What is an Animal Sanctuary?
Evidence from Applied Linguistics

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Abstract: *This paper addresses the meaning of the word 'sanctuary' from the point of view of its usage in English, as it emerges from dictionary and corpus sources, in contexts related to nonhuman animals. Specific attention is paid to the semantic prosody (Louw; Stewart) and semantic preference (Sinclair 'The Search') of this word, as well as to the relationship between 'sanctuaries' and other semantically related lexical items that identify places where nonhuman animals are confined and/or protected (e.g. nature reserves, national parks, animal shelters, zoos). Firstly, the paper provides a general overview of the main theoretical issues behind the nature and use of electronic language corpora for the analysis of discourse, and it reviews how these tools have been used in critical studies on the linguistic and cultural understanding of nonhuman animals and their relationship with humans (Human-Animal Studies, or HAS). Secondly, this methodology is applied to the word 'sanctuary,' showing the different kinds of information that can be retrieved about its meaning by using either dictionaries or electronic language corpora: more specifically, the dictionary used for this study is the Oxford English Dictionary, and the corpus source is the British National Corpus. The analysis reveals that corpora are more complete in terms of the amount of contextual information they provide, making it possible to detect the presence of ideologies and other systems of belief that are associated with the animal sanctuary as a site both of protection and of captivity. Findings actually suggest that the most reliable approach to obtain a thorough understanding of the meaning of the word 'sanctuary' consists in using both dictionary and corpus resources. Finally, some conclusions and suggestions for future research are offered, based on the strengths and limits of the corpus data used for this study.*

Keywords: *Applied linguistics, corpus linguistics, critical discourse analysis, dictionaries, Human-Animal Studies*

Introduction

This paper investigates the meaning of the word 'sanctuary' from the point of view of its usage in English, in contexts related to nonhuman animals, aiming to understand the role of this kind of facility within the broader picture of human-animal interaction, especially the contrast between protection (sanctuaries as sites of shelter and conservation) and captivity (sanctuaries as restricting the resident animals' freedom of movement and behaviour) that emerges from the contexts of use of this word in English.

The aim of the study is to explore the semantic territory of the expression 'animal sanctuary' in a variety of contexts in contemporary English (with some consideration given to its historical origins), by using both traditional dictionaries and computer-based resources, i.e. electronic language corpora. The analysis concentrates on the ways these two tools may complement each other to identify the main semantic features that contribute to the understanding of the concept of 'sanctuary' in a nonhuman animal context.

To achieve this goal, firstly, a brief overview of the use of electronic language corpora for the analysis of discourse is provided,[1] with specific focus on semantic prosody (Louw; Stewart) and semantic preference (Sinclair 'The Search'). Secondly, these principles are used to identify the meaning of the word 'sanctuary', and to explore the relationship between 'sanctuaries' and other semantically related lexical items that are commonly used to designate places where nonhuman animals are confined and/or protected (for example nature reserves, national parks, animal shelters, zoos). In doing so, the data offered by dictionaries and electronic corpora are compared in terms of the type and level of detail of the information they provide. Finally, the conclusions show that corpus sources are more complete in the amount of contextual information they offer, making it possible to detect the presence of ideologies and other systems of belief that are associated with the animal sanctuary as a site both of protection and of captivity. The methodology suggested in the present study is but a starting point in the exploration of how nonhuman animals are represented in discourse: as shown in the fledgling literature on this area of discourse analysis, descriptive studies of the lexical features that express a particular view of the human/animal interface can only make sense if they provide instruments for broader-ranging studies of texts. Therefore, although textual analysis exceeds the scope of

this paper, its ultimate goal is to provide a methodology to investigate the presence of ideologies and ecological philosophies, or 'ecosophies' (Stibbe, 'Ecolinguistic Discourse' 501), deployed in discourse beyond the word level.

Theoretically, this paper is grounded in studies of how nonhuman animals are represented and described linguistically or symbolically, a classic preoccupation of literary criticism (Flegel; Morse and Danahay; Pollock and Rainwater), which has recently attracted some interest from linguists, especially those who espouse critical approaches to how language contributes to shape and reinforce ideologies. Typically, parallelisms are suggested between the plight of nonhumans suffering in an excessively anthropized environment, or at the mercy of intensive farming, hunting, and fishing (reducing them to the role of commodities), and other hegemonic discourses. This approach to the study of how we talk/write about animals and other kinds of oppressive discourse follows in the steps of M.A.K. Halliday (the father of systemic functional linguistics, a very popular approach in applied linguistics, with a close focus on social context) who, in a keynote address delivered at the 9th AILA World Congress in 1990, denounced the existence of 'a syndrome of grammatical features which conspire … to construe reality in a … way that is no longer good for our health as a species' (193). Halliday here referred to all the lexicogrammatical phenomena, common to many languages, which implicitly or explicitly convey, or even 'engrammatize' (198), the idea that environmental resources, including the lives of sentient beings, are inexhaustible, and can be tapped indiscriminately to accommodate progressive human demographic, economic and industrial growth. Halliday concluded that 'the semantics of growthism' is a kind of hegemonic discourse, just like classism and sexism, and that it is a problem for biologists and physicists just as much as it is for linguists (199). A new strand of ecolinguistics,[2] endeavouring to investigate the human understanding – or, sometimes, *mis*understanding – of environmental issues, through the magnifying lens of discourse analysis, was thus inaugurated.

As a matter of fact, nonhuman animals are, almost by definition, an outgroup, insofar as the adjective '*non*human' itself portrays them apophatically, i.e. through a negation, by telling us what they are *not*, rather than adopting a specific term to identify them.[3] Therefore, they constitute a subaltern group in the Gramscian sense, because they are 'subject to the activity of

ruling groups' (Gramsci 55), i.e. humans, including in the ways they are represented and understood linguistically. This happens not only through vocabulary, which leaves relatively more freedom for speakers to make respectful lexical choices, but also through more cognitively entrenched grammatical phenomena, such as pronominal systems (is an animal 'it', 's/he', or 'they'?) (Gilquin and Jacobs; Gupta; Cook), articles (Cook; Sealey and Oakley, 'Why Did the Canada Goose'), connectives, infinitive forms (Sealey and Oakley, 'Anthropomorphic Grammar?'), and the use of mass nouns, often in the role of Classifiers, to describe animals, especially when used for food (for example meat, poultry, venison, fish), implicitly reinforcing notions whereby they are 'mere tonnage of stuff' (Stibbe, 'Ecolinguistics and Erasure' 595).

This patterning makes the linguistic representation of nonhuman animals an ideal object of inquiry for Critical Discourse Analysis, a strand of discourse studies which researches 'the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context' (van Dijk 352), often using corpus-based methods (Baker et al.). Indeed, the combination of critical and corpus tools has recently become the elective technique of ecolinguistic discourse studies (Alexander), including those specifically addressing the role of nonhuman animals in discourse (Pak and Sealey). With this methodology, a linguistic current seems to be developing within Human-Animal Studies (henceforth, HAS), a multidisciplinary research area that looks at various aspects of the interaction between humans and nonhumans, and that since the 2000s has been extending from its original social science focus to include the humanities (Shapiro and DeMello).

Basic Concepts of Corpus Linguistics

The three basic tenets of corpus linguistics, i.e. the analysis of language performed with electronic language corpora, are corpus, concordance and collocation, as suggested in the title of what is perhaps the best known founding book of this discipline (Sinclair, *Corpus*).

At its most basic level, a corpus is defined as a collection of texts stored in electronic format, searchable with special software ('concordancing software', or simply 'corpus software') to investigate the frequency and context of words and multiword expressions.

Corpora can be of various kinds, depending on the language variety they represent: they are not intended to be representative of a language *tout court* (which would be an impossible endeavour, given the infinite possibilities of expression that languages offer, and the constant changes that affect them), but they provide standard reference for the language variety they represent (McEnery and Wilson 24). Corpus kinds thus correspond to the variables of sociolinguistic variation: diachronic (for historical analysis), diatopic (reflecting regional or national varieties of a language), diastratic (reflecting the use of language by specific social classes), diamesic (written vs spoken), and diatypic (containing texts belonging to a specific register, or text type, typically language for specific purposes). Corpora also differ depending on whether they are open ('monitor') or closed ('static') projects, that is on whether they are intended to be regularly updated to reflect language change, or the data they contain are restricted to a certain predetermined period of time. Corpus dimensions may also vary greatly, from highly specialized corpora containing a few hundred thousand words, to large reference corpora running into billions of words.

The typical output of corpus software is the concordance (table 1),[4] a list of all the occurrences of a given word or phrase in a corpus, shown with its cotext (the other words that immediately precede and follow the word being searched in a corpus, as distinct from 'context', which includes extralinguistic features), in a layout called KWIC (Key Word In Context), where the searched word is shown in the centre of the page (sometimes highlighted in colour, and/or in bold), surrounded by its cotext and source information, and sorted left or right, depending on the alphabetical order of the words that precede or follow it.

The most reliable way to investigate the cotext typically associated with a given search word, however, is not a painstaking examination of every single concordance line in which this word appears in a corpus, but a collocation query. Collocations are the other words that are most frequently found in the vicinity of – and not necessarily in direct contact with – the search word: they help us identify the meaning of a word 'by the company it keeps' (Firth), and account, for example, for the semantic association between 'horse', 'race' and 'mare', and for usage-based motivations justifying the fact that the words 'paws' and 'claws' are typically found in association with nonhuman referents, whereas 'hands', 'feet' and 'nails' apply to human ones,

even if the body parts discussed are the same. These idiomatic patterns clearly have an ideological impact, insofar as they imply a difference in the bodies of human and nonhuman animals.

Starting from its collocations, it is also possible to identify the semantic prosody of a word. The expression 'semantic prosody' was first used by Louw to describe the positive or negative associations that relate to a given word or expression: at its most basic level; therefore, semantic prosody is roughly equivalent to connotation. In Louw's words, semantic prosody is 'the consistent aura of meaning with which a lexical item is imbued by its collocates' (157). Corpus research has demonstrated that even apparently 'neutral' words, like 'cause' (Stubbs), actually carry a negative semantic prosody, as they typically co-occur with negatively connotated words, like 'damage', 'danger', 'concern', and 'cancer'.

Complementary to the concept of semantic prosody is that of semantic preference,[5] whose textbook example is the expression 'naked eye' studied by Sinclair ('The Search' 84-91): based on its collocational profile, the expression 'to/with/by the naked eye' is characteristically associated with the idea of detecting something with a certain degree of difficulty, usually with the aid of special instruments. Its semantic preference will therefore be one of 'visibility' and 'difficulty'.

Corpora are a particularly powerful instrument to investigate 'what might be called *non-obvious meaning*, that is, meaning which might not be readily available to naked-eye perusal' (Partington et al. 11). More specifically, the possibility afforded by corpora to access large amounts of representative language data makes them suitable to bring to the surface the unconscious or semi-automatic choices – which may be culturally or ideologically motivated – speakers and writers make of particular lexicogrammatical structures (Baker and Levon), offering a valuable complement to more traditional, qualitative textual analysis.

Sanctuaries Defined: The Oxford English Dictionary

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (henceforth, OED),[6] 'sanctuary' is a noun originating from post-Augustan Latin in the sense of 'the private cabinet of a prince,' and it has reached English through the Old French *sainctuarie*, with the religious sense it had since acquired through its use in the Vulgate, and in Christian Latin generally:

> A church or other sacred place in which, by the law of the medieval church, a fugitive from justice, or a debtor, was entitled to immunity from arrest. Hence, in a wider sense, applied to any place in which by law or established custom a similar immunity is secured to fugitives. ('Sanctuary')

From this main sense, attested since 1374, stem several other definitions, including the one used in HAS, 'An area of land within which (wild) animals or plants are protected and encouraged to breed or grow,' attested since 1879. Another definition, labelled by the OED as still existing (although its most recent source dates 1898), is also connected with nonhuman animals, but in an almost opposite sense: 'Hunting, etc.: The "privilege of forest"; also "close time"'.

Another OED definition that may be seen as broadly connected with the notion of sanctuary in a nonhuman animal context, because it recalls the general idea of protection and shelter, is:

> Immunity from punishment and the ordinary operations of the law secured by taking refuge in a sanctuary (sense 5); the right or privilege of affording such shelter; shelter, refuge, protection as afforded by a church, etc.

All these definitions provide useful historical information, allowing us to reconstruct the first usages of the word 'sanctuary' and to ascertain that it originated in an aristocratic context in ancient Rome, subsequently acquiring a religious meaning, and gradually extending its semantic scope to identify specific areas for animals (hunted or protected) to reside in. The definitions also show that this word has undergone a progressive process of metaphorization whereby, from the original concrete meaning of 'sacred place', 'sanctuary' has gradually come to identify, especially when used without a preceding article, the abstract concept of safety and immunity.

However, the OED entry displays so few contextual examples of usages of the word 'sanctuary' (apart from some literary quotations, mostly pre-1800) that it is difficult to establish who the potential beneficiaries of this protection might be: even expressions that have become quite common in the past few decades, like 'refugee sanctuary', or 'terrorist sanctuary', do not appear at all. Another problem is related to the circularity of some definitions; for example, the last one mentioned above, in which the dictionary user is invited to go back to another entry, 'sense 5,' to look up the meaning of 'sanctuary'. Moreover, whereas common contemporary phraseologies are largely overlooked, expressions that have died out in present-day English, identified by a dagger symbol (†), feature prominently, e.g. 'to keep sanctuary,' 'sanctuary garth,' and 'sanctuary man,' with their respective literary sources, and it is emphasized, in a separate entry, that 'sanctuary' was also used as a verb until the end of the seventeenth century: 'To place in safety as in a sanctuary. Of a place: to afford protection or shelter'. It appears quite clear, therefore, that the main preoccupation of the OED lexicographers is not with the current use of the word 'sanctuary', but with its history and presence in literature.

The OED information, despite its gaps and drawbacks, has a series of advantages for our understanding of the word 'sanctuary', especially when complemented with the data provided in the OED Historical Thesaurus ('Sanctuary'). Although, again, the preoccupation of this reference tool is mainly (or only) historical, the Thesaurus illustrates a series of semantic associations that allow us to see the broad social contexts in which the word 'sanctuary' has been used in English. The schematic progression reported below represents the diachronic evolution of the semantic associations of 'sanctuary' as it appears in the OED Historical Thesaurus.

> the external world > abstract properties > action or operation > safety > protection or defence > refuge or shelter > [noun] > inviolable refuge, sanctuary, or asylum ▸sanctuary (c1380)

> the external world > the living world > food and drink > hunting > thing hunted or game > action of game > [noun] > right of sanctuary ▸sanctuary (1603)

> the external world > abstract properties > action or operation > safety > make safe or secure [verb (transitive)] > place in safety ▸sanctuary (1615)

the external world > the living world > living creature > collection or conservation of
natural specimens > sanctuary or reserve > [noun] ▸sanctuary (1879)

From the OED data, therefore, it is possible to conclude that the contexts of use of
'sanctuary' in English have evolved over time from the sphere of religion (1380) to that of
hunting (1603) to a more general form of protection (also as a verb, 1615), and only much more
recently (1879) to the 'conservation of natural specimens' which we may conjecture to include
nonhuman animals. Neither the OED nor its associated Historical Thesaurus, however,
provides any data about frequency, patterns of use, positive vs negative connotation, and
collocations with other words employed in the same or similar contexts, so it does not account
for how the semantic associations listed in the Thesaurus must have overlapped over time, and
gradually evolved, probably through a process of metaphorization, as seen below.

Sanctuaries Further Defined: The British National Corpus

Although it is not the largest corpus of English, and it is only representative of the period 1970s-
1993, the *British National Corpus* (henceforth, BNC) is still considered to be one of the most
reliable corpora of the English language. Potential alternatives for the analysis of British English,
such as the *Bank of English* and the *Oxford English Corpus*, are not equally well balanced in terms of
registers, specifically in relation to the lack of informal texts, and they are subject to quite strict
use restrictions (Davies, 'The Corpus of Contemporary American English' 450-451). However,
the most important reason for selecting the BNC as a term of comparison for the OED in this
study is that it has already been used successfully in linguistic HAS, as documented in the
relevant literature (Gilquin and Jacobs).

The BNC contains 802 occurrences of the lemma 'sanctuary' (including the plural), and
the most frequent noun group in which it appears (26 occurrences) is 'bird sanctuary', followed
by 'wildlife sanctuary' (23) and 'animal sanctuary' (21). The strong association with animals is
confirmed in the collocation list (table 2),[7] which includes a variety of creatures, mostly wild (in
order of frequency: birds, whales, butterflies, swans, rhinos, doves, seals, cetaceans, parrots,
wildfowl, otters) but also some domesticated (bulls, donkeys, cats) and human ones (refugees,

fugitives). The collocation list also shows that 'to seek' is the verb most consistently associated with 'sanctuary', and the only other recurrent semantic area, besides that of nonhuman animals, is the religious one, mostly in conjunction with Greek archaeological sites. Running a collocation query by parts of speech also shows quite a high level of animal agency, as the most frequent verbs (after 'to be', 'to have', and 'to seek') are verbs of movement ('to leave', 'to enter', 'to reach').

Running a concordance (table 3) further clarifies the association between sanctuaries and nonhuman animals, as beetles, tigers, dolphins, dogs, ponies, mice, and rabbits also appear, as do activities like hunting and foraging. According to these data, the main current meaning of the word 'sanctuary' is 'a site where nonhuman animals are protected', although the more traditional religious sense of 'holy place, church' (lines 2, 13, 14, 16, 17, 26, 27 and 28) is still widely attested, and so is the metaphorical meaning of 'secluded place, physical of imaginary, in which one can feel protected' more generally (lines 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 25).

The word 'sanctuary', in its meaning of 'a site of animal protection', actually appears to be a dead metaphor (no longer perceived as a metaphor by English speakers, due to its extensive literal usage)[8] in contemporary English, having evolved from the original sense of 'sacred place in which a fugitive was entitled to immunity.' This religious sense, according to the BNC, is no longer the primary one, at least judging from its frequency in common contemporary phraseologies: however, it still contributes to the semantic preference of 'sanctuary', which is one of holiness and immunity. The semantic prosody is also positive, due to the constant association – apart from very few exceptions, for example beetles as 'aquatic pests', line 4, table 3 – between 'sanctuary' and sanctuary-seeking agents who are weak, despondent, and disadvantaged through no fault of their own, although one concordance line in the BNC laments the existence of some 'bogus applications for asylum' on the part of migrants seeking sanctuary in the UK. The meaning of 'sanctuary' as a kind of humanitarian or political protection sought by humans (for example refugees, fugitives, victims of domestic violence, and even terrorists) actually appears to be still alive (i.e. recognizable) as a metaphor, and it identifies a physical place of refuge ('a temporary sanctuary to house refugees from Bosnia') in only one case in the BNC.

The BNC web interface used (Davies, *BYU-BNC*) also makes it possible to compare the collocates of two or more words, to see how they differ in meaning and usage. A comparison with some words potentially akin in meaning to 'sanctuary' in the context of nonhuman animals ('reserve', 'park', 'shelter', 'zoo') highlights a frequent connection only with 'national park', suggesting that 'wildlife sanctuary' may actually be a synonym for 'national park' implying more respect for animals, and placing more specific emphasis on the presence of 'wild animals' in the identified site, for the 'quiet visitor' to see in their habitat. 'Nature reserves' are also occasionally represented, in the BNC, as 'providing sanctuary for creatures of the wild'; however, in the majority of its occurrences, 'nature reserve' is used to identify areas that are run under the auspices of charities like the National Trust, regardless of their being a haven for wildlife. In addition, the expression 'game reserve' is still quite widely attested in the context of hunting: this ambiguity between the concepts of 'nature reserve' and 'game reserve' probably derives from the influence of the practice of 'culling', the selective killing of allegedly overpopulated species. The problematic status of culling as somehow legitimizing hunting, even in areas where nonhuman animals should find sanctuary, is very clear in a concordance line about Kruger National Park in South Africa and Hwange in Zimbabwe: these two sites are presented as places 'where culling has become a necessity born out of successful conservation', and their practice of selective hunting is actually taken as evidence of the greater effectiveness of their anti-poaching measures in comparison with Kenyan nature reserves.

A comparison between 'sanctuary' and 'shelter' in the BNC confirms that both words are consistently associated with 'animals': however, whereas 'sanctuary' shows a preference for wild animals, 'shelter' is more commonly used in conjunction with companion (e.g. dogs and cats under protection by the RSPCA) and farmed ('sheep', 'livestock', and 'cattle') animals. In addition, 'shelters' are clearly identified as buildings, unlike other facilities mentioned in the BNC as protecting animals: this emerges from collocations identifying the kinds of construction that house animal shelters, e.g. 'cottage', 'pound', and 'farm'. In addition, the protection provided by shelters to animals basically consists in putting a roof over their head, rather than giving them a full immunity: this can be understood from the fact that, in the BNC data,

'shelter' is also granted to farm animals portrayed as eventually destined to be butchered for their meat.

From this comparison, another interesting connection emerges between 'zoos' and 'conservation'. Although zoos have been described as 'institutions of captivity',[9] and are quite forcefully opposed by environmentalists generally, in the BNC zoos are represented as organizing 'conservation projects/ teams', and a 'Conservation Day', during which 'animal welfare organisations had stands in a marquee in the zoo grounds'. A direct semantic association between 'zoos' and 'sanctuaries' is even better visible in another English corpus, the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (henceforth, COCA; Davies), where the word 'zoo' features as a collocate of 'sanctuary': Austin Zoo describes itself as being also an 'animal sanctuary', a black bear is 'offered sanctuary' by a 'local zoo', a zoo spokesperson is quoted as saying that 'we think the zoo is a sanctuary for people as well as animals', zoos and sanctuaries are grouped together as being both 'reluctant to take in animals that could carry parasites', 'partnering to provide lifetime care for surplus animals', and having 'evolved into hospitable venues for species displaced from their native habitats'. Although zoos, at least in North America, have greatly evolved over the years to place more emphasis on animal welfare and to provide much better living conditions to captive animals than was the case only a few decades ago (Braverman), the appropriation of the linguistic imagery of sanctuaries may still be seen as an attempt on the part of zoos to legitimize their work by claiming a stake in animal welfare and conservation. At the same time, this use of language betrays the permeability of the border (not only semantic and rhetorical, but also conceptual, and even physical) between sites where nonhuman animals reside to be protected, i.e. proper 'sanctuaries', and sites where they are kept (also) for human entertainment. This permeability is probably, at least in part, a result of 'the paradoxes of sanctuary life – mainly, the fact that the benefits of care necessarily come with limits on animal autonomy' (Abrell 136), so there is no denying that sanctuaries have some aspects in common with zoos, for example a degree of restriction of animal freedom, and the fact that, in most cases, sanctuaries are open to the public, for educational and/or fundraising reasons.

Conclusion

This paper has addressed the meaning of the word 'sanctuary' as it emerges from dictionary and corpus sources in English contexts related to nonhuman animals, trying to highlight the merits and drawbacks of both these tools. Using the OED, the historical origins of 'sanctuary' have been traced, establishing that, chronologically, the first sense of this word in English was the religious one, identifying a sacred place where people could obtain protection and immunity. The use of the word 'sanctuary', however, has evolved over the centuries to identify game reserves and, starting from the nineteenth century, sites of wildlife conservation. Dictionary data provide quite a detailed historical account of the origin of the word 'sanctuary', and also some broad contextual information, but they do not include any precise description of its current phraseological use.

Where dictionary data fail to answer questions on present-day word usage, electronic corpora provide a valuable complement, revealing that sanctuaries, in contemporary English, are most frequently understood as sites where animals, especially (but not exclusively) wild ones, live under some form of human protection, although the religious sense of the word 'sanctuary' is still widely attested, especially in the context of antiquities, for example Greek archaeological sites. In fact, the current notion of the animal sanctuary has probably evolved as a metaphor, in which a concrete concept (a church offering refuge to humans) is used to understand a more abstract one (protection more generally).

Based on more recent and larger corpora, for example the COCA, it appears that some new metaphors, especially 'terrorist sanctuary', are gradually increasing in frequency. The negative connotations of the association between terrorism and sanctuaries seen as places where terrorists can find a safe *haven* (which, incidentally, is also a metaphor), may eventually tilt the balance of the semantic prosody of the word 'sanctuary' more generally, possibly including its use in a nonhuman animal context. At present, the prosody of this word in English is clearly positive, as the agents seeking sanctuary, be they human or nonhuman, are typically portrayed as being hapless victims of some negative circumstances that have forced them to leave their homes and find safety elsewhere, and therefore as deserving of our compassion. The emergence of the word 'terrorist' as a new collocate of the word 'sanctuary' may drastically change this picture.

Another issue that is reflected in corpus data is the coexistence of the ideas of conservation and captivity in the semantics of the word 'sanctuary', as zoos tend to appropriate the rhetoric of environmental conservation, including the use of the word 'sanctuary' and its associated concepts. This can be seen not only as a way for zoos to legitimize their existence through target-appropriate marketing strategies, but also as reflecting a conceptual tension between entertainment and conservation, probably a result of the fact that, from the point of view of captivity and other moral issues pertaining to animal welfare, there is more in common than is sometimes assumed between contemporary well-run zoos and animal sanctuaries (Emmerman).

Corpus queries run on historical corpora, such as the *Corpus of Historical American English* (COHA; Davies) actually suggest that zoos began to appropriate a rhetoric of environmental/animal habitat conservation as early as in the 1950s, with a steep rise in the use of 'zoo' in collocation with 'sanctuary' (especially for 'endangered species') starting from the 1990s. From the point of view of public communication, portraying themselves as sites of conservation is quite advantageous for zoos, as it projects a morally appealing image, making visitors feel that they are contributing to a good cause by purchasing their entrance ticket to a zoo; for wildlife sanctuaries, by contrast, having their lexis and imagery appropriated by zoos may be less beneficial in terms of public image, as it underscores some controversial points that sanctuaries and zoos have in common, for example the restriction of animal freedom.

Although sanctuary animals often enjoy much more freedom than zoo ones, and the intentions and ecosophies underlying their confinement in sanctuaries are different from those of zoos, 'different intentions do not ensure different effects, and the principled differences between zoos and sanctuaries may not be obvious or meaningful to casual visitors, especially young children' (Donaldson and Kymlicka 55). To conclude, although zoos and sanctuaries do share some traits, and – in the case of more progressive well-run zoos – also a preoccupation for animal care, there seem to be very good reasons to resist the ideology behind the semantic association

between zoo and sanctuary. By stressing the distinctive moral mission of sanctuaries that sets them out from zoos and other institutions of animal captivity, including in the way we describe them through language, sanctuaries may eventually be able to reclaim a transformative role to promote better interspecies coexistence in the increasingly human-influenced age that has come to be described as 'Anthropocene'.

Notes

[1] In applied linguistics, and henceforth in this paper, 'discourse' identifies language in use, both written and spoken: more specifically, 'discourse refers to the situated production of texts, their use on a particular occasion in a particular context' (Bartlett).

[2] More traditional approaches to ecolinguistics have, as their main preoccupation, the life, endangerment and death of languages (Romaine).

[3] An attempt in this direction was made by Jacques Derrida, who coined the neologism 'animot', from the fusion between the French words *animal* and *mot*. This alternative way to identify nonhuman animals is intended to counter the anthropocentric nature of the term 'animal' ('The Animal' 392), which remains implied even in the more compassionate, but still apophatic epithet 'nonhuman'.

[4] All tables are provided in the appendix.

[5] More recent accounts of semantic prosody and preference have framed them in terms of semantic/pragmatic associations, more broadly defined to integrate prosody and preference, and to account for their partial overlap. To this effect, Hoey has developed the notion of lexical priming, which 'unlike semantic prosody, goes beyond circumscribed sequences of words and beyond the sentence, in that a word may be textually primed, i.e. primed to appear in particular textual positions with particular textual functions, something greatly influenced by text domain and genre' (Stewart 15).

[6] For reasons of space, this study relates findings from only one dictionary and one corpus. Although both sources are highly reputed for their reliability, especially for the description of contemporary British English, extending the focus to a wider array of dictionaries and corpora is a potential development to be pursued for the advancement of this study.

[7] The collocate span includes 4 words to the left and 4 words to the right of the searched item. This setting is the default for the Brigham Young University (BYU) online corpus platform used for this study, but it can be changed as needed.

[8] The concept of dead metaphor has been challenged at many levels (Derrida, *Margins*; Lakoff) as too simplistic, especially when viewed from a purely language-centered, rather than cognitive perspective. Here, 'dead metaphors' mean lexical expressions that used to be understood figuratively, but have undergone a process of lexicalization whereby they no longer entail the cognitive work required to decode non-literal meaning.

[9] An in-depth exploration of this and other concepts and paradoxes related to zoos is provided by Braverman.

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Appendix

Table 1: Concordance of 'animal' as lemma in the BNC, first 30 hits, sorted left

#	ID	Register				Left context	Node	Right context
1	EFF	W_pop_lore	A	B	C	bred . The project has now taken the population from 18	animals	to more than 300 at the end of the 1991 breeding season
2	K8Y	W_misc	A	B	C	reduction in travel if we sample 10 herds and then 20	animals	within each . A further gain is that we do not need
3	J52	W_non_ac_nat_science	A	B	C	is not biomorph space but real genetic space . The actual	animals	that have ever lived on Earth are a tiny subset of the
4	KCS	S_conv	A	B	C	a neighbour of ours were very er keen on looking after	animals	, er stray animals and all like that Emma (-----) , Emma
5	KCU	S_conv	A	B	C	Ai n't the other one easier ? (SP:PS0GK) means A all	animals	are (SP:PS0GG) Bollock-less (SP:PS0GK) (laugh)
6	G1L	W_fict_prose	A	B	C	of walking . A look of hopeless desolation , of almost	animal	acceptance was in their faces ; they had long since passed beyond
7	ASF	W_non_ac_humanities_arts	A	B	C	) , which represents a man in the skin of an	animal	and wearing the antlers of a stag , may have felt that
8	C8P	W_instructional	A	B	C	a nursery rhyme character or not , whether they are an	animal	or a person and whether or not they are famous . When
9	FU8	W_fict_prose	A	B	C	he reared and plunged on the bed , grunting like an	animal	, until his lust emptied itself into her . Then his corpulent
10	B04	W_non_ac_soc_science	A	B	C	is the question of field or blood sports . From an	animal	welfare point of view the chasing of a fox or a deer
11	EFF	W_pop_lore	A	B	C	of the human race , vowing I will never treat an	animal	in these ways . But suddenly , the difference between the
12	JNB	S_meeting	A	B	C	we approve of allowing a pack of dogs to hunt an	animal	to its death . (pause) If the answer 's no we do
13	APH	W_ac_soc_science	A	B	C	not necessary) , however , that other aspects of an	animal	's behaviour toward a stimulus might be determined by the value
14	CRM	W_non_ac_nat_science	A	B	C	rest of the body is smooth . Sclerotization of such an	animal	, with jointed limbs replacing lobopods , could lead to an animal
15	B04	W_non_ac_soc_science	A	B	C	is not , would it be justified to say that an	animal	which does not have these components could not feel pain ? We
16	H85	W_fict_prose	A	B	C	or a dog . ' ' One could n't trust an	animal	to Weenie , ' ' She 'll grow up one day .
17	B04	W_non_ac_soc_science	A	B	C	harrowing chase of the animal , and moreover , of an	animal	which has not evolved with the typical biological
18	CBR	W_ac_soc_science	A	B	C	brings the post can be lexically realized as postman ; an	animal	which has been killed for consumption becomes meat . In this
19	FAC	W_ac_soc_science	A	B	C	It ca n't possibly be a dog and not be an	animal	. It 's a dog therefore it 's an animal . If
20	G07	W_fict_prose	A	B	C	the way , and G.P. saying I 've never hurt an	animal	in my life , you can always make out a case for
21	J52	W_non_ac_nat_science	A	B	C	The minimum requirement for us to recognize an object as an	animal	or plant is that it should succeed in making a living of
22	HB7	W_misc	A	B	C	three main raw materials -- china stone , china clay and	animal	bone . It is the bone (reduced to a fine ash
23	GVY	W_non_ac_soc_science	A	B	C	stations for grain exports ; Osharovka and Kryazh for cattle and	animal	products ; Samara for grain , cattle , and tallow . Further
24	B7E	W_non_ac_nat_science	A	B	C	expensive central sewerage systems and to recycle human and	animal	wastes locally to provide cooking gas and fertilisers . ' Under
25	FU8	W_fict_prose	A	B	C	he had spoken only to point out signs of bird and	animal	life that he thought might interest her ; in the mud at
26	EFR	W_non_ac_nat_science	A	B	C	competition that became more and more intense as time passed and	animal	life proliferated . The great variety of creatures in the
27	HTD	W_misc	A	B	C	(see page 90) . # Applied Animal Behaviour and	Animal	Welfare : # MSc (12 mth FT) /Diploma (9
28	J3C	W_misc	A	B	C	experiments involving the genetic modification of plants and	animals	. The commission is concerned about the possible risks
29	KM6	S_tutorial	A	B	C	and also there was a severe shortage of farm implements and	animals	cos they were n't redistributed , there was only the surplus that
30	HSN	W_non_ac_nat_science	A	B	C	to mankind . Agriculture , as the industry producing plants and	animals	as good or raw materials , is a major sector for research

Table 2: Collocates of 'sanctuary' as lemma in the BNC: first 30 hits

		CONTEXT	FREQ		ALL	%	MI	
1	☐	BIRD	26		3823	0.68	6.67	■
2	☐	WILDLIFE	23		1979	1.16	7.45	■
3	☐	ANIMAL	21		6587	0.32	5.58	■
4	☐	SOUGHT	13		5219	0.25	5.22	▮
5	☐	PEAK	11		2821	0.39	5.87	▮
6	☐	KNOSSOS	9		210	4.29	9.33	▮
7	☐	DEDICATED	9		1896	0.47	6.15	▮
8	☐	GODDESS	8		558	1.43	7.75	▮
9	☐	WHALE	8		564	1.42	7.73	▮
10	☐	CAVE	8		1211	0.66	6.63	▮
11	☐	LAMP	7		1242	0.56	6.40	▮
12	☐	REFUGEES	7		1815	0.39	5.85	▮
13	☐	TEMPLE	7		2024	0.35	5.70	▮
14	☐	THRONE	6		1194	0.50	6.24	▮
15	☐	DELPHI	5		111	4.50	9.40	▮
16	☐	ANTARCTIC	5		491	1.02	7.26	▮
17	☐	BUTTERFLY	5		623	0.80	6.91	▮
18	☐	SWAN	5		974	0.51	6.27	▮
19	☐	HEREFORD	5		1060	0.47	6.15	▮
20	☐	GREECE	5		1609	0.31	5.54	▮
21	☐	BULL	5		1771	0.28	5.40	▮
22	☐	EGHAM	4		40	10.00	10.55	▮
23	☐	SHRINES	4		136	2.94	8.79	▮
24	☐	SACRED	4		1245	0.32	5.59	▮
25	☐	JUKTAS	3		4	75.00	13.46	▮
26	☐	EPIDAURUS	3		11	27.27	12.00	▮
27	☐	SHILOH	3		18	16.67	11.29	▮
28	☐	HERA	3		40	7.50	10.14	▮
29	☐	RHINO	3		219	1.37	7.68	▮
30	☐	OLYMPIA	3		296	1.01	7.25	▮

Table 3: Concordance of 'sanctuary' as lemma in the BNC, first 30 hits, sorted left

#	Code	Genre				Left context	Node	Right context
1	B1F	W_religion	A	B	C	else , for it turns part of our minds into a	sanctuary	. On the one side of the mind is the entire world
2	HH3	W_non_ac_polit_law_edu	A	B	C	remind him (sic) that the church should be a	sanctuary	for the oppressed . The churches have incredible wealth and th
3	CH1	W_newsp_tabloid	A	B	C	. # HOSPICE VISITOR : but is our Princess turning a	sanctuary	for the dying into a sanctuary for DI ? # People who
4	GV1	W_misc	A	B	C	one . Untidy foliage at the water 's edge provides a	sanctuary	for waterlily beetles and other aquatic pests , so should be
5	ASU	W_misc	A	B	C	in a deep fold of the hills and has remained a	sanctuary	of rural peace unspoilt and unscathed by modern development
6	G33	W_pop_lore	A	B	C	Pulling up boring rhododendron roots . # C # Maintaining a	sanctuary	which must be kept a total secret . 29 Your body is
7	FTW	W_biography	A	B	C	one level , he finally found a spiritual home , a	sanctuary	from which he could vent his spleen on the oppressive bourged
8	CDB	W_fict_prose	A	B	C	a place of bliss in which to pass eternity : a	sanctuary	where one might chain-smoke without impairment of breathing
9	HH8	W_fict_prose	A	B	C	began to impose a new regime , it had become a	sanctuary	. Eventually , Sabine had been glad to escape altogether to
10	CK2	W_non_ac_nat_science	A	B	C	's proposals for ' Operation Tiger ' and Park as a	sanctuary	for tigers , later enlarged to 360 square miles (930 sq
11	J3C	W_misc	A	B	C	dolphin haven France and Italy have agreed to set up a	sanctuary	in which dolphins will be protected from drift-net fishing . The
12	A65	W_pop_lore	A	B	C	McCartney and given to the League Against Cruel Sports as a	sanctuary	against hunting . News of McCartney 's intention to give the
13	EVA	W_non_ac_soc_science	A	B	C	coins into the sacred spring . Similarly , at the Aesculapian	sanctuary	near Epidaurus , dormitories were provided for pilgrims
14	CM9	W_ac_humanities_arts	A	B	C	in the Labyrinth , luring deities from their various shrines and	sanctuaries	in outlying areas . The meaning of the double-axe is not known
15	KAD	W_misc	A	B	C	interests include The Royal Opera House , Street Markets and	Sanctuaries	which shelter and care for abandoned domestic animals . Cecili
16	K95	W_fict_prose	A	B	C	of the green boughs so lovingly placed along the nave and	sanctuary	steps . He remembered the chapel of St John and wondered wh
17	CCD	W_fict_prose	A	B	C	infinitely preferable ! ' Whilst there may be sanctuary men and	sanctuary	women -- ' he pointed out , producing as it were his
18	ACM	W_pop_lore	A	B	C	got Bonnie -- a little terrier-type dog -- from an animal	sanctuary	18 months ago when she was just nine weeks old . She
19	BMG	W_misc	A	B	C	with great kindness , acquire a rescued cat from an animal	sanctuary	, should be prepared for unusual reactions of this kind . They
20	K25	W_news_script	A	B	C	months ago he was brought into the Saint Tiggywinkles animal	sanctuary	at Haddenham in Buckinghamshire . He was down on his luck a
21	C88	W_newsp_other_report	A	B	C	centre recently , raised 650 for the St. Francis Animal	Sanctuary	. # A RECENT well supported jumble sale in the Methodist Chur
22	K26	W_news_script	A	B	C	. # CLARE LAFFERTY/Hereford # GEOFF BOUCHER/Hereford Animal	Sanctuary	# DAVID SIMMONS/Hereford City Council # JENNY
23	ASH	W_pop_lore	A	B	C	give pony rides to help raise funds for the Longeval Animal	Sanctuary	Trust , which is run by her mother , Cindy . The
24	F9F	W_non_ac_nat_science	A	B	C	day after foraging at night ; and mice and rabbits as	sanctuaries	where they are beyond the reach of most of their enemies .
25	EUU	W_commerce	A	B	C	Licensed dealers are the last places on earth to serve as	sanctuaries	from such treatment . The other dealers at Eyas Securities
26	B13	W_non_ac_humanities_arts	A	B	C	and building His spiritual house , a spacious and attractive	sanctuary	was rising for the accommodation of worshippers who were so
27	CM9	W_ac_humanities_arts	A	B	C	The Diktaian cave # Plate 18 Pillar Crypt at the Balustrade	Sanctuary	(Evans ' Royal Villa) # Plate 19 Phourni . The
28	CM9	W_ac_humanities_arts	A	B	C	as extensive as those at Knossos . There is a bench-lined	sanctuary	opening out of the west side of the Central Court , but
29	HKP	W_non_ac_polit_law_edu	A	B	C	an Exxon-owned vessel on Jan. 1 . A number of bird	sanctuaries	were seriously affected by the spill . # Moscow environment
30	CA6	W_biography	A	B	C	. Gertrude is an absurd person who lives in a bird	sanctuary	ministering to ' oiled-up sea-birds '(Elizabeth got that from a