# An Ecocritical Reading of Selected Works by Léopold Chauveau (1870-1940)

**John Ignatius Wareham Paterson**

**Bachelor of Arts (1st Class Honours) in French Studies, with Distinction in Spoken Italian, Lancaster University**

**Master of Arts with Merit in Literary Translation, University of East Anglia**

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**School of Modern Languages and Cultures**

**College of Arts**

**University of Glasgow**

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**Abstract**

This is the first study in English of the writer, illustrator, sculptor, and painter Léopold Chauveau, who since the 1990s has been the subject of renewed interest, leading in 2020 to a major Musée d'Orsay retrospective exhibition; and the first in any language to consider his work from an ecocritical perspective. Its corpus comprises a wide range of literary and visual works depicting non-human animals, including sympathetic 'monstres' who cannot easily be identified by species. This thesis argues that Chauveau represents these non-human characters, their interaction with humans and with an anthropomorphised God, in a way that expresses deep scepticism about anthropocentrism and expectations of human progress. With reference to archival material and to studies of the interwar period's cultural history, it relates these aspects of Chauveau's œuvre to his traumatic experience of working as a medical doctor at the time of the First World War and subsequent influenza pandemic, as well as treating his son Renaud, who died at the age of 12. I argue that, while Chauveau's viewpoint is pessimistic and his œuvre serves a therapeutic purpose, it also has politically subversive implications since it depicts solidarity between non-human animals and less powerful human groups, satirising ideologies and structures that oppress both.

The thesis comprises three chapters — as well as an introduction and conclusion that contextualise it with reference to previous criticism and the current reception context. Chapter 1 focusses on Chauveau's depiction of primitive environments threatened by colonialism and commercial exploitation, placing Chauveau's œuvre in the context of modernist primitivism and in conversation with recent scholarship on decolonial ecology. Chapter 2 focusses on works that depict various forms of kinship between non-human animals and less powerful human groups — especially women, children, anddisabled people— with particular reference to Chauveau's conception of the monstrous and his depiction of 'trickster' figures. Chapter 3 focusses on Chauveau's depictions of non-human characters interacting both with God and with human religious practices, arguing that, despite defining himself as a non-believer, Chauveau's œuvre engages with spirituality on a profound level, through a celebration of reverence for nature and a satire of anthropomorphising literalist conceptions of God.

**Contents**

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## Introduction

The subject of this thesis is Léopold Chauveau, an extremely prolific writer, illustrator, painter and sculptor, who suffered relative neglect during his lifetime. Many works remain unpublished, and Chauveau was largely forgotten after his death, but is now enjoying a strong revival of interest, culminating in a major exhibition held at the Musée d'Orsay from March to September 2020, featuring works donated by Marc Chauveau, Léopold's grandson and archivist, with whom I have been collaborating to raise his grandfather's profile since 2019. This work has resulted in the publication of a translation on the website of the Musée de la Piscine, Roubaix[1] and of entries in the Literary Encyclopedia.[2] I decided to pursue this thesis in the hope that it could help Chauveau gain a wider audience, both in French and in my English translation, by demonstrating the relevance of his œuvre to the ecological concerns of present-day audiences. While this has influenced my approach and definition of the corpus, I have been careful to preserve academic neutrality.

Nor am I arguing that it would be either effective or desirable to use Chauveau's works to convince present-day audiences of the importance of these ecological issues, still less of any particular viewpoint regarding practical solutions. This thesis works on the basis that it is rare for people to change their political and ethical beliefs in response to works of art. Instead, the vast majority of people interpret creative works in line with their previous assumptions, often simply by

[1] Léopold Chauveau trans. Nat Paterson, 2020, 'Wise Little Renaud's Stories' [Orsay video], La Piscine-Musée d'Art et d'Industrie André Diligent de la ville de Roubaix, available at: https://www.roubaix-lapiscine.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Three-stories-by-Leopold-Chauveau.pdf (Accessed 27 November 2020). The stories translated are those included in the Musée d'Orsay's video-installation, which is freely available at https://www.petitsmo.fr/gazette/trois-histoires-de-leopold-chauveau. A description of both is available at https://www.roubaix-lapiscine.com/en/exhibitions/past/in-the-land-of-monsters-by-leopold-chauveau-1870-1940/, the English-language webpage for the exhibition, which never opened in Roubaix, although a virtual tour is available at https://roubaix-lapiscine.yunow.app/756-les-defis-du-mercredi/4602-accueil-la-piscine-chez-vous (All accessed 4 July 2021).

[2] Nat Paterson, 25 January 2021, 'Léopold Chauveau's Children's Stories', *The Literary Encyclopedia*, available at: https://www.litencyc.com/php/sworks.php?rec=true&UID=39454 (Accessed 27 February 2021; and 23 November 2020, 'Léopold Chauveau', *The Literary Encyclopedia*, available at: https://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=14652 (Accessed 27 February 2021).

assuming that these works should not be taken seriously, a phenomenon reflected in the contemporary reception and editorial presentation of Chauveau.

While that neglect is unfortunate, this thesis also works on the much more positive basis that audiences are in little danger of becoming indoctrinated by reading creative works that express the prejudices and prevailing assumptions of the time when they were produced. Where I argue that Chauveau's œuvre is unique and contrast it with that of more conformist, less ecologically conscious writers and visual artists who enjoyed greater contemporary success, my point is not that they are less worthy of attention. As Edward Said argues 'rather than condemning or ignoring their participation' in unjust systems, 'what we learn about…hitherto ignored aspect[s]' of their œuvre 'actually and truly *enhances* our reading and understanding'. [3]

This thesis argues that one's 'reading and understanding' of works informed by scepticism about prejudices and prevailing assumptions is enhanced even more by politically-informed analysis, which in Chauveau's case can partially explain why he was neglected during his lifetime and thereby improve understanding of the interwar period in general and of contemporaries who achieved greater creative success. The intrinsic aesthetic quality of Chauveau's œuvre, and his ability to speak powerfully to audiences in different contexts to his own has already been demonstrated both by his popularity in Japan and by the Orsay exhibition. The latter includes a section, entitled 'Affinités électives', with examples of Chauveau's illustrations and those of living author-illustrators, including Maurice Sendak, as well as statements from these author-illustrators praising the 'modernity' of Chauveau's visual style.

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[3] Edward Said, 1994, *Culture and Imperialism*, London: Vintage, p.xv, original italics.I was prompted to state my position on the ideological influence of works of art by the discussion following my paper, 'Cultural Heritage in a New Environment: Re-Interpreting Léopold Chauveau's Visual and Literary Œuvre in the Context of Current Ecological Issues' at the University of Stirling's 22 May 2020 video-conference on 'Heritage and Culture(s)'. [My article for *MeCSSA*, accepted following peer review, is due to be published in a conference special issue.] I explained my scepticism about the positive potential for influence in response to an audience question, and reflected later that I should also have discussed the limited negative potential.

However, this thesis argues that Chauveau should not be considered simplistically as 'ahead of his time'. Rather, his œuvre is relevant to present-day readers precisely because it is the product of a unique worldview that invites reflection on a wide range of issues, challenging assumptions that people today are more 'enlightened' in terms of ecological awareness and social pluralism than at any time in the past and have little to learn from previous historical periods. Its relevance is also due in part precisely to the fact that it addresses both children and adults in a non-didactic way that speaks very well to the current context, in which children are taking a lead in ecological activism with the Youth Climate Strikes. Indeed, anti-didacticism is so central to Chauveau's œuvre that using his works to convince audiences of a particular viewpoint would be not only unwise but unethical. In addition to this progressive attitude towards children, Chauveau sympathetically depicts other less powerful human groups, presenting a range of perspectives which corresponds very well to the current need for a pluralistic ecological movement that can achieve what David Schlosberg defines as 'environmental justice'.[4]

**Environmental history and ecocriticism**

Far from being an ahistorical exercise, considering Chauveau's œuvre in the context of present-day ecological challenges involves exploring the long history of ecological problems and ecologically conscious viewpoints, especially in the context of their intersections with social and cultural developments during Chauveau's lifetime — particularly his later years since Chauveau only abandoned medicine to become a professional writer and visual artist in 1919. This thesis does not define Chauveau or his contemporaries as 'ecologist' or 'environmentalist', but explores how this recent terminology relates to earlier ideas. This thesis works on the basis that the 'ecological' is not a discrete category, since humans are an animal species that is integrated within the food chain in its primitive state, and all socio-economic systems ultimately depend on the use of natural resources. One of the works of ecocriticism that I have found most helpful is Dina El Dessouki's essay, in which she observes that mainstream

[4] David Schlosberg, 2007, *Defining Environmental Justice: Theories, Movements, and Nature*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Western thought is based around the myth of a 'human/nature dualism' that determines who and what is 'exploitable'.[5] It follows that works of art from many historical periods, both from Western cultures and from cultures that have experienced contact with the West, may productively be analysed in terms of the extent to which they reinforce or undermine this myth and the systems of domination it is used to justify.

In this thesis, I use the term 'ecologically conscious' to refer to works that demonstrate an awareness of humans' relationship to and dependency on natural resources, which are often disguised by unspoken adherence to the 'nature/culture dualism' myth. In contrast, I use the term 'anthropocentrism' to refer to the usually unspoken belief that 'nature' and all other species exist at least primarily for the benefit of humans, who are intrinsically superior; and 'ethnocentrism' to refer to similar beliefs specifically about Western human society. I would like to stress 'intrinsically': for the purposes of this thesis, it is not 'anthropocentric' to prioritise human survival, since all animals are genetically conditioned to struggle for their personal survival and that of their species, behaviour accepted by the non-human community in Chauveau's *Les cures merveilleuses du Docteur Popotame,* with Tobi the elephant explaining they must excuse the hunting carried out by the indigenous human population because 'il faut bien que chacun se nourrisse'.[6] I have arrived at this definition after engaging with works of post/colonial ecocriticism that emphasise the inadequacy of the Western term 'anthropocentrism' to discuss indigenous societies; and, as my focus is on concrete differences between societies rather than abstract similarities, I do not adopt deconstructionist approaches either in this discussion of meat as a necessity or elsewhere.

Similarly, I do not use 'anthropocentrism' or 'ethnocentrism' to refer simply to works adopting a (Western) human perspective—unavoidable however much a creator seeks to study or engage with other perspectives—although I discuss the

[5] Dina El Dessouki, 2016, 'Activating Voice, Body, and Place: Kanaka Maoli and Ma'ohi Writings for Kaho'olawe and Moruroa', in Elizabeth De Loughrey, Jill Didur and Anthony Carrigan (eds.), *Global Ecologies and the Environmental Humanities: Postcolonial Approaches*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 254-72.
[6] Chauveau, 1927, *Les cures merveilleuses du Docteur Popotame*, Paris: Les Arts et les Livres. Reprinted 2016, Nantes: les éditions MeMo, p.79.

significance of Chauveau's period of residence in Algeria, of his and his veterinarian researcher father's study and observation of non-human animals, and of his interest in non-Western and non-anthropocentric religious viewpoints. Moreover, this thesis works on the basis that neither study or travel are intrinsically linked to open-mindedness: that is demonstrated by Douglas' study of works by well-travelled ethnographic 'scholars' such as Froude. [7] The thesis explores how Chauveau avoids stereotyping non-Western peoples in stories about environments he has never visited.

This thesis also works on the basis that anthropomorphism is a feature of all creative works representing non-human animals, for the simple reason that they use human forms of expression. The former is heavily dependent on levels of realism, and many realist texts express an anthropocentrist outlook, for example Henry Williamson's *Tarka the Otter,* which the author researched 'diligently…to win the approval of William Henry Rogers, the master of the hunt and a local squire, to whom he would eventually dedicate the book'.[8] However, this thesis argues that Chauveau does anthropomorphise his non-human characters to a lesser extent than most other non-realist authors and illustrators, in a way that is closely linked to their anthropocentrism and his ecologically conscious, sceptical worldview. Throughout this thesis, I discuss the forms this takes in specific stories, all of which involve the characters acting out their natural instincts rather than becoming tamed or civilized by human society. One extremely important manifestation of this lower level of anthropomorphism is the fact that, unlike most of his contemporaries, Chauveau never depicts non-human characters wearing clothes in his illustrations, and even subversively represents humans abandoning clothes as they integrate into an ecosystem.

Other key terms, such as 'colonialism', 'ecofeminism', 'ecosocialism', 'neurodiversity' and 'idolatry' are defined and contextualised later in this thesis,

[7] Rachel Douglas, 2019, *Making* The Black Jacobins*: C.L.R. James and the Drama of History*, Durham (NC) and London: Duke University Press.
[8] Jeremy Gavron, 'Introduction',pp.v-xiii, in Williamson, Henry, 2009 (1927), *Tarka the Otter,* London: Penguin, pp. vii-viii.

with attention to how recent theories relate to Chauveau's contemporary context and to his worldview.

The binary Western ideology of domination by 'culture' over 'culture' may be traced back at least to medieval Catholic concepts of divinely ordained hierarchy and of 'dominion' exercised over Creation by humans, especially powerful groups within Christendom, who are regarded in literalistic terms as representatives of a strongly anthropomorphised God. In chapter 3, I discuss Chauveau's satirical response to medieval Catholic literature and visual art, as well as his engagement with alternative perspectives from within the Abrahamic religions that regard human perceptions of God as necessarily partial and metaphorical, and interpret the role of humanity as one of responsible stewardship rather than dominion.

From the early modern period onwards, developments in technology allowed Western elites to dominate the planet to an ever-greater extent, albeit with self-destructive unintended consequences due to their own place within nature. This occurred as European countries moved from a domestic agricultural economy to an industrial capitalist system based around the exploitation, for non-essential purposes, of natural resources from across the world. In chapter 1, I place Chauveau's work in conversation with Ferdinand's *Une écologie décoloniale* , which outlines the development of ecological problems and movements since Columbus;[9] and discuss my decision to adopt his re-definition of colonialism as the exploitation of natural resources outwith Europe, including in areas without an indigenous human population. In both chapters 1 and 2, I discuss Chauveau's unsympathetic representation of industries — including ivory, whaling, zoos, and circuses — and of the interlinked exploitation of non-human animals and of less powerful humans, either because they are employed within these industries or because they are subjected to violence using similar means and weapons.

The Enlightenment and growing secularization of Europe created a tendency to use the concept of 'rationality' to justify structures of domination: this is what Dina El Dessouki focusses on, writing about the categorization of 'specific peoples, species

[9] Malcom Ferdinand, 2019, *Une écologie décoloniale*, Paris: Seuil.

and places as nonhuman, female, other, irrational'. [10] These ideas were not shared by many significant Enlightenment figures, including Voltaire and Rousseau, as Renan Larue demonstrates in *Le Végétarisme des Lumières: L'abstinence de viande dans la France du XVIII^e siècle*.[11] Nevertheless, the secularization of Western powers has led to Enlightenment thought being instrumentalised, like Christianity, to justify the exploitation of natural resources and abuse of non-human animals, as well as social hierarchies and prejudice against groups within human society who were considered less intelligent. This thesis explores how Chauveau undermines prevailing assumptions about what constitutes intelligence, both by drawing attention to human stupidity and through his use of the trickster figure — a non-human character, frequently associated with less powerful human groups such as women, children, racialised and disabled people, who outwits characters with greater physical strength.

The question of physical strength, violence, and superior weaponry is central to Chauveau's writing, and is depicted as the true source of power. This thesis discusses Chauveau's utopian depiction of non-violent communities, with one important point of reference being his satirical reworking of the Old French trickster narrative *Le Roman de Renart* and of the œuvre of Jean de La Fontaine, who gives his fable 'Le loup et l'agneau' the cynical 'moral' 'La raison du plus fort est toujours la meilleure'.[12] Throughout his literary and visual œuvre, Chauveau, to quote from the Orsay information panel for his illustration to the fable, 'dénonce cette loi du plus fort et défend les faibles'.

Chauveau had a deep, pessimistic awareness of the omnipresence of violence, injustice and the 'raison du plus fort'. This informs both the satirical and the utopian elements in his œuvre, which he conceived as serving a therapeutic purpose both for himself and for others. This thesis makes frequent reference to traumatic events during the final years of Chauveau's career as a doctor, including the deaths of his eldest son Pierre (1899-1915), wife Renée (1875-1918) and

[10] El Dessouki, p.259
[11] Renan Larue, 2019, *Le Végétarisme des Lumières: L'abstinence de viande dans la France du XVIIIe siècle*, Paris: Garnier.
[12] Jean de La Fontaine, 1668-1694, *Fables*, 12 volumes, available at: http://www.la-fontaine-ch-thierry.net/lesfable.htm (Accessed 6 August 2020). Book I, Fable 10, Line i.

especially of his third son, Renaud (1906-1918), as well as working through the First World War and 1918-19 influenza pandemic. It considers how, among artists and intellectuals during the interwar period, the fact that technological development had resulted in mass slaughter but not significant improvements in medicine resulted in growing scepticism about Western society's rationality and capacity for progress. This thesis explores Chauveau's œuvre in the context of wider trends especially: modernist primitivism, a very broad tendency that involves celebrating nature over culture; and the wide-ranging debates among Chauveau's own circle of friends, colleagues and acquaintances, discussed in Pierre Masson and Jean-Pierre Prévost's *L'esprit de Pontigny (Profils d'une classique)*, an extremely useful study of a series of high-profile conferences attended by Chauveau, but which mentions him too briefly to be considered in the literature review.[13] However, I argue that Chauveau's œuvre is unique, and that the way he approaches these topics resonates with readers today but was largely misunderstood during his lifetime: I demonstrate this through comparisons with contemporaries, and an analysis of inaccurate contemporary criticism.

The interwar period was also defined by the rise of fascism and of eugenics, a pseudo-scientific discipline that adopts a particularly extreme form of the nature/culture binary—both in attempting to raise humanity above its natural state by artificially controlling reproduction; and in advocating the elimination of groups who were identified with non-human animals due to their disability or ethnic origin. Chapter 2 includes a detailed analysis of Chauveau's depiction of the monstrous, which emerges from his father's work as a veterinary researcher and from an interest in deformities which he shared with eugenicists, but is used in a diametrically opposed way, to celebrate diversity both within and beyond the human species. Throughout this thesis, I analyse how a contrast between totalitarianism and harmonious coexistence informs Chauveau's entire œuvre.

It should be clear from this overview that I adopt an expansive definition of ecocriticism, which allows me to incorporate previous politically informed criticism of Chauveau within the very broad context of my own research. However, I do

[13] Pierre Masson and Jean-Pierre Prévost, 2014, *L'Esprit de Pontigny (Profils d'un classique)*, Paris: Orizons.

maintain a focus on Chauveau's depiction of non-human animals, including 'monstres' who cannot easily be identified by species, and their interaction with humans, while suggesting possibilities for future research considering a wider corpus. Because the very small body of previous literature on Chauveau focusses on the same works, the thesis refers to all previous studies I am aware of. Since my corpus includes visual art and ecocriticism is normally considered to be a type of literary criticism, I use the term here in a deliberately broad sense, which involves considering the place of cultural within environmental history.

**Corpus**

The corpus of this thesis consists of literary and visual works that fit with my focus on the representation of non-human characters, including monsters who cannot easily be identified by species. Other written works by Chauveau are referred to for context: these include a memoir, novellas, works of literary criticism, and personal documents. Most of the literary works in the corpus could loosely be described as *contes,* animal stories, and/or as works of children's literature, although prose poetry is also considered. Through comparisons with better-known writers, this thesis explores how Chauveau undermines expectations relating to audience and genre.

This thesis refers primarily to the most recent editions of Chauveau's books, either because they have been revised by the author or because they were published posthumously and the editions published during Chauveau's lifetime are extremely difficult to obtain. The exception is *Le Roman de Renard*: I use the 1924 edition, as the later editions for children are considerably abridged, except when referring to illustrations that appear only in these abridged editions.[14] Using later editions does pose certain limitations relating to the illustrations, which Chauveau intended to be placed with captions after the main text of his stories, forming separate narratives that young children can read to themselves as picture books after having the main text read to them and that usually present differences of emphasis: Marc Chauveau considers the quality of reproduction in many recent editions to be

[14] Chauveau, 1924, *Le Roman de Renard*, Paris: Payot. Chauveau, 1928, *Le Roman de Renard, version illustrée pour la jeunesse*, Paris and Neuchâtel: Victor Attinger. Reprinted 1936, Paris: Éditions Sociales Internationales; 1956 and 1964, Paris: Éditions La Farandole.

inferior to the originals; the 1999 edition of *Petit poisson devenu grand* places the illustrations in the main text and omits the captions;[15] and the 2003 edition of *Les deux font la paire* omits Chauveau's illustrations completely.[16] However, it is both unavoidable and adequate given the main focus of this thesis. My bibliography of works cited includes a separate section for Chauveau's works, which are listed in chronological order of first publication: all versions, manuscript and published — together with closely related works, such as different adaptations of *Le Roman de Renard*, and standalone publications of individual stories from a collection — are then listed together, with the exception of the Orsay video, 'Histoires du Petit Père Renaud', which despite its title is cited separately as it includes stories from two separate collections. As this thesis aims to introduce Chauveau to a wider readership, my decisions about which editions to cite have been determined partly by which are most easily accessible. For the same reason, I made the regrettable decision that the limited wordcount left no space to consider manuscript versions of published books, although I do discuss a few unpublished manuscripts referred to by Poirier and kindly provided by Marc Chauveau.

In addition to analysing Chauveau's own illustrations for his *contes,* following my visit to the Orsay *vernissage*, I decided to extend my corpus to include stand-alone visual artwork. However, the sheer volume of Chauveau's visual output—18 bronze sculptures exhibited in the Musée d'Orsay and others in private collections; 60 black ink drawings in the series *La maison des monstres*;[17] 150 watercolour paintings in the series *Paysages monstrueux*;[18] 26 watercolour illustrations for Jean de La Fontaine's *Fables*, published posthumously in 1992;[19] and a range of other works, notably Bible illustrations, some among the 100 paper-based pieces displayed in the Orsay exhibition—makes it impossible to analyse all individually. Instead, this thesis considers representative examples of Chauveau's depictions of monsters in different visual media, and of his illustrations of the work of others.

[15] Chauveau, 1923, *Petit poisson devenu grand*, Victor Attinger: Paris and Neuchâtel. Reprinted 1999, Genève: La joie de lire.
[16] Chauveau, 1937, *Les deux font la paire*, Paris: Éditions Sociales Internationales. Reprinted 2003, Genève: La Joie de Lire.
[17] Chauveau, 2020, *La maison des monstres*, Paris: Musée d'Orsay.
[18] Chauveau, 2020, *Paysages monstreux*, Paris: Musée d'Orsay.
[19] La Fontaine, ill. Chauveau, *Fables de La Fontaine, Illustré par Léopold Chauveau*, Paris: Circonflexe, 1992.

The term ‘reading’ in my thesis title primarily means ‘interpretation’, and refers to all works in my corpus, visual as much as literary. It is also an acknowledgement that, while this thesis seeks to give as comprehensive an analysis as possible with reference to extremely broad contexts, it is also necessarily personal and subjective—both because it emerges from a specific theoretical and political context of increased ecological awareness; and because it is inspired by the aim of acquiring a wider audience for Chauveau’s œuvre, with which I have deep affinity. More specifically, the term ‘reading’ refers to the instinctive interpretative process, involving both macroanalysis and close reading, required by translation: I began writing about the ecological dimension of Chauveau’s works when preparing synopses for English-language publishers; and recently made substantial revisions to my discussion of ‘Histoire de Limace’ after my translation work for the Musée d’Orsay gave me new insights into passages in the story.

**Literature review**

The only dedicated monograph, Jacques Poirier’s biography was written in close collaboration with Marc Chauveau and quotes extensively from documents contained in the family archive.[20] It gives an excellent analysis of Léopold Chauveau’s reflection on his work, and its reception during his lifetime. The eight essays comprised in the Musée d’Orsay exhibition catalogue analyse both written and visual texts from a range of standpoints, again usually with a focus on archival material and contemporary reception. Shorter pieces by Marie-Pierre Litaudon and Roger Little focus on Chauveau’s anti-didacticism and anti-colonialism respectively, considering the influence of these aspects of his children’s stories on other interwar writers. Mathilde Lévêque discusses similar questions in various extracts of her 2011 study *Écrire pour la jeunesse, en France et en Allemagne dans l’entre-deux-guerres*.[21] Brief pieces, especially introductions to new editions of Chauveau’s books, provide useful factual and contextual information. In addition to these recent contributions, this thesis refers to two contemporary pieces of criticism. Clarke’s French-language introduction to her scholastic edition of *Les*

[20] Jacques Poirier, 2016, *Léopold Chauveau (1870-1940) Chirurgien, écrivain, peintre et sculpteur*, Paris: Hermann.
[21] Mathilde Lévêque, 2011, *Écrire pour la jeunesse, en France et en Allemagne dans l’entre-deux-guerres*, Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.

*cures merveilleuses* is now recognised to be out of date because it significantly overstates Chauveau's similarity to Rudyard Kipling in a way that provides useful insights into contemporary reception.[22] In what as far as I know is the only previous work of English-language criticism apart from exhibition reviews, Arnold H. Rowbotham also mentions Chauveau in a footnote at the end of his essay 'Rudyard Kipling and France'.[23] Hence, my ecocritical approach to Chauveau's œuvre is an original contribution to the literature, which I only refer to relatively briefly—when discussing the reception of Chauveau's œuvre and the reasons why its ecological significance has rarely been recognized; as well as the place within an ecocritical context of the political issues discussed by recent critics. However, within its ecocritical framework, this thesis also stresses the importance of issues not generally associated with ecology that are not discussed in detail by previous critics: including France's response to its Catholic heritage; disability; and violence against women and children.

An important aim of this thesis is to expand on the very brief allusions to ecology by previous critics, all of which are quoted in full, with the closing remarks to the final essay in the Orsay catalogue serving as the epigraph to chapter 2. Little's short article, whose specific points I expand on, had a major influence on my decision to pursue this research, not only because of his stature and the fact that he explicitly uses the term *écologique* but because he mentions me by name and is a personal contact.[24]

**(Auto)biographical context and future reception**

Despite the ecological significance of events during Chauveau's lifetime and of his own theoretical writing, this thesis necessarily takes a less biographical approach than previous works of criticism such as the articles in the Orsay catalogue, since its aim is to help Chauveau gain a wider readership by demonstrating his relevance to present-day audiences, and it does so by adopting a theoretical approach,

[22] Chauveau, abridged and edited by Isabelle H. Clarke, 1929, *Les cures merveilleuses du Docteur Popotame*, New York and London: J.M. Dent and Sons.
[23]Arnold H. Rowbotham, March and May 1937, 'Rudyard Kipling and France', *The French Review,* Vol.10, Nos. 5, pp.365-372, and 6, pp.472-479, p.479.
[24] Roger Little, May 2019, 'L'antiracisme de Léopold Chauveau', SIELEC, available at http://www.sielec.net/pages_site/comptes-rendus_lecture/Chauveau_antiraciste.pdf (Accessed 15 August 2020).

ecocriticism, that was not developed until many years after his death. However, this thesis argues that the strategy of ignoring biographical information and historical context to focus entirely on the context of reception is one that could not be applied effectively to Chauveau. I do not intend to comment on the wider appropriateness of such a strategy, but simply to draw attention to the fact that the corpus includes numerous autobiographical allusions and references, which it would be extremely difficult to justify ignoring. Far from allowing a wider range of interpretations, to do so would almost certainly result in a reductive reading, as was the case with Clarke's school edition of *Les Cures merveilleuses du Docteur Popotame,* in which autobiographical references are omitted from both text and introduction.

An equally inappropriate strategy would be to attempt to establish Chauveau's original authorial intent. To do so would be a contradiction in terms since, in his critical writing, Chauveau discusses creativity as an instinctive process and explicitly rejects the didactic conception of literature as expressing a fixed meaning and ethical message. Therefore, I do not discuss in detail the extent to which Chauveau actually practiced vegetarianism or other ecologically conscious actions that he depicts in a utopian way in his stories and suggests may be ideal in his critical writing, which discusses human pretentions with pessimistic scepticism. The closest I come to evaluating authorial intent is the analysis of possible non-autobiographical references, especially in chapter 3 when considering parallels between scenes in Chauveau's works and historical religious practices. However, my aim is not to demonstrate Chauveau's knowledge or ignorance of specific texts and information, but to consider his work within the cultural context in which it was produced, whilst also bringing it into conversation with later perspectives and perspectives from different cultures.

To achieve this, I apply two complimentary approaches. First, with reference to the works on ecological and general history discussed above, I explore the similarities and differences between the general context in which Chauveau was writing and the present-day context of renewed interest. This determines my choice of comparisons, which include ecologically conscious later writers as well as contemporaries discussed by previous critics.  Second, I apply Holland and

Scholar's enabling concept of the 'afterlives' of creative works, that is the contexts in which works acquire fresh meanings due to the interventions of people other than the original creator.[25] This is a highly relevant concept given how strongly my research has been informed by my visit to the Orsay *vernissage* and collaboration with the curators, as well as by contrasting different editions. However, the original 'lives' and 'afterlives' of the works in my corpus differ much less than the medieval and early modern examples Holland and Scholar consider, for three main reasons: the actual distance in time is relatively small, and rendered less constraining by the continued existence of a family archive; it was during his lifetime, not subsequently, that Chauveau's works were misrepresented and published in inaccurate editions; and, despite ecocriticism and the terminology associated with it being relatively recent, the concerns that are the focus of this thesis considerably predate Chauveau's lifetime. Therefore, the strategy adopted in this thesis has more in common with those of later scholars such as Douglas,who was inspired to apply the concept of 'afterlives' to Caribbean Marxist scholar and literary author C.L.R. James by the Greater London Council's celebratory exhibition 'C.L.R. James—Man of the People' held from February to March 1986. This thesis evaluates the significance of Chauveau's 'afterlives', although in chapter 3, the term 'afterlife' refers to spiritual survival after bodily death.

**Chapter Outline**

**Chapter 1: Primitivism, Decolonial Ecology, and the Contrast Between French Society and More Sustainable Cultures.** This chapter focusses on Chauveau's depiction of colonialism, as understood by Ferdinand, and of primitive habitats and ecosystems threatened by commercial exploitation. It also begins a discussion of his engagement with trickster narratives and of oral literature. The chapter discusses previous inaccurate comparisons with Kipling, and introduces new comparisons to analyse Chauveau's place within modernist primitivism.

[25]Anna Holland and Richard Scholar, 2008, *Pre-Histories and Afterlives: Studies in Critical Method,* Leeds: Legenda.

**Chapter 2: Friendship, Intelligence and Shared Vulnerability: Celebrating Difference Beyond the Human/Non-human Binary** This chapter explores Chauveau's representation of solidarity between non-human animals and less powerful groups within French human society, especially women, children, and disabled people. It continues my analysis of Chauveau's use of the trickster genre in the context of debates about both the nature and moral significance of intelligence. The chapter also explores Chauveau's conception of the monstrous.

**Chapter 3: Imagining Non-anthropocentric Spiritualities and Non-human Afterlives** This chapter analyses how Chauveau's œuvre invites humility through satire of anthropocentric Catholic literalism, the sympathetic or nuanced portrayal of other religions, and the depiction of non-human characters with spiritual wisdom. It places his works in conversation with scriptural texts and creative works inspired by organised religion, and in the context of strong interest in non-conventional spirituality during the interwar period. The chapter also refers to Armstrong's, Larue's and Ferdinand's work on religious history, demonstrating that, although Chauveau identified as a non-believer due to his rejection of Christianity, spiritual concerns are nevertheless central to his œuvre because of their great importance in shaping ideologies and in reinforcing or challenging structures of domination.

## Chapter 1: Primitivism, Decolonial Ecology, and the Contrast Between French Society and More Sustainable Cultures

This chapter discusses the relationship between the ecological significance of Chauveau's animal stories and his place within primitivism. In discussing Chauveau as a primitivist, it is important to clarify that he did not define himself as one, and that primitivism is not a formal movement. Rather, it is a cultural trend based around 'an imaginative act' of visualising a happy former state: this act has inspired creative works in Western culture ever since the myth of Eden; and has played a central role in anti-colonial movements in the Global South, such as Négritude, that depict the pre-colonial past from an insider perspective.[26]Therefore, primitivist works of art acquire significance mainly because of what they are reacting against. As Etherington observes, the term 'primitivist' is most often associated with French visual artists such as Matisse, Rousseau, Gauguin, and Picasso, who reacted against formal and aesthetic features of modern Western art, such as the use of naturalistic perspective, and were influenced by non-Western traditions, but had a paternalistic attitude towards non-European peoples. When used as a visual art term rather than as a more general description of environments and societies as is the case here, 'primitive' (but not 'primitivist') can refer to proto-Renaissance Italian painting, although this movement towards realism differs greatly from the primitivist reaction against it, as the contrast between a watercolour by Chauveau and a fresco by proto-Renaissance painter Giotto di Bonbone, discussed in chapter 3, will demonstrate. The paternalism of well-known primitivist visual artists is reflected by the fact that they frequently depict indigenous women in passive positions, and the 'primitive' as a simplistic, child-like state. European modernist literature made a similar aesthetic reaction against realism and a celebration of oral storytelling, in works such as Blaise Cendrars' *Petits contes nègres pour les enfants des blancs*.[27] Chauveau's animal stories are strongly influenced by these aesthetic trends: they are illustrated with stylistically simple, black ink drawings with flattened

[26]Ben Etherington, 'The New Primitives, *Los Angeles Review of Books,* 24 May 2018, available at: https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/the-new-primitives/ (Accessed 17 February 2021).
[27] Blaise Cendrars, 1929, *Petits contes nègres pour les enfants des blancs*, Paris: Gallimard.

perspective; and incorporate features from oral genres such as the trickster narrative.

However, Chauveau's work reacts against far more than realist aesthetics: it reflects his deep unease with modern Western society, both on grounds of moral and political principle, and in response to the personal traumas of the death of his son and of working as a military doctor during the First World War. Pericles Lewis argues that, modernist primitivism developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a reaction against elements of 'modernity' such as mechanisation and a growing human separateness from nature, which were celebrated in the opposing movement of futurism. He acknowledges that some primitivists were guilty of ignorance and racist stereotyping but, on the whole, associates primitivism with the political left, and futurism with the extreme right. In his discussion of the importance of nature in modernist primitivism, he suggests that it prefigures present-day concerns about ecology.[28] This thesis argues that Lewis' analysis is particularly relevant to Chauveau's œuvre, which displays many characteristic features of modernist primitivism but also attacks fundamental Western moral assumptions and undermines both anthropocentrism and ethnocentrism to a much greater extent than contemporaries such as Rudyard Kipling and Claude Aveline.

Chauveau's treatment of the primitive is idiosyncratic: while he is much more radical than other European writers, he does not engage with specific colonised countries in the same way as movements such as Négritude. His work takes inspiration from all three of the main 'primitive' influences identified by Lewis: the behaviour and creative work of children; pre-modern cultures within Europe; and indigenous cultures. Chauveau makes a connection between the psychology of children and that of adults in primitive cultures, and he adopts stylistically simple features of primitive art and literature to appeal to an audience including children, yet as a radical anti-didactic writer, Chauveau conceives of the child-like state as one of heightened awareness rather than naivety, and his children's stories are thematically complex and dark.

[28] Pericles Lewis, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Chapter 2: Primitivists and modernizers, pp.64-94.

This chapter focusses on stories set in environments that are primitive in the sense that they are not yet defined by human activity, although in many stories it is starting to pose a threat. These settings include environments in the ancient world, as well as non-European countries and ocean habitats threatened by Western big game hunting. None of these stories include major human characters and in some humans are entirely absent. Minor human characters indigenous to the environment are represented positively, and in symbolic, archetypal terms, with Chauveau stressing their low environmental impact, presence within the ecosystem, and harmonious relationship with the environment. They are represented unsympathetically as part of the food chain, and invaders are depicted as evil because they engage in aggressive, gratuitous violence not motivated by the need to feed themselves. Human characters who invade the protagonists' environment are represented in more realistic terms than indigenous peoples, for example with accurate descriptions of European weaponry. The non-human characters are anthropomorphised, but not associated with a particular human cultural or ethnic group. Rather, they are represented somewhat paradoxically. On the one hand, Chauveau depicts them as members of ecosystems that are in some respects similar to human societies, and shows these ecosystems to be self-sufficient communities that suffer from and are resistant to colonialism. Hence, Chauveau invites sympathy for both human and non-human victims of colonialism, without depicting specific colonised peoples. At the same time, Chauveau gives his protagonists features that are typical of groups within Western society: for example, he satirises the protagonist of 'Le Vieux Crocodile' as someone who expects to be respected simply due to his age; gives all the non-human characters in *Monsieur Tigre et Madame Tortue* the title 'Monsieur' or 'Madame'; and even represents the hippo Docteur Popotame as an alter ego of himself. The effect of this is both to help readers identify with the protagonists, and to draw attention to problems within Western culture, undermining ethnocentric and anthropocentric assumptions.

This strategy allows Chauveau to avoid racist stereotyping while writing about locations with which he was unfamiliar. Chauveau never lived in any of the countries he depicts in his animal stories, although he spent two years working as a civilian medical doctor in Tlemcen, Algeria, and draws on aspects of his life there

in his representation of Egypt. He chooses his locations primarily because they are the natural habitat of animals that he observed in Paris' Jardin des Plantes, or that his children read about in fables and textbooks. His stories undermine both these Western methods of representing non-human animals: he depicts the kidnapping of wild animals to transport them to zoos as a cruel practice; and satirises the development of the fable genre away from primitive story-telling methods.

My analysis of these elements of his work is informed by a consideration of two texts in which he discusses his concept of the primitive, although in both cases, he seems to be referring exclusively to ancient peoples and not to contemporary indigenous cultures. His book of prose poetry, *L'Ombre du Pantin* is a response to personal, existential anguish, whose spiritual themes I discuss in chapter 3. It depicts the alienation and loss of freedom among humans moving from 'primitive' to 'civilised' life, and links it to the domestication of non-human animals, especially in two pieces, 'Un chien hurle dans la nuit' and 'Ours enchaîné'.[29] This is echoed in the title story of *Les cures merveilleuses du Docteur Popotame,* which depicts non-human animals experiencing trauma when removed from their natural environment and taken to zoos, and humans experiencing greater freedom when they adopt an indigenous lifestyle.

In his lecture 'Écrire pour les enfants', Chauveau analyses the appeal of animal stories to children, without explicitly discussing his own. He expresses his disagreement with didacticism and moralisation, but suggests that stories should nevertheless be political when he argues that the child reader identifies with non-human animals who 'sont des frères qui souffrent comme lui de vivre sous la domination des grandes personnes' and criticises the way both children and non-human animals are treated. He also expresses scepticism about the concept of human superiority and praises children's imagination and curiosity about non-human animals, observing that in this respect, '[l]es hommes primitifs', whose cultures placed a great importance on animal stories, 'semblaient être assez semblables aux enfants'.[30] Implicit in this is a strong criticism of adults in

[29] Chauveau, 1924, *L'Ombre du Pantin*, Paris: Au Sans Pareil pp.152-3.
[30] Chauveau, 'Écrire pour les enfants', , lecture delivered at the Club George Sand on 11 December 1938, p.10 of transcript kindly provided by Marc Chauveau. The lecture reworks ideas presented in Chauveau, June 1937, 'Enfants et histoires d'animaux', *Le Coupe-Papier*, Number 5, p.4.

'civilised' societies, whose lack of curiosity and whose sense of their own superiority leads them to behave with cruelty and aggression.

Since Chauveau's stories, and other works of modernist primitivism, arose from an unease with growing Western disconnectedness from nature, and involved interest and admiration for indigenous cultures, they can be linked to recent scholarship on the connections between colonialism and ecological isssues. Malcom Ferdinand argues that Western colonialism and neo-colonialism are driving forces of ecological destruction, tracing the destructive impact of imperialism from the deforestation that immediately followed Colombus' discovery of the American continent to the time when Ferdinand was writing. Of course, this is a somewhat partial explanation, since Ferdinand does not discuss in detail the developments within European society, relating to the move from localised agricultural economies to a global industrial capitalist system based on colonialism, that led to Europeans adopting lifestyles dependent on the unsustainable exploitation of all natural resources; nor the fact that, before European influence, some non-European societies – such as the Mughal Empire, which practiced sport hunting even more than the British Raj and oversaw 'the most dramatic reduction in India's wildlife prior to the industrial period'[31] –were unsustainably exploiting resources within their borders. Nevertheless, Ferdinand gives a detailed overview of the extremely detrimental impact of European colonialism and neo-colonialism on vast areas of the planet that did previously have sustainable cultures. Those are the countries whose contemporary indigenous cultures were most often discussed or depicted as 'primitive'; and this thesis argues that, despite the many differences both between the cultures themselves, and the ways in which primitivists represent and sometimes misrepresent them, the similarities in their relationship to the natural world mean that primitive remains a useful term. Ferdinand also provides a new definition of Western colonialism as a process of economic exploitation of the entire planet's natural resources, including both human and non-human animals. He places particular emphasis on the importance of ships, discussing how the same vessels were often

[31] Richard C. Foltz, 2006, *Animals in Islamic Tradition and Muslim Cultures*, London: Oneworld, p.39.

used both for whaling and for the slave trade.[32] Drawing on this insight, this chapter considers the relationship between stories set in areas inhabited by indigenous peoples, and those set in marine or terrestrial environments where humans do not permanently live, but which human activity threatens.

Ferdinand's work can be linked to a growing body of scholarship analysing literary texts that are concerned both with ecological issues and with (neo-)colonialism, of which El Dessouki's study is a good example. Up until now, most of these studies have focussed on post-Second World War literature by writers from the Global South, especially realist texts about specific environmental injustices. Animal stories, including those by writers such as Kipling and Hugh Lofting who were strongly influenced by primitivism, have been analysed academically in terms of their representation of animal ethics: Margaret Blount's *Animal Land* is one important study.[33] However, this scholarship has tended to focus on texts that are very well known in English, and it has not discussed the connections between the representation of colonialism and of ecological issues. This chapter draws on both these strands of research and on studies of modernist primitivism, as well as expanding on the small body of previous criticism of Chauveau and placing his animal stories in the context of his artistic self-reflection and wider career.

The title story in *Les cures merveilleuses du Docteur Popotame,* appearing on pages 11 to 90, is the only text by Chauveau that previous critics have referred to in terms of ecology. This is likely to be because it is his longest original, as opposed to adapted, *conte* (and the only one with chapters) and one of his best known, and also because it is the most explicitly political, including a speech by the elephant Tobi attacking the behaviour of white big game hunters. However, these critics have only mentioned the environmental aspects of 'Les cures merveilleuses' very briefly, since their overall approach is to focus on the elements of Chauveau's work that were considered most important during his lifetime. Therefore, they consider his representation of colonialism essentially in terms of race relations because that was how the issue of colonialism was

[32] Ferdinand, p.376
[33] Margaret Blount, 1974, *Animal Land: The Creatures of Children's Literature*, London: Hutchinson.

perceived by his contemporaries, even though Chauveau never seeks to represent non-white people realistically in his stories set in primitive environments, and indeed humans of any ethnicity only appear as minor characters — although his First World War memoir *Derrière la bataille* depicts *tirailleurs sénégalais*.[34] Both because great writers speak powerfully to readers in different historical contexts, and because Chauveau is attracting more interest now than in any other historical period, I take a different approach, showing that his work is informed by an ecological awareness that is highly relevant to present-day readers and was ahead of his time. This thematic analysis should complement recent work on his style: the Musée d'Orsay exhibition includes a section entitled 'Affinités électives', which displays work by present-day authors and illustrators, including Maurice Sendak, many of whom were previously unaware of Chauveau, and homages written by them that praise his visual style and draw attention to its similarities with their own.

Moreover, the most explicit statement by a recent critic about the ecological significance of the title story in *Les Cures merveilleuses* is leading postcolonial scholar Roger Little's comment that the story is informed by 'un souci écologique, naturiste[...] et même végétarien rare pour son temps[...] mais aujourd'hui sur toutes les lèvres'[35] — confirming my argument that this is both central to Chauveau's œuvre and of great interest to present-day readers despite being overlooked during Chauveau's lifetime. Two other texts refer less explicitly to the way 'Les cures merveilleuses' de-centres French society by imagining the perspective of non-human animals: the prominent historian of early twentieth century children's literature and president of Afreloce [Association française de recherches sur les livres et objets culturels de l'enfance, an organisation working closely with the Bibliothèque de l'heure Joyeuse], Mathilde Lévêque, writes that racist assumptions are turned on their head through 'le détour par d'autres normes et par un autre point de vue, celui des animaux';[36] while Marie-Pierre Litaudon and Isabelle Nières-Chevrel, in their essay 'Les histoires cabossées' observe that 'Ses

[34] Chauveau, 1917, *Derrière la bataille*, Paris: Payot, 1917. Reprinted Montceaux-lès-Meaux: Fiacre, pp.85-94 and 171-172.
[35] Little, p.7.
[36] Lévêque, p.122.

contes dénoncent et ridiculisent les comportements coloniaux et les préjugés racistes des Blancs ; il n'hésite pas à écrire dans ses *Cures* que les Blancs pratiquent la chasse à l'éléphant sans nécessité, <<contents, disent-ils, d'avoir tiré un bon coup de fusil et ils nous arrachent les dents >> [c'est un éléphant qui parle]'.[37]

It is undoubtedly true that Tobi's speech expresses Chauveau's own disgust with Western violence, and that 'Les cures merveilleuses' is an anti-colonial and anti-militarist text. However, to understand the story fully one must give much more emphasis than Litaudon and Nières-Chevrel do to the remarkable fact that 'c'est un éléphant qui parle' - although this wording, which echoes a stage direction, 'c'est un scélérat qui parle', included by Molière in Acte IV, scène V of *Le Tartuffe* 'to defend himself against charges of blasphemy', alludes to the impossibility of expressing such sentiments in the author's own voice.[38] 'Les Cures merveilleuses' is the only story I know of that tells us nothing about the feelings and thoughts of human characters but considers them exclusively from the point of view of wild non-human animals, although other such neglected works probably exist. A number of books depict humans being judged by domesticated non-human animals, especially dogs, including Jack London's *Call of the Wild* and, in a Francophone African context, Patrice Nganang's *Temps de chien* and René Maran's *Djouma, chien de brousse*.[39] While the non-human viewpoint Chauveau presents is clearly fantastical, it draws attention to the fact that humans are animals, and that Western societies are often crueller than those that continue to live in close proximity to other species and are subject to the basic animal struggle for survival. In a fantastical and idealised way, Chauveau shows the indigenous human community to be an integral part of the local ecosystem: he even undermines anthropocentric assumptions by showing local people working for the hippo Docteur Popotame. He also unsentimentally depicts the community as part of the

[37] Marie-Pierre Litaudon and Isabelle Nières-Chevrel, 2020, 'Les histoires cabossées' in *Au pays des monstres: Léopold Chauveau (1870-1940)*, Paris: Musée d'Orsay, pp.198-215, pp.201-2. The citation is from Chauveau, *Cures,* pp.79-80.
[38] Molière ed. and trans. Stanley Appelbaum, *Tartuffe and the Bourgeois Gentleman: A Dual-Language Book*, Mineola (NY): Dover Publications, Inc.p.137.
[39] Jack London, 1903, *Call of the Wild*, London and New York: Macmillan. René Maran, 1927, *Djouma, chien de brousse: roman*, Paris: Albin Michel. Patrice Nganang, 2001, *Temps de Chien*, Paris: Le serpent à plumes.

food chain: the non-human protagonists accept that humans are eaten by other animals—in the chapter 'Le Crocodile', appearing on pages 36 to 47, Docteur Popotame even feeds two of his nurses to a crocodile who has been shot by a big game hunter and whom they have brought back to life, a decision that in most human value systems would appear callous and ungrateful, but is in fact motivated by compassion, with Popotame exclaiming 'comme il a faim, ce pauvre crocodile!'[40]— and that humans kill members of their own species when food is scarce. In the chapter 'Les méfaits de l'homme blanc', when the protagonists face a sustained invasion from big game hunters, Popotame's friend Tobi the elephant gives a speech that suggests that humans should act like the animals they are: he argues that the indigenous community cannot be blamed for hunting to eat when plant-based food is scarce; gives a detailed and accurate description of French uses of ivory; and concludes that white hunters are uniquely evil in killing for luxury products and for sport, a fact that can only be explained by the difference in colour, since they and the local black community 'appartiennent à la même espèce'.[41]Significantly, the non-human protagonists also recognise that black people in subservient roles to the big game hunters are not their enemies: in 'Le Crocodile', Docteur Popotame kills the hunter who has shot the crocodile and destroys his canoe, but 'ne s'occupa pas du [pagayeur] nègre'.[42]This is the only occasion where Chauveau represents a black human servant of the big game hunters, but it is important because it shows the encroaching damage caused by colonialism: readers will infer that the paddler does not belong to the indigenous community, but has travelled with the hunters from another part of Africa that probably also enjoys rich biodiversity and that has recently been conquered.

At the end of the story, the protagonists decide to paint the white big game hunters black, and succeed in rendering them harmless. The fact that the human characters are depicted entirely from the perspective of the non-human protagonists leads to an ambiguity: we are told the ex-hunters never eat meat again but we do not know whether they adopt complete vegetarianism because of guilt or because plant-based food never becomes scarce. This ambiguity increases

[40] Chauveau, *Cures,* p.39.
[41] Chauveau, *Cures,* pp.79-80.
[42] Chauveau, *Cures,* p.36.

the power of the ending. *Les cures merveilleuses* provides few details about its idealised setting, telling us only that the events happened in 'le pays des éléphants' and that all of the characters are dead.[43] This encourages readers to use their imagination, and ultimately to imagine their own alternatives to ecologically destructive Western lifestyles. Inviting an imaginative response in both child and adult readers was one of Chauveau's main aims as an author-illustrator, and it informed his decision to place full-page illustrations after the main text of each story or chapter, allowing young children to read a story told to them by adults as a picture book. Unfortunately, his publishers did not always respect this format and sometimes used other illustrators, a development I discuss especially in the context of the complex publication history of *L'Histoire du Poisson scie et du Poisson marteau*. Chauveau's ambiguous and idealised depiction of 'le pays des éléphants' echoes the eighteenth-century genre of utopian satires, which depicts European travellers journeying to imaginary countries—in most cases tropical islands—whose inhabitants live in peace with one another and follow a vegetarian diet.[44] This approach reflects Chauveau's awareness of his limitations, as someone who had never lived in or studied sub-Saharan Africa. On the other hand, Chauveau's descriptions of French abuses include a number of accurate details. The chapter 'Le Crocodile', appearing on pages 35 to 47, includes a graphic description of how the crocodile's body is destroyed by the 'balle explosible' of the big game hunter's gun;[45] and Tobi describes these bullets in his speech, referring ironically to 'leurs fusils perfectionnés'.[46] The chapter 'La queue du petit éléphant, appearing on pages 21 to 35, accurately describes a ship used to transport captured animals to a European zoo. Perhaps most provocatively of all, the chapter 'Le voyage à Paris', appearing on pages 72 to 78, in which Popotame kills his guard in the Jardin des Plantes and escapes, is a reference to a real incident in which a hippopotamus killed a guard there narrated from the killer's point of view. [47]

[43] Chauveau, *Cures,* p.84.
[44] Larue, pp.124-44.
[45] Chauveau, *Cures,* p.36.
[46] Chauveau, *Cures,* p.79.
[47] Michèle Cochet, 'Postface', pp.173-79 in Chauveau, *Cures,* pp.175-6

In addition to this, Docteur Popotame is an alter ego of the author and, by representing him as possessing fantastical healing powers, Chauveau draws attention to his own powerlessness and undermines assumptions both of European and of human superiority. This is most poignant in the final conversation, when Renaud tells Léopold (who, in real life, treated him during his final illness) 'Rien que d'avoir entendu lire son [du Docteur Popotame] histoire, je ne me sens plus malade du tout'.[48] Although Renaud himself died of septicaemia,[49] at the time Europe was severely impacted by a global influenza pandemic, which Chauveau alludes to in 'Le voyage à Paris', a chapter appearing on pages 72-78, where Popotame cures 'une interminable queue' of patients and, after he escapes, 'l'état sanitaire de Paris redevint normalement déplorable'.[50] More subtly, when Chauveau describes the kidnapped monkey Lotki's traumatic memories of 'les histoires que racontaient les vieux, les soirs d'hiver, au coin de feu: histoires de singes mis en cage, embarqués sur des navires, transportés dans des pays où ilpleut toujours, où le soleil ne luit jamais, où l'on meurt d'ennui et de consomption',[51] he simultaneously gives an accurate description of the suffering of monkeys used in the zoo and pet trades and alludes to the generally poor mental and physical health conditions in interwar Europe, describing a death similar to that of his first wife, Renée Chauveau née Penel (see chapter 2 of this thesis), and subverting ethnocentric assumptions that it is primitive environments that are intrinsically unhealthy.

In 'Le Crocodile', a chapter of 'Les cures merveilleuses' appearing on pages 36 to 47, Chauveau alludes to another traumatic period in his medical career, his work treating injured soldiers during the First World War: the weapons used in the conflict and by the big game hunters are similar, and when he describes Popotame's work mending and resuscitating the crocodile, readers are likely to reflect on his failure to heal soldiers with bullet wounds. This exemplifies the close links between anti-militarism, anti-colonialism and ecological consciousness, and demonstrates that the violence of Western culture ultimately threatens everyone:

[48] Chauveau, *Cures,* p.90.
[49] Poirier, p.60
[50] Chauveau, *Cures,* p.73.
[51] Chauveau, *Cures,* p.21.

European peoples, colonised communities, and non-human animals. Chauveau's œuvre should resonate strongly with readers today, as ecological crises force growing awareness of the interdependency of all forms of life. The medical context of the 'Docteur Popotame' story is also particularly timely, as I will discuss below

Understandably given their focus on Chauveau's reception during his lifetime, previous critics have compared 'Les cures merveilleuses' mainly with books that either influenced Chauveau, such as Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Books* and *Just So Stories*,[52] or that are likely to have been influenced by him, such as Claude Aveline's *Baba-Dième et Morceau de Sucre*. The exception is Little's comparison with Lamine Senghor's *La Violation d'un pays*. First published in 1927, the same year as *Les cures merveilleuses du docteur Popotame,* Senghor's *conte* was inspired by his participation, as a Senegalese activist in the Parti communiste français, in the founding conference of the *Ligue contre l'impérialisme*. Predictably, his writing differs from Chauveau's both in its didacticism and, as the editor of the 2012 edition David Murphy acknowledges in his introduction, in its lack of literary quality. However, Little argues that the two works should be considered together because they both express anti-imperialist ideas using simple language and stylistically simple illustrations. He shows this to be an important comparison that could be expanded on, but I will not do so, since it is of limited relevance to ecocriticism. Senghor's allegory of the development of colonialism does begin with the sale of ivory goods by indigenous people to settlers, but without expanding on the significance of this particular form of commercial exchange.

During Chauveau's lifetime, he was regarded as very similar to Kipling, for two main reasons: the fact that his stories were addressed to a dead child (in Kipling's case, 'Best Beloved', his daughter, Josephine, who died in 1895 aged 6); and the inclusion of evolution myths (for example, 'La Petite Giraffe', a chapter appearing on pages 48-57 of 'Les cures merveilleuses', in which a giraffe's neck is lengthened so she can reach the leaves). Isabelle Clarke, editor of the 1929 abridged edition

[52] Rudyard Kipling, 1894, *The Jungle Book*, London: Macmillan. 1895, *The Second Jungle Book,* London: Macmillan. 1902, *Just So Stories*, London: Macmillan.

for Anglophone schoolchildren, went so far as to call Chauveau 'un Kipling français':[53] she does recognise that he is more satirical than Kipling, but does not discuss his satire having any serious political implications.[54] The term 'un Kipling français' reflects contemporary acclaim for Kipling as a writer whose intimate knowledge of the colonial experience allowed him to produce works that served as the model for multiple genres of exoticist and colonial literature. The same title had been given by previous critics to Pierre Mille, an author of multiple books of short stories about an uneducated, lowly French colonial civil servant named Barnavaux, who was influenced by Chauveau's realist short stories set in the Indian Civil Service.[55] Therefore, Clarke's identification of Chauveau with Kipling not only downplays the political aspects of Chauveau's work but suggests that he belongs to the same pro-imperial literary tradition as Kipling and Mille.

It is now recognised that Chauveau's and Kipling's outlooks were fundamentally different, since Chauveau constantly undermines assumptions both of social hierarchy and of authorial authority: this is exemplified by the fact that the fictionalised Renaud frequently contradicts his father, whereas Best Beloved never speaks. I would like to add one very important detail to this comparison: the representation of humans working for Popotame in 'Les cures merveilleuses' is uniquely original, and contrasts with the 'Toomai and the Elephants' story in *The Jungle Book*,[56] which is about elephants working for the British Army in India and clearly expresses the author's ethnocentric and anthropocentric worldview. In this respect, 'Les cures merveilleuses' is also very different from Lofting's hugely popular *Doctor Dolittle* series. While Blount claims *The Story of Doctor Dolittle* is

[53] Clarke, 'Préface', pp.1-8 in Chauveau ed. Clarke, p.8.
[54] Clarke, a French teacher at Ipswich Grammar School and editor of the French-language books in Dent's Modern Language Series, played a valuable role in introducing Chauveau and other writers to Anglophone children. Since Chauveau is unlikely to have been an obvious choice for inclusion in the series, it is likely that she felt personal affinity for his work and had at least some awareness of the contradictions inherent in creating a scholastic edition of an anti-didactic text. One intriguing possibility is that she deliberately misrepresented the book, both in her introduction and through the omission of the conversations with Renaud and most of the illustrations, in order to make it acceptable for inclusion in the English school curriculum. Whatever her intentions, Clarke's introduction is the product of a cultural context in which children's literature was Bowdlerized and widely assumed to have little serious significance, especially not in terms of socio-political comment.
[55] Yaël Schlick, 'The "French Kipling": Pierre Mille's Popular Colonial Fiction', *Comparative Literature Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1997), pp. 226-241.
[56] Kipling, *Jungle Book*, pp.152-83.

the first book [presumably, she means the first to be widely available in English] to be seriously concerned with animal ethics,[57] yet while it represents a doctor fighting animal abuse and curing victims, he is a white man who behaves paternalistically both towards his non-human patients and indigenous peoples.

'Les cures merveilleuses', and Chauveau's friend Claude Aveline's *Baba Dième et Morceau de Sucre* share obvious similarities: both are set in colonial sub-Saharan Africa, although Chauveau sets his story in a primitive past and Aveline in a technologically enhanced future; and, perhaps influenced by 'the popularity and ubiquity of [blackface] minstrelsy in France' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century,[58] they mock white supremacy by depicting characters changing colour. As a result of this, all previous critics have agreed that the two books promote essentially similar attitudes. However, whereas in Chauveau's story this change symbolises a rejection of French culture in favour of assimilation into a morally superior primitive community, in Aveline's it takes place as a result of experimentation by a white scientist, who justifies his work in terms of a paternalistic concept of equality, arguing that 'Les noirs savent moins de choses que nous, voilà toute la différence. Mais, pour le cœur et pour l'esprit, tous les hommes sont frères'.[59] It is significant that, while black people are represented as less knowledgeable in general, Aveline does depict them as having a greater knowledge of nature. The book includes a number of instances of co-operation between the black human community and non-human animals, but it also depicts an enlightened colonialist talking to his mule, suggesting colonisers can access this form of indigenous knowledge. This contrasts with Chauveau's depiction of Docteur Popotame and his human workers excelling in the supposedly Western fields of medicine and sculpture.

In keeping with my focus on the current relevance of Chauveau's work, I will add a new comparison between *Les cures merveilleuses* and *Walkabout*,the first and most successful of eight books of Australian outback tales published under the

[57] Hugh Lofting, 1920, *The Story of Doctor Dolittle: Being the History of his Peculiar Life at Home and Astonishing Adventures in Foreign Parts*, New York: Franklin A. Stokes. Discussed in Blount.
[58] James Smalls, 2016, 'Visualising racial antics in late nineteenth-century France', in Adrienne H. Childs and Susan H. Libby (eds.), *Blacks and Blackness in European Art of the Long Nineteenth Century*, edited by, Abingdon and New York: Routledge, pp.145-74 p.153.
[59] Claude Aveline ill. George Bruller, 1938, *Baba-Dième et Morceau de Sucre*, Paris: Gallimard p.130.

name James Vance Marshall.[60] *Walkabout* is well known chiefly because it was adapted into an extremely popular and highly acclaimed film,[61] but this film has upstaged the novel, and is an extremely free adaptation that is open to interpretation because it omits the factual information derived from the articles and the explanations of the characters' motives. It is unlikely that either Payne or Marshall read Chauveau, or were consciously influenced by modernist or other forms of primitivism, although their observation-based approach is somewhat similar to movements such as Négritude based on insider knowledge of indigenous cultures both in the present and before contact with Europeans. However, both Chauveau and the authors of *Walkabout* display a readiness to sympathetically depict characters breaching fundamental taboos in Western culture, and embracing an alien but more compassionate moral framework. This can be seen in the ending to 'Les cures merveilleuses', where the ex-big game hunters decide to go naked at the same time as they commit never to harm another animal, thus abandoning their old values together with their clothes. Towards the end of his novella, Marshall includes a similar episode, in which the teenage protagonist abandons her dress to give a koala cub who has clung onto it back to the cub's mother.

*Walkabout* is best understood as a realist fable: all the individual events are realistic, but they combine to form a symbolic plot. It begins when the two white children, Mary and Peter, find themselves isolated in the outback and receive practical assistance from an Aboriginal boy. Originally from the American Deep South, Mary has had a strict Christian upbringing and mistrusts the Aboriginal boy because he is naked. Therefore, when he becomes seriously ill from a common cold, she misinterprets the gestures he uses to request help as an attempt to seduce her. By this point, Peter has acquired basic knowledge of the Aboriginal

[60] James Vance Marshall, 1983, *Walkabout*, London: Puffin, originally published as *The Children*, 1959, London: Michael Joseph.Donald Gordon Payne (1924-2018), an English author who lived in Australia during his childhood, adopted the pseudonym James Vance Marshall for this part of his literary output because it was the real name of an Australian travel writer (1887-1964), who allowed Payne to incorporate extended passages from articles about the environment and indigenous people of the outback into Payne's fiction. In *The Children/Walkabout* (Payne changed the title before the release of the film), these incorporations give the reader detailed knowledge of the Aboriginal boy's motivations, which the white children tragically misunderstand.
[61] Nicholas Roeg, 1970, *Walkabout*, 20th Century Fox, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAG-osKJv0g (Accessed 5 August 2020).

boy's language and, understanding the seriousness of the situation, he urges Mary to help the boy.

After the boy's death (possibly but not necessarily preventable), Mary experiences severe remorse and develops a new ethos of harmony with her environment and with the indigenous culture. The incident with the koala marks a turning point in this process of moral regeneration, coming shortly before a meeting between the naked Mary and an Aboriginal tribe that directs her to the nearest main road. In discarding her dress to return the cub to its mother, Mary prioritises compassion and abandons the concern for modesty that may have contributed to the death of the Aboriginal boy. In a sense, she also saves a life, since the cub would have died had it remained separated from its mother, although there is no suggestion of transcendental redemption, and Mary continues to feel remorse. Nevertheless, the symbolic contrasts between the two incidents transform reader's perceptions of the characters: whereas Peter had remonstrated with her over her neglect for the boy, she regains her position of moral authority when she scolds him for wanting to treat the koala as a toy. Although Chauveau and Marshall have no other connections to naturism and are unlikely to have considered nudity within their own national contexts due to differences in climate, in both works the characters' abandoning of a value system that prioritizes appearance and modesty over compassion is combined with nudity positively expressing liberation and a oneness with nature, as well as with the indigenous human population.

Whereas 'Les cures merveilleuses' invites readers to respond imaginatively, Marshall's realism shows readers how interspecies connectedness can work in practice: Mary feels deep empathy with the koala family at a time when she is acting as a mother to Peter and misses her own parents, but knows she cannot interact with the non-anthropomorphised koala family, in which the cub of unclear sex is called 'it'.[62] Readers are likely to respond to the episode in the context of detailed descriptions earlier in the book of Aboriginal spirituality, ethics and interactions with the natural world. The differences between the two works are exemplified by the fact that, unlike many other works by Chauveau, 'Les cures merveilleuses' makes no explicit reference to religion, although it clearly

[62] Marshall, p.116.

challenges aspects of traditional Western Christianity such as anthropocentrism, modesty, and the objective of converting other cultures. Precisely as a result of these differences, it is productive to consider Chauveau's and Marshall's stories together, because they encourage complementary approaches to similar issues. These approaches are extremely timely: following the devastation caused to ecosystems and indigenous people by wildfires such as those in sub-Saharan Africa in late 2019,Australia in early 2020, a; and since the current public health crisis— closely linked to ecological problems including deforestation, wider issues of habitat destruction and wildlife displacement, intensive farming, and pollution — demonstrates Chauveau's and Marshall's wisdom in associating illness with Western rather than primitive lifestyles.[63]

As well as the title story, *Les cures merveilleuses* comprises three other tales: 'Histoire du petit phoque', appearing on pages 91 to 126; 'Histoire du boa et du tapir', appearing on pages 127 to 135; and 'Histoire de l'ogre', appearing on pages 136 to 172. While 'Histoire de l'ogre' is not an animal story and I return to it in my discussion of the monstrous, the physical and moral transformation of the ogre is somewhat similar to that of the big game hunters: the ogre has his teeth pulled out against his will, but after the operation, willingly changes his behaviour and embraces vegetarianism. Chauveau suggests humans are an animal species with the statement 'Il ne mangeait plus jamais de viande, plus jamais de petit enfant, ni de boeuf, ni de mouton, ni de poulet, ni d'autre bête'.[64]

Like a number of other stories discussed in this chapter, 'Histoire du boa et du tapir' is set in an environment seemingly untouched by human activity. However, in the final conversation with Renaud, Léopold alludes to the damage being done to such environments by globalisation and settler colonialism: he says he does not want to know what has happened to the tapir since he escaped from the boa's stomach because 'Il a peut-être été tué par un chasseur'.[65]

[63] For a detailed analysis of how human-induced ecological destruction has created the conditions for the current pandemic and other zoonoses, including the realistic possibility of a far more devastating global outbreak in the near future, see Andreas Malm, 2020, *Corona, Climate, Chronic Emergency: War Communism in the Twenty-First Century*, London: Verso.
[64] Chauveau, *Cures,* p.145
[65] Chauveau, *Cures,* p.131

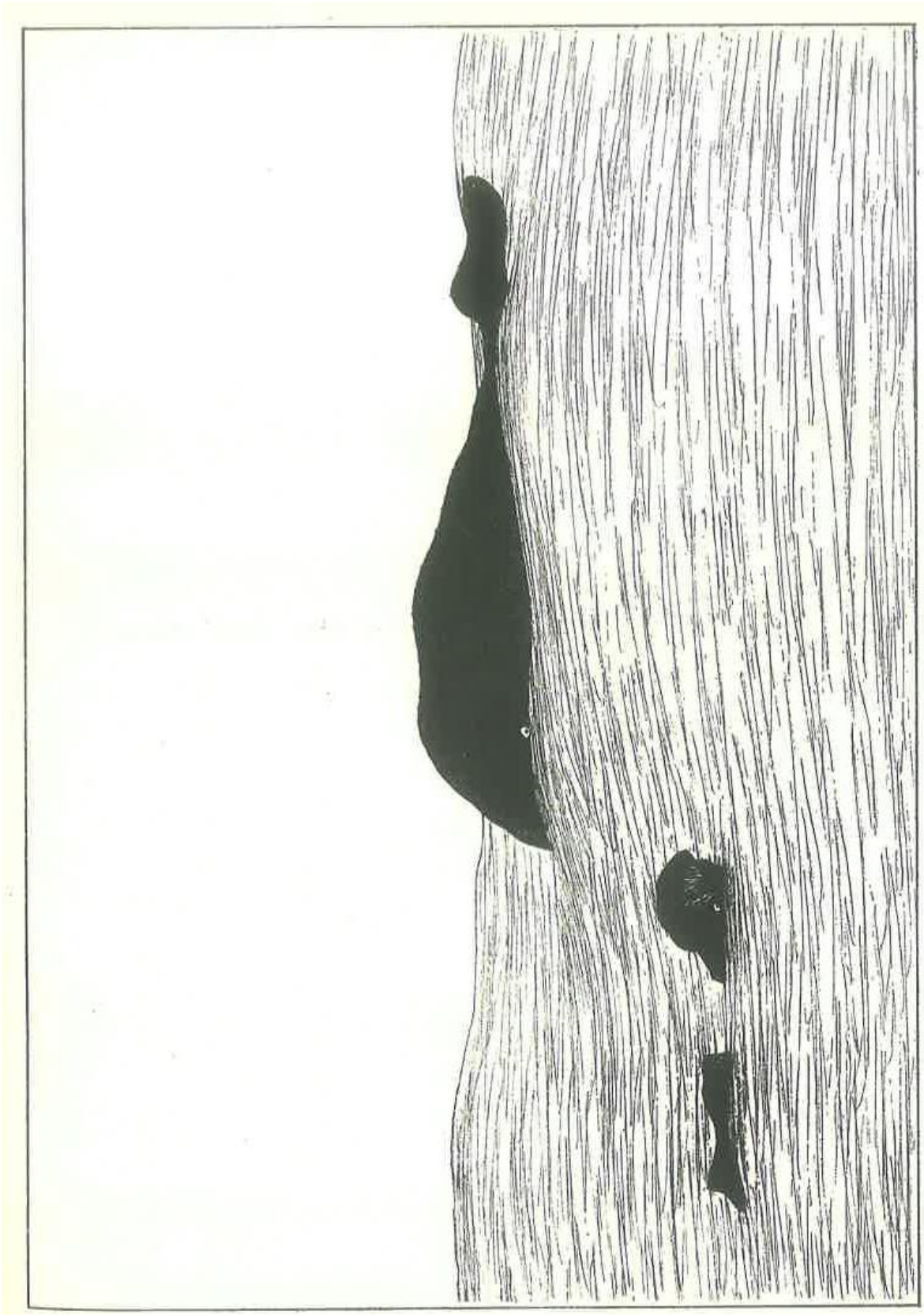
‘Histoire du petit phoque’ is a fantasy, but it includes one event that is unfortunately realistic: the protagonist is caught on a fishing line, which for seals is ‘a frequent threat’.[66] With this capture occurring near the North Pole, the fisherman may be seen as a colonialist, in Ferdinand’s sense of someone navigating the world to exploit its natural resources for profit. The events following the accidental hooking of the seal lead, as in ‘Les cures merveilleuses’, to the invader becoming part of the natural ecosystem, when a polar bear eats both the fisherman and the seal. This reflects Chauveau’s unsentimental vision of nature, but he gives the story a non-tragic ending: the seal remains sentient after being eaten, and his consciousness merges with the polar bear’s. A number of his other stories represent sympathetic characters being killed and eaten, so this is likely to reflect an awareness of the symbiotic nature of the food chain, rather than a simple desire to reassure children. The different stories in *Les cures merveilleuses* also have a symbiotic relationship. The emphasis at the end of the title story is on vegetarianism and compassion, but it also refers to the protagonists ‘se mangeant les uns les autres selon la nécessité’,[67] and includes four cases of non-human animals killing humans: Popotame’s killing of the big game hunter who shot the crocodile; his feeding of his nurses to the crocodile; his attack on the guard; and lions eating the big game hunters who had already entered ‘le pays des éléphants’ before the paint-filled trap was laid on the road. ‘Histoire du petit phoque’ brings these elements that are less prominent in ‘Les cures merveilleuses’ to the fore.

The title story in *Histoire du poisson scie et du poisson marteau*, which appears on pages 6 to 66, is also about endangered species in the oceans: the only sympathetic character is a whale who pursues the sawfish and hammerhead shark and, at the end of the story, flattens them to death in revenge for their murder of her baby when she was breastfeeding, acts of resistance I discuss in chapter 2 in the context of child abuse and gendered violence. My focus here is on the complex relationship between the two non-human villains and whalers, who are colonialists in Ferdinand’s sense that they invade the ecosystem and attack its non-human

[66] ‘Ten Ways We Can Help Hawaiian Monk Seals’, US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, available at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/ten-ways-we-can-help-hawaiian-monk-seals (Accessed 5 August 2020).
[67] Chauveau, *Cures,* p.84.

inhabitants for profit. The sawfish and hammerhead shark resemble them in two important respects: they travel very large areas attacking animals of many different species (including humans); and, like the big game hunters who are 'contents, disent-ils, d'avoir tiré un bon coup de fusil',[68] they are motivated by aggression, with Léopold telling Renaud that he cannot explain their motivation any further than 'Parce qu'ils étaient très méchants'.[69] The story begins with Renaud asking about the pictures of sawfish and hammerhead sharks in his school textbook, and Léopold's responses to Renaud's questions reflect a willingness to confront children with harsh realities such as the ultimately inexplicable nature of evil, challenging an education system that values dogmatic answers over imagination. Chauveau's decision to re-publish the book with his own illustrations was motivated by format: Bonnard's sketches appeared in the main body of the story; and, as I discussed in the introduction, Chauveau wanted all his children's stories to appear with full-page illustrations following the text, so that children could read a story told to them by adults as a picture book. However, the differences in visual style mean that the second edition is much more disturbing, at least to a present-day reader: the text, like all of Chauveau's animal stories, is comic, but the drawings, which appear on pages 30 to 65, show the violence both of the non-human villains and of the whalers graphically—unlike Bonnard's sketches, which include only vague outlines and never depict a violent act—and the captions are much less humorous than the main text. For example, below is Chauveau's illustration—a black ink drawing, like all his illustrations for his own work, although he illustrated La Fontaine and the Bible with watercolours—of the dismembered whale pup, for which the caption reads 'La baleine s'apercoit que le poisson scie vient de couper en deux le petit baleineau./Elle jure de se venger'.[70]

[68] Chauveau, *Cures,* p.79.
[69] Chauveau, 1929, *Histoire du Poisson scie et du poisson marteau,* Paris: Victor Attinger, p.16. Originally Chauveau ill. Pierre Bonnard, 1923, *Histoire du poisson scie et du poisson Marteau,* Paris: Payot.
[70] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau,* pp.34 (caption) and 35 (illustration).



Of course, this aspect of Chauveau's representation of the non-human villains is entirely anthropomorphic, with no comment on the real behaviour of sawfish or of hammerhead sharks.[71] However, one incident draws attention to the fact that human invasion (unlike indigenous, sustainable human presence) threatens entire ecosystems, rather than benefitting the natural enemies of the species being hunted. Poisson marteau is hit by a harpoon immediately after approaching the whaling ship and thinking, 'Les ennemis de nos ennemis sont nos amis'. Chauveau's ironic use of this proverb about military alliances exemplifies the connections between his ecological awareness and his anti-militarism, satirising people who support violence (whether against humans or non-human animals) by those more powerful than themselves. As in the other stories I have discussed, the human invasion is defeated: the harpoon, which Poisson scie saws out of Poisson marteau's flesh, leaves Poisson marteau with no serious injury; and it is by the whale that both are killed.

The second story in *Poisson scie et poisson marteau,* 'Histoire du vieux crocodile', appearing on pages 67 to 126, is set in ancient Egypt, imagined as a primitive environment where the dominant species is clearly crocodiles rather than humans. This is illustrated by the immense age of the protagonist, who 'avait vu, dans sa jeunesse, construire les pyramides: celles qui vivent encore maintenant, et bien d'autres qui ont disparu, démolies par les hommes, car une pyramide à laquelle personne ne toucherait, durerait autant que la terre' ;[72] and, we learn at the end of the story, is still alive. The ancient crocodile eats both his great-grandson and an octopus who befriends him and feeds him with fish, behaving in a way that conventional morality would regard as evil. However, apart from a satirical description of the protagonist's resentment at his family's lack of respect for his age and status when they send him away after the killing of the great-grandson, Chauveau's depiction of him is sympathetic. As in Chauveau's other animal stories, this is because the crocodile is motivated by necessity: he has a voracious appetite, but suffers from rheumatism and is no longer able to catch his usual

[71] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau,* p.17.
[72] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau,* p.69.

prey. Although the way in which he eats the octopus—devouring a leg every night while she is asleep, knowing she will not notice because she cannot count—involves deception and betrayal, the emphasis is on the crocodile's reluctance, remorse, and on an inner spiritual conflict to be explored in chapter 3 of this thesis. The story is significant largely because it represents a predator in a primitive environment sympathetically, while celebrating the primitivist myth that these environments are unchanging. This is stressed in the final sentence, 'Et il vit encore, adoré par les peuplades qui habitent la haute vallée du Nil'.[73]

This may be connected to the fact that Chauveau's representation of the natural environment of Egypt is strikingly similar in a tale included in *Histoires du Petit Père Renaud,* 'Histoire de la poule et du canard', appearing on pages 167 to 220, which has an apparently contemporary setting.[74] The banks of the Nile, where the hen and duck travel on the back of a migrating stork, are represented more positively than they escape from, even though they (together with the stork and Cipouligogne, the stork's son whom the hen broods and claims is a chicken) die prematurely, just as they would have done if they had been slaughtered. What the birds gain from living in a more natural environment is freedom, and the respect of the human community, whose Islamic faith I will discuss in chapter 3. The important point here is that the community is conspicuous largely by its absence, showing that, in stark contrast to the owners of the French farm, local people tend to leave other animals alone. As in 'Histoire du vieux crocodile', crocodiles are the dominant species, and Chauveau sympathetically represents a solitary crocodile searching for food. 'Histoire de la poule et du canard' is a black comedy that ends with the protagonists dying while en route back to Europe to escape the crocodile. The story's satirised protagonists never become the object of sympathy, allowing Chauveau to end the story from the perspective of their predator, with the sentence, 'Là-bas, en Égypte, au bord du fleuve bourbeux et limoneux, le crocodile pleurait car il avait vu partir Cipouliogogne, la poule, le canard, et il avait toujours esperé qu'ils ne s'en iraient pas ailleurs que dans son estomac'.[75]

[73] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau,* p.86.
[74] Chauveau, 1932, *Histoires du Petit Père Renaud*, Paris: Victor Atttinger. Originally Chauveau ill. Pierre Bonnard, 1927, *Histoires du Petit Renaud*, Paris: Gallimard. The story was also published in a standalone edition: *Histoire de la poule et du canard*, Genève: La Joie de Lire.
[75] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.219.

Children's natural sympathy for predators is then celebrated, with Renaud responding, 'Pauvre crocodile!'. [76]This unsentimental depiction of the crocodile can be linked to the fact that, while the Egyptian environment is represented more positively than the French one, no character expresses moral condemnation either of the farmer or the crocodile, since they accept the necessity of killing for food.

Of the eight stories in *Histoires du Petit Père Renaud,* three —'Histoire du petit serpent', appearing on pages 45 to 76;[77] 'Histoire du loup et de la tortue', appearing on pages 131 to 136; and 'Histoire de la placide tortue', appearing on pages 137 to 166 — include no human characters, and appear to be set in a primitive environment that, like the environment in Egypt in 'Histoire du vieux crocodile' and 'Histoire de la poule et du canard', human activity has not fundamentally altered. Of these three stories, the most significant from an ecocritical perspective is 'Histoire de la placide tortue': while the other two never mention human activity, in 'Histoire de la placide tortue' Chauveau makes references to it that draw attention to its relatively minor role. The tale begins with a race, and purports to be the 'true' story behind the victory of the tortoise in the fable of 'Le lièvre et la tortue'.[78] Chauveau writes ironically that 'Les savants et les fabulistes ont essayé d'expliquer cette victoire qui nous semble aujourd'hui surprenante, en imaginant que la Lièvre était parti lorsque la Tortue, du bout de son nez, touchait déjà la salade. Mais ce sont là imaginations de savants et de fabulistes'. [79] This passage includes a strong element of self-mockery: Chauveau's story is absurd and he strongly admired, and was frequently influenced by, La Fontaine. However, it also celebrates the origin of primitive storytelling in curiosity and observation of non-human animals, and draws attention to how humans lost this ability as they came to live increasingly separate lives. More specifically, Chauveau's use of the term 'savants' to describe wrongly informed people satirises the role of abstract speculation in Western academia. Chauveau suggests that the local human community observes the environment a great deal, but intervenes in it rarely and ineffectually. This is emphasised by the

[76] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.220.
[77] Also published in a standalone edition: Chauveau, 2020, *Histoire du petit serpent*, Paris: Musée d'Orsay.
[78] La Fontaine, Book VI, Fable 10.
[79] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.139.

only other reference to human activity in the story, when the bear is only caught in a trap because the prey animals trick him into walking into it, and he is able to escape. This primitive environment is celebrated, as is the primitive tradition of oral trickster narratives, with a strong emphasis on friendship and collaboration between prey species.

Similar elements are present in *Monsieur Tigre et Madame Tortue,* a very short story, published posthumously as a picture book with illustrations by Jean Trubert[80], a decision that means readers cannot be entirely sure of the original meaning. However, a close reading of the text draws attention to important features that echo his other stories and are intrinsically important. We can deduce the setting is an Indonesian tropical rainforest, since all the species depicted are native and the orangutan is endemic.[81] The story centres around the eventually successful efforts of all the other animals in the forest to kill Monsieur Tigre, whom they all fear and Madame Orang-Outang wants to revenge for the killing of her son.

Although this aspect of the plot echoes that of 'Histoire du poisson scie et du poisson marteau', the way the subject is treated is extremely different: Monsieur Tigre, who kills without malice and to feed himself, is never morally condemned. Indeed, Chauveau celebrates Monsieur Tigre's role as dominant predator and outwitting of humans, who are ridiculed: Chauveau informs the reader that men are out hunting, then writes 'Mais le tigre n'avait pas peur des hommes. Il les mangeait même volontiers',[82] showing that they are really the hunted rather than the hunters. While Monsieur Tigre is mocked in a similar way when he is outwitted by the other characters, he is also shown to belong with them to an independent ecosystem untouched by human activity. This ecosystem is represented comically and absurdly as a society, with all characters named either 'Monsieur' or

[80] Chauveau ill. Jean Trubert, *Monsieur Tigre et Madame Tortue*, Paris: Éditions La Farandole, 1954.
[81] Oliver W. Wolters, Asvi Warman, Adam Goenawan, Susatyo Mohamad, Thomas R. Leinbach, James F. McDivitt, and John David Legge, 'Indonesia', Encyclopaedia Britannica, available at: https://www.britannica.com/place/Indonesia/Plant-and-animal-life (Accessed 29 September 2020).
[82] Chauveau ill. Trubert, no page number

'Madame'. As in most of his animal stories, the use of humour allows Chauveau to avoid distressing children while exploring serious themes.

After the killing of Monsieur Tigre, Chauveau makes a serious comment about the relationship between the ecosystem and the human community with the sentence, 'Et comme il y avait peu d'hommes dans le pays – des sauvages dont les armes n'étaient pas très perfectionnés – avec un peu d'astuce on leur échappait et l'on vivait heureux',[83] which echoes Tobi's description of the 'fusils perfectionnés' of big game hunters.[84] Both works satirise anthropocentrism and ethnocentrism, showing that both human and non-human life is dominated by a struggle for survival and power, and that it is the 'perfecting' of weapons, not moral progress, that has led to the dominance of the human species over others, and of 'civilised' peoples over those referred to as 'les sauvages'. This is reinforced in *Monsieur Tigre et Madame Tortue* by the titles given to the non-human protagonists, a device that encourages the reader to reflect on the violence and power struggles of Chauveau's own supposedly respectable society. Both stories are poignant because they are set in the distant past in areas that have enjoyed extraordinary biodiversity but where many of the species have become endangered - at the time Chauveau was writing, and even more so today.

Both Chauveau's satire and his creation of audience sympathy for physically weaker characters are achieved through a double trickster narrative, with Monsieur Tigre deceiving the human hunters and the prey animals deceiving him. The figure of the trickster appears very often in animal stories, and can be defined as a non-human character who uses cunning to outwit human or non-human characters who have greater physical strength and sometimes occupy positions of authority. Trickster narratives have considerable subversive potential, with many writers identifying their trickster protagonists with less powerful human groups, a phenomenon I discuss in more detail in the next chapter. I note here that the trickster genre originates in oral literary traditions, including those of many colonised countries labelled as primitive; and was frequently used in anti-colonial movements. For example, African-Caribbean resistance movements have been

[83] Ibid.
[84] Chauveau, *Cures,* p.79.

strongly influenced by the character of Anansi the spider, a major trickster figure in a number of African traditions, many of which also celebrate the turtle as a trickster. [85]

To conclude, Chauveau's animal stories use humour and fantasy to undermine ethnocentric and anthropocentric assumptions. They represent primitive environments as symbiotic and harmonious, despite the constant struggle of human and non-human animals for survival. These environments are contrasted favourably with modern French society, which is dominated by gratuitous violence against both human and non-human animals, and where people's artificial lifestyle leads them to suffer both emotional and physical ill-health. Moreover, Chauveau shows that it is only the development of weaponry that has allowed the dominance of European peoples over other species and other countries. He celebrates oral literature and genres, such as the trickster narrative, which emerged out of curiosity and observation and imagine characters using intelligence to defeat those with greater physical strength. I expand on Chauveau's critique of Western violence in chapter 2, which explores the connections between Chauveau's depiction of animal abuse and of male violence towards women and children, and further considers his use of trickster narratives, especially his adaptation of two major works in the French tradition: La Fontaine's *Fables* and *Le Roman de Renard*. I further consider his criticism of traditional Western morality in chapter 3, which explores his response both to non-Western religions and to the Catholicism of the *Renard* and La Fontaine.

[85] Emily Zobel Marshall, 2012, *Anansi's Journey: A Story of Jamaican Cultural Resistance*, Mona (Jamaica): University of the West Indies Press.

## Chapter 2: Friendship, Intelligence and Shared Vulnerability: Celebrating Difference Beyond the Human/Non-human Binary

Gilbert Lascault concludes 'La familiarité des monstres', the final essay in the Orsay catalogue, with the words 'Léopold Chauveau a manifesté une amitié avec les humains, les animaux, les proches et les différents, les monstres hétéroclites et gentils. Les monstres de Chauveau ont une camaraderie cordiale, une communauté, une confrérie'.[86] This chapter seeks to expand on that statement, the only one by a previous critic that alludes to the ecological significance of Chauveau's entire œuvre, rather than a specific text. Lascault and others draw attention to how Chauveau strongly identifies with marginalised monsters, a term understood within the medical discipline of teratology to refer to human or non-human animals with a deformity or physical feature abnormal for their species, and in the arts to refer to imaginary hybrid creatures who cannot clearly be identified by species and often transcend the human/non-human binary. This chapter explores the immense significance of Chauveau's conception of the monstrous, which influenced both his representation of characters he himself described as 'monstres' and others that display monstrous characteristics. More broadly, it discusses Chauveau's depiction of various forms of kinship between non-human animals and human beings from marginalised groups, as well as with monsters who share some characters with both.

Chauveau's positive re-definition of the monstrous challenges the marginalisation of two human groups in particular: children and disabled people.While Chauveau frequently referred to the monsters he had sculpted as his children, his imagined relationship with them was an equal one based around 'amitié', much like his real relationship with Renaud. Similarly, his depiction of monsters as possessing abnormal features but also high intelligence, moral worth, and even physical beauty, can be linked to the present-day understanding that disabled peopleare 'differently-abled' individuals who suffer 'the life-long process of reconciling their personal views of themselves with the negative perceptions and prejudices of

[86] Gilbert Lascault, 2020, 'La familiarité des monstres', in *Au pays des monstres: Léopold Chauveau (1870-1940)*, Paris: Musée d'Orsay, pp.216-232, p.232.

society'.[87] The term 'differently-abled' itself is controversial since it can minimise the challenges people face, and an increasing number of organisations are now accepting a 'social model of disability' according to which 'people are disabled by barriers in society'.[88]

Chauveau's sympathetic portrayal of physical disability is linked to his own sense of difference from his peers in specific ways linked to this model that go beyond a general celebration of diversity. Chauveau's personal papers include strong evidence that, to quote from an information panel in the Orsay exhibition, 'Léopold lui-même se sentait à part'. The exact nature of this separateness is impossible to explain, but Chauveau is known to have been shy and to have experienced distress at his relative lack of creative success, which is likely to have been due both to the idiosyncratic nature of his works and to his reticence about self-promotion. His experiences may be linked to recent discussion of the links between creative originality and 'neurodiversity' — the fact of belonging to a minority that is socially disabled due to differences (such as autism, dyspraxia and dyslexia) in neurological functioning from the 'neurotypical' majority. Some critics argue that neurodivergent conditions can be the subject of 'retrospective diagnosis',[89] even though they were only discovered relatively recently: the term 'autism', for example, was first coined in 1943 by Leo Kanner, who considered it an inherently disabling pathology. Any attempt to 'retrospectively diagnose' Chauveau with a specific condition would necessarily be speculative, and would need to be carried out with a clearly defined purpose by a neurological expert. Nevertheless, Chauveau's œuvre can be seen to depict experiences of alienation linked to neurodiversity; and my National Autistic Society mentor, the retired art teacher Julie MacRae, has observed that his visual output shares many characteristics with the wide range of visual artworks, created by untrained individuals in response to personal traumas, that is now referred to as 'Art Brut'.

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[87] Caroline Munster, 2017, 'There is No "Dis" in Our Abilities: Acknowledging the Experience of the Differently-Abled Community', in Shantozi Halder and Lori Czop Assaf (eds.), *Inclusion, Disability and Culture: An Ethnographic Perspective Traversing Abilities and Challenges*, Cham: Springer International Publishing AG, pp.107-32, p.107.

[88] Scope, 'Social model of disability', available at: https://www.scope.org.uk/about-us/social-model-of-disability/ (Accessed 17 April 2021).

[89] Steven Shapin, 18 January 2016, 'Seeing the Spectrum: A new history of autism', *The New Yorker*, available at: https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/01/25/seeing-the-spectrum (Accessed 6 August 2020).

While this term only entered standard usage in 1948 when Jean Dubuffet established the *Compagnie de l'art brut,* Dubuffet and other founding members including André Breton worked with mentally ill people throughout the interwar period.[90]

Chauveau's sympathetic representation of 'monstres' may be understood in very basic terms as a reversal of traditional negative conceptions of the monstrous. The term 'monstre' is derived from Latin *monere,* to warn, and '[u]ntil relatively recently in history, monsters close to home, such as deformed babies or two-headed calves, were construed as warnings of divine wrath'. [91] Species discovered during the colonial era and labelled as 'monsters' caused less fear and were more likely to be regarded as objects of entertainment and curiosities that could be 'displayed in menageries and freak shows', which also exhibited human freaks.[92] It should be clear from Lawrence's examples that, even when used to discuss supposedly real phenomena rather than invented characters, the category of the monstrous has no scientifically rigorous definition but does have a clear societal role of 'reinforc[ing] categories by clarifying the criteria for these [normal and accepted] groups', hence the monstering, both in popular culture and in scholarly discourse, of a wide range of deviant behaviours as well as human and non-human others.[93]

To avoid this thesis being misinterpreted as arguing that Chauveau conflates monstrosity and disability, I should first clarify that the term *handicap* is never used in any work by Chauveau that I am aware of. Nor do the works that form the basis of discussion in this chapter give a realist depiction of any specific disability — although that is an important element in *Derrière la bataille* and *Pauline Grospain*, which draw on Chauveau's experiences as a surgeon without depicting patients as monstrous. However, in depicting the social exclusion of imaginary *monstres* and the commercial exploitation of circus freaks, as well as his intense imaginary relationship and identification with excluded monsters, Chauveau

[90] abcd [Art Brut Connaissance & Diffusion]/Collection Bruno Decharme, 'Chronologie', available at: https://abcd-artbrut.net/art-brut/chronologie/ (Accessed 20 June 2020).
[91] Natalie Lawrence, 'What is a monster?', University of Cambridge, available at: https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/discussion/what-is-a-monster (Accessed 22 August 2020).
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.

subverts dominant conceptions of the monstrous in a way that prefigures the social model of disability, with both disability and monstrosity understood as umbrella terms for socially marginalized minorities. In this thesis, I use 'disability' as a sociological term closely corresponding to current legal definitions of disability as a protected characteristic, and 'monster/monstrous/monstrosity' to refer to a much broader cultural concept.

A particular focus of this entire thesis is how Chauveau subverts the animalization of less powerful human groups in prejudiced discourse to instead celebrate their solidarity with non-human animals mistreated by dominant groups in Western society. Where Chauveau draws on cultural traditions relating to the monstrous, he focusses on human characters that are marginalized due to disability, so my discussion of his representation of the monstrous also focusses on ableism more than on other forms of prejudice. However, it must be noted that both academic and popular conceptions of the monstrous were also strongly informed by both racism and misogyny. The former can be observed in the exhibitions of colonial curiosities (sometimes including colonized peoples) discussed by Lawrence; while the latter is reflected in the characterisation, throughout history, of hirsute women and girls as severely deformed, a stereotype reflected in the inclusion of bearded women in early-twentieth-century freak shows. However, this thesis does not argue that Chauveau connects gender to monstrosity. I discuss both gender and disability in this chapter because it focusses on 'amitié' between non-human animals and groups marginalized within French human society, and because of specific similarities between Chauveau's depiction of disabled people and women. These relate to problems that disproportionately affect both groups in real life, including harsh judgements based on physical appearance as well as elements less clearly related to the monstrous that I will now contextualise.

While the category of the 'monstrous' developed to reinforce societal norms, the works that influenced Chauveau treat the subject in nuanced and complex ways, albeit ones that remain very different from his own unambiguously sympathetic portrayals of monsters. Poirier identifies Ambroise Paré (c.1510-1590), author of the treatise *Des monstres et des prodiges* who shared Chauveau's medical

background and informed many later writers, as an influence.[94] Jean Céard, in his introduction to the 1971 edition of Paré's work, which refers to positive aspects of the monstrous in its very title, discusses Paré's feelings of fascination and awe towards, and complex conception of, monsters, who may on one level be 'le signe de [la] colère [de Dieu]' but are nevertheless part of 'la nature, obéissante à Dieu',[95] meaning that like all other natural creatures they undergo processes of evolution that can perfect what was originally a deformity or curse. This theological approach to scientific endeavour, undertaken with a belief in 'des animaux fantastiques légendaires'[96] is distinct from the secular discipline of teratology, which Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (1772-1844) 'a créé' 'dans une perspective évolutionniste … retrouvant dans les types de monstres l'application des lois de la nature'. [97] Chauveau had detailed knowledge of these later teratologists due to his father's work at the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, where Saint-Hilaire had taught zoology, as well as the fact that an individual identified as monstrous could become 'un cas singulier conservé au musée Dupuytren pour l'enseignement des étudiants en médecine'.[98]

A more pessimistic influence that, like Chauveau's œuvre, reflects both the alienating effect of modernity and a fascination with pre-modern history and oral literature is the nineteenth-century Gothic tradition. Unfortunately, the nature of Gothic influence on Chauveau is described very inaccurately in Tim Smith-Laing's extended museum review.[99] Smith-Laing argues that Chauveau's sympathetic portrayal of monsters makes him fall within a 'modern' tradition of monster-writing that differs from folkloric, and pre-19th century literary, traditions in that it represents monsters not as forming communities, but as 'nameless and companionless, [their] monstrosity and [their] loneliness inseparable'. He claims

[94] Poirier, p.218
[95] Ambroise Paré, ed. Jean Céard, 1971, *Des monstres et des prodiges,* Genève: Librairie Droz, p.xxxiii .
[96] Poirier, p. 218.
[97] Stéphanie Dord-Crouslé, explanatory note in Gustave Flaubert, ed. Stéphanie Dord-Crouslé, *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, Paris: Flammarion, 1999 (1881), p.145.
[98] Poirier, p. 217.
[99] Tim Smith-Laing, 27 June 2020, 'The best of fiends – the monsters of Léopold Chauveau', *Apollo Magazine*, available at: https://www.apollo-magazine.com/leopold-chauveau-modern-monsters/ (Accessed 15 August 2020).

that modern monsters' 'evil is no longer essential, but contingent' on being shunned by society, since the 'unholy trinity of modern monsters that presides over the 19th century – Frankenstein's fiend, Quasimodo and Dracula – craves, above all else, the ability to integrate into human life'. For Smith-Laing, the logical consequence is that 'the modern monster is primed to lose his monstrosity', being 'ready, always, to provide congenial company for beings who feel, like him, set apart from others', like many children and like Chauveau throughout his life. This is a misinterpretation, since Chauveau's monsters cannot 'lose their monstrosity' in this moral sense, never having been anything other than innocent and sympathetic. Moreover, while Smith-Laing seeks to establish moral complexity and evil actions motivated by extreme loneliness as common features in three nineteenth-century Gothic monster novels, his description applies much more closely to the anonymous fiend in Shelley's *Frankenstein* than to Quasimodo in Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* — which had a strong direct influence on Chauveau and with which he shares gargoyles on Gothic churches as a source of inspiration. (The inclusion of Stoker's *Dracula,* a much later work of genre fiction in which the monster is represented much less sympathetically, as part of the same move towards greater complexity is not fully explained.) Quasimodo, Notre-Dame's physically deformed bell-ringer, is a morally sympathetic character whose love for Esmeralda, equally sympathetic and from another marginalised background as a *bohémienne,* represents 'l'éveil de l'âme', despite a 'laideur physique' which he shares with Notre Dame's gargoyles.[100] Hence, Hugo accepts conventional ideals of physical beauty, but shares Chauveau's celebration of monsters and criticism of social exclusion.

Chauveau belonged to a social and intellectual circle that was beginning to question the traditional view that children, neurodiverse individuals and non-Western peoples are inherently inferior because they are incapable of rational thought. He regularly attended the *Décades de Pontigny,* a series of three annual conferences — respectively on philosophy, politics and literature — hosted by author Paul Desjardins, a close friend who like Chauveau had lost a son to drowning, and attended by much of the intellectual elite. In 1930, the subject for

[100] Léon Cellier, 1967, 'Préface' in Victor Hugo ed. Léon Cellier, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, Paris: Flammarion, pp.17-24, p.23.

the *Décade* on philosophy was the extent to which *le primitif, l'anormal* and *l'enfant* share a common psychology, and to which the psychology of all three groups differs from that of *l'homme civilisé*.[101]

This chapter expands on the analysis in chapter 1 of the contrast between myths of civilised moral superiority over the primitive and the reality of 'fusils perfectionnés' by exploring how Chauveau represents connections between the abuse suffered by non-human animals and three groups within Western society whose lack of power is justified on the basis of their inferior intelligence but is really due to inferior physical strength: women, children and disabled people. Recent scholarship has drawn attention not only to links between Western colonialism and environmental damage, but between both phenomena and injustices within Western human society, notably the abuse of women and children in the patriarchal family, and ableism. Nineteenth and early twentieth century anthropologists frequently compared both racialized and disabled people to non-human animals. These comparisons, like conventional representations of the monstrous, were used to re-assure dominant groups of their own normality and superiority, and ultimately to justify eugenics, a pseudo-scientific movement that sought to maintain the purity of the human species by eliminating degenerate groups. Eugenics informed the policies of the Nazi regime, which was responsible for mass euthanasia of physically and non-physically disabled people as well as genocide against Jewish and GRT ethnic groups, Chauveau's representation of both of which is discussed later. Eugenicists took inspiration from '[h]uman zoos and freak shows, [which displayed] non-Western peoples, people with disabilities and other human oddities at entertainment sites', often alongside non-human performing animals;[102] and even 'studied' specific performers, whose abnormal and 'monstrous' features were considerably exaggerated for their roles, in order to manufacture evidence for a 'conflation of genetic degeneracy with race and other *animal-like* qualities'.[103] This thesis explores how Chauveau subverts these ideas of

[101] Masson and Prévost, pp.157-159.
[102] Robert Bogdan, 2014, 'Race, Showmen, Disability and the Freak Show', pp.195-208 in Nicholas Bancel, Thomas David and Dominic Thomas (eds.), *The Invention of Race: Scientific and Popular Representations*, London and New York: Routledge, p.195.
[103] Tanfer Emin Tunc, 2008, 'Freaks and Geeks: Coney Island Sideshow Performers and Long Island Eugenicists, 1910-1935', in Pascal Blanchard (ed.), *Human zoos: science and spectacle in the age of colonial empires*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.276-285, p.279, original italics.

the subhuman in a context of rising totalitarianism; and considers the relationship between reality and utopia in his œuvre, which Chauveau himself often describes as serving a therapeutic purpose. That is visible not only in the re-creation of storytelling sessions with Renaud, but also in the monster-companions who, Chauveau observed in a notebook entitled 'Salade de souvenirs' and dated March 1939, are 'bien ridicules à côté des monstres vrais et vivants qui bouleversent maintenant le monde – bien peu monstrueux…en comparaison de la hideuse gueule de Hitler'.[104]

Dina El Dessouki writes that traditional Western thinking is based around the concept of a 'human/nature dualism' used to justify 'the Western colonial processes of categorising specific peoples, species and places as nonhuman, female, other, irrational, and thus exploitable'.[105] Malcom Ferdinand connects his theory of decolonial ecology to ecofeminism by discussing the process of 'animalisation des femmes', in which the relationship between genders within Western society is conceived in the same terms of domination that apply to relations between societies and species, since women are sexually pursued in a process of 'mises en chasses'.[106] It would of course be anachronistic to refer to Chauveau as an ecofeminist: indeed, he never referred to himself as a feminist, nor did he use the term *écologie*. However, violence against women is a recurring theme throughout his literary œuvre and, in his animal stories, it is conceived in relation to 'mises en chasse'. This chapter discusses both stories in which women are represented directly and their mistreatment is connected to that of non-human characters, and those in which non-human mothers are literally hunted when defending their children. Chauveau did explicitly define himself as a socialist, and his work has affinities with the current ideology of ecosocialism, since he negatively represent capitalism both because of injustices within human society, including child labour and workplace sexual harassment, and its ecological destructiveness.

[104] Cited in Poirier, p.232.
[105] El Dessouki, p.259.
[106] Ferdinand, p.370.

Previous critics have not discussed Chauveau's representation of gendered violence, perhaps because he usually depicts it briefly and in a non-realist way. The exception to this is his bleakest work of fiction, *Pauline Grospain,* a novella drawing on Chauveau's experiences as a doctor that depicts the cruelty of French society towards women, especially those of lower socio-economic status, provoking suicidal despair. The protagonist, a young nurse from an economically deprived area of Paris, is sexually harassed by doctors, witnesses the suicide of a patient who believed her partner would find her unattractive if she had a mastectomy, and ultimately allows herself to be murdered by a stalker, imitating the woman he pursues.[107] *Derrière la bataille* includes multiple passages suggesting nurses deserve greater respect, and one of very few contemporary references to sexual violence as a weapon in the conflict. The prose poem, 'Billet de logement' depicts the rape of a French domestic servant by billeted German soldiers and asks whether she will love, or murder, her half-German child.[108] Chauveau's enigmatic approach, omitting names and giving no indication of date or location, makes the story appear representative of the French wartime experience rather than an isolated incident, while the final question confronts readers to challenge dominant male and affluent narratives of what reconciliation demands.

Unlike Chauveau's depiction of gender, his representation of childhood has already been analysed in detail. Recent critics have focussed especially on his anti-didacticism and emphasis on children's intelligence, which is often greater than his adult characters'. Issues relating to education and parenting feature prominent throughout Chauveau's literary œuvre, with a substantial part both of *Pauline Grospain* and his earlier novella *Monsieur Lyonnet* taking place during the childhood of the protagonist, with a failure to nurture childhood intelligence causing problems in adulthood.[109] Marie-Pierre Litaudon relates Chauveau's anti-didacticism, satire of education and emphasis on 'amitié' between parents and children to guilt at his generation's betrayal of young soldiers, giving a detailed analysis of instances where non-human child characters suffer serious harm due to

[107] Chauveau, 1932, *Pauline Grospain*, Paris: Gallimard.
[108] Chauveau, *Bataille,* p.125.
[109] Chauveau, 1930, *Monsieur Lyonnet*, Paris: Gallimard.

bad advice from non-human adults.[110] Because Litaudon appears to have discussed this aspect of these passages exhaustively, I do not expand on it and 'children' in this thesis refers to pre-adolescents.

Chauveau's lecture 'Écrire pour les enfants' discusses children's fiction and especially children's animal stories without mentioning his own work. It reveals a view diametrically opposed to stereotypes of idyllic childhood and naïve children that informed more traditionalist contemporary authors. Chauveau simultaneously undermines assumptions of the moral superiority of humans over other species, and suggests children have a cynical view of adult human society due to their own mistreatment, when discussing the practice of 'parer une bête de toutes les qualités dites humaines dont il [l'enfant] s'est apercu déjà que les hommes ne sont pas très richement pourvus'. Chauveau suggests vulnerability to physical violence even more strongly with the statement that, for a child, 'Les animaux domestiques sont des frères qui souffrent comme lui de vivre sous la domination des grandes personnes, frères un peu inférieurs qu'il peut tyranniser ou protéger'.[111] This thesis argues that Chauveau represents kinship between children and wild as well as domesticated non-human animals, although this kinship takes different forms. In 'Histoire de Limace', the only published story with a domesticated protagonist, the dog Limace is depicted as similar to a human child in his dependence on human adults and membership of a human family. In stories about wild animals, Chauveau often depicts attacks on non-human mothers and children, as well as depicting Renaud's sympathy for adult non-human protagonists, especially predators, who act according to their natural instincts and often in conflict with humans. Recent scholarship has shown that mainstream writers of animal stories discourage these kinds of attitudes: Nodelman writes that 'a central dilemma of childhood – whether one should act naturally in accordance with one's basic animal instincts or whether one should do as one's parents wish and learn to act in obedience to their more civilised codes of behavior' features prominently in picture books whose strongly anthropomorphised non-human protagonists behave like human

[110] Litaudon, 2013, 'Léopold Chauveau et ses « histoires du petit père Renaud »: Cronos au cœur de l'invention', *Strenae*, 6, available at: https://journals.openedition.org/strenae/1307 (Accessed 15 August 2020).
[111] Chauveau, 'Écrire', p.10.

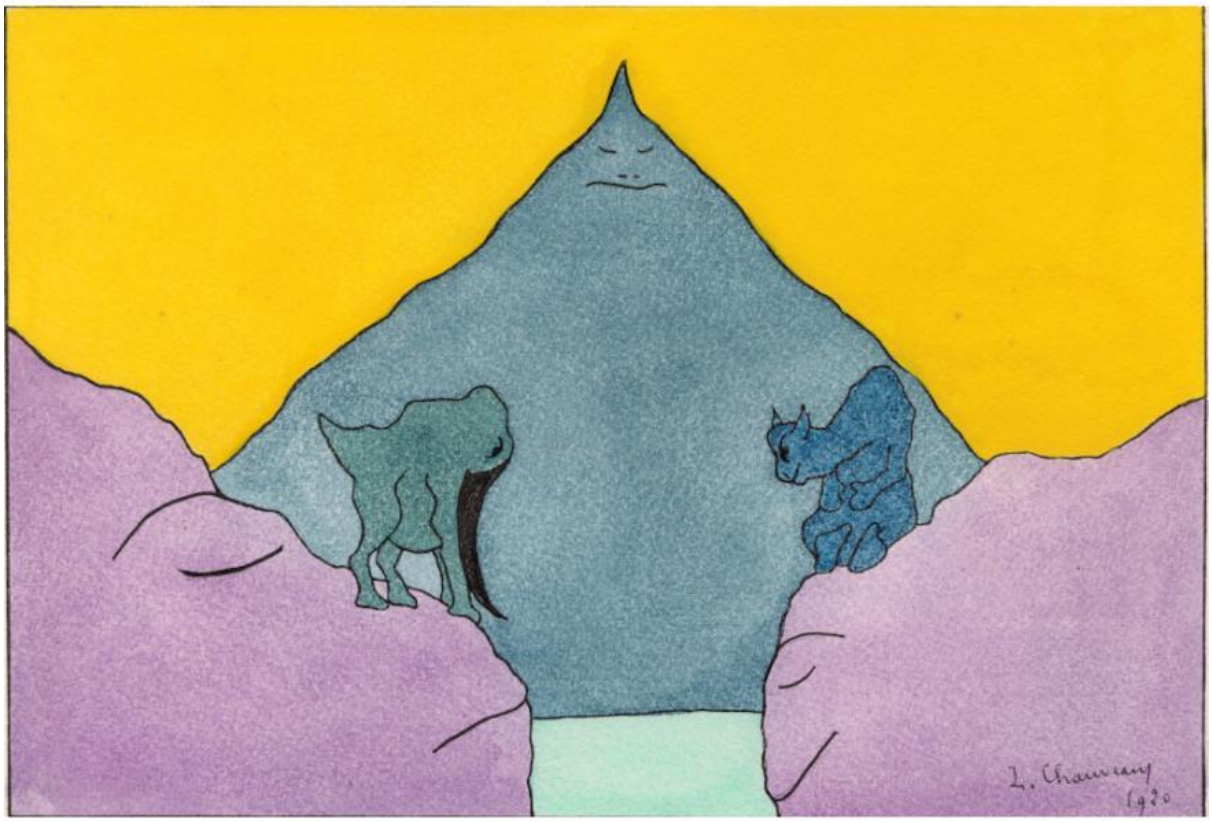
children.[112] I use comparisons with more mainstream writers to draw attention to Chauveau's originality and uniquely radical worldview, which imagines idealised alternative societies based on 'amitié' and the embracing of differences in personality and instinct across boundaries of species, ability, age and gender.

As outlined in the introduction, Chauveau produced a large body of work in three visual media: watercolour painting; black-ink drawing; and bronze sculpture. Apart from illustrations for works by himself and others, most of his visual works represent sympathetic 'monstres', as he himself described his 'créatures hypothétiques'.[113] Each monster is unique, with a shape and figure distinct from his other creations and those of fellow artists. Individual identity is particularly important for Chauveau's sculptures, which he kept at home, named, and described imaginatively as his 'enfants'. Below are examples of Chauveau's depictions of monsters in each visual medium.

[112] Perry Nodelman, 1990, *Words about Pictures: The Narrative Art of Children's Picture Books*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, p.117.
[113] Chauveau ed. Élisabeth Brunet, *Créatures hypothétiques (1920-1939)*, Rouen: Librairie Élisabeth Brunet, 2010.


**Black ink drawing from *La maison des monstres*[114]**

[114] Photograph from 'La maison des monstres', Paris: Musée d'Orsay, 2020, available at: https://www.petitsmo.fr/gazette/la-maison-des-monstres (Accessed 4 July 2021)




**Watercolour painting from *Paysages monstrueux*[115]**

[115] Photograph from 'Drôles de paysages', Paris: Musée d'Orsay, 2020, available at: https://www.petitsmo.fr/gazette/droles-de-paysages (Accessed 4 July 2021)

**Bronze sculpted monster**[116]

'Le Petit Monstre' was published posthumously in *Créatures hypothétiques (1920-1939)* .[117] It is illustrated with recent photographs of multiple sculpted monsters by

[116] 'Au pays des monstres', Paris: Musée d'Orsay, 2020, available at: https://www.petitsmo.fr/au-pays-des-monstres (Accessed 4 July 2021)

[117] The bookseller Elisabeth Brunet published the portfolio *Créatures hypothétiques (1920-1939)*, consisting mainly of loose prints, for sale during the exhibition *Léopold Chauveau (1870-1940) Oeuvres sur papier: aquarelles, dessins à la plume 1910-1939*, held from 25 November to 18 December 2010 at her colleague Michèle Noret's Parisian shop. The story appears on unpublished pages of the large-format portfolio booklet of texts, so I will not give further page references. I am in regular contact with Noret, whom I met during my research trip to Orsay. Her exhibition was one of the first two dedicated to Chauveau since his lifetime: the other, *Léopold Chauveau, l'Art et la*

Chauveau, now conserved in the Musée d'Orsay, suggesting the protagonist is not inspired by any specific artwork. The story begins by establishing sympathy for the young monster's vulnerability, comparing a human child 'criant de froid et de terreur au sortir du ventre maternel' to his 'tristesse de mort' when 'le sculpteur'—clearly based on the author but never named—who has made him leaves the room. Chauveau reveals no details about the protagonist's own appearance, but gives a detailed description of the other monsters, who are very different both from each other and from flesh-and-blood animals, some combining features from different species while others 'ne ressemblaient plus à aucun être connu'. Chauveau creates a powerful atmosphere of harmony and acceptance, with all the monsters recognising each other as 'frères'[118] and the 'enfants' of the sculptor, who strokes them with 'douceur', especially for comfort when he is sad.

The imaginary world appears even more comforting after the little monster has completed the 'dure épreuve' of casting. The monster initially thinks he is ugly and disfigured, but his brothers are 'bien contents de le revoir'. His father jokingly calls him 'vilaine bête' before lovingly using a hammer to remove his 'cicatrices', thereby perfecting his appearance while still making him look different from everyone else. Chauveau's conception of the monstrous is significant largely because of its embracing of ugliness. As can be seen from the incident of the breast cancer patient's suicide in *Pauline Grospain,* Chauveau is painfully aware of the extent to which people condemn as 'vilain' and mistreat both non-human animal species and humans—especially the physically ill and disabled, women and racialized groups—who do not meet conventional beauty standards.

The story becomes increasingly tragic after it is revealed that the sculptor's 'amis' mock and laugh at his sculptures during the day, when the sculptures are asleep and so unaware of the reason for his sadness. This depiction of bullying is not autobiographical, since Chauveau enjoyed close friendships with fellow artists who supported and promoted his writing. Chauveau must have felt comfortable showing them his monsters, since in the group photograph at the Décades de Pontigny he

*Littérature: les deux font la paire* was held at the Centre Culturel Aragon Triolet, Orly, from 5 November to 22 December 2010.

[118] Since Chauveau's monsters cannot easily be identified by gender, *frères* is best understood as a generic masculine.

stands next to his car on which a bronze sculpture, now conserved by Orsay, appears prominently as a radiator cap. [119] However, he movingly uses the character of the sculptor to express anguish at personal traumas and his relative lack of artistic success, and generally at wasted talent and neurodiverse people's struggles to gain social acceptance and share their interests and talents.

The story ends with the protagonist deliberately falling on the sculptor to kill him out of mercy, and with the monsters being bought by a 'marchand de vieilles ferrailles', then used as church bells, in a sense playing their own eulogy. This is an example of Chauveau movingly using religious imagery to reinforce pathos and suggest potential for renewal, as I will discuss in chapter 3. Nevertheless, the ending remains tragic, reflecting Chauveau's sorrow at the neglect of his artwork, and a suspicion that art either cannot transcend life or can only convey a very sad message, together with distress at how hostility from wider society defeats individual support networks and acts of solidarity.

Despite the pessimistic ending to 'Le Petit Monstre', its depiction of love and acceptance between non-conventionally beautiful characters is hopeful. Chauveau represents such mutual acceptance in 'Histoire de Limace' , the final story in *Histoire du poisson scie et du poisson marteau*, appearing on pages 127 to 179; and the final story in *Les cures merveilleuses du Docteur Popotame*, 'Histoire de l'ogre', appearing on pages 136 to 172. Although Chauveau does not use the term *monstre*, ogres clearly fall within conventional definitions of the monstrous; and it could be argued that the protagonist of 'Histoire de l'ogre' 'lose[s] [his] monstrosity' in Smith-Laing's terms, although the authorial voice does not condemn his killing for food. A village priest and schoolteacher pulls the ogre's teeth out, forcing him to adopt a vegetarian diet (see chapter 1). The ogre then becomes part of the priest's household, working alongside a female housekeeper whom others consider 'vielle, laide, acariâtre' but, because she prepares liquid food for him, the ogre 'trouva jeune, belle, d'humeur douce'.[120] Chauveau's representation of their marriage and continued harmonious relationship with the priest powerfully highlights the transformative potential of acceptance and love.

[119] Masson and Prévost, p.149.
[120] Chauveau, *Cures,* p.145.

‘Histoire de Limace’ occupies a unique place in Chauveau’s œuvre. One reason for this is the fact that it is the only animal story in which the protagonist is domesticated; and Chauveau observes in ‘Écrire pour les enfants’ that domesticated non-human animals occupy a similar position to human children, in that they are dependent on human adults from whom they may suffer abuse. Since he made this observation in the context of children’s response to literature, we can infer that the immediate reference is to the relationship between relatively affluent children and their parents. However, it is also highly relevant that, during the interwar period, child labour continued to exist in France and a number of other countries in Europe,[121] a fact that must have deeply concerned Chauveau as a ‘compagnon de route ‘of the Parti communiste français,[122] and an author whose work is critical of many aspects of capitalism, such as the industries discussed in chapter 1. Moreover, although Chauveau never directly represents industrial relations or organised class conflict, he frequently refers to imbalances in power and, in *Pauline Grospain*, depicts the protagonist being exploited in an apprenticeship as a minor adolescent. The unnamed owner of the circus where the protagonist Limace Basset performs is referred to as his ‘maître’. [123]While this is a standard term for dog owners, it may carry subtle connotations of human forced labour, notably as the same term used for the employers of apprentices. At the same time, Limace’s difference from human children is made clear at the beginning of the story, when he meets the ‘chien d’aveugle’ Chocolat Caniche while scavenging through rubbish.[124]

The scene in which the ‘maître’ kicks Limace and Limace escapes to live with Chocolat and his employer echoes the escape of Popotame from the Jardin des Plantes and of other non-human characters in ‘Les cures merveilleuses’ from a ship that would have taken them to captivity in Europe; but also the scene in Hector Malot’s novel *Romain Kalbris* where the protagonist and another child, Diélette, escape from the circus where they have been forced to work and subjected to violence, with Diélette exclaiming ‘Pauvre Mouton!’ in sympathy for a performing

[121] See Lévêque.
[122] Poirier, p.98.
[123] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau,* p.133.
[124] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau,* pp.130-31.

lion who has attacked the circus owner.[125] Malot is a complex writer who represents child circus labour in a more nuanced, less negative way in his later book *Sans famille*,[126] but the comparison between Chauveau and Malot is particularly interesting given how positively circuses are normally represented in twentieth-century animal stories, even those by otherwise ecologically conscious writers, such as Jean De Brunhoff's *Babar au cirque* and Erich Kästner's *The Animals' Conference*.[127] De Brunhoff may be considered ecologically conscious due to the negative representation of big game hunters in the first book in the Babar series, *Histoire de Babar*, despite its generally positive representation of colonialism.[128] Although Blount writes that *The Animals' Conference* subverts anthropocentrism in representing non-human animals taking control of government, they only do so to prevent human conflict, are very strongly anthropomorphised, and the book makes no reference to their mistreatment by humans, nor does it adopt a clearly left- or right-wing standpoint, condemning war but also 'strikes' and 'revolutions'.[129] A major difference between Chauveau's and Malot's treatment of the subject is that, while the circus in *Romain Kalbris* is a disreputable family business touring the countryside, Chauveau names the well-known chain *cirque de Médrano* and refers to the foire de Neuilly, a major performance location, prompting Parisian readers to think differently about familiar locations, much as he does with the Jardin des Plantes.

Another realist writer for adults who shares Chauveau's unambiguously negative depiction of circuses, and sceptical portrayal of zoos despite writing autobiographically about visits to them, is Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette (1873-1954), who appears to have felt instinctive horror at cruelty towards non-human animals but, unlike Chauveau, expresses deeply contradictory political views, albeit with a similar scepticism. This is clear from her vignette 'Jardin zoologique'[130] in which

[125] Hector Malot, 1869, 'Romain Kalbris' in Francis Lacassin (ed.), 1994, *Des enfants sur les routes*, Paris: Robert Laffont, pp.3-155, p.107.
[126] Malot, 1878, 'Sans famille' in Lacassin, pp.157-568.
[127] Jean De Brunhoff, 1952, *Babar au cirque,* Sablons: Hachette.*Histoire de Babar*, Paris: Éditions du Jardin des Modes. Erich Kästner, ill. Walter Trier and trans. Zita de Schuensee, 1955, *The Animals' Conference*, Glasgow: Collins.
[128] De Brunhoff, 1931, *Histoire de Babar*, Paris: Éditions du Jardin des Modes.
[129] Kästner, multiple pages.
[130] Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette, 1916, 'La paix chez les bêtes', in Alain Brunet et Léon Delanoë (eds.), 1986, *Œuvres de Colette II*, Paris: Gallimard, pp.71-162, pp.120-3.

she expresses sympathy for the caged animals but then imagines humankind forming an 'amitié intéressée'[131] with the species on display, as it had done with those used in hunting and agriculture.

Whereas Limace is vulnerable at the circus because he is dependent on his 'maître', he and Chocolat enjoy an interdependent relationship with the blind 'astronomer' Lallune, who employs Chocolat to look through his cardboard telescope and Limace to make calculations. At the same time, Lallune himself carries out tasks—such as writing with an unspecified implement, but in a way that involves crossing out, impossible in the Braille writing system that only uses dots[132]—that a blind person could never perform in real life; and makes absurd statements such as 'Je n'ai jamais rien vu de pareil',[133] and 'Une des plus choquantes erreures de l'ancienne astronomie a été de donner aux constellations des noms qui ne correspondent pas à leur apparence'.[134] In his depiction of Lallune, Chauveau is influenced by a long tradition of works satirising astronomy, especially astrology — including a number of fables by La Fontaine, especially 'L'Astrologue qui se laisse tomber dans un puits'; and Meliès' 'La lune à un mètre'[135]— but Lallune seems to work entirely separately from other astronomers. While the extent to which the characters believe in their purported abilities is ambiguous, they appear to be performing with the conscious aim of convincing both themselves and each other: the story constantly exploits the dual meaning of 'savant', an idea introduced when Limace reads sums written on a blackboard to the circus audience.

On one level, the story is a celebration of the power of the imagination, especially in children. However, while many of Chauveau's animal stories depict characters who really possess extraordinary and clearly ridiculous powers, 'Histoire de Limace' is unique in having a relatively realistic ending in which the characters acknowledge the falsehood of these powers, both to themselves and to each other. This difference can be explained by the fact that, whereas the characters in other

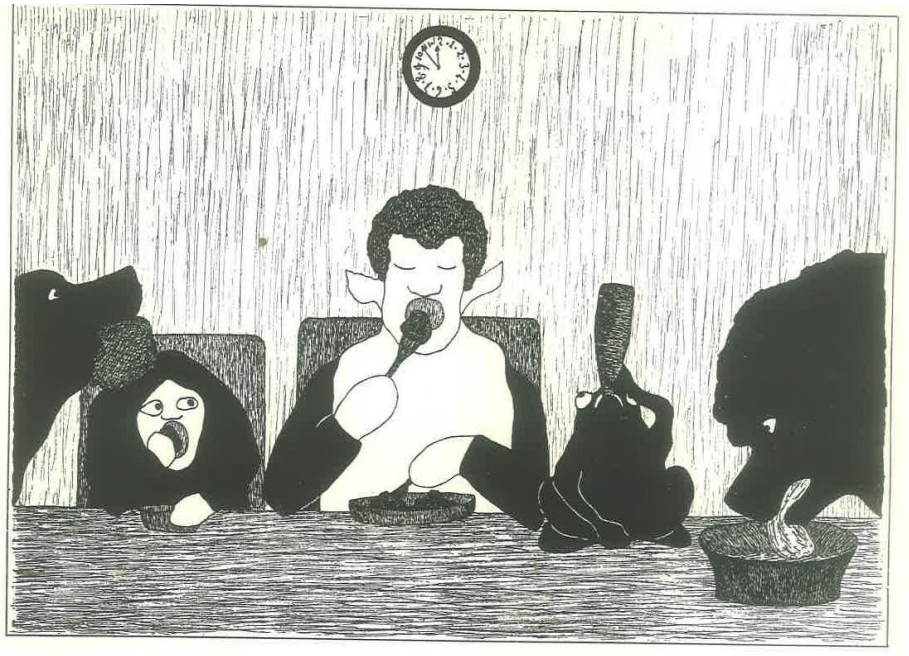
[131] Colette, p.123
[132] Gloria Lotha, Grace Young, Vivek Abhinav and Alison Elbridge, 'Braille', Encyclopedia Britannica, available at: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Braille-writing-system (Accessed 15 August 2020).
[133] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau,* p.136.
[134] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau,* p.137.
[135]La Fontaine, Book II, Fable 13.

stories use their powers to their own advantage and often against their oppressors, Lallune is imitating people with high social status and attempting to hide his disability. Limace and Chocolat's behaviour is even more complex: while they appear to be conforming to the definition of intelligence embodied by the circus, in which non-human animals imitate human abilities while losing their instinctive knowledge, it becomes increasingly clear that they are acting on their animalistic trickster knowledge, indulging Lallune's delusions so he will continue to provide for them. Moreover, Chauveau's ironic use of the word 'savant' in this story echoes his reference to misinformed 'savants' in 'Histoire de la Placide Tortue': both stories celebrate the figure of the trickster and satirise the narrow definition of what constitutes Western, 'rational', neurotypical human intelligence and knowledge.

The plot of 'Histoire de Limace' increases in absurdity as Limace makes calculations that, Lallune claims, predict the world will be destroyed three hours later by a comet, and is sent to Neuilly fair to check his calculations with Pythagore, a toad 'mathematician' kept in a box by a woman who runs a stall where she exhibits herself as a freak under the name of 'la femme sans tête'.[136] The relationship between Pythagore and the woman seems remarkably equal, reflecting the fact that they work independently, not for a large company such as Médrano. The story ends with all the characters eating a meal, realising the predicted arrival time has passed, and acknowledging their ignorance. The characters admit they are unable even to count, an inability that also features in 'Histoire du vieux crocodile' and, in both stories, is reassuring for young children struggling at school. This acknowledgement allows them to accept themselves and one another, and to form a family, with the disabled humans marrying and adopting the three non-human characters as their children, but in an equal relationship similar to that between Léopold and Renaud Chauveau, whose conversations, not featured in this story, are controversial largely due to Léopold's admissions of ignorance. At the end of 'Histoire de Limace', Chauveau movingly alludes to the true nature of intelligence when the woman calls her husband 'un grand savant modeste' and he calls her 'une femme de tête'[137]. Like the story as a

[136] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau,* p.134.
[137] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau,* p.144.

whole, and like the ending to 'Popotame', the ending to 'Histoire de Limace' is somewhat ambiguous, as it is possible that the new family will work as circus performers for money. However, it is clear Limace will not return to his 'maître'; and the values of the story are incompatible with circuses in real life. These values are expressed visually as well as verbally. The illustration below of the family eating together resembles Chauveau's depiction of his 'monstres': the bodies of all five characters are out of normal proportion for their species, showing, as in 'Histoire de l'ogre' that conventional beauty should not be necessary either to attract a romantic partner or to be accepted socially.



**Black ink drawing. Caption: 'Arrivés chez Lallune, ils font un bon déjeuner pour s'éclairer les idées.'[138]**

*Comet in Moominland,* the second novella in Tove Jansson's Moomin series,[139] presents intriguing parallels with 'Histoire de Limace'. Like Chauveau, Jansson

[138] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau,* pp. 172 (picture) and 173 (caption).
[139] Tove Jansson trans. Elizabeth Portch, *Comet in Moominland*, 1959, London: Ernest Benn Ltd. Reprinted London: Puffin Books, 1979, is the second Moomin novella that Jannson wrote and that was published, in 1946, in the original Swedish. It is the sequel to Jansson trans. David McDuff, 2005, *The Moomins and the Great Flood*, Esbo: Schildts, first published in the original in 1945. However, the third novella in the series, which depicts later events and was first published in Swedish in 1948 under the title *Trollkarlens Hatt* [The Hobgoblin's Hat] was the first to be

bases her plot around a prediction that the Earth will be hit by a comet, and a journey to seek 'expert' advice. Moomintroll and Sniff travel to the observatory at the top of the Lonely Mountain in order to consult the stereotypically aloof human astronomers, who correctly predict the exact time when the comet will arrive. The astronomers are satirised, and their academic knowledge is represented as less important than Moominmamma's wisdom, with the result that the journey home to shelter with her is depicted with considerably more urgency than the journey to the observatory. The obvious similarity between the two works is that the experience of living under threat leads to increased self-knowledge and to a strengthening of bonds within an inter-species family that is at least partly chosen rather than biological. Throughout Jansson's novella, the Moomin family re-affirm their attachment to the new home they discovered at the end of *Moomins and the Great Flood*; and Moomintroll and Sniff develop close friendships with characters they meet during the journey, who live with the family in later books. However, Jansson depicts familial relationships in a more psychologically realistic way than Chauveau. In the two final novellas of the saga, *Moominpappa at Sea* and *Moominvalley in November,* both set during Moomintroll's adolescence and at a time when his parents are reaching middle age, major disagreements are represented in a way that is highly unusual for mid-twentieth-century children's fiction. In *Comet in Moominland,* familial solidarity emerges as the most effective way of coping with a genuine threat that, for reasons unrelated to this solidarity, does not materialise. The fragility of terrestrial existence is conveyed powerfully in the following paragraph:

> If it had come a tiny bit nearer to the earth I am quite sure that none of us would be here now. But it just gave a whisk of its tail and swept off to another solar system far away, and it has never been seen since.[140]

While both Chauveau and Jansson include personified descriptions of the comet, in each case this has quite different effects. In 'Histoire de Limace', such personifications are never expressed by the authorial voice but only in ludicrously

published in English under the title *Finn Family Moomintroll*: Jansson trans. Portch, 1958, London: Ernest Benn Ltd.

[140] Jannson trans. Portch, *Comet*, p.153.

exaggerated ways by the characters, especially Lallune who follows his announcement that he has discovered the comet with the following 'observation' of the comet's behaviour:

> Elle arrache une patte de ma Grande Ourse, crève l'œil de ma Petite, bouscule planètes et étoiles qui se mêlent, se heurtent, s'écrasent, se brisent, éclatent.[141]

This comic theatricality, significant in the context of Chauveau's exploration of performance both as a form of deception and as a creative activity that helps the characters bond, contrasts sharply with Jansson's restrained solemnity. This restraint is clear from the reference to the comet as 'it' (Swedish *den*), showing that while the comet somehow acts consciously and shares characteristics like its 'tail' with the main characters, ultimately the comet remains a cosmic force beyond the limited comprehension of those on an extremely fragile earth. As the book was first published in Swedish in 1946, this force is likely to symbolise the nuclear arms race, that is masculine human violence that threatens the biosphere and from which the feminine ethics of the inter-species family provides a refuge. 'Histoire de Limace' does not suggest the entire biosphere is fragile, but the family provides a refuge from the smaller scale threatening force of capitalist exploitation in the circus system.

Nearly all the characters in the Moomin series are sympathetic creatures that, like Chauveau's monsters, are the product of the author's imagination and whose physical features are unlike those of any real species. The main difference is that, whereas Chauveau's monsters are unique individuals, Jansson usually creates imaginary species with multiple members. One significant exception is the Groke, who appears as a morally ambiguous, lonely figure; and, in *Moominpappa at Sea,*[142] is befriended by Moomintroll and 'lose[s] [her] monstrosity in the way described by Smith-Laing. Like Chauveau, Jansson's celebration of diversity is linked to her own difference from her peers: she spent the last forty-five years of her life in a romantic relationship with female graphic artist Tuulikki Pietilä, and was

[141] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau*, p.138.
[142] Jansson, trans. Kingsley Hart, 1965, *Moominpappa at Sea*, London: Puffin.

romantically involved with both men and women before that, and before homosexuality was legalised in Finland.[143] Both this aspect of Jansson's writing, and her ecological consciousness, are attracting an increase in interest. As the specific parallel between the comet's unpredictability and that of the nuclear arms race becomes less topical, Jansson's celebration of the fragile natural beauty of coastal Finland and its oral cultural heritage are attracting more attention from readers and critics. Her personification of indifferent forces of nature, and interest in Biblical catastrophes such as the flood, paralleling pantheistic elements in Chauveau's *L'Ombre du Pantin,* discussed in chapter 3, has been a particular focus of recent criticism. The revival of interest in Jansson, with books including *The Moomins and the Great Flood* appearing in English translation for the first time, suggests that Chauveau should also be able to attract a wider international audience.

Human romantic relationships are depicted in two other books by Chauveau, *Le Roman de Renard* and *Petit poisson devenu grand*. Both respond to classic works of French literature that are the product of a pre-industrial society where humans had a relatively small environmental impact and lived in close proximity to other animals, but felt little sense of obligation towards them due to an anthropocentric Catholic worldview that also strongly supported patriarchy and strict hereditary, class-based hierarchy. In both works, Chauveau pays homage to the original work as a source of inspiration at the same time as responding creatively to the difference in values between himself and the original author(s). *Petit poisson devenu grand* is a counter-narrative to La Fontaine's fable 'Le petit poisson et le pêcheur', in which a young carp pleads with a fisherman to throw him back into the sea so as to catch him again when he is bigger, but the fisherman mocks him and throws him in the frying pan. [144] The conclusion, like that to many of La Fontaine's fables, is amoral and demonstrates that, to quote his cynical moral' to

[143] Moomin Characters Oy Ltd, 'Queer Themes in Tove Jansson's Life and Work', 2019, available at: https://www.moomin.com/en/blog/ive-fallen-madly-in-love-with-a-woman-queer-themes-in-tove-janssons-life-and-work-part-1/; https://www.moomin.com/en/blog/the-secret-message-in-mymbles-name-queer-themes-in-tove-janssons-life-and-work-part-2/#6744b1f6; and https://www.moomin.com/en/blog/going-over-to-the-ghost-side-queer-themes-in-tove-janssons-life-and-work-part-3/#6744b1f6 (Accessed 28 July 2020).
[144] La Fontaine, Book V, Fable 3.

the fable ‘Le loup et l’agneau’,  ‘La raison du plus fort est toujours la meilleure’.[145]

It is unsurprising that La Fontaine had a major influence on Chauveau, given his pessimistic worldview, tragic life, and tendency to avoid moralisation and to explore very dark themes in his animal stories. Chauveau praises La Fontaine very strongly in his critical work, and he illustrated many of La Fontaine’s fables, including ‘Le loup et l’agneau’ but not ‘Le petit poisson et le pêcheur’, for personal satisfaction in 1921. At the same time, the Orsay information panel describing Chauveau’s illustration of ‘Le loup et l’agneau’ observes that ‘Léopold dénonce cette loi du plus fort et défend les faibles’ throughout his literary and visual œuvre. This can be seen in the illustration itself, which invites sympathy for the lamb by drawing attention to how much smaller he is than the wolf and depicting him with a crestfallen facial expression.

[145] La Fontaine, Book I, Fable 10, line i.

**Chauveau's watercolour illustration to 'Le loup et l'agneau'**[146]

This contrasts with the illustration to the original edition by François Chauveau (no relation), in which the lamb's expression is not visible and he appears in a conventional pose of supplication:

[146] La Fontaine ill. Chauveau, no page number.

**Woodcut by François Chauveau**[147]

Renaud asks Léopold what would have happened if the little fish in La Fontaine's fable had been allowed to grow big, to which he gives his customary answer 'Je ne sais pas du tout',[148] before agreeing to invent a story. In Chauveau's counter-narrative, the fisherman attends mass with the fish in his basket; the fish is kept alive by holy water and inspired by a homily about loving one's neighbour; after escaping into the sea, he puts this into practice by becoming a vegetarian and feeding off algae, thereby becoming the largest animal in the world; he uses his immense size to hold a light warning ships of danger; and, at the end of the story, his soul ascends into heaven while his body is transformed into a lighthouse. Due to the centrality of religious themes, I discuss the book primarily in chapter 3, but here I would like to draw attention to how the final sentence used to describe the

[147] La Fontaine, ill. François Chauveau ,1678, *Fables choisies mises en vers: tome premier*, Paris: Barbin & Thierry p.30.
[148] Chauveau, *Petit poisson,* p.7.

fisherman draws attention to his mistreatment not only of fish but also of his wife: 'Il y [chez lui] arriva cependant [ayant trop bu], battit un peu sa femme — et maintenant on n'a plus besoin de lui pour cette histoire'.[149] While this sentence alerts the reader to the fact that the rest of the story will focus on the positive behaviour of the fish, it also draws attention to how often violence against women is dismissed in real life and forces child readers to confront the reality of evil, even when reading a fantasy that gives an otherwise happy ending to a sad fable.

While Chauveau's positive depictions of predators draw attention to the absurdity of judging them for killing to eat—especially in militaristic societies characterised by the use of violence, both against non-human animals and other humans, for reasons other than necessity and survival—stories told from the perspective of prey animals draw attention to problems relating to vulnerability and especially to domestic abuse, much like 'Histoire de Limace' and *Petit poisson devenu grand*.[150] As discussed in chapter 1, two stories, 'Histoire du poisson scie et du poisson marteau' and *Monsieur Tigre et Madame Tortue,* depict a non-human mother revenging the predator who killed her child. In 'Histoire du poisson scie et du poisson marteau', the solitary mother whale hunts the hunters who killed her baby, pursuing them with stealth and perseverance before finally killing them with a blow of her tail when they are too engrossed in eating to guard against attack. In *Monsieur Tigre et Madame Tortue,* Madame Orang-Outang kills Monsieur Tigre by dropping Madame Tortue on his head, thus achieving her aims by collaborating with another female character. It is striking that the father of the slain child is never mentioned in either story—a reflection less of the fact that fathers play only a minor role in many species, since they feature prominently in other Chauveau tales,than of Chauveau's radical response to a cultural landscape which took a strong interest in motherhood. Contemporary authors including Kipling wrote about the 'deadly' maternal instinct of both human and non-human mothers to protect their young, although they represented it much less sympathetically, stressing that

[149] Chauveau, *Petit poisson,* p.22.
[150] Some Chauveau stories depict violence within non-human families, especially in 'Le vieux crocodile'; and, as Litaudon discusses, of non-human adults giving poor advice to non-human children. However, I do not consider this a representation of domestic abuse, and this thesis will I argue that the characters responsible are depicted in a morally ambiguous way, as not subject to human moral codes.

women ‘must not govern’ because they cannot ‘understand’ rational, impartial laws.[151]

Despite his interest in motherhood, Chauveau never depicts Renée in his fiction, only including imaginary one-to-one conversations with Renaud, the significance of which I began discussing in chapter 1. Chauveau sometimes also presents stories told to Renaud as collaborative works. Histoire du poisson scie et du poisson marteau’, in which Renaud repeatedly interrupts his father, and *Les cures merveilleuses du docteur Popotame,* where he is credited as author of a ‘Préface’, appearing on pages 9 to 10, include elements of this. In her essay ‘Une éducation monstre’, Marie-Pierre Litaudon observes the similarity between this Préface, where Renaud observes that his father ‘dessine très mal. Il fait des éléphants qui ne ressemblent pas du tout à des éléphants. Je les reconnais parce que je sais de que ça doit être’ and the narrator’s complaint in Saint-Exupéry’s *Le Petit Prince* that ‘Les grandes personnes ne comprennent jamais rien toutes seules, et c’est fatigant, pour un enfant, de toujours et toujours leur donner des explications’.[152] This reflects the fact, discussed in the context of the *décades de Pontigny* which Saint-Exupéry also attended, that Chauveau was working at a time of strong interest in developing new concepts of children’s literature and childhood, which in turn informed the representation of spirituality by Chauveau, Saint-Exupéry and others, discussed in chapter 3. Both anti-didacticism and the use of visual techniques inspired by child-authored artwork were common among early twentieth-century author-illustrators.

Chauveau gives two of his books titles that suggest a collaborative effort: *Les deux font la paire* a homonym with ‘père’ as Litaudon observes;[153] and *Les Histoires du petit père Renaud*. *Les deux font la paire* comprises forty-three very short stories, all of which are conversations between Léopold and Renaud, and in most of which they create a narrative together. With a combination of poignancy and humour,

[151] Kipling, 1911, ‘The Female of The Species’, available at: http://www.poetryloverspage.com/poets/kipling/female_of_species.html (Accessed 15 August 2020).
[152]Litaudon , 2020, ‘Une éducation monstre’, in *Au pays des monstres : Léopold Chauveau (1870-1940)*, Paris: Musée d’Orsay, pp.159-197, P.181. The citations are from Chauveau, *Cures,* p.9 and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, 2001 (1943), *Le Petit Prince*, San Diego and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt USA, p.2.
[153]See Litaudon, ‘éducation’.

the book places more emphasis on their unconventional relationship and on Léopold's approach to educating his son than on the narratives. In some stories, such as 'Crocodiles en bois', appearing on pages 199 to 202, which takes place at Paris' Jardin des Plantes, Léopold encourages Renaud to observe non-human animals with sympathy, spontaneity and imagination. However, the story where concerns about animal ethics are most apparent is 'Le petit cochon de pain d'épice', appearing on pages 124 to 28 and published posthumously as a standalone picture book, [154] in which Léopold and Renaud pretend the gingerbread pig is alive and joke about sparing him. Léopold sings a song that reflects his 'amitié' for both Renaud and non-human animals, and that can be related to the recurrent theme of eating and vegetarianism in his work:

> *En pain d'épice ou pas en pain d'épice*
>
> *Un jour ou un autre un cochon est mangé*
>
> *Mais quand il est en pain d'épice*
>
> *Il ne crie pas si on lui mange une patte.* [155]

As well as the four animal stories discussed in chapter 1, *Histoires du petit père Renaud* includes four tales that explore the relationship between children and non-human animals from the child's perspective. 'Histoire du gros escargot', appearing on pages 9 to 44, begins as an absurd, comic narrative about a snail who believes he is the largest snail in the world; then becomes a family story after Renaud captures the snail in a box. Many incidents reveal Renaud and Léopold's remarkably unconventional relationship: Renaud boasts about slime on his hands and Léopold responds by joking; both describe Léopold as unintelligent when he says he cannot answer a question; and most significantly, Léopold encourages Renaud to use his imagination. Renaud expresses his love for the snail and invents theories about the snail's thoughts and feelings, with Léopold refusing to express an opinion and feigning lack of interest to allow Renaud to develop his own imaginative and empathetic skills. Renaud realises the limitation of this kind of

[154]Chauveau ill. José and Jean-Marie Granier, *Le petit cochon de pain d'épice*, Paris: Éditions La Farandole, 1962.
[155] Chauveau, *Paire,* original italics, p.125.

attachment to a non-human individual when he gives his snail a companion—ostensibly to keep him company although the extent to which he believes in his own speculations is unclear—and realises he cannot tell the two apart. Like Docteur Popotame and Limace Basset, the snail eventually leaves captivity, not by escaping but because, at the end of the school holidays, Renaud 'rendit la liberté à son cher escargot'.[156] In a happy ending that reflects Chauveau's sense of harmony and emphasis on kindness, Renaud is rewarded with a letter signed by the snail, and presumably written by his father.

In 'Histoire du petit ours', appearing on pages 101 to 130, the relationship between child and non-human animal is reversed, with the bear Rounichond imagining he can pass his intelligence on to the boy Toto. Rounichond begins the story as the teddy bear of Toto, an extremely insecure boy who cries and wakes his parents when he loses his bear. After being found by the son of 'des bohémiens monteurs d'ours',[157] Rounichond is transformed into a sympathetic monster: his adoptive parents have licked him so much that he becomes much larger than them and 'monstrueusement intelligent',[158] a significant choice of language that makes a satirical comment about Western human society, with its tendency to fear types of intelligence most people cannot understand. This contrasts with a depiction of the relationship between the bears and their 'monteurs' as idyllic: the bears enjoy complete freedom, as can be seen from the illustrations that depict them in a natural setting, and from the behaviour of the protective adoptive mother, who 'devint féroce, personne ne put l'approcher, elle refusa de danser'.[159]As in 'Histoire de Limace', Chauveau satirises the circus system by depicting an idealised version of it as an equalised partnership between non-human performers exercising their natural talents and human managers who belong to a disadvantaged minority: the 'monteurs' are conspicuous largely by their absence and non-interference in the bears' lives, a positive depiction that is significant in the context of the rise of fascism and anti-Roma racism. When the bears perform near Rounichond's village and Toto adopts Rounichond, he is

[156] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.41.
[157] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.113.
[158] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.119.
[159] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.116.

subjected to the same process of licking, which develops his intelligence and makes his physical appearance even more monstrous than Toto's, with his hair turning into a 'boule flasque'.[160] Chauveau gives his story a satirical ending, with the parent bears suggesting they stop the process, but Rounichond mocking them and referring to himself and Toto as 'intelligence supérieures', with the result that Rounichond's head explodes and Toto dies of suffocation from the gases.[161]

Like 'Histoire de l'ogre', 'Histoire du Roitelet', appearing on pages 221 to 252,[162] is an original story that explores children's vulnerability by using features of the traditional fairy tale, which Chauveau reworks according to his distinctive conception of the monstrous. Roitelet, a fifteen-year-old boy who has grown smaller since the day he was born, becomes king of Caracotie after saving the princess of Microbalaisie, where all the inhabitants are his own size, from her bridegroom, his predecessor 'le géant Caracot',[163] whom Roitelet initially recognises as 'un homme de taille ordinaire' [164]but describes as 'un ogre' after discovering his plot to eat the princess.[165] These shifting definitions reflect Chauveau's relativism, telling the story from the perspective of the small people who eventually identify Caracot as an ogre on grounds not of genetic characteristics but of behaviour. Caracot treats the princess somewhat like livestock, feeding her a growth-inducing 'confiture preparée par [un] fameux alchimiste'.[166]

While this is a conventional feature of fairy stories such as *Hansel and Gretel,* Chauveau uses another typical feature of fairy stories, the protagonist's ability to communicate with non-human animals, to draw attention to the shared vulnerability of children and non-human animals in a more explicit way. The name Roitelet alludes simultaneously to the hero's royal status and to his relationship with birds. Roitelet succeeds in guiding the princess to Caracotie because, being

[160] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.127.
[161] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.128.
[162] Also published in a standalone edition: Chauveau, 1928, *Histoire de Roitelet*, Paris: Attinger. Reprinted 1999, Genève: La Joie de Lire.
[163] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.234.
[164] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.238
[165] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.244.
[166] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.240.

'très doué pour les langues',[167] he has succeeded in communicating with a duck in her own language, and she wishes to repay him for saving her children from drowning by placing them in the clog he was using as a boat. Chauveau writes relatively realistically about a range of sounds with radically different meanings that most humans perceive as an identical 'Coin! Coin!', [168]unlike in many of his other stories where the non-human characters' linguistic abilities seem fantastical. Most significantly and originally, after Roitelet's marriage and coronation—which, despite Chauveau's socialism, are depicted uncritically in accordance with the adoption of fairy tale conventions—Chauveau suggests a practical form of interspecies solidarity: Roitelet's first royal decree reads 'Sous peine de mort, la chasse au canard est interdite dans toute l'étendue de mon royaume'.[169]

Finally, 'Histoire du gros arbre qui mangeait les petits enfants', appearing on pages 77 to 99, also emphasises the vulnerability of children and of non-human animals, but in each case this vulnerability takes different forms. Whereas children are vulnerable because of their size, non-human animals are liable to be used as a scapegoat by human adults, who frequently blame them for hostile environmental conditions and behave extremely destructively, in a way that reveals their own lack of intelligence and worsens those same conditions. Significantly, in the passage below Chauveau evokes this alongside the scapegoating of human groups, especially those that live apart from normal human society, a crucial concern in his contemporary context of rising authoritarianism.

> On se dit:
>
> -Ce sont sûrement les charbonniers qui prennent tous ces petits enfants.
>
> On tua tous les charbonniers et il n'y eut rien de changé. On se dit:
>
> -Ce sont sûrement les loups.
>
> On tua tous les loups et il n'y eut encore rien de changé.

[167] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.229.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.252.

> On tua toutes les bêtes de la fôret, les renards, les blaireaux, les fouines, les cerfs, les chevreuils, les lapins—ce n'étaient pourtant pas les lapins qui pouvaient manger tant de petits enfants—et le gros arbre continua à s'empiffrer de petites filles, à s'empiffrer de petits garçons chaque fois qu'il en trouvait l'occasion.[170]

Significantly, this story ends with a celebration of the wild and of children's embrace of danger, with Renaud responding to the news trees who eat small children no longer exist, 'C'est dommage'.[171]

To conclude, Chauveau uses fantasy and humour to create imaginary environments characterised by 'amitié' between both human and non-human animals, as well as imaginary 'monstres', thereby validating marginalised identities and transcending divisions between 'les proches' and 'les différents'. Both in these stories and in others, Chauveau uses trickster narratives that allude to the remarkable intelligence of less powerful species and groups within human society, as well as to the fact that their low social status is due to physical violence. Gilbert Lascault's essay provides a useful starting point to understanding Chauveau's conception of the monstrous, and briefly introduces readers to these more general themes of cognitive diversity, physical vulnerability, friendship, and solidarity. However, because these stories are non-realist, non-didactic, and written in a style that avoids disturbing child readers, their responses to serious concerns about violence towards non-human animals and disadvantaged human groups has not previously been analysed in detail. In this chapter, I have expanded on work by Lescault and others about the therapeutic role of creativity in Chauveau's life, analysing his allusions to personal trauma and to a social context of rising totalitarianism informed by scapegoating and a eugenicist ideology developed around ideas of the freakish and 'monstrous', with reference to the strong links between these problems and the mistreatment of non-human animals, and to Chauveau's depiction of a commonality of human and non-human suffering. In chapter 3, I will continue this discussion of fantasy and commonality to consider how Chauveau, a self-defined non-believer writing in response to the premature death both of

[170] Chauveau, *Renaud,* pp.80-81.
[171] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.99.

family members and other patients he treated, depicts non-human animals enjoying a spiritual afterlife and explores the possibility of building an inclusive rather than exclusive spiritual community.

## Chapter 3: Imagining Non-anthropocentric Spiritualities and Non-human Afterlives

Like most left-wing French intellectuals, Chauveau described himself as a non-believer. He attributed his loss of Catholic faith as an adolescent to his perception that the priests who catechized him acted on the assumption that 'la seule chose importante était de faire son salut, le plus sûr moyen d'y arriver étant de négliger tous les intérêts matériels pour se consacrer à honorer Dieu et à obéir à son Église'.[172] Throughout his life, Chauveau was unable to find meaning or solace in other-worldly religion in the face of major personal challenges, starting with his difficult relationship with his father, a veterinary researcher who pressurized him into adopting the medical career for which he felt deep distaste. He was also naturally unsympathetic to such attitudes, as someone who worked in a caring profession and believed in prioritising practical assistance.

Léopold Chauveau received religious instruction to satisfy his Catholic mother Sophie and he was clearly influenced by his father's scepticism, despite his distaste for medicine and pessimism about scientific progress. Indeed, Chauveau was naturally ill-disposed not only to otherworldliness but to patriarchal ideologies based around obedience. His anti-authoritarian attitude to personal morality extended not only to confronting domestic abuse, addressing child readers in a non-didactic way, and supporting equality between husband and wife — but to a remarkable open-mindedness towards transgressive behaviour. A good example of this is his depiction of nudity, discussed in chapter 1. Poirier's biography also includes an intriguing detail: Chauveau wrote to one of his closest friends, the Nobel-winning, homosexual novelist Roger Martin du Gard, expressing admiration for Du Gard's novella *Confidence africaine*, which depicts a brother-sister love affair, and commenting, 'laissons les "bons esprits" se scandaliser. L'inceste est instinctif, naturel, respectable, très ordinairement pratiqué, et probablement vu d'assez bon œil par beaucoup qui n'osent pas le dire'.[173] Chauveau's attitude to incest was probably much more complicated than this: in his picaresque novella *Grelu,* he characteristically makes no authorial comment on the attitude of his

[172] Cited in Poirier, p.91.
[173] Letter dated 5 February 1931, cited in Poirier, p.133

protagonist, who experiences unrequited desire for his daughter during senile old age.[174] However, his open-mindedness on the subject is very strong evidence that his worldview could not be reconciled with official Catholic doctrine. As discussed in chapters 1 and 2, the same is true of Chauveau's scepticism towards his society's ethnocentric and anthropocentric assumptions.

Nevertheless, this chapter argues that Chauveau's œuvre engages with spirituality on a profound level that goes beyond the four main elements identified by Poirier,[175] for which I will provide my own examples. First, social critique and satire of religious institutions is significant in Chauveau's novellas and in stories discussed later in this chapter. Second, nostalgia features in Chauveau's representation of childhood in the novellas as well as in 'Histoire de l'ogre', in which the schoolmaster-priest is based on a local benefactor who funded the studies of his father; [176] and it informs the final third of *Derrière la bataille*, which depicts the damage caused both to the natural environment of the Western Front and to the medieval Gothic churches that, as in *Le Roman de Renard,* dominate the landscape.[177] Third, religious imagery, based especially around church bells, is deployed in stories including 'Le Petit Monstre'. Fourth, Chauveau's œuvre demonstrates respect for others' conviction as a core value of the author, who made no attempt to prevent his children adopting the faith either of their Protestant mother or Catholic stepmother. *Derrière la bataille* includes passages about Chauveau praying for a patient at the request of the patient's mother, and responding sensitively to arrangements for segregating patients so that Muslim *tirailleurs sénégalais* can observe Ramadan.[178]

This thesis argues that, in addition to these aspects, Chauveau's œuvre builds on the cultural heritage and moral values of Christianity and other traditions to create a new form of non-dogmatic spirituality. In this respect, Chauveau had much in common with his contemporaries, notably his close friend Paul Desjardins, the organiser of the *décades de Pontigny* discussed in chapter 2, which were held in a

[174] Chauveau, 1934, *Grelu*, Paris: Gallimard.
[175] Poirier, pp.90-97.
[176] Cochet, p.178.
[177]Chauveau, *Bataille,* pp.109-146.
[178] Chauveau, *Bataille,* pp.41-42 and 85-94

desecrated monastery as secular, mixed-gender retreats: Desjardins discussed them in terms of an afterlife for his son (who had drowned, like Chauveau's eldest son Pierre, in 1915 aged 16), and even wrote an inscription in Latin describing the *décades* as a continuation of the monks' work.[179] Similarly, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, whose *Le Petit Prince* I discuss in chapter 2 and later in chapter 3, 'voit dans le sacré une construction humaine' in which actions such as developing rituals and forming a bond of love and friendship (in *Le Petit Prince,* termed *apprivoiser,* with Saint-Exupéry somewhat appropriating the term but not entirely obviating its connotations of domination), result in creating an 'Absolu en réalité relatif à l'homme qui n'a pas grand rapport avec la religion', even if 'l'invention de Dieu…lui permet en quelque sorte d'exister'.[180]

The fact that writers such as Chauveau, Desjardins and Saint-Exupéry operate outwith religious institutions and stress their independence from the Christian tradition they draw upon is not due to an incompatibility between the ideas they develop and Christianity, still less all organised religion. Instead, it can be attributed partly to their personal worldviews, and partly to two cultural factors that were especially important in France. The first is the long-standing political conflict between a right-wing, authoritarian form of Catholicism and left-wing forces that sought to supplant it: Desjardins' conversion of the monastery echoes the revolutionary transformation of the country's most important churches into 'temples de la raison'.[181]

The second is a tradition of intellectuals and artists of no faith engaging seriously with non-Christian religions, as part of a wider interest in non-European indigenous cultures both in the academic discipline of anthropology and primitivist artistic trends. The tradition has played a central role in the development of French ecological thought since the Enlightenment, when thinkers including Voltaire celebrated Hindu vegetarianism and compared it favourably to anthropocentric

[179] Masson and Prévost,pp.16-38.
[180] Laurent de Bodin de Galambert, 'Le sacré et son expression chez Antoine de Saint-Exupéry', abstract of doctoral thesis at Université Paris IV – La Sorbonne supervised by Jean-Yves Tadié, available at: http://nitescence.free.fr/position.pdf (Accessed 15 August 2020).
[181] Serge Bianchi, 15 November 2013, '1793: La fête de la liberté à Notre-Dame de la Raison', *L'Humanité*, available at: https://www.humanite.fr/tribunes/1793-la-fete-de-la-liberte-notre-dame-de-la-raison-553166 (Accessed 21 August 2020).

Catholicism, both out of genuine sympathy and because non-human suffering provided a powerful counter-argument to the view of Catholic conservatives that French social structures were ordained by a compassionate god.[182] Prominent figures in modernist primitivism (see chapter 1), depict rituals and deities that reflect the 'sacralisation' of the 'Terre-mère', as well as a 'cosmogonie qui tenait pour sacré le meilleur de vie composé de ses nombreux esprits et non-humains' that constrasts sharply with the Western tendency to anthropomorphise God as a father.[183] Artworks significant in this respect include: Henri Rousseau's painting *La Charmeuse de Serpents*, which depicts a practice with religious origins;Paul Gauguin's icons of the Tahitian goddesses Oviri and Tii;and *Saint Orang*, his sculpture of an ape-god.[184] This chapter also considers a specific way in which non-Jewish French writers engage with Jewish mystical and literary works that anthropomorphise God to a lesser extent than Christianity and place more emphasis on feminine aspects of the divine. However, it was rare for French intellectuals to engage with Islam on a genuinely spiritual level because, unlike Judeo-Christian and non-Abrahamic traditions, Islamic culture was studied with a 'common intellectual and methodological' framework 'whose unity was truly international' across Europe and by scholars tasked with giving practical advice to 'colonial administrators'.[185] In summary, many major French cultural figures engaged sympathetically with non-Christian religions, but most did so in ways that reflected ethnocentric and colonialist prejudices.

This chapter explores Chauveau's response to a range of religion traditions as well as to secular French perceptions of them, focussing especially on his depiction of non-human animals enjoying a spiritual afterlife and being integrated within spiritual communities. The chapter makes frequent reference to studies of theology and religious history that consider the relevant questions. Since Chauveau's approach to Christianity is frequently satirical, and French thinkers including Voltare have approached it as a highly anthropocentric and

[182] See Larue,pp.147-196.
[183] Ferdinand, p.76.
[184] *La Charmeuse des Serpents* dates from 1907, the icon of Oviri from 1894, that of Tii from 1892, and *Saint-Orang* from 1902. All are conserved in the Musée d'Orsay.
[185] Said, 1978, *Orientalism*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. Reprinted 1985, London: Penguin, p.210.

anthropomorphising religion committed to maintaining social hierarchies, it is important to stress that Christians themselves have widely divergent views on a range of issues, including ecology, animal ethics, and the question of whether non-human animals have souls. [186] This can be demonstrated by a brief comparative consideration of the Anglophone context, in which Dissenters (Protestants who rejected the hierarchical structures of the established churches) played a central role in establishing movements against industrialisation and the mistreatment of non-human animals, justifying their ecological consciousness with explicit reference to their religious beliefs. This has had a major literary influence, due to the prominence during the Romantic period, which coincided with rapid and controversial industrialisation in England, of politically engaged Dissenter writers. William Blake depicts the protagonist of his poem 'The Tyger' as a 'miracle of nature' created by God and therefore worthy of human reverence;[187] and begins his poem 'Auguries of Innocence' with a warning that caging a robin would enrage Heaven because 'God loves *all* his creatures'.[188] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in his epic poem 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', makes the mariner give voice to a message of compassion towards all creation, arguing that 'He prayeth well, who loveth well/Both man and bird and beast/ He prayeth best, who loveth best/All things both great and small/For the dear God who loveth us/He made and loveth all', a message Coleridge reinforces in his explanatory note, which states that the mariner's task is to 'teach, by his own example, love and reverence for all things that God made and loveth'.[189]

Many Dissenters combined criticism of their own society with opposition to colonialism and recognition of spiritual truth in indigenous cultures. This was especially important in Pennsylvania, an American state founded by members of

[186] In this thesis, terms such as 'Christians' refer to all people who self-define as adherents of the relevant religion, but not to those who claim a purely cultural identity. Similarly, terms such as 'Islam' refer to all beliefs and practices that claim to be informed by the relevant religious teaching.
[187] Jonathan Jones, 18 November 2014, 'How William Blake keeps our eyes on The Tyger', *The Guardian*, available at: https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2014/nov/18/william-blake-the-tyger-art-poem-tigers (Accessed 15 August 2020).
[188] David Perkins, Summer 1999, 'Animal Rights and "Auguries of Innocence"', *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, (Vol.33) 1, pp. 4-11.
[189] 'All Things Both Great and Small', *Humane Religion Magazine*, January-February 1997, available at: https://www.all-creatures.org/hr/hr-199701-06.htm (Accessed 15 August 2020).

the Religious Society of Friends one of the most radical Dissenter denominations.[190] Many Pennsylvania Friends campaigned for sustainable land use, arguing that their community should seek to attain the 'mystical communion with the Great Spirit' of the 'American Indians whom they admired'.[191] These ideas of community between all religions and with non-human creation have influenced many later writers, including those who are non-practicing or who belong to more mainstream denominations: to take just one example, James Vance Marshall's *Walkabout,* discussed in chapter 1, depicts Mary reconciling her Christianity with indigenous spirituality and coming to know that the aboriginal boy is in heaven and 'that heaven, like earth, was one'.[192]

While Chauveau depicts God in an irreverent, satirical way that draws attention to the absurdity of anthropomorphising religious imagery, he simultaneously uses the concept of Creation to celebrate diversity and to encourage reverence and 'amitié', much as he adapts the conventionally negative concept of the monstrous. As discussed in chapter 2, the original negative concept of the monstrous is theological; and one of the main influences on Chauveau, as on better-known figures such as Hugo, is Gothic religious architecture, especially the gargoyles of Notre-Dame de Paris, restored in the mid-nineeteenth century by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, a source of fascination for Chauveau since his childhood.[193] The similarity between Chauveau's visual depiction of monsters and his use of religious imagery is strongly apparent in his illustrations for the Old Testament, in which both God and His creatures are depicted somewhat like monsters, with bodies that are out of proportion, using a flattened perspective that does not centre any character and is typical of primitivist visual art. See below for an example :

[190] Today, Members of the Society are commonly referred to as 'Quakers', although this term originated as, and was at the time consisdered, an insult.
[191] Donald Brooks Kelley, October 1986, 'Friends and Nature in America: Towards an Eighteenth-Century Quaker Ecology', *Pennsylvania History*, 53, pp.257-272.
[192] James Vance Marshall, p.98.
[193] See Lascault and Smith-Laing.

**Watercolour entitled'Et Dieu créa les oiseaux'.**[194]

This illustration evokes an ecologically conscious strand within Catholicism that has inspired many artistic works but—throughout most of its history and especially during the period of colonial expansion by European states, many of them Catholic—had little practical influence: the 'spirituality' of the 'disciples' of Saint 'Francis of Assisi, who had tried to reproduce Christ's poverty, humility and suffering in every detail of his life'.[195] Chauveau's illustration is somewhat similar to Giotto di Bonbone's fresco of Francis preaching to the birds, especially as both use flattened perspective, and later works Giotto inspired. At the same time, the fact that God occupies a less dominant position in Chauveau's painting than Francis in Giotto's is extremely striking: both because Chauveau's work is much less realistic than Giotto's, depicting birds that appear monstrous because they are the same size as a man; and because God is de-centered, despite his relative status compared to Francis'.

[194] From Chauveau's series of watercolours 'L'Ancien Testament', 1921, conserved in the Musée d'Orsay.
[195] Karen Armstrong, 2009, *The Case for God: What Religion Really Means*, London: The Bodley Head p.144.

**Fresco entitled 'San Francesco predica agli uccelli'[196]**

Another work that provides valuable insights into Chauveau's approach to spirituality is *L'Ombre du Pantin*, a book of prose poetry that Poirier describes as deeply pessimistic, since it expresses the author's existential anguish at witnessing premature death while unable to believe either that it would achieve a higher earthly purpose or in the Christian afterlife, as well as distress at the alienating effects of civilisation, as I discussed in chapter 1.[197] However, at other points in the book Chauveau celebrates the spiritual value of nature and humanity's place within it, moving beyond the Creator/Creation dualism to express this pantheistic vision of unity:

> Musique et Dieu sont même chose, sont tout, sont l'âme des vivants, même âme de tous les vivants, l'âme aussi des plantes, des rochers, des plaines, de la terre, de la mer, une grande âme pour toute la terre, une grande âme pour toute la mer, une grande âme pour tout l'Univers.[198]

In equating God with music in *L'Ombre du Pantin*; and, in his illustrations, depicting an anthropomorphised God among a non-human Creation in a similar way to his depiction of himself among his sculpted monsters: Chauveau alludes to the similarity between art and religion as imaginative practices that provide consolation for the artist's and audience's personal trauma, as well as encouraging empathy and wonder for the human or non-human other. Prominent scholar of

[196] Giotto di Bonbone, fresco dating from ca.1295-1299, conserved in the Basilica di San Francesco d'Assisi, Assisi.
[197] Poirier, pp.179-180.
[198] Chauveau, *Ombre,* p.84, prose poem entitled 'Musique et Dieu'.

comparative religion and religious history Karen Armstrong argues that, in transcending *logos* and everyday language to address its audience on the level of *mythos*, 'all art constantly aspires to the condition of music; so too, at its best, does theology'.[199] This thesis argues that a specific similarity between scriptural and literary texts is that they are 'productive of fresh meaning'—both by every individual reader and in new historical, geographical and cultural contexts—a process of re-interpretation that, in the case of scripture, many religious movements have actively encouraged '[b]ecause the word of God was infinite' .[200] Chauveau makes a similar point about children's literature in these remarks at the end of his lecture 'Écrire pour les enfants', which rejects didacticism but suggests animal stories and other children's genres must engage with ethical and political concerns and help the development of the reader's 'esprit':

> Et pour finir, répondons à une question qui est bien souvent posée: la littérature enfantine doit-elle être moralisatrice? Oui et non. Oui, si l'on prend le terme de morale dans le sens le plus large, si l'on pense qu'une belle histoire bien contée, parce qu'elle est belle et bien contée, hausse l'esprit de l'enfant, le moralise. Non, s'il s'agit d'inculquer à l'enfant une idée déterminée de morale pratique.[201]

Armstrong stresses that, before the modern period when *logos* attained growing dominance over *mythos* and a specific form of supposedly rational Western thought came to be widely regarded as superior to others (see chapter 2), 'theologians made it clear that while it was important to put our ideas about the divine into words, these doctrines were man-made and, therefore, were bound to be inadequate';[202] and recognised that scriptures could not be read 'literally, as if they referred to divine facts',[203] but must serve as 'a programme of action' both for rituals and daily life.[204] Moreover, she argues that '[h]istorically atheism has rarely been a blanket denial of the sacred per se but has nearly always rejected a

[199] Armstrong, p.6.
[200] Armstrong, p.93.
[201] Chauveau, 'Écrire', p.11.
[202] Armstrong, p.2.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Armstrong, p.3.

particular conception of the divine'.[205] While she is referring to pre-modern 'atheist' movements, including those now recognised as religions, this thesis argues that Chauveau's work is also informed by a deep sense of the 'sacred' while rejecting the 'conception of the divine' of his conservative Catholic upbringing. With reference to scriptural texts and theoretical work by Armstrong and others, the rest of this chapter explores how this is manifested through his children's stories, in their depiction both of human rituals and of the spiritual lives and afterlives of non-human protagonists.

*Petit poisson devenu grand* is centred around two contrasting approaches to religion, that of the fisherman and that of the fish. The fisherman believes he has a contractual relationship with 'Dieu d'abord, puis la Vierge, puis les Saints…qu'il connaissait très bien'.[206] He prays for practical help from them in catching fish, then immediately concludes that his failure to catch more than one is due to the sin of working on Sunday rather than attending Mass. Therefore, he rushes to attend and mechanically asks for divine forgiveness, without paying attention to the homily, but drinks to excess and beats his wife immediately afterwards. He can easily be identified as a caricature both of religious literalism, and of Catholics who seek to exploit the forgiveness offered by sacraments despite not meeting the theological requirement of genuine remorse.

The story may not immediately appear to satirise Catholicism itself, since the fish is inspired to act virtuously by the homily, but the ideas it expresses were not mainstream in Catholicism at the time either of La Fontaine or of Chauveau. Chauveau only quotes the homily briefly: 'Aimez-vous les uns les autres, disait le prêtre; ne faites pas à autrui ce que vous ne voudriez pas qu'on vous fît; aimez votre prochain comme vous-même'.[207] The first and third commands are recognisable from the Gospels.[208] However, the second is noticeably different from the traditional Christian Golden Rule, 'Tout ce que vous voudrez que les hommes vous fassent, faites-le leur donc'.[209] The priest's negative version is not

[205] Armstrong, p.7.
[206] Chauveau, *Petit poisson,* p.10.
[207] Chauveau, *Petit poisson,* p.15.
[208] See John 13:34-35 for the first; Matthew 22:35–40, Mark 12:28–34, and Luke 10:27a for the third.
[209] Matthew 7:12, in Félicité Robert de La Mennais' Catholic version, dating from 1846. Multiple French Bible translations are available at https://www.levangile.com/ (Accessed 4 July 2021).

present in either the Old or New Testament, and the first person known to have formulated it is Confucius, but it is strongly associated with Judaism because of the following legend about 'the great [Rabbi] Hillel (c.80 BCE to 30 CE), who had emphasised the importance of the spirit rather than the letter of Mosaic law'.[210]

> The Talmud recounts that a Gentile once approached Hillel with the request that Hillel convert him to Judaism. This Gentile did not want to go through a lengthy regimen of learning, so he told Hillel; "I want you to teach me the entire Torah while I stand on one foot". Hillel's response endures as a lesson for the generations.
>
> Hillel taught this Gentile; "Do not do unto others that which you hate done unto yourself – that is the entire Torah. The rest is commentary, go and study it."[211]

When understood within the context of Hillel's teaching, the negative version of the Golden Rule appears particularly alien to conservative Catholicism since it seeks to replace the normally central role of both dogma and sacramental ritual in religion. While few of Tillel's immediate disciples consciously attempted to apply the Golden Rule to non-human animals, most concluded that, by working to avoid causing harm, they could metaphorically rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem, destroyed by Roman troops in 70CE, without replicating rituals based around animal sacrifice. More generally, animal ethics plays an important role in Judaism, since the 'laws of kashrut greatly limited people's permission to eat meat', based on what were then the most humane slaughter methods, and it has been argued that 'the permission to eat meat given to the generation of Noah after the flood was only a temporary concession' due to the scarcity of plant-based food.[212] Although the Catholic Church has traditionally interpreted passages in the New Testament about accepting Gentiles as advocating a complete abolition of dietary laws, except those about fasting, together with

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[210] Armstrong, p.83.
[211] Yisroel C. Blumenthal, 11 March 2001, 'Do Not Do Unto Others', available at: https://judaismresources.net/2011/03/31/do-not-do-unto-others/ (Accessed 12 July 2021).
[212] 'Judaism', Jewish Vegetarian Society, available at: https://www.jvs.org.uk/why-vegetarian/judaism/ (Accessed 15 September 2020).

regulations on human treatment of other animals more generally,[213] a significant minority of Christians (including many Dissenters) have argued in favour of vegetarianism. For example, John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, advocated vegetarianism and appears to have believed non-human animals have immortal souls since he claimed they 'shall recieve ample amends for all their present sufferings'.[214] Hence, there are theological precedents for Chauveau's imagining the Golden Rule applied to non-human animals.

Even when the negative Golden Rule is considered in isolation from Hillel's teaching, it is considerably more constraining and less open to self-interested interpretation than the positive one, perhaps explaining its appeal to the persecuted Jewish people. Within human society, the positive Golden Rule is frequently interpreted as an instruction to provide philanthropy, a system that has been demonstrated to 'reinforce inequality'.[215] Were it applied to non-human animals, it would be likely to reinforce existing tendencies towards sentimentalism and preferential charity for pets and charismatic megafauna, with 'les chats au-dessus des cochons, les ours polaires au dessus des poules'.[216] In contrast, the fish realises the particular severity of the negative Golden Rule in the following passage:

> ['']Aimez-vous les uns les autres.['] On pouvait aimer les crevettes et les manger.
>
> ['']Ne faites pas à autrui ce que vous ne voudriez pas qu'on vous fît.['] Cela n'allait plus![217]

As in the trickster narratives discussed earlier in this thesis, Chauveau draws attention to the absurdity of judging non-human animals, especially predators, according to human moral standards; and he also mocks Catholic otherworldliness.

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[213] Larue, pp.18-22
[214] 'Famous Vegetarians', Christian Vegetarian Association, available at:https://christianveg.org/famousveg.htm (Accessed 15 August 2020).
[215]Kevin Laskowski, 'Philanthropy and Inequality: What's the Relationship?', U.S. National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, available at: https://www.ncrp.org/publication/philanthropy-inequality-whats-relationship (Accessed 15 August 2020).
[216] Ferdinand, p.358.
[217] Chauveau, *Petit poisson,* p.27.

Both objects of satire are apparent in the statement 'Le petit poisson faisait toujours à autrui ce qu'il n'aurait pas voulu qu'on lui fît à lui-même – il ne songeait qu'à manger son prochain et le haïssait parce qu'il devait se défendre d'être mangé par lui';[218] and when the protagonist, returning to the water, 'trouva l'eau de mer plus vivifiante encore que l'eau bénite. Non pas qu'elle eût plus de vertu – ce serait péché de le croire – mais il en avait davantage'.[219] However, after the fisherman drops the basket he has carried the protagonist to church in and the protagonist escapes, he is anthropomorphised as someone able to change his diet, a representation based very loosely on the real-life biology of carp and other omnivores that feed primarily on invertebrates but also eat algae.[220] It is possible to infer the protagonist is a carp, because La Fontaine's fable refers to him as a 'carpeau'.[221] However, this is not clear either from Chauveau's illustrations, and the text always refers simply to 'le petit poisson', which may make some readers associate him with Christ, conspicuously never mentioned in the story despite frequent references to saints. The sentence, 'Il se rappela que certains poissons – pas de poissons de sa famille, il est vrai – se nourrissaient d'algues' is deliberately ambiguous, as 'famille' could refer either to relatives or to a zoological group.[222] However, Chauveau clearly places religion within a practical context; and represents the protagonist, having reflected on not wanting the shrimp to eat him, undergoing a difficult but achievable conversion like humans who adopt vegetarianism or making other moral choices. In *Petit poisson devenu grand* and *Les cures merveilleuses du docteur Popotame*, Chauveau depicts vegetarianism as the ideal without advocating it. Both books depict an ethical decision to abstain from all animal-derived food, although the word *végétalien* is never used, presumably because, although its first recorded usage is in 1890, at the time Chauveau was writing the distinction between vegetarianism and veganism was not widely understood.[223] 'Histoire du poisson scie et du poisson marteau'—in

[218] Chauveau, *Petit poisson,* p.15.
[219] Chauveau, *Petit poisson,* p.20.
[220] 'Common Carp [Cyprinus Carpio]', *Wayback Magazine*, available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20051126203610/http://www.arkive.org/species/ARK/fish/Cyprinus_carpio/ (Accessed 15 September 2020).
[221] La Fontaine, Book V, Fable 3, line vi.
[222] Chauveau, *Petit poisson,* p.27.
[223] 'Végétalien, -ienne, subst. et adj.', Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales, available at: https://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/végétalien (Accessed 16 August 2020).

which Léopold tells Renaud that oysters are 'des espèces de coquilles très bonnes à manger',[224] and soles 'des poissons tout plats, tu sais bien! comme ceux que nous avons mangés ce matin au déjeuner'[225]—suggests Chauveau did not practice vegetarianism. However, like his unsympathetic depiction of zoos, circuses, and people using products made of ivory, his sympathetic depiction of vegetarianism reflects a highly questioning outlook—expressed in his comment in 'Écrire pour les enfants', 'Et que des animaux, a-t-on ajouté, se dévorent entre eux, leur [aux enfants] paraît tout de même moins grave que si des hommes en faisaient autant. Ce n'est pas sûr!'[226]—that leads to profound imaginative work but not to the formulation of 'une idée déterminée de morale pratique'.[227]

The celebration of vegetarian spirituality in *Petit poisson devenu grand* is developed when the protagonist, beginning to eat algae, experiences disgust and temptation, so that:

> quand passèrent sous son nez poisson, crabe ou crevette, il lui fallut une grande force d'âme pour résister à la tentation qui lui venait de les manger – d'autant plus forte qu'ils n'avaient plus peur de lui puisqu'il ne leur faisait plus de mal, venaient très près, si près parfois qu'il devait fermer la bouche pour les empêcher d'entrer dedans.[228]

This practice of taking precautions to avoid accidental consumption of fellow creatures echoes the wearing by Jains of *muhpatti*, or protective mouth-coverings, and other measures to prevent accidental killing of insects or microbes,[229] that Chauveau may have been aware of since they are described (often inaccurately with reference to Hinduism) in eighteenth-century Western travel writing, which in turn inspired Enlightenment writers who favourably compared Indian religions to Catholicism.[230]

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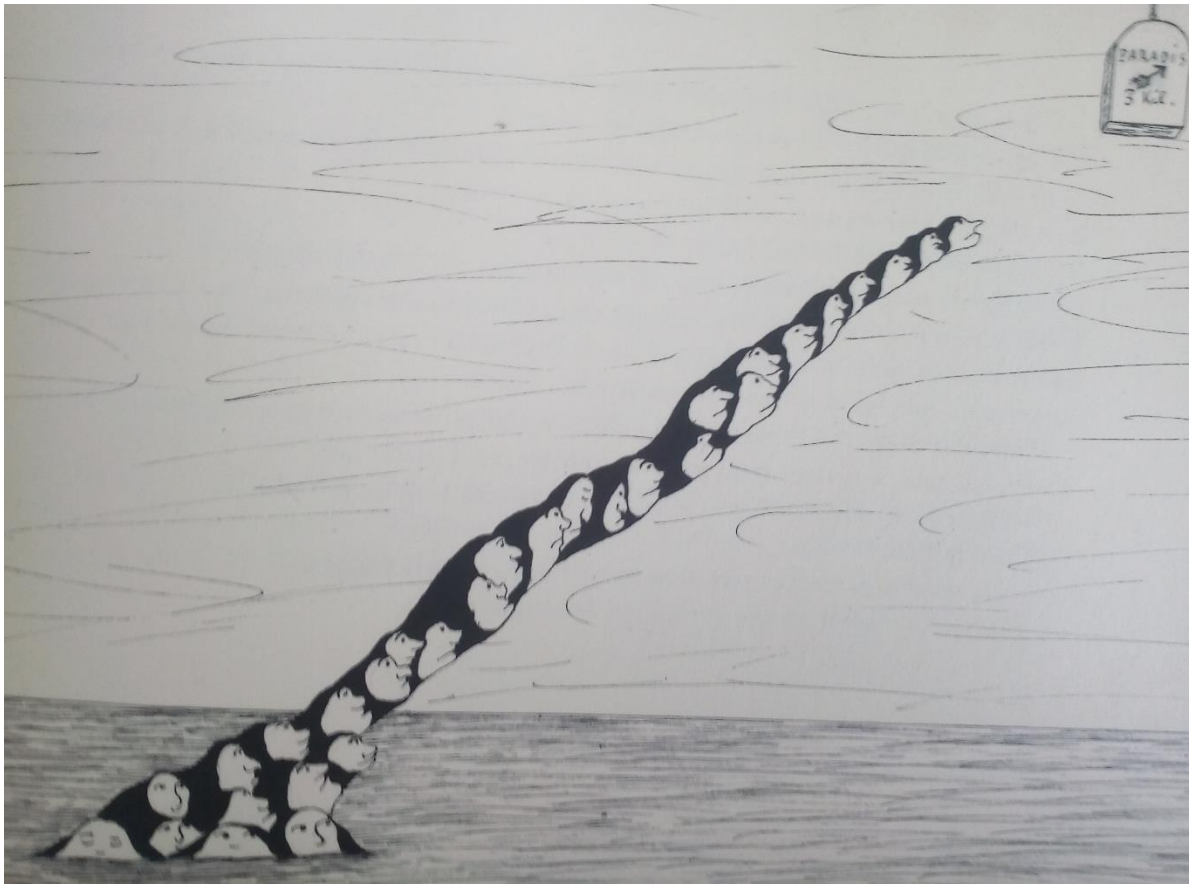
[224] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau,* p.26.
[225] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau,* p.28.
[226]Chauveau, 'Écrire', p.10.
[227] Chauveau, 'Écrire', p.11.
[228] Chauveau, *Petit poisson,* p.28.
[229] Anne Mocko, 22 November 2017, 'Attending to Insects', Religion and Culture Forum of the University of Chicago, available at https://voices.uchicago.edu/religionculture/2017/11/22/attending-to-insects/ (Accessed 15 August 2020).
[230] Larue,pp.107-144.

Chauveau then represents the protagonist's physical growth, predicted in the title and the opening conversation with Renaud, and occasioned by the fish's new diet, in increasingly exaggerated terms, until he becomes 'la plus grosse de toutes les bêtes qui aient jamais existé'.[231] It is suggested that he has simultaneously become the most virtuous creature to have ever existed: in the sentence, 'Il devenait si bon, en même temps qu'il devenait si gros, qu'il prenait garde, dans les parages où passaient les bateaux, de ne pas remonter trop près de la surface',[232] Chauveau depicts physical growth mirroring spiritual development while also making non-violence more difficult: the protagonist could accidentally sink ships simply by moving his tail. The wording here is very similar to in the following sentence from 'Les cures merveilleuses du Docteur Popotame'—'Il était si noir, il devint si bon qu'il ne fit plus jamais de mal à aucune bête'[233]—reflecting Chauveau's strong interest in physical metamorphosis as a symbol for moral transformation, despite his satirising of religious literalism and physical conceptions of the divine.

This satire informs both the text and illustrations of the second half of the story, in which Chauveau depicts heaven in a stereotypically medieval manner that is particularly comic because it immediately follows the description of a large modern ship that has crashed into a rock. He draws ironically upon a corpus of anti-clerical but otherwise religiously orthodox medieval texts, including the *Roman de Renart*,[234] the religious significance of which is discussed in detail later, in depicting the souls of the pilgrim passengers rising to heaven while '[l]es hommes de l'équipage, le capitaine, le médecin et l'aumônier descendirent directement en enfer'.[235] Chauveau absurdly describes the passengers' souls, which are non-physical by definition, as 'comme de grosses bulles';[236] and visually depicts the souls following a sign of the kind found on footpaths.

[231] Chauveau, *Petit poisson,* p.30.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Chauveau, *Cures,* p.84.
[234] J.R. Simpson, 1996, *Animal Body, Literary Corpus: The Old French* Roman de Renart, Amsterdam: Éditions Rodopi,
[235] Chauveau, *Petit poisson,* p.34.
[236] Ibid.




**Black ink drawing of the pilgrims' souls rising to Heaven**[237]

This is followed by an absurd depiction of God the Father as a self-ironizing leader who 'voulait se donner à lui-même l'illusion qu'il ne savait les choses qu'après les avoir devinées';[238] and of Saint Peter as a practical-minded administrator who 'gémissait' at the challenge of finding accommodation for so many souls.[239] However, God also represents genuine wisdom when he causes the protagonist's soul to ascend into heaven and thinks, 'Certes! Voilà un bon chrétien! Beaucoup de ceux que je prends ici ne le valent pas!'.[240] God has been observing the protagonist take one of the ship's lanterns and hold it aloft to warn other ships of the danger posed by the rock, demonstrating a foresight achieved because '[l]e petit poisson, en devenant grand, était devenu très intelligent'.[241] When God thinks 'J'ai donné, cependant, bien peu d'intelligence aux poissons',[242] Chauveau

[237] Chauveau, *Petit poisson,* p.35.
[238] Chauveau, *Petit poisson,* p.38.
[239] Chauveau, *Petit poisson,* p.36.
[240] Chauveau, *Petit poisson,* p.38.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Ibid.

is alluding to the need to actively cultivate spiritual intelligence by practicing the Golden Rule, as well as to how little humans know and how arrogant human assumptions about intelligence can be. Chauveau represents this arrogance in the final two sentences of the story before the closing conversation with Renaud:

> Les hommes, un peu surpris d'abord de trouver là cette tour qu'ils ne connaissaient pas, furent bientôt convaincus qu'ils venaient eux-mêmes de le construire et d'inventer l'ingénieux mécanisme du phare à éclipse.
>
> Personne, jusqu'à présent, ne savait quel rôle le petit poisson avait joué dans cette affaire.[243]

This statement, like the comment about 'imaginations de savants et de fabulistes' in 'Histoire de la Placide Tortue', includes an element of self-mockery, since his own narrative is clearly absurd. In *Petit poisson devenu grand,* this is reinforced by a comic final illustration of Heaven raised above the lighthouse. However, Chauveau is also creating a self-reflexive *mythos* that invites humility and wonder.


[243] Chauveau, *Petit poisson,* p.41.

**Final black ink drawing, showing the blessed souls looking down on the lighthouse**[244]

*Le Roman de Renard* is the work that Chauveau revised most extensively and that exists in the largest number of different editions. Significantly for this study, the original edition is dedicated to the memory of Renée Chauveau née Penel,[245] Chauveau's first wife and the mother of his four children, who died in 1918, four months before Renaud, at the age of 43 'de maladie et de chagrin' caused by the drowning of their eldest son Pierre in 1915.[246] Chauveau opposed Attinger's decision to omit certain passages, mainly relating to sexual activity, from the 1928 illustrated children's edition: this reflects his willingness to confront children with challenging subject matter and, given he uses euphemistic language about this activity and the children's version does include violent scenes, Attinger's decision indeed seems illogical. Due to the abridged nature of the illustrated children's version, this thesis focusses on the 1923 original, while also considering the style of the illustrations.

The original *Roman de Renart* is a compendium of twenty-six *Branches*, anonymous twelfth- and thirteenth-century narrative poems grouped in order of composition rather than the order of the narrated events. The Old French *Roman,* which incorporates material from the twelfth-century Latin beast epic *Ysengrimus,* was the first of many extremely popular versions of the saga in European vernacular languages. The publication in 1794 of the first edition of Goethe's *Reineke Fuchs,* based on poems in medieval German, prompted a significant body of research on the *Renart,* inspired by the aims of acquiring a large domestic readership for the saga and establishing it as a major classic of French literatures. Two scholars, Dominique Martin Méon, whose 1826 edition Chauveau used, and Ernst Martin, whose edition was published in four volumes between 1882 and 1887, had compiled different manuscript versions of the *Branches* to arrive at a more

[244] Chauveau, *Petit poisson,* p.40.
[245] Chauveau, *Renard,* p.5.
[246] Jacques Chevallier, 'Léopold Chauveau (1870-1940) médecin, écrivain, peintre et sculpteur', available at: https://www.biusante.parisdescartes.fr/sfhm/hsm/HSMx2016x050x002/HSMx2016x050x002x0141.pdf (Accessed 15 August 2020). Renée's illness was not officially diagnosed and is not identified in any study of Léopold Chauveau, although Marc Chauveau has told me he has strong reason to believe it was tuberculosis.

definitive printed text.[247] These editions were then used to produce versions of the saga in modern French that could be read as a continuous epic.

In the first of these versions, the scholar and poet Charles Potvin uses his 144-page introduction to make a political case for the *Renart*'s significance as a classic and to attack the culture of censorship that had resulted in the saga, which was included on the Papacy's *Index of Prohibited Books*, acquiring less popularity in France than in Protestant Germanic countries.[248] This argument is based primarily on the satirical importance of poems in which the characters are greatly anthropomorphised. Potvin considers that, in portraying Renart, ostensibly a villain, as a religious hypocrite who succeeds in gaining the support of the ostensibly sympathetic lion king Noble, the authors of the *Renart* satirised both religious and feudal institutions in a way that would inspire later classics representing religious hypocrites, such as Molière's *Tartuffe* and Voltaire's *Candide*. While this still involved considering the anthropomorphised Renart to be unsympathetic, Potvin frequently refers to the fox as a *héros,*[249] and he suggests that Renart is represented more sympathetically when he is acting out his animal nature. In a detailed discussion of the sources that inspired the authors of the *Renart*, he claims that, '[l]es lois des Germains protégaient les animaux, et ces peuples sont ceux de la race indo-européenne qui ont conservé davantage le culte de la nature, metempsychose dans l'Inde et chez les Druides, sorte de providence naturelle chez les Bardes, panthéisme chez les Saxons et les Allemands'.[250] His theories about the Germanic, in the sense of Aryan, origins of animal stories are likely to be informed by the folklorist Jacob Grimm, who had written extensively on German versions of the *Renart* saga and who in his *Teutonic Mythology* writes of

[247]Dominique Martin Méon (ed.), 1826, *Le Roman du Renart, publié d'après les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Roi des XIIIe, XIVe et XVe siècles*, Paris, Treuttel et Würtz, 4 vols. Ernst Martin (ed.), 1882 (Vol.1), 1885 (Vol.2) and 1887 (Vols. 3 and 4), *Le Roman de Renart*, Strasbourg: K.J. Trübner.
[248]Charles Potvin, 1862, *Le roman du Renard, mis en vers d'après les textes originaux, précédé d'une introduction et d'une bibliographie par Ch. Potvin,* Bruxelles: Lacroix, Verboechoven et C[ie], pp.5-148.
[249] Potvin, p.8 onwards.
[250] Potvin, p.55.

the ‘divine veneration’ conferred by ancient Germanic peoples on non-human animals.[251]

Whatever the scholarly merits of Potvin’s interpretation of the Old French *Renart* and of Grimm’s theories on ancient history, Potvin’s version had a major influence on subsequent adapters, including Chauveau. Chauveau acknowledges in his *Avant-propos* that he has ‘aucune science et aucune prétention à la science’, as is clear from the fact that he announces his decision to use Méon’s edition without comment despite Martin’s being generally regarded as superior.[252] This sets Chauveau quite dramatically apart from earlier and other contemporary French adapters of the saga: Alexis Paulin devotes his fifty-page introduction to outlining the results of his archival research and arguing that Méon’s edition should be replaced;[253] while the prominent linguist of Old French Alfred Jeanroy introduces his wife Caroline’s translation.[254] A fluent speaker of both German and Italian since his period of residence in Switzerland from 1910 to 1914, Chauveau read Goethe’s *Reineke Fuchs* with admiration, but Méon and Potvin were clearly his primary influences.

Like Potvin and Paulin, Chauveau’s *Renard* consists of: a preface presenting the author’s interpretation of the original saga; a prologue based on Branche XXIV, a short poem that gives a comic account of the origin of different animal species; and a number of *parties*—three in Chauveau’s case—subdivided into chapters that recount the events of the saga in a logical order. Chauveau’s two-page ‘Avant-propos’ expresses deep admiration for the original *Renart,* stating that his motivation was ‘de mettre à la portée du public moderne cette oeuvre qui a joui d’une immense popularité, qui s’est répandue dans l’Europe entière et n’est tombée dans l’oubli, en France, que lorsque le vieillissement de la langue l’a rendue inaccessible au plus grand nombre’.[255] He then expresses a much more

[251] Jacob Grimm trans. James Steven Stallybrass, 1885, *Teutonic Mythology: Volume II,* London: George Bell and Sons, p.217.
[252] Chauveau, *Renard*, p.7.
[253] Alexis Paulin, 1861, *Les aventures de maître Renart et d'Ysengrin son compère, mises en nouveau langage, racontées dans un nouvel ordre, précédées de nouvelles recherches sur le Roman de Renart,* Paris: J. Techener. Reprinted 1921, Paris: Éditions G. Crès et C[ie], pp.i-l.
[254] B.-A. and Alfred Jeanroy, 1926, *Le roman de Renard, principaux épisodes traduits par Mme B.-A. Jeanroy, introduction par A. Jeanroy,* Paris: de Boccard.
[255] Chauveau, *Renard*, p.7.

radically positive view of the protagonist's character than Potvin, defining the *Renart* as the 'prodigeuse épopée…[de] la lutte, contre la force brutale, de l'intelligence servie par la ruse'.[256] Like Potvin, he connects this to the 'amour de la nature' and 'profonde connaissance de la campagne' of the *Renart*'s original authors and the authors of works that inspired them.[257] By 'la force brutale', Chauveau appears to be referring to all the protagonist's enemies—including Noble and the wolf Ysengrin, whom the medieval authors had to portray as ostensibly in the right since he was the husband of the she-wolf Hersent with whom Renart had an affair, as well as human hunters. However, both in the adaption and, to a much greater extent and much more explicitly, in Chauveau's original stories inspired by the saga, he depicts Renard more sympathetically in episodes where he appears in his natural context than in those where he acts like a scheming baron.

In addition to this, as a relatively faithful adaptation, Chauveau's *Roman de Renard* shifts in emphasis from episode to episode according to the extent to which the original authors are 'de connivance avec le goupil'.[258] Two of the most important elements in these shifts of representation are: Renard's treatment of his wife and children, whom he sometimes protects and provides for but sometimes neglects; and the depiction of Renard's relationship with Hersent, whom Ysengrin accuses Renard of raping, whereas many passages suggest a consensual affair. Chauveau takes advantage of these ambiguities to identify Renard as a trickster whose struggles present some commonalities with those of rebellious women, who also use their intelligence to combat 'la force brutale'. The progressive gender politics of Chauveau's version of the saga, which may be connected to the dedication to Renée, are expressed towards the end of the 'Avant-propos' with the observation that, for all the characters in the original saga, ' seul l'amour pour la femme et pour les enfants est un amour profond qui résiste à tout'.[259] This is followed in the 'Prologue' by a version of Branche XXIV that diverges from the original meaning so radically that Chauveau's claim that his sole intention is to adapt the saga faithfully appears ironic. Chauveau does not change the narrative—

[256] Chauveau, *Renard*, p.8.
[257] Chauveau, *Renard*, p.8.
[258] Jean Dufournet and Andrée Meline (eds.), 1985, *Le Roman de Renart* (2 vols.), Paris: Garnier, Vol. I, p.6.
[259] Chauveau, *Renard*, p.8.

in which God gives Adam a magic wand which Adam uses to create species such as dogs and sheep that benefit humans, and Eve steals the wand while Adam sleeps to create hostile predators such as foxes and wolves—but comments on its significance in a highly original way that reveals a great deal about Chauveau's own approach to gender, ecology and religion:

> C'est pourquoi ceux qui blasphèment à Notre Seigneur Dieu d'avoir créé les bêtes qui ne nous portent que nuisance et dommage, blasphèment très vilainement puisque ce n'est pas lui qui est responsable de leur naissance, mais bien seulement Ève, la femme, dont sont nés encore pour nous tous les autres maux qui infestent la terre.
>
> Mais il ne lui en faut pas vouloir, non plus qu'à ses filles, nées d'elle, qui sont mortes et qui vivent encore maintenant, car le monde, sans les maux qui l'encombent, serait séjour bien monotone.
>
> Que bénie soit donc notre grand-mère Ève pour tout le mal qu'elle a créé, et aussi pour avoir créé le goupil dont nous allons vous narrer les aventures.
>
> Et qu'avec elle soient bénies ses filles, ses petites-filles, arrière-petites-filles, jusqu'aux générations de celles qui vivent aujourd'hui et nous font encore tant de bien, tant de mal, et peuvent seules nous donner le courage et la force de supporter tous les maux qu'elles nous font.[260]

This uncharacteristic authorial comment satirises the deepest assumptions of the original satirists. According to critical consensus, these medieval authors' critique of feudal and ecclesiastical corruption did not question belief in a hierarchical 'scale of intellectual capacity running from inanimate objects [followed by non-human animals] at one end to God at the other…with "Man" firmly in the

[260] Chauveau, *Renard*, pp.13-14

middle'.[261] This scale involved considerable differentiation within human society, for example the belief that 'the king is closer to the divine than the mass of his subjects', as well as on the basis of gender.[262] The worldview of the original authors and their contemporaries was also profoundly shaped by the first major phase of European colonial expansion, the Crusades, 'an idolatrous catastrophe' whose perpetrators 'had foisted their own fear and loathing of [the] rival faiths [of Judaism and Islam] on to a deity they had created in their own likeness and thus given them a sacred seal of absolute approval'.[263] Animal satires such as the *Renart* draw upon the 'blurred division between the human and the animal' and on humans' supposed dual nature, combining elements of the animal and the divine, to satirise the supposedly animalistic misconduct of individuals in positions of authority, with the non-human characters' aping of human behaviour acting as 'a parody of the quest for God that was faith'.[264] This explains the paradox that, despite the medieval authors' belief in human superiority, Renart appears much more sympathetic, at least to modern readers, in stories where he is acting in his natural role as predator, than in those where he is anthropomorphised as a courtier for Noble, the crusading lion king.

In praising Eve, women in general, and predators for introducing variety and the sense of purpose inherent in struggle, Chauveau satirises what Armstrong identifies as 'idolatrous' abuse of religion, in which people conceive of God as being 'in their own likeness', assuming Creation occurred in what they perceive to be their own interest and that God opposes enemy or rival groups, in this case predators and women.[265] Chauveau's authorial comment also draws attention to the tendency identified by Ferdinand for Western Christians to fail to recognise the sanctity of women or nature because they have excessively anthropomorphised God as a father. This tendency has had a great influence on later secular societies, in which 'ceux qui blasphèment à Notre Seigneur Dieu' share similar anthropocentric and patriarchal assumptions that society and the environment should be organised in the interest of men; and that this interest should be defined

[261] Simpson, p.10.
[262] Simpson, p.16.
[263] Armstrong, p.137.
[264] Simpson, p.11
[265] Armstrong, p.137.

in terms of an absence of conflict, challenge, inconvenience and struggle. Chauveau draws attention to how human beings benefit from the arts, which respond creatively to the challenges and conflicts posed both by interpersonal relationships and by the confrontation with a seemingly hostile and alien natural environment. In thanking Eve and her descendants for the Renard story, Chauveau alludes to women's 'critical role in creating and sustaining oral literature'.[266]

Chauveau's positive depiction of Eve's trickster nature and her association with Renard and other non-human tricksters is an ironic response to the literary tradition of the animalised femme fatale, in which Eve is frequently depicted as the archetypal 'femme tentatrice' with a 'rapprochement du serpent et de la femme'.[267] It also draws upon an important tradition of both Jewish and non-Jewish writing that re-interprets the mythic figure of Lilith, created from an androgyne as Adam's first wife, then transformed into a demon after refusing to accept the authority of Adam, supported by God. Legends about Lilith in written form originate with 'the writings called Midrash – imaginative interpretations or commentaries on scripture' that are inspired by mystical and anti-literalist conceptions of the divine but nevertheless 'were primarily told by men, and their depiction of Lilith was consistent: she was a witch; a temptress; a dangerous, evil woman'.[268] Key figures in nineteenth and early twentieth-century French Romantic and Decadent writing, such as Victor Hugo, Anatole France, and Renée Vivien, appropriated this tradition to depict Lilith as possessing a 'perfection…[qui] excède les desseins du Créateur' and thus to attack the presumed superiority of God the Father.[269]

The rehabilitation of demonised Biblical women parallels that of monsters, reflecting wider connections between religion and conceptions of the monstrous. Much as Chauveau represents monsters overcoming their loneliness by becoming part of an imaginary family with himself, he depicts Eve as a 'grand-mère' and Creator

[266] Barbara Fisher, 1995, *Third World Women's Literatures: A Dictionary and Guide to Materials in English*, Westport: Greenwood Press.
[267] Patricia Eikel-Lojkine, 2014, 'Canis dans tous ses états : Récit sériel(s), sagesses et animal exemplaire', Cahiers de recherches mediévales et humanistes, 27, available at: https://journals.openedition.org/crm/13453 (Accessed 15 August 2020).

[268] Enid Dame, Lily Hilkin and Henry Wenkart, 2004, *Which Lilith?: Feminist Writers Re-Create the World's First Woman*, Lanham (MD): Rowman and Littlefield.
[269] Pascale Auraix-Jonchière, 2002, *Lilith, avatars et métamorphoses d'un mythe entre Romantisme et decadence*, Cahiers Romantiques: Clermont-Ferrand,p.90.

who, despite her loveless marriage, enjoys a privileged relationship with her human and non-human offspring. This imagining of Creation as a process involving a male and a female who are to some extent opposed to each other but nevertheless produce beauty and harmony may be linked to Jewish Midrash and literary texts about the relationship between the *Shechinah*—an aspect of God similar to the Christian Holy Spirit, referred to with female pronouns—and God the Father. These writings should not be interpreted literally, but as an acknowledgement that 'ideas about the divine' need to be expressed but inevitably lead to 'man-made doctrines' 'inadequate' for describing divine reality. [270]In response to the growth of Jewish feminism and to the loss after the Shoah of traditional faith in divine compassion for, and intervention on behalf of, humans, post-War writers including Primo Levi have depicted Lilith displacing the *Shechinah* as the partner of God the Father. [271] While these works parallel Chauveau's in terms of the reworking of *mythos* in response to concerns over both gender and totalitarianism, he is particularly original in combining these concerns with strong ecological awareness.

Chauveau exploits the contrast between Renard's characters as a heavily anthropomorphised corrupt *baron*, and as a sympathetic predator struggling for survival, to satirize hierarchical belief systems and anthropomorphising religion in two original works, 'La mort de Renard' and 'Renard Pièce en 9 tableaux', which both depict God and Saint Peter in a similarly absurd way to *Petit poisson devenu grand*.[272] 'La mort de Renard' begins with an argument between God and the Devil, who both want Renard's soul: this passage expresses Chauveau's own admiration for Renard's amoral genius and satirises the original authors of the *Renart* for their anthropomorphised view of both God and non-human animals and their assumption of a rigid division between good and evil. Renard then tricks the Devil by forcing the lion king Noble's soul out of Noble's body and putting his own soul in its place, a situation Chauveau uses to satirise the physical depiction of souls as well as assumptions about the essential moral nature of non-human

[270] Armstrong, p.2
[271] Dame, Hilkin and Wenkart; and Auraix-Jonchière.
[272] Chauveau, 5 and 12 February 1936, 'La mort de Renard', *Marianne*. 'Renard, Pièce en 9 tableaux, Écrite pour être jouée par des enfants' was never published or performed. Page references for both works are to electronic documents based on the manuscripts, prepared and kindly made available by Marc Chauveau.

species, with phrases like 'la plus pacifique âme de brebis'.[273] Initially a light-hearted satire similar to the *Renart* stories it is a continuation of 'La mort de Renard' becomes considerably darker when the king enters negotiations with his arch-priest on state funding for the church, and proposes a solution that reminds 1930s readers that scapegoating, especially antisemitism, dates back at least as far as the Middle Ages and can be linked to religious literalism and the abuse of Christianity by self-interested elites: 'je fais appréhender, incarcérer, juger, mettre à mort, tous les hérétiques, schismatiques, juifs et mécréants qui infestent le royaume – et je confisque leurs biens qui sont immenses'.[274] For most of the story, Renard is depicted as an odious, entirely anthropomorphised hypocrite exploiting the poor and justifying his actions with reference to Christianity and even to 'la faiblesse inhérente à l'humaine nature'.[275] Chauveau subverts anthropocentric assumptions and draws upon primitivism towards the end of the story, when a famine forces Renard to return to his animalistic nature and to the primitive struggle for survival, so that 'Il tuait, pour se nourrir, juste ce qu'il pouvait manger – pas d'avantage'. [276] After Noble's corporeal death, Renard's soul tricks a donkey's soul into exchanging bags of sins and, presumably with the connivance of God who always wanted him in heaven, succeeds in being enthusiastically welcomed by Saint Peter. This absurd scene, together with the Epilogue in which Saint Peter proposes the donkey's canonisation to the Pope via telephone, satirises both assumptions of privileged human knowledge and access to the divine, and the depiction in religious literature of predators as epitomes of vice and prey as epitomes of virtue, as in Peter's conflation of all donkeys when he dismisses Renard's affected contrition with the statement, 'Tu n'as cependant pas refusé de porter Notre Seigneur sur ton dos, pour son entrée à Jérusalem !...'.[277]

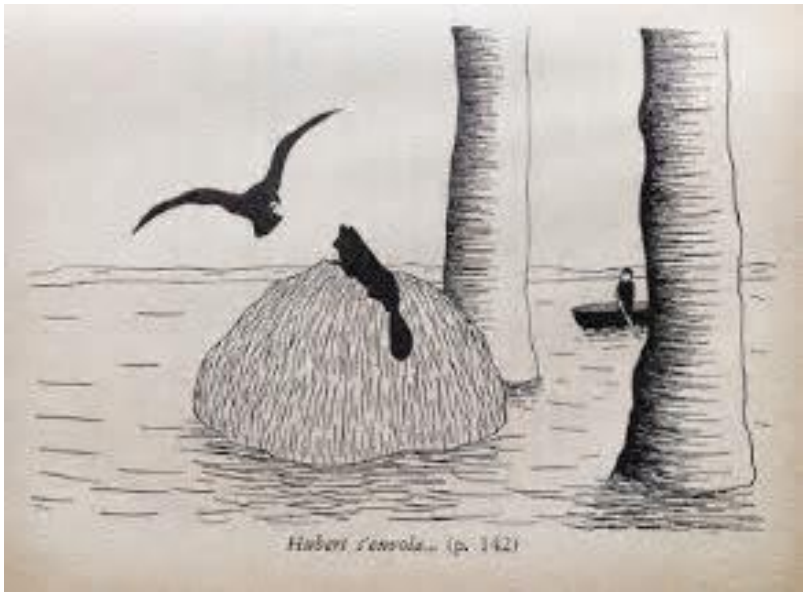
Chauveau repeats the incident with Renard and the donkey at the end of his play, with Saint Peter using the even more absurdly anthropomorphising expression

[273] Chauveau, 'mort', p.5.
[274] Chauveau, 'mort', p.9.
[275] Chauveau, 'mort', p.11
[276] Chauveau, 'mort',p.20.
[277] Chauveau, 'mort',p.24, original ellipsis.

'Paradis! Première classe!'.[278] This draws attention to the strongly materialistic value system of the authors of the original *Renart*, who can only imagine salvation in terms of earthly wealth. Earlier scenes adapt the original *Renart* stories to more fiercely satirise both social hierarchies and anthropocentrism. For example, a chorus of hens complains to Noble that, by eating their relatives, Renard has denied them the dignified death they would have had if they were killed for human consumption.[279]

While the 'Avant-propos' and the 'Prologue' are omitted from the abridged, illustrated children's version of Chauveau's *Renard,* his distinctive interpretation of Renard's character is conveyed powerfully through the illustrations. Chauveau's style of illustration for this piece contrasts sharply with that of previous illustrators, much like the contrast between his illustrations of La Fontaine and those by his namesake François Chauveau. This can be demonstrated by considering an example illustration by Chauveau, and another by Wilhelm von Kaulbach, the most popular illustrator of Goethe's *Reineke Fuchs*. The illustration by von Kaulbach, which depicts Reineke as an overweight glutton with a large supply of carcases, is untypical since he frequently portrays Reineke as skinny and struggling to find food. However, these two images are radical examples of a fundamental difference between the two illustrators' approaches: von Kaulbach anthropomorphises Reineke as cruel and greedy, whereas Chauveau depicts Renard in his natural setting in a way that invites sympathy for his hunger.

[278] Chauveau, 'Pièce', p.29.
[279] Chauveau, 'Pièce', p.16-17.




**Black ink drawing with caption 'Hubert s'envola'.**[280]

**Block print of Reineke in his larder.**[281]

Much as Chauveau responds to medieval Catholic culture with works that satirise antisemitism and incorporate elements of Judaism, depicting them positively, in 'Histoire de la poule et du canard', appearing on pages 167 to 220 of *Histoires du Petit Père Renaud,* he positively represents Islam in a way that is significant not only

[280] Chauveau, *Renard, version illustrée*, p.141.
[281] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, ill. Wilhelm von Kaulbach, 1857, *Reineke Fuchs*, Stuttgart: J.D. Cotta, p.3.

because, as Said observes, positive representations are rare generally, but because Islam has recently become associated with cruelty towards non-human animals. The stork in Chauveau's story carries the hen and the duck to the minaret where she nests each year. Immediately after her landing, '[a]u-dessous d'eux, dans les ruelles étroites d'un village arabe, sur les toits plats des maisons, hommes, femmes, enfants levaient la tête et se réjouissaient de voir que la fidèle cigogne était revenue'.[282] Apart from the stork's taking the other birds with him, the description of his migration and nesting is relatively realistic: storks migrate annually from Europe to Africa, and nest on the roofs of large buildings.[283] Chauveau almost certainly observed storks nesting on a minaret during his stay in Tlemcen, since Robert Swain Gifford includes a stork's nest in his painting of one of the town's mosques.[284] Chauveau's depiction of the villagers as joyful, like his depiction of the villagers' gratitude in 'Histoire du vieux crocodile', reflects a primitivist tendency to depict non-European peoples experiencing spontaneous pleasure and appreciation in their encounters with nature, but is also relatively realistic and may be informed by personal experience.

It may also reflect Chauveau's knowledge of Islam, some interpretations of which could lead Muslims to welcome non-human animals as fellow worshippers. The Qurānic teaching that all animal species praise God and belong to spiritual communities (ʾ*umam*) similar to the human Muslim ʾ*umma* is expressed in Suras 24 : 41,'Seest thou not that it is Allah Whose praise all beings in the heavens and on earth do celebrate, and the birds (of the air) with wings outspread? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise, and Allah knows well all that they do'; and 6 : 38, 'There is not an animal (that lives) on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but (forms part of) communities like you. Nothing have We omitted from the Book, and they (all) shall be gathered to their Lord in the end'.[285] These passages have

[282] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.204.
[283] 'White Stork – here's why they're such an uplifting opportunity', Rewilding Britain, 20 June 2016, available at: https://www.rewildingbritain.org.uk/blog/white-stork-opportunity (Accessed 5 August 2020).
[284] Gifford's 'The Sidi Hassan Mosque, Tlemcen, Algeria' dates from 1875 and is conserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, details available at: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/759614 (Accessed 29 June 2020).

[285] Trans. Abdullah Yusuf Ali [1934], cited and contextualized in 'Halal Vegetarianism', Animals in Islam (website with editorial independence supported by People for the Ethical Treatment of

been subject to considerable interpretation: while a majority of Muslims has held that non-human animals, like plants and other parts of Creation, praise God involuntarily and 'will be extinguished on the Day of Judgement'[286], a significant minority argue either that 'good animals, like good humans, will enjoy eternal life in heaven, while bad animals will join bad humans in hell'[287] or less frequently, 'that *all* [non-human] animals…go to heaven'.[288] Despite these disagreements, 'historically, non-human animals in Muslim societies benefited from protections and services that filled European visitors with astonishment';[289] and the nineteenth-century English traveller Edward Lane attributed the relative decline of this 'traditional kindness' in Egypt to the influence of European colonialism.[290] This humane attitude is derived from Qur-ānic instructions about ecological stewardship in general and especially about animal ethics, which replace much crueler pre-Islamic practices and include the obligation, as in Judaism, to use what were then the most humane slaughter methods and a ban on killing except 'to satisfy…hunger or to protect [oneself] from danger'.[291] Apart from revisionist arguments that Muslims must adopt vegetarianism because modern intensive farming is un-Islamic, and because the Qur-ān should be interpreted as only authorizing killing for necessity and 'most Muslims today are not constrained to eat meat for their survival',[292] orthodox Islamic jurists have recently begun adopting progressive positions: for example, they have authorized stunning before slaughter and the replacement of animal sacrifice with a charitable donation, since the original purpose of sacrifice was to share food with the poor. Therefore, despite the brevity of Chauveau's reference to Islam, his depiction of a harmonious Muslim environment offers a useful corrective to Western assumptions that Islamic societies are cruel and monolithic.

At the end of Chauveau's other story set in Egypt, 'L'histoire du vieux crocodile', appearing on pages 67 to 126 of *Histoire du poisson scie et du poisson marteau*, he

Animals), available at: https://www.animalsinislam.com/halal-living/halal-vegetarianism/ (Accessed 16 August 2020).
[286] Foltz, p.6.
[287] Foltz, p.6.
[288] Foltz, p.7, original italics.
[289] Foltz, p.7.
[290] Foltz, p.5.
[291] Foltz, p.33.
[292] Foltz, p.123.

engages with much older rituals that now appear deeply alien and invites readers to re-evaluate their own attitudes. He represents the ethical dilemmas faced by the protagonist and discussed in chapter 1 as conflicts between spiritual aspirations and physical needs, with the sentence 'Quand la nuit fut tombée, la pieuvre endormie, un terrible combat se livra dans l'âme du vieux crocodile, entre les deux amours qu'il portait à la pieuvre: l'amour que lui inspiraient ses nobles qualités, ses vertus, sa sagesse, et l'amour que lui inspiraient ses gigots'.[293] This reflects the idea explored in *L'Ombre du Pantin* that all living things possess a soul that is intimately involved with their physical reality as parts of an ecosystem. In using terms such as 'âme' and 'amour', Chauveau also adopts the method he describes in 'Écrire pour les enfants' as 'parer une bête de toutes les qualités dites humaines dont il [l'enfant] s'est apercu déjà que les hommes ne sont pas très richement pourvus'.[294] This is something many writers do about prey, but by describing a predator in this way, Chauveau draws attention to the immense importance for all animals of the instinct for self-preservation, which is the driving force in primitive societies; and suggests that neither human nor non-human animals should be judged by unrealistic moral standards. While it includes satirical elements, 'Histoire du vieux crocodile' is the least comic of Chauveau's animal stories, with little sense that the protagonist's grief and remorse is less serious because of his species. This can be linked to Chauveau's remark immediately after his comment about 'les qualités dites humaines' that 'Et que des animaux, a-t-on ajouté, se dévorent entre eux, leur [aux enfants] paraît tout de même grave que si des hommes en faisaient autant. Ce n'est pas sûr!'.[295]

In the context of these pantheistic and primitivist ideas, as well as of the conception expressed by Saint-Exupéry and other contemporaries of the sacred coming into existence through human thoughts and actions, it appears natural that when the protagonist returns to Egypt and, turned red from his sojourn in the Red Sea, terrifies other crocodiles into fleeing the area, 'On le déposa, dormant toujours, dans la plus grande, la plus belle hutte du village, qui devint un temple, car le vieux crocodile

[293] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau,* pp.79-80.
[294] Chauveau, 'Écrire',p.10.
[295] Chauveau, 'Écrire', p.10.

était élevé au rang d'un dieu'. [296] This is based on a real practice in ancient Egypt of keeping temple crocodiles, with a similar practical aim of appeasing the crocodile-god, Sobek, and preventing crocodiles from killing large numbers of people.[297] However, the scene before the protagonist is carried to the temple, in which the local people continue to dance and sing while he eats a girl, and their decision to bring a girl to the temple every day as a sacrifice, are unlikely to be based on the cult of Sobek, since '[o]ther than the killing of prisoners of war, no other evidence for human sacrifice, neither as offerings to the gods nor in the form of retainer sacrifice, has been found' in ancient Egypt. [298]The reverence afforded to Sobek has sometimes been exaggerated in sensationalist or anti-pagan texts, with claims such as 'mothers of children eaten by crocodiles felt privileged to have provided something for Sobek's delectation',[299] but even the events they describe are very different from the sacrifices in Chauveau's story, which are imbued with sexual symbolism. This is clear both from the behaviour of the first girl he eats, who 'souriait tandis que le vieux crocodile lui mâchonnait la cuisse…[et] enleva rapidement son pagne car elle craignait que les verroteries dont il fut orné fussent de digestion difficile pour l'estomac du pauvre crocodile';[300] and from the description of the later sacrifices, during which '[c]haque jour, on lui offre une jeune fille de dix ou douze ans' who 'semble très heureuse d'être mangée par lui'. [301] This gift of females at the onset of puberty may be inspired by a tradition in Kupang, West Timor that was described by western travel writers during Portuguese colonialism. Before the mass conversion of islanders to Catholicism, people throughout Timor believed themselves to be descended from crocodiles, whom they regarded with both fear and admiration; and, to secure an alliance with the crocodiles, 'at the coronation of the ruler of Kupang a virgin had to be sacrificed' and 'was then considered to be married to the crocodile'. [302]

[296] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau,* p.86.
[297] 'Sobek', Museum of Monsters, Myths and Legends (New Jersey), available at: http://www.museumofmythology.com/Egypt/sobek.htm (Accessed 15 September 2020).
[298] Caroline Seawright, 'Human Sacrifice in Ancient Egypt', Tour Egypt, available at: http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/humansac.htm (Accessed 16 August 2020).
[299] Richard Bangs, 2017, *Richard Bangs' Adventures with Purpose: Dispatches from the Front Lines of Earth*, Birmingham, AL: Menasha Ridge Press, p.6.
[300] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau,* p.85.
[301] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau,* p.86.
[302] H.G. Schulte Nordholt, trans. J.L. van Yperen, 1971,*The Political System of the Atoni of Tim*or, Drieburgen: Offsetbruk Van Manen & Co, p.323.

Characteristically, Chauveau makes no authorial comment on the worshippers' behaviour; [303] instead depicting it from the perspective of the crocodile, who accepts with naïve innocence that the girls are happy to be eaten, and whose 'paix' and 'sérénité' are troubled only by his inability to understand how he has become an object of terror for crocodiles and reverence for humans, '[c]ar il est modeste'.[304] While it is suggested that the protagonist's relationship with his octopus 'amie' is romantic,[305] his distaste for killing shows that he is not predatory in the human sense,[306] and indeed is more innocent and worthy of reverence than his worshippers assume. Throughout his œuvre, Chauveau sympathetically represents predators; and many stories feature crocodiles, 'the only large, partially terrestrial animals that do not hesitate to attack humans'[307]. In 'L'histoire du vieux crocodile', the worshippers appear sympathetic in their gratitude to the protagonist and acceptance of their own place within the food chain, but unsympathetic in their patriarchal choice of victims. As Litaudon observes in her discussion of stories in which non-human children are abandoned by their parents,[308] an important theme in Chauveau's œuvre is intergenerational betrayal; and the 'sacrifice' by Chauveau's generation of young soldiers means the worshippers cannot be simplistically considered culturally inferior. Instead, Chauveau invites readers to respond creatively both to a range of religious traditions and to the wonders of nature, in order to build a spirituality based both on compassion and on a celebration of difference and mystery: an

[303] This story also includes no conversations with Renaud. However, since it is published in *Histoire du poisson scie et du poisson marteau,* and Renaud frequently interrupts his father to ask questions during the title story, it cannot be inferred from this that either Chauveau, with his lack of preconceptions about age appropriateness, or his publishers intended 'Histoire du Vieux Crocodile' to be read exclusively by adults. Victor Attinger's willingness to market 'Histoire du Vieux Crocodile' to children, despite insisting on the omission of sexual references from the illustrated version of the *Renard,* is likely to reflect an assumption that primitive practices constitute inherently trivial subject matter. Unsurprisingly, Yamamura's film is marketed to adults, although I know parents whose pre-adolescent children have watched and enjoyed it.
[304] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau,* p.86.
[305] Chauveau, *Scie et Marteau,* p.81.
[306] Juliette Boutant and Thomas Mathieu represent human sexual predators as crocodiles in their high-profile 'Projets crocodiles', a series of *bandes dessinées*, available at: https://projetcrocodiles.tumblr.com/ (Accessed 29 September 2020). It is possible that 'crocodile' was used metaphorically to refer to sexual predators before that, although the Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales lists no metaphorical meanings except the expression 'larmes de crocodile': see 'Crocodile', Centre national de ressources textuelles et lexicales, available at: https://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/academie8/crocodile (Accessed 29 September 2020).
[307] Boria Sax, 2001, *The mythical zoo: an encyclopaedia of animals in world myth, legend and literature*, Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO,p.68.
[308] See Litaudon, 'éducation'.

attitude similar to those expressed in explicitly religious works about predators such as The Tyger'.

While Chauveau's non-realist depiction, especially in his illustrations, of the Egyptian tribe, like his representation of the crocodile eating the nurses in 'Les cures merveilleuses du docteur Popotame', clearly does not meet present-day standards of political correctness, since Chauveau depicts the killing of white human characters by non-human animals in similarly provocative ways, one should not condemn as racial stereotyping the story by Chauveau most popular among non-Western audiences. In 2005, independent director, editor and producer Koji Yamamura faithfully adapted the story as an animated film, *Toshi wo totta wani/The Old Crocodile*, using Chauveau's original illustrations and a text derived from Yasuhiro Deguchi's Japanese translation.[309] The film's success prompted later translations of *Poisson scie et poisson marteau* into Korean and Chinese.[310]

In 'Histoire du petit ours', appearing on pages 101 to 130 of *Histoires du petit père Renaud*, without referring to any specific religious tradition, Chauveau at once satirises human pretentions to be 'intelligences supérieures' with privileged knowledge of the divine setting them apart from other animals;[311] and imagines the possibility of non-human animals enjoying spiritual knowledge. This can be understood as an extremely light-hearted comment on the futility of attempting to define spiritual reality using human language; and by implication as a celebration of the 'mystical wonder and mystery' that arises from 'constant engagement with insoluble problems', both about theology and aspects of the natural world such as the psychology of non-human animals, an emotion Einstein described as 'the sower of all true art and science'.[312] The young bear Rounichond insists that the parent bears continue licking the boy Toto—this is their method of imparting intelligence to both Toto and Rounichond and of provoking physical growth—after he has become

[309] Koji Yamamura, 2005, *Toshi wo totta wani/ The Old Crocodile*, Yamamura Animation, available in Japanese with French subtitles at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhIEIgTX6v0 and in English with Spanish subtitles at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDKWJ6614VM (Both accessed 5 August 2020). Chauveau trans. Yasuhiro Deguchi, 1986, *Toshi wo totta wani no hanashi* [*Scie et Marteau*], Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten.
[310] Chauveau trans. Zijun Liu, 2012, *E yu, Sha yu, Duan tui gou* [*Scie et Marteau*], Beijing: Guang ming ri bao chu ban she; Chauveau trans. Anonymous, 2010, *Neulk-eun aggeo iyagi* [*Scie et Marteau*], Seoul: Buk ta im.
[311] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.128.
[312] Cited in Armstrong, p.225

abnormally large, so that he will acquire and pass on to other humans knowledge about '[l]'origine du monde…le problème du mal… l'immortalité de l'âme, des rapports du physique et de la morale, etc, etc' and other subjects humans find 'si compliquées, si mystérieuses'.[313] Rounichond's hubris leads to both his and Toto's death, and he cannot be considered spiritually enlightened. However, the two parent bears, who had wanted to stop licking Toto, demonstrate wisdom, observing simply that humans, not knowing the answers to their questions, 's'en passeront', before mourning their children's death, reflecting the need to prioritise compassion and wonder for Creation over attempts to develop factual knowledge about the divine.[314]

Chauveau's depiction of Toto's friendship with the bears—and, throughout his œuvre, of adult and child human characters forming emotional bonds with, and learning from, non-human animals—parallels Saint-Exupéry's representation in *Le Petit Prince* of the prince's and narrator's spiritual quests. Throughout his novella, Saint-Exupéry favourably depicts children's kinship with other animals and naïve wonder at the natural world, castigating adults for their obliviousness towards it, a theme introduced with the narrator's opening anecdote about his drawing of a boa constrictor eating an elephant being mistaken for a drawing of a hat.[315] In describing the prince's arrival on earth, the narrator observes that '[l]es hommes occupent très peu d'espace dans le monde', although '[l]es grandes personnes s'imaginent tenir beaucoup de place'.[316] The prince then forms his pact with the serpent, has a brief conversation with roses, and is taught about the spiritual blindness of humanity by a hunted fox who re-defines the term 'apprivoiser', which usually means domesticating non-human animals—albeit in a more persuasive, less violent way than the other French verb translated into English as 'tame', 'dompter'—as 'une chose trop oubliée', 'créer des liens'.[317] This re-definition, and the claim that the term's

[313] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.128.
[314] Chauveau, *Renaud,* p.129.
[315] Saint-Exupéry, p.1. This parallel reflects the two writers' shared interest in drawings by children. Saint-Exupéry may have been influenced by Chauveau's illustration, appearing on page 134 of 'L'Histoire du boa et du tapir', that depicts the boa's misshapen abdomen after the tapir has stretched out his trunk inside the boa's stomach and before it bursts. Saint-Exupéry attended the *décades de Pontigny* at the same time as Chauveau, although I am unaware of correspondence or evidence they met.
[316] Saint-Exupéry, p.50.
[317] Saint-Exupéry, p.60.

true meaning has been forgotten, is based on the term's etymological derivation from Latin *apprivatare*, to familiarise, a term that appears to have been used for both human and non-human animals in a way that is more ambiguous than the Modern French term but still suggests that power is conferred on the person carrying out the action.[318] The fact that it is the fox who both defines the term and requests that the narrator tame him both gives the fox much greater control than the object of the verb *apprivoiser* would normally enjoy, and suggests that both children and non-human animals are in need of adult human leadership. Despite its ambiguities, this passage expresses the need for a spiritual practice based not on doctrine or formal observance but on creating rituals for everyday interactions with human and non-human others. Hence, Chauveau and Saint-Exupéry depict non-human characters with spiritual wisdom to convey a similar message of humility and wonder that is very close to ideas expressed by Armstrong and Einstein. However, Saint-Exupéry is much more optimistic than Chauveau; uses less humour or satire; and his tone is earnest and to some extent didactic, although he subversively assumes that children must teach adults.

To conclude, Chauveau engages with spirituality on a profound level, not despite, but precisely because, of his scepticism and satire. This engagement reinforces his critique of socio-ecological injustices, together with his celebration of diversity and solidarity within Western society, between metropolitan and colonized populations, and between human and non-human animals. His satire of traditional Western interpretations of Christianity draws attention both to the inherent absurdity of religious literalism and to the detrimental effects of usuallymale Western Christians anthropomorphising God 'in their own image'. His sympathetic or nuanced depiction of elements from other religions challenges assumptions of cultural superiority and invites readers to acknowledge the sanctity of human and non-human others and to practice humility and compassion. Finally, his representation of non-human animals with superior spiritual knowledge plays an important part in his satire of dominant discourses about intelligence.

[318] 'Apprivoiser', Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales, available at: https://www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/apprivoiser (Accessed 16 August 2020).

## Conclusion

This thesis has analysed Chauveau's response to the interlinked systems of domination, over both ecosystems and less powerful human groups, that I outlined in the section of my introduction entitled 'Environmental history and ecocriticism', from three perspectives: territorial, societal, and ethical/spiritual. Chapter 1 explored Chauveau's sympathetic depiction of ecosystems in which humans are not

the dominant species, and unsympathetic representation of Western hunters and invaders. It argued that, while Chauveau falls within the very broad aesthetic trend of modernist primitivism, he is much more radical than other modernist primitivists in his critique of colonialism— drawing on recent scholarship re-defining this term as the capitalist exploitation, by metropolitan powers, of natural resources throughout the world, including in areas previously uninhabited by humans— with this critique showing Western humans to have achieved dominance because of their superior weaponry rather than moral progress or intelligence. It introduced the question of Chauveau's celebration of oral traditions and 'primitive' storytelling traditions, which draw on forms of intelligence radically different forms of intelligence from those privileged in Western academia, reflecting indigenous peoples' integration into natural ecosystems and empathetic observation of non-human animals engaged in the same struggle for survival, rather than domination.

Drawing on the discussion in my introduction of ecocriticism as a form of holistic criticism that explores the representation of human communities within their local and global environments, Chapter 1 explores the continuity both between the concerns of the interwar period and those of present-day readers, and between issues concerned with colonialism and those directly affecting metropolitan populations. With reference to works of historical ecocriticism, studies of interwar cultural history and to Chauveau's critical writings, it draws out the significance of the connections both he and his contemporaries drew between violence against human and non/human others and militarism, as well as his depiction of poor public health conditions in Europe despite its supposed scientific progress. The chapter uses new scholarly concepts of continuous socio-ecological crisis since the early modern period, caused by the replacement of local agricultural economies with global, industrial, Western imperial capitalism, as a framework for considering Chauveau's œuvre within its historical context while also considering its timeliness, for example with reference to the 1918-9 and current pandemics, as well as misrepresentation during Chauveau's lifetime.

Chapter 2 expanded on this analysis by considering what previous critics have briefly identified as a common thread in Chauveau's work: the transgressive

celebration of *amitié* with non-human animals, marginalised human groups, and sympathetic monsters who share features with both. The chapter focusses very strongly on the personal traumas that lead Chauveau to seek solace in these imagined relationships, together with his contemporary social context, in which the longstanding imperial drive to control both nature and human others took the particularly extreme forms of fascism and eugenics, a pseudo-scientific movement seeking to artificially control reproduction by eliminating groups of people animalised and monstered due to ethnicity or disability. In addition to these ideological elements, the chapter discusses Chauveau's imaginative, often fantastical and satirical, response to specific ways in which both non-human animals and human groups—including women, children, physically and non-physically disabiled people, ethnic minorities including Roma, and those socio-economically disadvantaged— are mistreated and to possibilities for inter-species solidarity, considering similitarities to present-day concepts such as neurodiversity, ecofeminism and ecosocialism. It stresses the importance of considering Chauveau's œuvre as political but not didactic, with an emphasis on its therapeutic purpose and on Chauveau's anti-authoritarian approach both to children's literature and more generally to relationships between adults and children, which is particularly timely now that children are showing increasing political autonomy through movements such as the Youth Climate Strikes.

Chapter 2 is particularly concerned with recent exhibitions and the publications that have emerged from them, which have allowed a wide audience to access works that Chauveau had kept in the private sphere, and should help make his œuvre better known and understood than during his lifetime. Due to the sheer volume of Chauveau's visual output, I could not give a detailed analysis of individual works. Instead, the chapter built on the invaluable contribution the exhibitions and publications make in considering explicit and implicit depictions of the monstrous, visual and literary works together.

Chapter 3 focussed on the religious dimension of themes already discussed, exploring Chauveau's critique of idolatrous attempts to anthropomorphize God 'in the image' of dominant groups, and his depiction of *amitié* in the form of religious compassion. It analyses how Chauveau draws on a wide range of influences from

multiple religious traditions and on his unique, pantheistic imagination. The chapter demonstrates that Chauveau moves beyond the immediate context of deep divisions between Catholicism and Enlightenment secularism, brilliantly exploiting the medievalist satirical traditions it gave rise to in a way that undermines both sides' anthropocentric, ethnocentric, patriarchal and hierarchical assumptions.

While this is linked to modernist primitivism and more broadly to a renewed interest in non-traditional spirituality in France during the interwar period, in Chapter 3 I reiterate the argument that Chauveau's ecological consciousness makes him adopt a uniquely radical approach. That approach is exemplified in his rewriting of medieval mythology from the viewpoint of demonised figures, and more broadly in his depiction of non-human animals within spiritual contexts and often with privileged spiritual intelligence. As well as literary texts, the chapter analyses Chauveau's illustrations both for the Bible and for his own stories, especially those depicting God in the company of non-human animals, and refers to the religious origins of the concept of the concept of monstrosity. The chapter makes reference to anthropological studies, scriptural sources and works by prominent religious commentator Karen Armstrong, who draws attention to similarities between literary and scriptural texts. The latter were originally interpreted in a metaphorical, non-didactic manner that sought new meanings based on the audience's context, an approach advocated in works of literary criticism by Chauveau.

Overall, the thesis has contributed towards ending the unjust neglect and misrepresentation of Chauveau's œuvre, establishing its significant literary value and Chauveau's rightful place within the high-profile circles of which he was a valued member. It demonstrates that Chauveau responds to the primary concerns of that circle, wider society, and to his own personal traumas in ways that are particularly timely in this period of renewed interest because they demonstrate awareness of processes predating Chauveau's lifetime but that are only now becoming widely understood. While Chauveau's œuvre is extremely varied and specific features such as his depiction of sympathetic *monstres* and fictionalised conversations with his dead son are considered discretely, the thesis identifies two common threads: a radical questioning of dominant ideologies, whether secular or

religious, and assumptions about the moral or intellectual inferiority of non-human species and less powerful human groups, both of which are frequently depicted as victims of physical violence; and an idealised celebration of *amitié,* bonds of affection that transcend the human/non-human binary and unite the marginalised, in forms ranging from unconventional families to religious compassion.

This thesis could only ever be a starting point for analysing specific manifestations of these threads in individual works, given the volume, range and complexity of Chauveau's œuvre and the need to provide contextual information when introducing Chauveau to an Anglophone audience for the first time since 1929, when Isabelle H. Clarke edited *Les cures merveilleuses du docteur Popotame* for use in English schools. The thesis suggests many productive lines of further inquiry, notably concerning the ways in which Chauveau expresses his ecologically conscious viewpoint through visual style, both in illustrations for his *contes,* many of which have recently been republished, and in the standalone visual works, most depicting monsters, that are gaining prominence thanks to the Orsay exhibition. My contextualisation of Chauveau's conception of the monstrous in terms of his representation of non-human animals, childhood and disability may usefully inform future studies of specific artworks.[319]

A rounded overview of Chauveau's œuvre must also include a dedicated analysis of his writing for adults, although in the immediate term this may attract limited interest since all these works except *Derrière la bataille* remain out of print, and plans by the Musée d'Orsay for new publications, including of unpublished manuscripts, have been effectively abandoned. However, I plan to expand on important themes, including: representation of gender, class, injury and disease (exploiting my membership of the University of Glasgow Medical Humanities Network) in Chauveau's novellas and *Derrière la bataille*; his depiction of damage to the environment of the Western Front in *Derrière la bataille*; and pantheistic themes in *L'Ombre du Pantin*. Considerable possibilities remain both for republications and for first editions of Chauveau's many unpublished writings,

[319] My forthcoming MeCSSA article (see p.6, note 3) discusses visual style in more detail than was possible here, including through expanding some of the comparisons in this thesis, especially that between Chauveau and Jansson.

which are summarised by Poirier and which Marc Chauveau has donated to the BIbliothèque Nationale de France, as well as for translations: I have begun pitching works for both adults and children to Anglophone publishers.

While this thesis has distinguished between works for adults and for children based on Chauveau's and his original publishers' intended audience, another important area for future research concerns their current appeal to different age groups. Given the significance and timeliness of Chauveau's anti-didacticism, especially in the context of his ecological consciousness and of children's growing political autonomy through movements including the Youth Climate Strikes, I plan to organise workshops with children, which should provide a useful corrective to scholarship on children's literature that ignores children's perceptions. In the context of my applications for PhD study, my National Autistic Society mentor Julie MacRae has secured expressions of interest from teachers for me to conduct discussion and translation workshops for pupils in Glasgow with additional support needs.

The provisional title of my PhD thesis is '*Amitiés monstrueuses*: An Intersectional Analysis of Léopold Chauveau's (1870-1940) Œuvre, Contemporary and Present-Day Reception'. The term 'intersectional' refers to the multiple connected forms of marginalisation discussed here, with a less strong focus on non-human animals, absent from *Derrière la bataille* and the novellas. Together with this broader scholarly focus, I have ambitious outreach plans, including for an exhibition in Scotland. I am confident Chauveau can reach new audiences and give them new perspectives on issues discussed in this thesis, including in Scotland and the wider Anglosphere.

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