

# Animality



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# Animality

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## What People Are Not *Randy Malamud*

“The more I know men, the more I like cats” – attributed to Pascal, possibly apocryphally. Sometimes, to Frederick the Great. Sometimes dogs rather than cats.

Aphorisms solidify and validate one’s opinions and whims. Possibly, they may broach deep truths, and convey pithy, concentrated brilliance. On the other hand, they may just be suave facile clichés that displace ideas people are too lazy to formulate for themselves.

I don’t even like cats all that much. I live with two, but I find myself annoyed by them at least as often as I am comforted by them. People, though, are definitely getting to be a big problem for me, the more time I spend among them. In a nutshell: increasingly, I find them (us) messy, short-sighted, and selfish in a way that seems . . . silly and dangerous.

Generating and recycling aphorisms is one of the things we are good at, as a species. Animals don’t do this – or do they? Maybe the expressions clumsily transliterated as “meow” or “tweet” or “moo” are really piercing insights into the nature of things. Or maybe they’re banal time-fillers, like “working hard or hardly working?” The question of what nonhuman animals think and what they say is one of the many fascinating things in the world that, I believe, we will never know. (Animal behaviorists will disagree.) I think it’s a little frustrating, but also very exciting, for there to be so many fascinating things that nobody will ever know. When I look at all the things that people *do* know, and the consequence of that knowledge, it seems to me that current patterns and trends in human epistemology are, on balance, more destructive than constructive; more depressing than uplifting; more entropic than coherent; more immoral than moral.

Perhaps our salvation lies in our “ignorance.” And perhaps there is some connection between what we would call “ignorance” (in a Baconian sense) and animality.

I’ve written two books about animals: *Reading Zoos: Representations of Animals and Captivity*, and *Poetic Animals and Animal Souls*. The first was a tremendously sad project for me, so I wrote the second one in order to spend some time thinking happier thoughts about animals. The point of my first book is that zoos are cruel and horrible places, and people who create and attend zoos are cruel and horrible idiots. The point of my second book is that there are ways of seeing and thinking about animals – ways that are diametrically opposed to zoo-spectatorship – that can be pleasant (for both the human and the nonhuman animal) and mutually informative.

One of the things that motivates my work is trying to use the contemplation of animals as a way of highlighting what people do not know: what people are not. The animal is a foil for the human. If it sounds as if I’m being opportunistic and exploitative in using animals to show how other people are opportunistic and exploitative . . . well, I’m only human. Anthropocentrism, dangerous as it is to the planet and to an intellectually accurate vision of reality, is largely unavoidable for even the most enlightened anthros like myself. I fantasize about independent animal subjectivity – the authenticity of the animal apart from any human construction – and I believe that this condition exists, resplendently, but I do not know what it is.

Reading Zoos:

[http://www.nyupress.org/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=1465](http://www.nyupress.org/product_info.php?products_id=1465)

Poetic Animals and Animal Souls:

<http://www.palgrave-usa.com/catalog/product.aspx?isbn=140396>

## Animals Strike Poses Susan McHugh

Pop music is a curious place for animal studies, one where multi-layered examples complicate questions about the enduring forms of animal representation. Touch, smell, and taste pose special problems for representation of any experience but in pop music, the technological sound of contemporary urban life around the world, the animal aural elements are also the eroding aura of the animal.

CALL ME ANIMAL, THAT'S MY NAME  
CALL ME ANIMAL, I'M NOT ASHAMED  
CALL ME ANIMAL, THIS IS YOUR HOUR

**CALL ME ANIMAL, YOU'VE GOT THE POWER** ———MC5, "Call Me Animal"

Music becomes animal through power/knowledge structures as well as material interactions. The oldest musical instruments are flutes made from bones, including those of birds and bears. Like cave paintings, animal parts become involved in a process of imitating animal life; these material artifacts resemble even as they reassemble animal activities drawn from life.

I know you've been inside but what were you in for?

Animal lover, **animal lover**, animal lover? ———Suede, "Animal Lover"

Love and lust expressions aren't the only patterns that repeat across whale, bird, and human ("classical") compositions. Across cultures animal bodies continue to provide the material foundations of music. Stretch animal hides to make drum skins, carve elephant tusks to make ivory piano keys, and make catgut from the intestines of sheep, hogs, and horses to string instruments—all make music and inscribe histories of violent relations across species. More disembodied animal sounds technologically enhance this process of marking animal proximities and distances. Animal noises in early radio were replicated by not just animals but also human imitators on standby (for instance, for unreliable dog actors, notes Erica Fudge). Through these radio histories, musical instruments have also come to substitute most people's knowledge of their referent; coconut halves clapped together are to many the sound of horses' hooves on pavement. The barking dog version of "Jingle Bells" spawned a genre that defers the question of animal noise/music, but with pop hits (Jane's Addiction's "Been Caught Stealing") and b-sides (Prince and Sheena Easton's "La La La, Hee Hee Hee"), these animal sounds can also be said to have arrived as rhythmic elements.

Dream if u can a courtyard  
An ocean of violets in bloom

**Animals strike curious poses**

They feel the heat  
The heat between me and u ———Prince, "When Doves Cry"

More broadly social histories are sometimes confused in these questions of animal music/noise. Jerry Lieber and Mike Stoller, white men, wrote "Hound Dog," the favorite story of which is that Elvis Presley's version of what was Willie Mae (Big Mama) Thornton's trademark song marks a change from (black) blues to (white) rock. At other moments, the animal highlights otherwise obscure connections. Phranc's homage to the child-eating polar bear in the Bronx Zoo might be referenced (or not) by Bjork's blue polar bear outfit in the video of "Hunter." As metaphors and materials for musical expression as well as historical and sentimental subjects, animals strike curious poses indeed.

## Literary Animals *Bunny Tucker*

We live in an era where animals are manufactured: salt-water fish are mass-produced in inland ponds, chickens are raised for slaughter without venturing outside their pens, and cows' milk is extracted in assembly lines without the touch of a human hand. During the industrial revolution, as machines began to replace the role of living beings, animals, in turn, became objects that could be produced for human consumption and experimentation.<sup>1</sup> Though many individuals now consider such behavior natural or necessary, humanity was only able to reach this point through a complete denial of animal being. The absence of animals' subjectivity permits us to view them now as inexhaustible commodities.

As we investigate and challenge the contemporary relationship between humans and animals in Western society, we face a dilemma that distinguishes the animal right's movement from other social movements. The subordinated group cannot represent itself because there is no forum through which their demands can be voiced. No fundamental means of communication exists between the oppressor and the oppressed; humans and animals, though they may be in close proximity to one another, occupy different spheres that are not connected by a common spoken language. Some would claim a specious privilege based solely on the sophistication of our language; however, it is important to recognize that language is merely a self-serving construction that we created for our own use.

Historically attempts that have been made to protect animals have not taken this dilemma into account. During the Victorian era, kindness toward animals served as a rhetorical tool of supremacy for the social elite. The publicly condemned forms of cruelty were entirely politicized; lower class horse beaters were imprisoned while the royal sport of fox hunting was condoned. As a result, the imprisonment and taxation of the lower classes, not animal protection, was maximized, which fulfilled the primary motivation of the lawmakers: stability for their ruling class.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, the anthropocentric motivation

behind these regulations failed to debunk the human-animal dichotomy that justifies animal cruelty.

More recently, individuals like Jane Goodall and Barbara Smut have taken great strides in proving not only that communication between humans and animals is possible, but also that animals are endowed with many traits that we have erased and forgotten: they too have feelings, emotions, and language. The accomplishments of these individuals prove that "there is no limit to the extent to which we can think ourselves into the being of another."<sup>3</sup> Yet, given this, is there a way for people who cannot spend their lives in the wild to reach the same understanding?

Erica Fudge advocates the inclusion of animals into history. By accepting that our treatment of animals manifests in "the social, the economic, and the political" and that humans define themselves comparatively, the history of animals provides much insight toward human history.<sup>4</sup> However, while such projects have the power to evoke some emotive responses from the reader, they still present animals only in terms of their significance to humans. The historian Christine Kenyon-Jones suggests that instead we must reach outside the realm of academia if we wish to shift away from our anthropocentric worldview.<sup>5</sup> Through contemporary literature we may be able to create this new discourse, positing the writer as a bridge between the increasingly divided human and animal spheres. J.M. Coetzee's *The Lives of Animals* exemplifies imaginative literature, generating a fictional world removed from our current construct of reality.

By flooding minds with the very thoughts that have been dismissed, hidden, and ignored, imaginative literature can create an urge for individuals to genuinely reflect upon their treatment of animals. Humans can begin to view animals once again as autonomous beings. While Coetzee has taken the first step, it remains unclear whether or not his approach will spread and catch on, if other authors

will be interested, or inevitably whether or not it will impact the life of the reader. It is clear that much greater awareness needs to exist. We must open up space for human creativity to operate before viable solutions regarding our treatment of animals can begin to emerge.

<sup>1</sup> Berger, John. *About Looking*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980) 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ritvo, Harriet. *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987) 135.

<sup>3</sup> Cotzee, J.M. *The Lives of Animals*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). 35.

<sup>4</sup> Fudge, Erica. "A Left Handed Blow: Writing the History of Animals." *Representing Animals*. Ed. Nigel Rothfels. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002) 5.

<sup>5</sup> Kenyon-Jones, Christine. Lecture. Worcester College, Oxford. July 19, 2004.



*Unblinking Gaze, Sigirira Perret-Gentile*

18 Lives (excerpt) *Sigrira Perret-Gentil*

In *18 Lives* I am interested in the idea of “becoming” and blurring the species line. “Becoming” refers to a term used by philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, who state, “becomings [sic] animal are neither dreams nor phantasies, they are perfectly real . . . the becoming animal of the human being is real, even if the animal he becomes is not” (238). So this becoming is not literal, but more like a state of mind, in which for a brief moment each creature may forget what species he or she (or the other) is. Deleuze and Guattari only allow for a “becoming” to happen when one is not actively trying to imitate the other. It is less intentional and more subtle than that. Feeling my muscles relax as the cats gaze at me while lying in the sunlight is a “becoming.” Involuntarily my eyes blink slowly, gradually, like theirs do. The sensation is more about identification with their pleasure than a personal human desire for heat. One jumps over and smells my eye, I feel his nose and whiskers touch my eyelashes. There is a becoming.

Jarvis grooms me in the morning, and as I feel his raspy tongue licking my sensitive human skin incessantly, I “become” cat. Occasionally he gets over-enthusiastic and grasps my skin between his teeth; I pull away and become human again. Juneau sleeps with his body under the comforter and his head on the pillow, arm positioned like mine as I sleep; he “becomes” human. Later, when he curls up behind my knees he and I become cat again, seeking warmth like his wild counterparts.

“Becomings-animal [sic] are basically of another power, since their reality resides not in an animal one imitates or to which one corresponds but in themselves, in that which suddenly sweeps us up and makes us become — a proximity, an indiscernibility that extracts a shared element from the animal far more effectively than any domestication, utilization or imitation could . . .” (279).

When the cats and I communicate, we do so in a language that is not entirely cat or human like. We reach a point somewhere near the middle where it all blends and we are not speaking our own nor trying to mimic the other’s language. Our eyes and body language play a large part. When these moments of communication are successful, a becoming occurs.

Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*  
Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1987.



*Becomings*, Sigrira Perret-Gentile





*Neotony, Pam Longobardi*

I think we as humans have a very complex relationship to animals. This is centered in our simultaneous desire for, and denial of, our animality. At the same time that it is considered an insult to be called an “animal,” a “pig,” or a “dog,” we covet the body-covering fur that we are lacking. Perhaps our will is divided against the primal sensations of animal pleasure and the feeling of loss of control this creates

in the intellect. I feel this displacement has something to do with the idea of surrogacy.

Work I have done in reference to surrogacy include a series of paintings that involve “re-portraiture,” where the re-portrait is a surrogate for the original, just as the original portrait stands as a surrogate, or double, for the subject. One specific piece entitled



“Double” was a carefully painted double portrait of two twin daughters of the Flemish painter Cornelius de Vos. Having seen this painting in Finland, I was struck by the odd mirroring of the twins and felt compelled to attempt to repaint this. The act of concentration involved in studying the ‘reproduction’ so closely in order to capture the extreme similarities and subtle differences in the faces of the two girls created an emotional attachment and devotion in me, and I realized I had “fallen in love” with these two long-dead children as if they were my own daughters. Many women artists often chose the pleasure of the creation of artwork over actual biological reproduction.

I have explored this notion in light of my own choice of childlessness and began to think about pets as surrogates for reproduction. Desiring closeness and the need to care for a smaller dependent being has been satisfied in many humans by their pets. I choose dogs because of their seeming desire to relate to human beings. At a telling point in my life six years ago, I chose my present pet. Realizing the extent to which we project our sense of humor onto our pets’ existence, I decided to name her a popular “yuppie” girl child’s name, Brianna. She is a Boston Terrier, a breed that was created solely as a companion animal for humans – they do not hunt or point or retrieve. A male friend of mine made the sagacious comment that he knew exactly why I got her—full grown at 23 lbs.; she is a “permanent 9 month-old baby.” Indulging these desires with her, I

have taken to dressing and decorating her. I have collars and ruffs, “jammies,” sweaters, dresses, and hats. I bathe her with me, in the shower or bath, and carry her on my hip, as one would a young baby. She is quite tolerant of these excesses; in fact she loves the attention. She is a natural clown who loves dressing up, and with a short coat and nearly hairless stomach, wants to snuggle in outfits when the weather is cold. We share a symbiotic relationship.

The word “neotony” refers to the hard-wired mammalian biological tendency for certain body-to-head size ratios to induce overwhelming feelings of love and protectiveness in adult members of the species. The large head and eyes in relation to small body size is seen in infants of all mammalian species, and elicits a “cuteness” response from humans. The response for nurturing and protection has been evolutionarily advantaged and genetically compounded to the point that the response in humans can be triggered by any species, accounting for the demonstrative affectations that come pouring out of both males and females when encountering puppies, kittens, babies of any sort. A Boston Terrier is a breed whose primary attributes include a large round head, a flattened non-canine face, and very large eyes. As a feat of genetic engineering, she maintains permanent cuteness, even as an adult.

“Neotony,” oil and patinas on copper over wood, 29" x 39" x 2", 2000.

“Infanta,” oil, fabric, wood. 36" x 40" x 12", 2000.

## Animality Revolution: There are no Animals *Ron Broglio and Frederick Young*

An event of foundation cannot simply be understood within the logic of that which it founds.

—Derrida

Okay, we have to be honest. There are no animals. Jacques Derrida has remarked on numerous occasions about the question, or really, the question of the question, of the animal, which, lacking a subject (subjectum) can only take the call (being subjected) to/of man. Derrida has often warned (*le monster*) of a violent inscription of the animal that is at the same time necessary in order for the “progress” and ontological constitution of man, of the human proper. In *Geschlect II*, Derrida opens up the question of the animal in Heidegger, not only in order to point the conceptual ambiguity and disorder that the animal figures into *Sein und Zeit*, which he’ll also take up elsewhere, but also to open up a critical limit-case between the animal, humanism, technics, technology and nationalism. For Heidegger, the animal is “poor in world” (welt[f]arm), inscribed into such an impossible *state* by means of sadness. In addition to this misfortune, the animal lacks a hand, which for Heidegger is that which allows thinking. The animal, without a hand, lacks access to tools, and thus to a technics and technology necessary for a politics. No wonder the animal is sad.

Fear of a Gold Planet: Re-Marx on Che’s “The Murdered Puppy.”

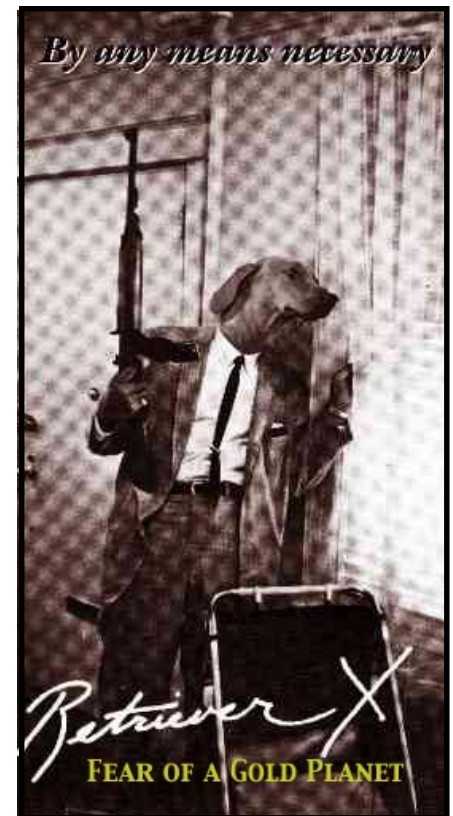
Within these preliminary remarks, there is not enough room to fully develop and expose the complex and different ways in which the animal remains on the border of so many critical discourses. Rather, we would like to turn to the question of politics, or perhaps, really, to the question of the political and how a singular ontic case of a so-called animal’s death might signal the beginnings of a new spectro-conceptual modality of refiguring the question of animal no longer as that which stands over and against man, to be petted (the present petperfect) nor as that to be simply consumed, though we all need to eat something. Instead, such an ontic death of an animal in the midst of a human

revolution signals a far more radical and spectral revolution, not of animals, nor of humans, but of an animality that transforms the political determination of the very ontology (as technology) that would otherwise regulate the animal/human binary in advance. We must move quickly. Modernity and the globalization of capital always lend an advance; always lend a hand. By way of illustration, we would like to examine, to return<sup>1</sup>, to the case of Che in the midst of a revolution in the jungle of the Serria Maetra.

(From “standing reverse” to standing retriever.)

To pick up on a remark of an earlier discussion of Che and Heidegger regarding the question of the animal and revolution, in which the similarities and the limits of both C and H’s (pure cane sugar, we mean) conceptualization of the animal was explored, suggested an almost a performative play of Kojève’s earlier observations regarding the left and right wing Hegelians of Hitler and Stalin. Thus, the case of Heidegger and Che was considered as the *Same* regarding a violent inscription of the animal, in Heidegger’s hand, by means of philosophical violence and, in Che’s hand, by means of literal violence, the strangulation of a puppy.

In march, along the jungle paths toward revolution, Che ordered his comrade Felix to kill the puppy in their midst before it’s barking alerted the enemy. In



*In the silence the dog cries not to be left behind. It is not as was thought, a call to the masters. Instead, its hysterics is a call not to be left behind, a call that is answered by his being silenced and in martyrdom achieving another voice in another silence . . . one that words cannot respond to and asking that humans not be left behind . . . since now the dog is before them.*

the following passage Che writes of the events that led up to his order to kill the puppy:

Our small column marched silently along. not even the sound of a broken twig intruded upon the usual noises of the forest. Suddenly the silence was broken by the disconsolate, nervous barking of the little dog. It remained behind and

was barking desperately, calling on its masters to help it through a difficult patch. Someone picked up the animal, and we continued on again. However, as we rested in the middle of a creek bed with a lookout keeping watch on the enemy's movements, the little dog once again began to howl hysterically. Comforting words no longer had any effect; the animal, afraid we would leave it behind, barked desperately.

The question becomes, in the state of emergency where the stake of the Cuban revolution dictated silence lest they would all be killed, how to read the puppy's death?

Any break in silence and the revolution is fucked. On the one hand, as has been remarked in an earlier essay, Che assumes and reinscribes the hierarchy between human and animal in which the life of an animal is less than that of his men. And yet, on the other hand, there is an overidentification with the animal in which the puppy is part of the

revolution and is one of the revolutionaries. For the puppy's sacrifice is in service of the revolution, and the question must be asked whether Che would not sacrifice one of his men, himself, or even a crying baby

in such a critical moment? In this scenario, the hierarchy between human and animal perhaps disappears in the immediacy of death, and yet the *event* of death exceeds from within the foundation and institutional inscription of a revolutionary programme; one that would lend a hand to humanism. In the midst of any programme or pogrom of death, for that matter, a spectral revolution *to come* haunts the very foundation of any conservative gesture, of a self-regulating self-inter-est

of an infrangible philosophic subject. And yet, who can deny, on the one hand, in the overdetermination of identification with the puppy which binds and folds human and animal in a dangerous moment in the jungle, there remains the hierarchy between man and animal to lend itself to an abstract and circular current of equivalences in which to capitalize on the moment, to further subject space to "capital times." Now,

*Reader, pass your hand over this book. In the silence of your reading there is another silence and another language. A summons and a summoning. Reader, you forget the other hand. How typical. How human all too human of you. With out rumination, without a tail to wag how are you turning pages? You've already read My Pet Goat {inverted}. Reading with two hands but not thinking. You already know how the story goes. A fundamentalist aesthetic. A transcendental signifier teaching you how to read. You have immunized yourself against the silence of another reading. Against rabies or any other foaming of the mouth, regurgitation, or disarticulation. You are an institution. You have won/one. a new car . . . and the dog is in the back of the car, chomping at the wind. The dog is already Oedipal hysteric woman, obedient dark servant, bitch to his/her master, breed. . . . Processed through every already fashioned tool for reading, the dog doesn't stand a chance. It isn't even dog. It is all that we've enframed for it ahead of its calling. So what is left {before & behind}? Where is there a wandering, a remainder? In this place, this empty place and silent moment is animality.*

*They call [der ruff] the animal "to come" but nothing comes to them because the animal is before and already ahead of them. They only have their future which inevitably they will have lived in consulate with consultations while displace and disconsolate, otherwise the animal lives on.*

*Breath Turn: The dog can't bark. It is strangled and any voice from within is silenced. {inside-outside, so human.} Now, its corpse is a surface and another silence of an animal revolution yet to come. Its surface prevents recourse to the fundamentalist aesthetic with its transcendental signifier that so easily reads my pet dog, my pet goat, my pet son, my pet wife... Of corpse you ask? A séance? Precisely. There is no dead doggy there. Fort-Da. {The Fort of Das Sein protected from animality.} When your passing the hand over the flattened surface, dear reader, this site becomes more than a space for reading... it is a temporal evocation. You call forth a past and a future, a dog before and behind us.*

neither human nor animal—an exchange of death, of something greater than a singular life. Transcendent ends. Something is afoot, you know: a utilitarianism emerges from ideation. A suggestion creeps along: the overdetermination that formed into an abstract equivalency, like that of money, blended human and animal while sustaining the reactive force of a human-ism. Such a sacrifice necessarily lead to one productive moment of revolution of a future that came, and that such a revolution became (though, not necessarily) for many, human, all too human.

### **From Transcendental to Surfaces**

We would like to suggest a spectro-technics (“a making appear”) of the puppy’s death opens and doubles revolution, haunting the future perfect revolution that became human, and offer, instead, another

revolution “to-come” that marks a far more radical and impossible revolution of animality in which neither human nor animal as ontically separate but equal would still be considered viable. We can only imagine an event that haunts the puppy’s sacrifice in which the human and animal do not blend into a circular and capital exchange of a restricted economy of equivalences. Always a question of politics, and of revolution that would not lend it’s time to nationalism nor globalization, but now of a politics of animality, no longer the political ontology of the West, but rather that of a spectro-technics and technology that gives to a transformative thought a modality *to come* that thinks neither with mind, nor hand. What does the animal offer as gift that is not an already inscribed technique of reading and production alongside so many human movements, causes, and revolutions? The haunting puppy might open a counter and “constitutive ontology” suggesting a new subject that is neither human, nor the gift of humanity, the proper name of animal, but, perhaps, instead, sustain a work of mourning for the puppy while instigating an active forgetting of an emergent new body, a new surface and new temporality— transformation “to come.”

Speaking in PetPerfect Tense:  
I don't bite... hard. Just a piercing of the skin, something to open up your human interior to the surface. And at the same time your fantasy of me, what you call a dog disappears with a touch. Not a pet, a perforation.  
Fear and blood keep us warm. rushing to the surface. Here is a language without words and a flattening of the human-animal hierarchy with language marks of the flesh... another sort of sacrifice different, this time for the Animal Revolution.

<sup>1</sup> See “Animality: Notes Toward a Manifesto” *Glossalalia* Routledge, 2003

nanoq: flat out and bluesome. Artists' survey of stuffed polar bears in the United Kingdom between 2001-2004 *Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir and Mark Wilson*

Part of the story laid out in “nanoq” should be the unpacking of what it is to exoticise something – to dwell on its difference as something opaque and impenetrable – that asks no questions and seeks only to confirm the stereotype that we know.

Much has been written on the hollowness of souvenirs, their intrinsic sadness and the ultimate futility of collecting things by which we seek to remember places and events. Perhaps none is more poignant than that which is plucked from “nature”, that thing that once was living and now is dead or redundant – a shadow of what it once was in life – dead flowers, a piece of coral, a stone, a shell – *“nothing looks so dead as a shell in suburbia”*. If we handle or knock expectantly on the surface of something stolen long ago, we can expect to hear one of two things – the dull thud of its disembodiment, its unmediated physicality, in short, what it is – not what it was or what we think or thought it was.

Or, if we listen more closely we may hear the ring and echo of a much larger set of truths, only one of which will be indicative of its current condition and only one of which will be, or correspond in part with what we thought its significance to be. A multitude of narratives and interlocking fragments, redolent not only of what has transpired, its dislocation, journey and its second life, but inevitably, if only by implication, of what else might have been.

This project is, as the subtitle implies, a survey of taxidermic polar bears existing in the United Kingdom today. In its methodology it actively sets out to track down these specimens. We have done everything within our power to locate every last specimen that exists as a whole mount, but also acknowledge that this may be an impossible task. We have reason to believe that some remain tucked away in private collections. We advertised our intentions and generally made our mission known but there are no doubt more “out there”. The project is designed to generate a discourse in which the audience is invited to consider their

relationship not only to the “polar bears” themselves, but to the history of their collection, presentation and preservation.

After 3 years of research we have found 34 stuffed polar bears in the U.K. We have tracked them down, visited them on site, photographed and gathered documents about their history and provenance.

We have also lost a few bears; the one that was observed standing outside a demolition ground in Glasgow. When we went to photograph it, the demolition company had suddenly gone into receivership and we were unable to establish what became of the bear. There was also a polar bear in Potter’s Museum of Curiosities which was sold by Bonham’s in 2003 as lot no. 616 – (asking price £5,000-£7,000). It went to an anonymous bidder for £3,290. Then there was the polar bear we heard of in Alderman Richard Hallam School, in Leicester with glowing red lights instead of eyes. Although we contacted the school we were unable to speak to anyone who was prepared to confirm it having been there.

Museums have, almost without exception, been of great assistance to us during the research stages of this project. They have demonstrated a great deal of interest in helping us find polar bears because although there is, or rather was no data base on the subject, each keeper or curator knew of two or perhaps three in other collections. There were even times when we were able to assist the museums themselves in identifying specimens within their own collections. In the Eureka Museum of Childhood in Halifax there was, we were told a polar bear that had come from Dundee. We received this information from the keeper of the natural history collection at Sheffield Museum and Art Gallery who showed us a photograph and a “skeletal” provenance of the specimen as proof. When we made a phone call to Eureka we were asked if this was April Fool’s

day – in short, they didn't have a polar bear. After further investigation the director (who may have been newly in post) called us back to confirm the existence of their bear).

For the installation in Spike Island, a large converted warehouse gallery space in Bristol we negotiated with collectors, both public and private, to borrow 10 polar bears. There we displayed them in specially designed glass cases, the plinth they arrived on, being the only visible trace of their museum environment. By removing the bears from the ambience of the museum dioramas and indicative environments, viewers were forced to look at/observe them whilst relying solely on their own knowledge. This duly focused the thoughts just as much on the audience as on the object on display. We say *object on display* here, because although many were killed for what was called *scientific purposes* in order for the public to be able to get an idea of what this animal looked like in real life, Michel Henning a senior lecturer in Cultural Studies at Bristol University has pointed out that they are not polar bears – they are *of* polar bears just as a photograph is of a subject. This, on a closer inspection, became quite clear at Spike Island. Amongst other things, the bears represented a history of taxidermy dating from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to the late 20<sup>th</sup>, our growing awareness and knowledge about this animal, its anatomy/physiology and our shifting attitudes towards it and what it might mean to us, psychologically and culturally. The bears mounted in late 19<sup>th</sup> century or early 20<sup>th</sup> are portrayed as vicious, scary, fearsome and designed to reflect their danger and the implicit intrepidity of the hunter. The polar bear in Kendal Museum in Cumbria and the two at Somerleyton Hall in Norfolk are prime examples.

The polar bear in Kendal recorded in our photograph on the project website, stands in a classic, aggressive pose set in front of a painted arctic landscape. The romantic scene features a rosy midnight glow. The polar bear is standing elevated on a plinth on top of which is another pedestal, made to look like a small ice floe. This reinforces the aggressive

and overpowering effect as the bear is not standing properly on his back legs but instead gives the impression of being just about to strike or jump. The visitor has to negotiate a narrow space between the bear and the opposite display. This awkwardness is further reinforced by the fact that the bear is not cased. The display is part of an arctic corner in which we see a painted autumn tundra behind a cased musk ox and snowy owls amongst other specimens. It is a somehow awkward, fragmented display in that it doesn't sit convincingly as a diorama and relies heavily on token arctic references. Above it all sits the trophy head and a security camera possibly directed at our encounter with the bear. The bear itself is a trophy as is suggested on the label behind it, claiming that it was shot by the local Lord Lonsdale in the year 1888/9 during an arctic expedition. Further investigations revealed that the expedition took him across northern Canada, Alaska and eventually to Kodiak Island. When we approached the current Lord Lonsdale for more information about this polar bear he made it abundantly clear that he did not want to know. Further research revealed that the motives of the Earl were far from heroic, as he was sent to the arctic by Queen Victoria in order to divert attention from an affair he was conducting with a well known actress.

The Somerleyton polar bears, (one of which we borrowed for the show in Spike Island) normally stand in a symmetrical arrangement in the vestibule on either side of the grand entrance to Somerleyton Hall. We understand that they have stood in this way, guarding the stately home since they were brought back from Spitzbergen in 1897 by the 1st Lord Somerleyton. Out of shot in our photograph, in the centre of the entrance hall is a marble bust of the first Lord Somerleyton as a young boy. As a young man in 1897 it was he who travelled to Spitzbergen as a paying, working crew member and it was he who took part in the shooting and capture of a recorded total of 55 polar bears – two of which now stand behind his likeness. It would seem to be a classic tableau – evoking an archetype of British aristocratic adventuring with the relics and trophies



of colonial enterprise. When we first visited Lord Somerleyton he showed us some glass slides which his grandfather took on the expedition. These images have never before been published (www.valand.gu.se/bryndis) and they constitute a treasure in themselves. They document quite unselfconsciously the progress of the crew around the shores of Svalbard and particularly the capture, the 'exercising' and the consequences of the shooting of bears. The titles of the glass slides which we have kept and which you can see when navigating the site, are simple, graphic descriptions of the images; bear walking on board (climbing ladder), two cubs eat mother, bear roped on deck etc. Incidentally it was whilst photographing the polar bear in the Castle Museum in Norfolk which was also shot by the 1st Lord Somerleyton, that we heard about the two/three at Somerleyton Hall (one exists as a skin only).

Today there are only 3 polar bears alive in the U.K. One is in Edinburgh Zoo. Called *Mercedes*, she has been 23 years in captivity. When we visited the zoo a few years ago she was in a temporary enclosure as the staff were installing a 'toy' designed to attempt to stimulate her and help her to reconnect with some natural behaviour patterns. This was a platform in her enclosure which would throw a fish into the air when she punched on it with her front paws. We were told that Mercedes came originally from Churchill in Canada and wandered into town in search of food. This is not unusual to happen in Churchill and when it does the polar bears are sometimes put to sleep with sedatives shot into them from a distance and airlifted in a basket net back into the nature reserve. Mercedes on the other hand did this repeatedly and as a consequence she was sold to Edinburgh Zoo.

Amongst the bears we borrowed for Spike Island, were two relatively recent mounts i.e. from the late 1960s. One was from Sheffield Museum the pride of it's collection and the other from Edinburgh Museum, both mounted in rather "natural" looking, playful, friendly, anthropomorphic poses. One stands on a stone with his hands down by the side,

the right hand paw slightly stretched out as if to indicate ..."hey, it is my turn to have the ball now" and the other sits back leaning on one arm as if having to momentarily rest in the middle of a play. These female bears although mounted by two different taxidermists were actually living together at Edinburgh Zoo. They had the names Janie and Jim although Jim on his/her death in 1975 was registered as female. Both bears died at the same time and both originated from Canada and had been brought over to Scotland by Captain Koran on 25th of September 1947.

What we have noticed whilst visiting natural history collections around the UK, Europe and the USA is that they are peppered with individual animals with a popular history – that is, animals that have been local or national favourites in zoo collections for ten, twenty or more years prior to dying and being stuffed and deposited in their local museum. Chi Chi, from London Zoo, Guy the gorilla, Jumbo the elephant and many more, all public and media favourites in their time, occupy a strange but distinctive niche which cuts across the "animal as representative of species" model, occupying more of a celebrity status befitting the former star of an emporium of popular culture (specifically the zoo). Here, where the normal course of events gives an ex-zoo animal a new and more serious currency as it passes into "the museum", these individuals – coloured and even tainted by their unwitting colonisation of the affections and imagination of countless human admirers, are destined to remain forever in a kind of limbo – neither returned to a representative role, nor ever again a subject of delight or affection. One of the most bizarre incidences of this kind for us was the two polar bears Misha and Nina at Bristol Zoo. We actually didn't find them until the show at Spike Island in Bristol was underway. First, we had not approached zoos for stuffed polar bears and as it happens, Misha and Nina were both at Bristol Zoo. Misha came to the zoo in 1980 from a circus and before that had been captured in the wild – where and when is unknown. Nina was born in 1958 in Copenhagen Zoo and was sold to Bristol in 1963

she was therefore 33 years old when she and Misha were put down in 1992. Today the bears are a feature of the education centre at Bristol zoo. The second reason for them not becoming evident to us for so long is that there is some sensitivity surrounding them as they, like so many others in captivity, became mad and paced constantly up and down in their enclosure. As a matter of fact Misha and Nina were the first animals in the U.K. in which this behaviour, (stereotypic pacing and head-weaving) was identified as syndromic. As a consequence of this, amidst much unfavourable publicity the bears were destroyed.

It did not pass us unnoticed that in undertaking the tracking down of bears, we were involved in a process that in some way mirrored the original acts of hunting (if not killing). It was a cultural hunt – unheroic perhaps and clearly not dangerous, but nevertheless one where the unexpected could be expected to happen. The collection of objects is a necessity for many, long after the needs of subsistence are met, but it seems unlikely that instincts driving the hunt to eat and clothe are *entirely* divorced from those driving the hunt to collect. The impulses which demanded that newly- built museums be stocked like Arks with taxidermic representatives of every conceivable species were fed and met by equally enthusiastic pioneers and explorers in newly-discovered territories and landscapes which were inaccessible to all but themselves. This was heroic and where the hunger for trophies of heroism and machismo seemed not enough, it was heroism underpinned by the worth of “science” and “education”.

In our search, our hunt, we maintained a modesty and focus. The polar bear is a totemic, iconic creature. We have witnessed how in living human memory, the image of the polar bear has been expropriated and put to the most varied and unlikely purposes – selling dreams, sweets, lifestyles, travel. In all cases except seemingly for the most contemporary and chilling – its role as iconic representative of the demise of its own environment – its appeal is dependent on an almost inescapable anthropomorphism. The bear stands on two legs. It plays and wrestles – it sits – it rests – all in ways which are suggestively “human”.

But we also know the polar bear to be a formidable predator at the top of the food chain in the Arctic commanding the greatest respect of all visitors to that environment. It is a catalogue of paradoxes. It is a prism with the capacity to contain and refract all manner of response in us: fear, horror, respect, pathos, affection, humour. It is this capacity above all others which makes it such a potent symbol and for us, in relation to this project, such a powerful reality to seek to reappraise.

*(Seven tenths, the sea and its thresholds*, James Hamilton-Paterson, 1992, Random House, ISBN 0-679-40596-8)

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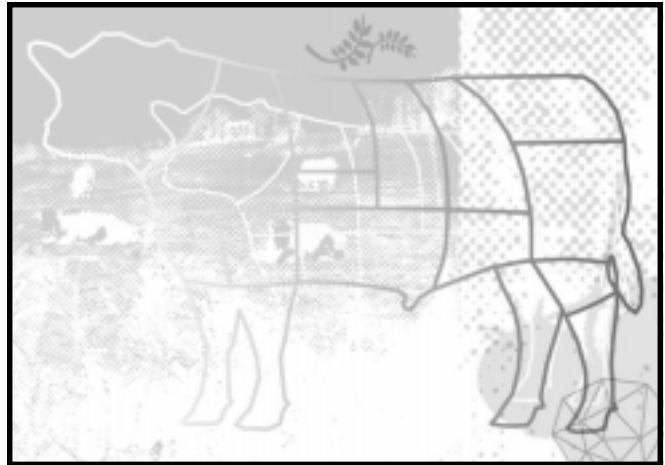
Website: [www.valand.gu.se/bryndis](http://www.valand.gu.se/bryndis)

## On Meat-Trees *Kelly Lefler*

What kind of animals are cattle or pigs? I know that they are both mammals—I'm not asking about *that* "kind." Take the wolf and the dog, for instance. Michael Pollan compares dogs and wolves in this way: dogs have taken advantage of humans and, thus, have proliferated to a population of approximately 5 million animals, while wolves have a meager population of only approximately 10,000. Dogs are domesticated. Wolves are wild animals; they're part of nature (19). Each animal has a clear label in our language. So then, what do we call cattle, pigs, and chickens? These are animals raised for the sole purpose of giving us stuff, be it meat, eggs, fat, milk or fertilizer.

One might argue that they are domesticated, but do they get to share a bed with us at night the way our cat or dog does? Do we let them in the house at all? Do we even touch them anymore? Many cows are milked on an assembly line. Pigs spend the majority of their lives in dark, warm cells and don't interact with anything. They are not domesticated in the same sense as other animals; however, they are clearly not wild animals. Cows and pigs in present form could hardly survive in their original habitats—they are wholly dependent on humans.

So that begs the question, what exactly *are* they? We treat them like resources, Meat Trees, if you will. Compare pigs and dogs. Both are incredibly social animals within and outside of their species. Pigs are



*Last Supper*, Mark Liebert

trainable like dogs, too. For the most part, we get no financial return from dogs. We give them the best care money can buy—food, medical attention, a home, and a few unpleasant niceties such as cropping tails, neutering/spaying, and clipping ears. We use almost every part of pigs' bodies for something. They provide a great economic return, yet a piglet just doesn't affect us in the same way a puppy does. That leaves pigs and cattle in their own category, with no clear title like wild or domesticated; that leaves them as simply capital, which is fitting since cattle and capital come from the same root word.

Pollan, Michael. "An Animal's Place." *New York Times*. 10 Nov 2002.

Serpell, James. "Of Pigs and Pets." *In the Company of Animals*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986. 3-20.

No, I saw a Dog see a Ghost     *Zachary Keebaugh*

No, I saw a dog see a ghost. I saw a dog sea among a sea of ghosts. Once, it was written: ANIMAL = CAPTIVATION (Heidegger). To what extent captivated? Held captivated by? To whom do these creatures pledge their loyalties? And who holds the keys? Whither captivation? Again it was written: EGO=GHOST (Derrida 133). Shall we again call this captivation? Am I so captivated by ghosts, that I did not actually see a dog see a ghost? No, I saw a dog see a ghost. Albeit, a pet dog. Laika, because she shares the name of the first dog in space. In the wake of Laika, we will now gesture that all space is haunted. Was this already true? It can be taken for granted that NO MOVEMENT=NO SPACE. No movement without tracks – to be left and followed, lost and found. What engenders these movements? What crawls out of the tracks? Surely, ghosts. They are the past and the future. Only our past? Do wolves sense ghosts? And especially as they drown under a sea of pets. Yes, I think so; although they may know nothing of their precarious situation. But are they captivated by ghosts? Have not met wolf. Assuming no, and noting that I did in fact see a dog see a ghost; have the animals we have bred so near assimilated something like our sense of the spectral? In so many words: breed=history, history=ghost;

and before and perhaps most importantly, no ghost without without origin (and its corollary: NO HISTORY WITH ORIGIN). So we see a dog still and still staring silently. Or maybe it has lost its keys. In any case, it is heartening to have a comrade. A co-benefactor with whom to share a mutual inheritance. For now or forever, we remain liminal. We will grow to have many eyes; these will be the first media to be discarded. Then we will have several noses, ears, and tongues until finally expansive panes of flesh forever. We will feel the most infinitesimal of hauntings. In the night, we will grow white with intensity. Only because we are the most vulnerable. We will nurture specters and tell each other promises. Well, we will start with words. But only with the wispiest phrases. Recently, we enlisted the aid of a stray cat, who proved to be a most inciteful poet: Is that a tumor on its paw? No it is a claw!

Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus*. London: University of Minnesota Press, 1980.

Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New Internationalism*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Heidegger, Martin. *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. Bloomington: Indiana University: 196-266.

There's a scene in David Cronenberg's remake of *The Fly*, in which mad scientist-cum-insect Seth Brundle ponders his monstrous, half-human half-insect existence. He asks, rhetorically, "Have you ever heard of insect politics?" Of course not, he answers. There is none. "Maybe I'll be the first insect politician"...

"Now, that man is more of a political animal than bees or any other gregarious animals is evident," says Aristotle (*Politics* I.2). The famous formulation of humans as a "political animal" takes on new meanings in light of contemporary studies of biological self-organization: swarms, flocks, packs, and so on. For Aristotle, the human being was first a living being, with the additional capacity for political being. In this sense, biology becomes the presupposition for politics, just as the human being's animal being serves as the basis for its political being. But not all animals are alike. Gilles Deleuze distinguishes three types of animals: domestic pets (Freudian, anthropomorphized Wolf-Man), scientific animals (the isolated, taxonomic species), and packs (group-animals, multiplicities). Maybe Aristotle just chose the wrong kind of animals to study. "You can't be one wolf, you're always eight or nine, six or seven" (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 29). Or rather, perhaps Aristotle's bias is one that colors nearly all subsequent philosophical thinking on animals, the presupposition of individuation as a starting point. What happens to the human in such aggregate forms? Does the human become *extrinsic* to itself?

Exhibit A – Animals Without Heads. It is not hard to look around and notice that computer-generated imaging (CGI) has become a staple of genre science fiction, horror, and action film. More than that, the predominant use of CGI is in the imaging and animation of aggregate forms: innumerable soldiers on a battlefield (*Lord of the Rings* trilogy), the attack of enemy insects (*Starship Troopers*), herds of dinosaurs (*Jurassic Park*), the flocking of bats (*LXG*), the swarming of AI (*Matrix Revolutions*) and of robots

(*I, Robot*), and of course the chaos of an all-out starship battle (*Star Wars Episode II*). The software algorithms for many of these films is derived, in part, from fields such as "swarm intelligence," in which computer science models itself on ethological studies of army ant foraging, wasp nest building, cooperative transport in ants, and coordinated firefly flashing (the work of Eric Bonabeau, James Kennedy, Guy Théraulaz). These examples of aggregate insect phenomena have been transformed into abstract algorithms for problems of network optimization (ant foraging algorithms have been used in routers for telecommunications networks). The lesson that these and other fields put forth is that complex, "global" behaviors can and indeed do arise from simple, "local" actions. It is interesting, then, that its cultural expression in CGI films is always represented as a threat to human modes of organization.

Exhibit B – Pass It On. or all the hype about networks and staying connected, there is one class of networks most people avoid at all costs: epidemics. The CDC has recently adopted the phrase "emerging infectious disease" to describe a new set of contagious diseases that have, in recent years, made headlines: Mad Cow, West Nile, monkey pox, bird flu, and SARS, to name a few. Popular science books warn us of the "coming plague" which would not be a single disease, but a combination of emerging infectious diseases, a new kind of epidemic terrorism. Epidemics are, of course, networks. But they are not just networks. In many cases they are networks abetted by animality: human-cow, human-rat, human-monkey...human-virus? The insight of US biodefense policy is to have understood that it takes networks to fight networks (e.g. the US Biosurveillance Program). In a sense, modern epidemiology can be understood not just as a network practice, but as a network practice that always assumes *the immanent permeability of species boundaries*. As humans, we are, in a disturbing way, never closer to animals than in the event of "communicable disease."

Exhibit C – Undead. Vampires and zombies are often carriers of disease (“a virus,” says David Cronenberg, “is only doing its job”). While Bram Stoker’s novel *Dracula* (1897) made little explicit reference to disease, it was bathed in a social context in which the erotic and the diseased coalesced in the blood. By the 1920s, however, when F.W. Murnau brought German expressionist film to the myth in *Nosferatu*, a different kind of association was introduced: plague. *Nosferatu* is replete with hordes of rats; rats as an aggregate phenomenon become the privileged emblem of the vampire, resulting in panic, fear, and quarantine (this theme is echoed in Werner Herzog’s remake). Rats, of course, were the main carriers (via fleas) of *Yersinia pestis* during the Black Death. The vampire, according to the standard account given by Montague Summers, exists in a netherworld of perpetual hunger, neither living nor dead, seemingly immortal and yet totally dependent on and driven by the need for blood (or perhaps a “symbolics of blood”). Aristotle would have a tough time with the vampire, as would natural historians such as the Comte de Buffon. The figure of the undead is, in a sense, the embodiment of disease itself, the disease minus the human subject, a *disease-without-host*.

Exhibit D – Living Dead. While the anthropological figure of the zombie derives from Haitian voodoo myths, it was modernized (and Americanized) in George Romero’s living dead trilogy. *Night of the Living Dead* portrays many of the stock characteristics of the modern zombie: corpse-like, slow-moving, unspeaking, almost beast-like in its behaviors, and driven by a need to consume human flesh (brains, if possible). Like certain versions of the vampire myth, the zombie is also tied to disease. Romero’s films make oblique references to either nuclear or biological causes of zombies, and his film *The Crazies* couches the zombie within the context of biological warfare (repeated in Lucio Fulci’s *Zombie* and *28 Days Later*). The figure of the living dead is not the same as the figure of the undead. Vampires are often intelligent, cultured, and well-

dressed. Zombies are dumb brutes, without language, and always wearing the tattered clothes they died in. One is tempted to see a class division at work in the vampire-zombie relation, but what is also important is the way that both are connected to epidemic disease. They are contagious, and, in the more scientific or medicalized versions, that contagion is a microbial contagion, another instance of the crossing of species borders. But, whereas the fear of the undead is a fear of being a disease-without-host, the fear of the zombie is almost the inverse: the fear of becoming *nothing but a body, nothing but “bare life.”*

A tentative statement - the basis of any possible comparison between human and animal is conditioned by these four principles: (i) that the basis of comparison is an individuated being, (ii) that the individual precedes the group, (iii) that the individual constitutes the group, (iv) and, most importantly, if the group has a “life” of its own, it will be that of a super-individual. In a sense, groups can never be alive; or, the “life” of a group is always proper to the individual that is the group. *Aggregates are only “living” at the cost of being aggregates.* Perhaps, then, the obsession with the boundary between human and animal is only a stop-over leading to a more fundamental boundary: that between individuated and aggregated forms, be it in human, animal, plant, or machines.

Animals ceaselessly transgress the boundaries we demarcate for them. More importantly, “animality” may be the name for the threshold of our ability to understand aggregate forms as *living aggregates*, in all their ambivalence: bats, rats, packs.



## The Leap *Robert Cheatham*

1. I've woken before in the middle of the night, half conscious, head on arm, peering blearily at what seems undoubtedly a reptilian appendage at the end of my arm: curved, clawed, and ready to strike. At any rate, for a brief moment my hand seems animal and not human. Which is crazy, because I AM an animal. Right?
2. There are times in restaurants or at home, when I decide to have a piece of meat or a steak. Of a sudden I have to suppress the thought that I'm eating an animal, flesh that has a face attached to it. I'm not a vegetarian and I've never been queasy about it before. "The question is no longer one of knowing if it is 'good' to eat the other or if the other is 'good' to eat, nor of knowing which other. One eats him regardless and lets oneself be eaten by him. [Š.] The moral question is thus not, nor has it ever been: should one eat or not eat, eat this and not that, the living or the nonliving, man or animal, but since one MUST eat in any case and since it is and tastes good to eat, and since there's no other definition of the good, how for goodness sake should one eat well?" J. Derrida, "Eating Well": an interview, p115
3. When I eat something, the formerly living thing makes the move across an almost imperceptible border into me. Something leaps across a species barrier.
4. I might be willing to eat YOU under the proper (or improper) circumstances. As I understand it, you would taste like pig. But anyway we ingest each other.
3. I always wanted to have a pet chicken, even though I was attacked by a rooster when I was five. Or maybe BECAUSE I was attacked.
4. The precariousness of the human/animal interior duality is almost perfectly expressed by the biohazard symbol. Developed in 1966, the closed interior circle is nevertheless opened at its center by another ducted circle and surrounded by a triumvirate of opened circles which function effectively as thorns or pincers. The more one meditates on the symbol, the less clear it becomes: or rather the more that it oscillates between two poles: is it a warning about keeping something out or a warning about keeping something in? The symbol functions as a Mobius strip, transporting the inside to the outside and the outside to the inside, all action rotating about the still, open axis at the center, a point of monstrous indifference where animal and human meet, where toxicity and exuberance merge and become each other, a pharmakon. It works also as a 'stopped' and swollen swastika, one of the oldest of human symbols, conveying a primal cosmic movement. (In fact the development team charged with coming up with an image started with triangular swastika shapes.) But instead of movement and cosmic time, the symbol conveys a malign fecundity, a time that has become directionless and fully immanent, a time that only metastasizes into and out of itself.
5. The analysis by Jakob Uexküll of *Ixodes ricinus*, the tick, occupies a highpoint of modernist antihumanism, according to philosopher Giorgio Agamben. Uexküll, a pioneer of biosemiotics, came up with the idea of the *umwelt*, the life world and perceptual world of animals. In his analysis, all these lifeworlds intersect but do not meet, each occupying its own species boundaries and perceptions.
6. The tick can 'wait' on the end of a blade of grass or twig for years before leaping to its prey. Uexküll

demonstrated that it can wait for up to eighteen years without nourishment; it is in some sense of suspended animation perhaps but still ‘cocked’ and in a state of anticipation. It has somehow formed a relationship with its warmblooded prey (which actually consists of three elements: the smell of butyric acid in the sweat of mammals; a blood temperature of 37 degrees centigrade; and the sort of skin characteristic of mammals). But the question to be asked here is: what sort of time does the tick occupy in this interregnum? It seems almost a mathematical or geometrical space; at the very least nothing that we would not recognize in any sort of lived human time trace, or even of animality as we generally know it. It seems to be a chilled, crystalline spot which it can occupy seemingly neither dead or alive. The chill of Agamben’s statement regarding the tick’s world seems to uncannily resonate, but certainly not coincide, with a postmodern technical immanentized world: “How is it possible for a living being that consists entirely in its relationship with the environment to survive in absolute deprivation of its environment? And what sense does it make to speak of ‘waiting’ without time and without world?” Doesn’t the technical world we have cocooned ourselves with sometimes feel this way? It is the inhuman gaze which H.G. Wells years ago attributed to another steely life form, his fictional Martians: “vast, cool, and indifferent.”

7. In the morning of January 3, 1889, while in Turin, Nietzsche had a mental breakdown leaving him an invalid for the rest of his life. Upon witnessing a horse being whipped by a coachman at the Piazza Carlo Alberto, Nietzsche threw his arms around the horse’s neck and collapsed, never to return to full sanity.

*“To breed an animal with the right to make promises — is not this the paradoxical task that nature has set itself in the case of man? is it not the real problem regarding man?”*

Genealogy of Morals, F. Nietzsche

*“we are conscious of an animal in us, which awakens in proportion as our higher nature slumbers. It is reptile and sensual, and perhaps cannot be wholly expelled.”*

Henry David Thoreau

8. In Hieronymus Bosch’s **Garden of Earthly Delights**, we see what would become of humankind had the Fall not happened, if we had remained at one with our animal nature, not succumbing to a painful split borne of guilt, conscience, a certain unbearable knowledge. (And what is that knowledge? Acknowledgement of the split between human and world, human and animal, human and divine.) The painting’s fulfillment (which coincides with its simultaneous decline and extinction) of human history coincides with libidinous desires and the consolidation (and consolation) of the human flesh, a flesh which is always on the verge of becoming something other, chimera or cryptozoological beast. There do not seem to be theriomorphs, or beast-gods; or more properly, the landscape itself has become a morphing beast-god, the vast, slow vegetative wave combining with the animal and human, almost as if some other form of techne were used, something more akin to pagan magic.

This fairy world exists on the cusp of *syncope*, a fainting and falling away, never to be revived, animal-like changelings subsequently substituted for the human, and/or *harpazo*, a rapturous seizure and


incline to the marvelous and absorptive disappearance of boundaries. Both 'falls' function as a leaving perhaps never to return, a peculiar combination of immanent and transcendent, of animal and divine, precipitating out the human, always manifesting in the uncanny (both aspects celebrated not only in fairy lore even now, but also the magical realism of technical media's take on the collision of those two).

9. The **Garden of Earthly Delights** perhaps serves as a propaedeutic to Agamben's analysis of animal headed humans at the end of time as portrayed in an ancient Hebrew Bible held in the Ambrosian Museum. It is then somewhat startling to think that at least one take on the demonic is "that which confuses the limits among the animal, the human and the divine, and which retains an affinity with mystery, the initiatory, the esoteric, the secret or the sacred." (**The Gift of Death**, J. Derrida) Given this scenario, the very act of 'redemption' is at the very same time the remonstrance of the 'middle way' of the daemonic, and that the task of redeeming

humans, nature, and god(s) resides in the task of radical impurity, hybridization, and fluidities and that the fulfillment of humanity will not be a separation from its animal kin but fusion.

10. Humanism's battle cry has always been the motto of the lurid current movie called AVP or Alien versus Predator: "Whoever wins — we lose", no matter whether the animal comes from an immanentized interior realm — the alien, descending the alimentary canal in a pale imitation but reversal of, eating as impregnation, subsequently turning into a monstrous form of 'pregnancy' — or a transcendental realm of the theriomorphic 'animal-god': the predator, coming from outer space, but a monstrous hybrid of all of humanism's worse imaginings concerning its ur-monsters, the ur-Leviathans which haunt the human predatory imagination. The 'human', attempting to divest itself of its own inner animality as well as in the process of containing all the 'monsters of God' on the planet, perhaps finds itself not in a Garden of Earthly Paradise but a denuded plain of bare encapsulated life.

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*Copycat, Mark Liebert*