

IN-BETWEEN PLACES: THE NATURAL ZOO AS A CULTURAL PLACE

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My research is in the broad area of Environmental Humanities and the interface between the concepts of nature and culture. A large part of my activity during the 'Passage to India' exchange programme was exploring places and blogging about them. In some ways I was 'displaced' from my home country and was occupying an in-between place. Berlin was my home, yet not my home. This essay includes 'in-betweenness' in its structure, as the actual paper is written in between my journal entries (in italics) on the visit to the Berlin Zoo. Zoological gardens are places where boundaries between nature and culture are fuzzy and one cannot apply distinct binaries to evaluate or judge them as one or the other. The zoological garden is ontologically a cultural place but its components or constituents are natural elements such as trees, animals and plants. This chapter traces the in-betweenness of zoos through the story of Knut, the polar bear in the Berlin Zoo and the history of zoos in general.¹

On the history of zoos: collections of animals

The tickets to the Berlin Zoo were printed with pictures of birds and animals and it looked like a colourful souvenir I could put away in my scrapbook. As I followed my friends through the large gates, past the ticket-checking personnel, I was one of a few hundred people entering the Berlin Zoo that day. This was my first 'sight-seeing trip' inside the city of Berlin.

Vernon N. Kisling Jr. (2001), in his book on the history of zoos, informs us that human beings attempted to keep wild animals as early as 10,000

BC, along with the first attempts at domestication of animals. This just might have been a process where some animals were selected to live with human beings and some were found unsuitable for domestication. The collecting of different types of animals began later. Kisling (*ibid.*: 7) adds that, however, "collections" of wild animals were not assembled until the earliest urbanised civilisations began about 3000 BC.²

Many animal collections also formed parts of gifts and tributes to the conquerors of other kingdoms and the value of the tribute being greater in case the animal was perceived as exotic. In a descriptive passage from the *Mahabharata*, one of the ancient epics of India, we find a list of animals, gifts to the emperor Yudhishthira from his vassals including wild animals, camel herds and many other animals (cp. Sabha Parva Book 2: Mahabharata). The earliest zoo (Kisling 2001: 7) recorded in history was the collection of African animals by Queen Hatshepsut of Egypt (ca. 1479–58 BC) brought from the punt region (now a part of Ethiopia). We know from the temple paintings of this period that it may have been the first collection that was open for public viewing. We do know that private royal animal collections did exist before, such as those of Shulgi, the ruler of Uruk (now south-eastern Iraq), but they were for the pleasures of the royal court only. There were also collections of sacred animals that belonged to the temples (cp. Turner 2005: 13f.). All of these places that animals were displayed in were called by different names over time but fundamentally, they always were concerned with having animals on display. Kisling (2001: 7) points out:

Animal collections evolved into menageries during and after the European Renaissance period (1456–1828), and then into zoological gardens beginning in the nineteenth century (1828 to present). In hindsight, however, earlier collections may also be considered menageries or zoos. Modern usage of these words applies to any collection of wild animals, including those collections existing in the past.

From 'mere display' to the 'scientific study' of animals in a garden

The Berlin Zoo is spread over a large area with wide open spaces, pathways and display boards showing maps and information (in both German and English) about the enclosures and the animals on display. As we walked past the large herbivores (Elephants, Camels and Giraffes), my colleague, who studies animal behaviour and social interactions in monkeys, kept up a running commentary on the different animals, their geographical distribution and strange facts about them a philosophy student like me may have not known.

The study of animals and their classification became central to Natural history in the early half of the eighteenth century. Carolus Linnaeus (1707–78) is credited with the establishment of the modern scientific method of classification and naming of plants, animals, minerals and diseases. With increase in trade and explorations to other continents, more and more varieties of plants and animals were discovered, prompting natural historians like Linnaeus to send trained pupils as observers to record and describe in detail as well as to bring back samples of the plants and animals of the different explored countries (cp. Ben-Menahem 2009 (1): 1330). The private animal collections were replaced by institutionally managed collections during this period. The move was both political and social, and reflected the changing ideas about 'science' during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Characteristic of this period is the transformation of Curiosity which was a part of the flaws of character, along with Hubris, into a noble virtue. Sarukkai (2009: 762) writes:

From the seventeenth century positive values get attached to curiosity. [..] Hobbes also used curiosity to distinguish humans from animals and thus puts curiosity in a constellation of ideas such as rationality which served to make this distinction in Aristotle. For Hobbes and Descartes, curiosity was the origin of the search for knowledge.

This development of 'science' as a discipline encouraging curiosity about the world in general did initiate the scientific study of animals (zoology) during that period. We find that one of the official documents, a Zoological Society of London prospectus dated 1 March 1825 stated:

It has long been a matter of deep regret to the cultivators of Natural History, that we possess no great scientific establishment either for teaching or elucidating Zoology; and no public menageries or collections of living animals where their nature, properties and habits may be studied. In almost every other part of Europe, except in the metropolis of the British Empire, something of this kind exists.

cited in Kislung (2001: 61)

Kislung draws from this document to show how the idea of a zoological garden promoted the scientific study of animals. He writes:

This prospectus also asserted that the society would 'offer a collection of living animals, such as never yet existed in ancient or modern times' and that it would benefit Britain to offer 'a very

different series of exhibitions to the population of her metropolis; one that could be used for the 'objects of scientific research, not of vulgar admiration'.

ibid.: 62

The motivation of scientific curiosity which legitimised the act of watching exotic animals earlier was how considered a vulgar spectacle. By contrast, the scientific method of observation in the form of animal studies in zoos was construed as legitimate pursuit of the rational human being. The setting up of the zoological gardens thus seems to have been influenced by the re-cast idea of curiosity that supported proper methods of science.

Sarukkai (2009: 7) writes of this development of 'methodical curiosity' in the sciences:

For Descartes, the problem was in unmethodological curiosity and so he constructs methods which will control 'blind curiosity'. Over the course of the seventeenth century, curiosity gets established as something natural, something innate which characterizes human thought and action. It is not an accident that this period also saw the invocation of duty towards attaining knowledge.

Turner (2005: 18) explains that in eighteenth-century England the study of wild nature otherwise called 'first nature' was given renewed significance by the philosophical school known as empiricism. He writes: 'There was a steady swing from Cartesian rationalism to the empiricism of Bacon, Hobbes, Locke and Hume. In the nineteenth century, this led to a botanical appreciation of plants. Gardens became an example in the discussion of man's relationship to nature.'

The word 'zoo' is an abbreviation of the term zoological garden. Like a botanical garden that houses plants and trees from all over the world, a zoological garden (or zoo) houses animals of different kinds. In German, another word for zoo is 'Tiergarten', which literally means 'animal garden' and actually is the name of the district where the Berlin Zoological Garden is located. The word 'garden' in the phrase 'zoological garden' warrants a closer look.

The place between nature and culture

As we sauntered along, a board with an arrow announced, 'Arctic foxes and polar bears'. Polar bears... My heart must have skipped a beat. To actually see a live polar bear in Berlin was a welcome opportunity. Instead of trudging miles in the freezing arctic cold or alternately watching a

moving picture on a flat screen in the comfort of my city home, I comfortably get see a live polar bear in Berlin Zoo! From my own interest in environmental issues, I already knew that the polar bear was a mascot for the cause of mitigating global warming. The ecologists are concerned that melting polar ice caps would maroon these large carnivorous bears on islands of ice, threatening their very existence. As I neared the large rocky enclosure, I was more than satisfied. Polar bears, their fur white as snow were taking a bath in the warm sunlight, ambling along the rocks, or just resting, watching us watch them. The arctic foxes were in another enclosure with the brown bears. As I look at the brown shaggy animal, the brown bear chose to suddenly stand up on its hind feet and tower over the watching humans. All of a sudden I smelt raw meat. I turned back to see a wheel burrow behind me. It was filled with the bear's lunch – dead rabbits and birds. The title of an environmental-philosophy essay of James Harley's came to my mind – 'The Uncanny Goodness of Being Edible to Bears'. I had a phenomenological moment of being bear's food (meat) for a few seconds then the irrational fear filled moment passed and the human rationale took over. I began to click pictures with my mobile phone camera.

Gardens are places that are between nature and polis, our built settlements. Rolston (2005: 62) claims (as does Aristotle earlier) that human beings are naturally political and build themselves a polis in which they can socialise. According to him, the architectures of nature and culture are different, and culture will always seek to improve nature, this management intent spoils the wilderness. Cultural processes by their very 'nature' interrupt evolution, he claims. Yet one cannot deny that human beings have dimensions within themselves which relate to the wild or the rural. The parks and the gardens seem to create a 'wild' or natural area for the urban dweller to fulfil this need. One may speculate that this need is perhaps what draws the visitors to the zoos. These gardens and green areas within an urban area are much visited as they bring the natural landscape to that halfway point between human-made and entirely natural. The normal reaction of urban dwellers to the wild is one of threat and fear and there are communities that would be happier with plastic plants and trees. Yet these halfway wildernesses, places that are hybrid between nature and culture are set against the background view that tamed nature is more worthy than either the pure wild or the totally built environment.

Yi-Fu Tuan (1975: 156) also points out that for the people of the city, the public places of a city are less meaningful than the countryside and wildernesses. He writes:

The assertion is obvious and yet may sound surprising, for many well-educated and vocal people of urban background have come to believe that meaning in a place gains almost in proportion to its lack of people. In this view, sparsely settled farmlands are somehow more meaningful than cities, and wilderness areas more meaningful than farmlands.

Explaining this urban preference for wilderness, he (ibid.) further adds:

To people of urban background, farms and wildernesses are aesthetic and religious objects. A special verbal and pictorial syntax, the creation of many talented artists, exists to articulate rural and wilderness experiences from the visitor's viewpoint.

Though Tuan is talking specifically about the paintings and colour slides as visual syntax, a zoo is also such a carefully designed or staged representation of wilderness within a city, nature in an urban area. Are such gardens natural or cultural? The landscaped gardens are an urban phenomenon certainly and zoos are a special type of such garden places with animals. In his history of gardens, Turner mentions that early collections of animals were maintained in gardens. 'People have always sought to understand the natural world and enclosures have assisted the quest by containing collections of plants and animals. The earliest spaces of this type were known as *paridaxa* (literally "around-wall")' (Turner 2005: 11).

It is interesting to examine here how the idea of the 'wild' is constructed in urban areas through the construction of parks, particularly zoological gardens. The idea of 'wild animals' brings to the layman the imagination of the forest and wilderness more easily than neat rows of tulips in a garden bed. The nature that zoos represent is – created nature – a restored or maintained natural surrounding which the philosopher Elliot refers to as 'faked nature'. He argues that any humanly designed entities are at best feeble attempts to copy nature (Elliot 1997: 105).

Without giving in to this extreme dichotomy between nature and culture, we could also look at the idea of cultural as being related to human purposes. Within the life-world of human beings, zoological gardens do not exist for or by themselves. The zoo is designed to fulfil a human purpose, that of looking at the animals placed in enclosures (for education or aesthetic or scientific study), which makes the place cultural for us. The term cultural is appropriate here because it includes the aesthetic appeal of nature and not merely its utilitarian values.

A zoo is an example of a new kind of *hybrid place* where the porous boundaries between nature and culture seem to fulfil a cultural purpose.

The zoo is a place where nature (as represented in particular by the wild animals and their 'natural enclosures') is present. But the zoo itself is a museum, a cultural exhibit that is totally created for human purposes; be it for education, conservation of a gene pool or the study of animal behaviour. Though zoological gardens are meant to house and study animals in general, we find that a majority of the zoos prefer to house exotic species. For the lay person, the idea of exotic means alien, uncommon, strange or rare; for the zoo expert, the term is to be understood in a more technical sense. Exotic for the expert refers to the geographical origins of the animals, to the fact that their natural range is found in parts of the world other than where the zoo and its exhibits are. However, it must be emphasised that the zoo is not like a scientific laboratory of a zoologist or ethologist. One of the main functions of a zoo is to display these exotic animals for the general public. A zoo that does not open its gate for public viewing is rare.

I walked away towards the souvenir stall that seemed to be a polar bear special shop, hoping to pick up a message T-shirt or something small for my friends back in India. I saw a picture postcard of a cuddly white bear cub reclining on a green blanket. 'KNUT' said the caption in block letters. 'Knut! Who's Knut?' I was puzzled that one animal had so much popularity in the zoo and he was famous enough to have a souvenir stall all for himself. When I asked the store-keeper about it in broken German, she replied in perfect English, 'Knut was born in this zoo, so he is a special bear.' Was Knut a Berlin bear, or a polar bear, or a polar bear born in Berlin? Later, browsing through the internet from many articles and news stories, I found out about Knut. Born in captivity in the Berlin zoo, on December sixth, 2006, this polar bear cub called Knut has been the centre of many controversies surrounding the ideas of 'natural' 'wild' and ethics of human-animal interaction.

A polar bear is exotic because it does not naturally occur in the regions around Germany. In other words it is alien to the local geographical region. This idea of exotic comes from a particular understanding of the concept 'ecological species'. This is a concept of species in which a species is a set of organisms adapted to a particular set of resources, called a niche, in the environment. According to this concept as defined by Ridley (2004: 353), 'populations form the discrete phenetic clusters that we recognise as species because the ecological and evolutionary processes controlling how resources are divided up tend to produce those clusters.' So when an animal is displaced from its natural niche it is 'alien' to the place. In a zoo, most animals are exotic and 'displaced' from their natural habitat. Despite the best attempts of zoo managers to recreate their natural surroundings it is evident that this is not the natural habitat of the animal in nature. Even if zoos manage to recreate ice and snow within a large arctic glass dome, they cannot avoid the miniaturisation effect. The best zoo enclosure is another

artificial niche, created by humans and maintained by sustained effort of cost and energy.

Lee (2005: 22) suggests that according to a particular view in environmental philosophy known as holism or ecocentrism, 'ecology in general, and habitats and ecosystems in particular, play a vital part both in the emergence and the maintenance of a species.' The polar bear in Berlin is a representative of the species *Ursus maritimus*. But this polar bear, devoid of the Arctic landscape and seascape is actually a 'non-polar' bear. Even without invoking ideas of wild and non-wild, the zoo animals may be natural kinds, but they are culturally different from the bears foraging for fish in the Arctic regions. They are human artefacts, placed on display. Like reconstructed Greek pillars in the museum, they are show pieces for study, education and entertainment. The difference between the pillars and the bears is that these animals are alive.

Arguing for an environmental ethic that addresses the value of nature from a non-anthropocentric perspective, Elliot (1997: 97) posits that original nature cannot be replaced by these restored artefacts. These increasing trends to bring nature into the city represent an aspect of the human-nature relationship which portrays nature as an artefact, adding to the glory of human technology that recreates the pristine beauty of the wild for us in our urban backyard.

The human destruction of the environment resulting from depletion of resources prompted George Marsh to write *Man and Nature: Or, Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action*, one of the first modern books (published in 1864) concerned with the need for environmental conservation (Kisling 2001: 18). The changing interest towards the study of ecology and conservation led to zoological gardens redefining themselves as being centres of ecological education and conservation awareness. Kisling (2001: 40) writes that the trend towards conservation parks is a reflection of related social, environmental and technological changes. Captive breeding has created the idea of zoos being a sort of a modern Noah's ark where animals can be preserved and bred within zoos in controlled environments, perhaps to repopulate the depleting wild populations. Most zoos justify their programmes around creating awareness about conservation and environmental issues. It comes from the idea of preservation of type. Elliot (1997: 107) writes:

[...] we might distinguish between type-preservation and token-preservation. In the case of preservation, type-preservation will always involve token-preservation. The point of the distinction is merely to signal that there is a particular reason for

some token-preservations, namely that they are, in addition, type-preservations. So, one token-preservation may be compellingly justified to carry out more than another. This may be because some type of ecosystem is threatened and would be made safer through that particular act of token-preservation. Token-restoration of various kinds is one way in which the type-preservationist goal might be secured.

So a token 'wild animal' will help preserve the type polar bears in the arctic region being threatened by melting polar ice caps. Given this argument, it becomes easier to see why rarer animals are important for the zoo. On the other hand, zoos that are actually engaged in captive breeding or wild life rescue to replace wild populations are very careful to maintain the animals in very non-human surroundings. The exposure of such animals to human beings is minimised to a great extent to allow the animal to adapt to the forest or other habitats easily. The animals on display however are used to human presence.

As I bought the cute card and a cute keychain, I found Knut items were marked with a copyright. It was estimated that in 2007 from the sale of t-shirts and Knut-branded merchandise, Knut generated more than 5m (£4.4m; \$7m) euros in extra income for Berlin zoo. Reports also estimate that the stocks of Berlin zoo went up after the cub Knut was registered as a trademark of Berlin zoo. Is Knut a form of urban capital, a brand?

Latour (1993) detects two contradictory processes at work in modern societies – the increasing proliferation of hybrids mixing nature (physical objective world) and culture (the human subjective world). On one hand there is an attempt to keep these two terms pure and pitted against each other, yet there continuously occurs an intertwining between them. 'Here lies the entire modern paradox. If we consider hybrids, we are dealing only with mixtures of nature and culture; if we consider the work of purification, we confront a total separation between nature and culture'. Latour (1993: 30)

This attempt to mix and yet keep apart is continuously present in a zoo. The animals in captivity are portrayed as tokens of their species that live in the wild. Are they actually wild animals? People may argue that animals in a zoo are natural and that they are just in a different habitat. Others may raise the issue that like exhibits in a city museum, they are no longer wild. That was the issue with Knut. As any wild cub in the polar region rejected by its mother may simply die, so also the cub Knut in the zoo must have been allowed to die. Would the cub have been rejected at all in the wild? Knut's upbringing raises so many ethical questions regarding the close

interaction between human beings and their wild wards. What is the status of these halfway wild animals in the human world and in human conceptualisation? To understand this we must turn to the philosophical stream called ontology. Ontology indicates the kinds of things there are in the world, how to distinguish them and their role in framing our conceptual schemes.

We are clear that animals and other organisms are not like tables and cars. They are natural kinds. Lee (2005: 19) defines natural kinds and processes thus: 'Naturally occurring entities and processes are precisely those which have come into existence, continue to exist, and go out of existence, entirely autonomously, and therefore independently of human intentionality and agency (and of supernatural agency for that matter)'. An animal or a plant, though not exactly like a lake, a rock or a mountain are still instances of natural kinds. Living organisms are those natural kinds that not only exist by themselves, but also exist for themselves; fulfilling a life trajectory. They grow, mature, reproduce and actively nourish and protect themselves from destruction. They are said to be autopoietic.

I was standing inside a dome in the zoo with glass walls and the other side was filled to half with water. A Hippo baby slowly swam across the pool and sank down underwater, its feet striking the floor of the tank and raising the mud. I had never seen a Hippo underwater. I watched the animal gracefully tread through water and watched it swim across the large tank across my glass screen view. I had an 'underwater Hippo baby' photograph to show off to my friends.

Arguing that the term 'wild animals in captivity' is a misconstruction from an ontological viewpoint, Lee (2005: 81–88) posits that once the animals are placed in a zoo, their ontological status changes, they are no longer independent of human intentionality. He insists that the animal caught from the wild first becomes decontextualised and then recontextualised according to human design and intention. He suggests that they are biotic artefacts. Where in the wild can one see arctic foxes at such close proximity to brown bears? A large part of the decontextualisation is the displacement of the animal from its natural geographical habitat. The recontextualisation of the animal occurs within the structures of the zoo. As I noticed during my visits there, the design of the enclosures (with glass domes or walls that have replaced the older kinds of iron bars in most zoos), the space that is provided for activities, partial concealment areas, feeding and watering spots, ponds, rocks, shrubbery – everything is arranged as a part of the display background. The cage is now a showcase, as in most parts of the Berlin Zoo; these are larger in size and suited for a living display. The zoo encl-

sure are designed in such a way as to enable zoo visitors to look at the animals. Elements of the design also ensure that the animals are content and happy in these enclosures with enough distractions for play or movement. Some zoos feed the animals in public view, some make sure that at least for a part of the day the animals are available to the viewing public. The public is not concerned with the ontological status of the wild animal. For the lay person, as long as the tiger looks like a tiger in the forest, it is a wild animal. For purposes of conservation and education, a token 'living model' of a wild tiger is placed in a glass enclosure. Lee suggests that the zoo keepers are careful to maintain the outward appearances of the wild animals. He writes:

Zoo theorists and zoo keepers, therefore, deliberately intend and ensure that their exhibits retain the morphological characteristics which their wild counterparts possess in order, first, to sustain the claim that they are 'wild' but happen to be exhibited to the public in zoos, second, to uphold their central justifications of zoos in terms of *ex situ* conservation and education-for-conservation.

Lee (2005: 76)

Knut represents not himself, but the wild polar bears in the Arctic region who are threatened by melting polar icecaps. The fact that Knut himself was born in the zoo and may have never been to the polar region is not of importance for the awareness-education about polar bears as a threatened species. On the other hand, the politics of Knut's ownership and the profits from his popularity are all firmly based on the fact that he was born in captivity. Knut is wild as a representation, a mascot for his species. But he is not wild; he is owned, brought up and cared for by human beings. His fate is intertwined with the politics of the Berlin Zoo.

Of politics and polar bears

Knut was feeding on some fishes in the enclosure but there were so many people surrounding him, many more than those around the other polar bears or the brown bears, which seemed equally interesting to my eyes. I caught just a glimpse of Knut in between many heads of people in front of me and after one or two more unsuccessful attempts to see him for longer, I unconcernedly walked away and enjoyed the rest of animal watching day. Watching some of the animals watch me, I wondered if they 'knew' they were displaced. I for one was an Indian, who had voluntarily displaced herself to Europe, always aware my 'home' was far away. Like the animals' enclosures, my room in Berlin was miniaturised too. From a large six room territory called my home, now I was

residing in a small hostel room a few squares in size. I had the same view of the adjoining building from my one window to the world every day. But as a human being I was of course free to go out, have adventures and explore the city or the country. The animals would remain in the zoo. Knut will stay in Berlin. Or will he not?

Knut was born at the Berlin Zoo to 20-year-old Tosca, a former circus performer from East Germany who was born in Canada, and her 13-year-old mate Lars, who was originally from the Tierpark Hellabrunn in Munich. His birth and the surrounding ethical debates gave rise to an endless stream of nature journalism – a steady stream of photographs, essays, pictures and articles on Knut followed in what was dubbed as 'Knutmania'. It is no wonder that Knut brought both cultural and economic values to the Berlin Zoo. It is no surprise that in July 2008, it was announced that the Neumünster zoo in northern Germany, which owns Knut's father, was suing the Berlin Zoo for the profits from Knut's success. Neumünster had previously tried to negotiate with Berlin Zoo, but was now seeking a court ruling in their favour. Zoos are much more than just cultural, they have become political. The political implications of a city owning an exotic zoo animal is equally relevant today as it was in medieval periods to own and care for these exotic animals.

On one hand it seems that the media representation of such issues feeds into the way the zoo as a place is constructed culturally. On the other hand, it also seems possible that what is written in such newspaper articles are mere representations of what is already present in people's minds. Trying to find out if the cultural construction came first or the representation in people's minds is a question that is unanswerable.

The dichotomy between nature and culture is not a clear one. It is a continuum that ranges from the human-free autopoietic being such as a tree to the completely human-dependent sign board. The animals in a zoo are not artificial, their context, the place is. The place called the zoological garden or conservation-education park, or by any other name is an in-between nature-culture place. We as human beings will interact with animals in the zoo at various levels. We, human beings give them our meanings, make them appealing for us to look at and in return we become their caretakers. They continue to follow their life trajectory. We culturally relate to them as wild pets, endangered species or as objects of study. It is for us that these animals in a zoo are cultural. They are the hybrid wild.

I walk past the other enclosures of tigers, lions, jungle cats, snakes, amphibians and fire ants. As I walk away from the zoo, a broken monument, destroyed during the World War stands outside the aquarium. The displaced stones and broken order stand in stark contrast to the neat structures of the building behind

it. All the animals are busy at fulfilling their existences. The difference is that they now are sharing a place that I belong to, being seen by me and my fellow beings, fulfilling our needs. There is a saying in Hindi which comes to my mind that I translate here: 'The Peacock danced in the jungle, but nobody saw it.' The animals in zoo are seen admired and appreciated. They are paid for, cared for and perhaps loved too.

Epilogue

As I reedit this paper for publication, I am back in India doing research and teaching – well placed as one could say – and a great many things have happened at the Berlin Zoo. On 19th March, 2011 Knut the polar bear died. An infection in the brain caused him to drown in the pool. I saw the news on television and was reminded of my visit and this essay that I wrote in Berlin. In fact, Knut's current status as an artefact has come full circle. Arguments against the idea of stuffing Knut were raised; the museum instead mounted the real fur on a statue for display. They also have a bronze statue in his honor. The Website of the Natural History Museum has photographs of the mounting process and states that after the free public display for a few days, 'Knut will be added to the scientific research collections of the Museum and be displayed in another exhibition not before 2014 (cp. BBC report 2011). The exhibition entitled "The Value of Nature" will include Knut under the aspects of his extraordinary popularity and his role as ambassador for an endangered species.' Perhaps the most important idea of the natural is the idea of life ending, of death. Knut has overcome this not once but twice. The first time, the zoo came to his rescue saving him from a biological death. The second time, after the biological demise he has been conserved immortalised in bronze and also in fur. Knut the polar-Berlin bear is no more but Knut the brand and his artefact value survives.

Note

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