

**“Not Eva, not Kelly – both, but one”: Voice, Choice, and (Material) Agency in Peter Dickinson’s *Eva***

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The discourse of young adult literature dealing with sex and sexuality is directly linked to the materiality of the adolescent body, and adult authors writing for a juvenile audience often use the metaphor of adolescent-animal metamorphosis to convey the initiation of adolescent protagonists into adulthood in coming-of-age stories. This paper deals with the relationship between the agency between the material represented by Eva’s body and the discursive represented by human language in Peter Dickinson’s *Eva*. Thirteen-year-old Eva wakes from a coma to find her consciousness transposed into the body of Kelly an adult chimpanzee, and she occupies an interesting position even in her futuristic world, as a unique amalgam of human and chimp. Although several children’s literature scholars like Millicent Lenz, Robyn McCallum, and Aliona Yarova and Lydia Kokkola have argued that Eva rejects her human identity in favor of the chimp, I argue that Eva’s human and chimp, adult and child (or sexually mature and prepubescent) selves exist in a state of fluidity and interdependency. To be a successful leader of her tribe and more important, to *function*, Eva must find a way for the seemingly incongruent aspects of her identity to coexist. This paper draws on theories of cognitive narratology as expounded by David Herman, theories of material feminisms, and children’s literature scholarship to better understand Eva’s gradual success regarding her human and non-human interactions. I conclude that Eva’s unique subject position – a liminal entity who is at once Eva *and* Kelly – allows for the facilitation of communication between – and consequently, community formation within – two previously non-communicable groups: the humans and the chimps.