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Gaining Ground: Towards a Discourse of Posthuman Animality

A Geophilosophical Journey

Cartography: 'Here be dragons'

'At the beginning of a journey, when you are about to cover strange territory, you are always ignorant.'[1]

In *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault observed that liberal humanism was 'sovereign and untroubled'. The sovereign subject is one that 'runs in empty sameness throughout the course of history'.[2] As an attempt to problematise this assertion, this paper has emerged as an artifact of a troubled journey and a 'journey of trouble'. As both a voyage of discovery and a nomadic wandering through error, the traveller's passage through the sovereign terrain of humanism has been beset with detours, digressions and dead-ends.[3]

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1 Krim Benterrak, Stephen Muecke and Paddy Roe, *Reading the Country*, (Freemantle Arts Centre Press, 1984) 21.

2 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things (Les Mots et les Choses) An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (Pantheon Books, 1970) (first published 1966).

3 'Nomadic thinking' is used here to indicate the dynamic and evolving character of philosophical concepts. A concept developed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, it stands in distinction to the idea that concepts have fixed and eternal meanings independent of context, time, place, subject, or culture. As 'flows or movements across space' nomadic thinking engenders the development of a critical and creative language and engenders the production of new concepts, meanings and values. Gilles Deleuze

As she traversed territories and excavated strata, the traveller encountered opportunities and obstacles, all of which gave rise to unanticipated lines of flight upon a rhizomatic landscape. The traveller took comfort in the notion of rhizome, a concept used by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in connection with theory and research that allows for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points in data representation and interpretation.[4] The movement of the rhizome apprehends multiplicities and resists chronology, instead favoring a peripatetic system of growth and propagation. Philosophy becomes less about making arguments and articulating propositions and more about generating connections and proliferating lines of inquiry in a network of concepts. Such a methodology allowed for a flexible itinerary, enabling the traveller to digress to a variety of attractions, influences and interstices during the course of her journey.

But whatever her initial hopes and expectations, the traveller encountered a conceptual landscape which, far from being *terra incognita*, had already been deeply inscribed.

While rhizomatic, the journey was no escapade, having been anticipated by the traveller for some time. Her itinerary had been the result of extensive preparation, the geophilosophical terrain mapped, and the equipment needed to navigate it assembled. Although well provisioned, the traveller looked forward to the unexpected challenges of the landscape which lay ahead. Prepared to encounter both the familiar and the strange, she was excited both by her own ignorance and by that which she thought she knew. She took comfort in the thought that she wouldn't get lost if she didn't know where she was going and accepted that, to reach her 'destination', she might have to negotiate undecidable thresholds. With naïve confidence, the traveller felt prepared for the hazards and the possibilities which lay ahead.

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and Felix Guattari, *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (B Massumi, trans The Athlone Press, 1988) (first published 1980).

4 Deleuze and Guattari , above n 3, 7. Deleuze and Guattari contrast the *rhizome* with an *arborescent* conception of knowledge which works with dualist categories and binary choices, vertical and linear connections. A 'rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo'.

The traveller's plan was to search for and articulate possibilities for a reciprocal ground of animality, a non hegemonic conceptual frontier within which the sovereign terrain of liberal humanism would yield to networks of alliances and reciprocities among human and other animals.[5] The objective was to locate topographies where the conditions of *creaturely life* may be conceptualised in relational and non anthropocentric terms.[6] The traveller knew this to be an ambitious project and that much would remain open to further investigation. Her hope was that by journey's end, a gesture of possibilities for a discourse of animality which avoids the haunting spectre of humanism will have emerged.

In particular, the traveller hoped to explore routes which would avoid the dualisms of western thought and to identify alternative ways by which animality might be conceptualised and represented. She knew that she would need to move beyond conventional philosophical genres in order to expose weaknesses in established frames of reference which limit humans' capacity to think differently about animality. The traveller's intent was to identify terrain capable of unsettling the notion of the human as ontologically non animal and to highlight the undecidability of species boundaries. In doing so, she hoped to contribute to emergent conversations which expose the erasures of the humanist disavowal of animality. But while a conceptual journey, the traveller was convinced of its ethical importance and its practical significance.

The traveller was not alone in believing that the marginalisation and consequent mistreatment of nonhuman animals has been a 'necessary' consequence of humanism and was well aware of the gravity of her undertaking. She was also mindful that any attempt

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5 The traveller acknowledges that descriptors such as 'non human' animal privileges the human as a referential benchmark. However, for exegetical purposes it may be employed in this paper to denote animals that are not human. The use of the expression 'nonhuman others' will generally be avoided since it reinforces a problematic hierarchical binary. Note that the difficulties inherent in the discursive representation of nonhuman animality will be a recurrent theme of this paper.

6 For the expression 'creaturely life', the traveller is indebted to Eric L Santer, *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald* (University of Chicago Press, 2006). The expression is used here to avoid the use of a human/non human binary in which human *being* retains its sovereignty as the benchmark for explorations of animality.

to 'trouble' the sovereignty of liberal humanism would involve a consideration of biopolitical power. Such a project would, as Giorgio Agamben suggests, confront the ways in which 'life' itself is represented, and in the process, 'incessantly confront power's strategies'. [7]

The traveller was also aware that, as a human animal, she faced insurmountable difficulties in conceiving, let alone representing, other-than-human animality as an autonomous entity, independent of her perceptions. Earlier explorers had reminded her that human knowledge of animality comes to us already socially constructed in powerful and constitutive ways. Informed by the insights of structural linguistics, past travellers had reminded her that because humans mediate their lives through language, their relationship to the world is negotiated within a matrix of representations which position them, as subjects, 'over against the world as an object of mastery and desire:' [8]

Conceptual and representational dilemmas were something the traveller had anticipated. That there exists no extra-textual field of reference by which the agency of animality might be understood by human biopolitical actors; that textuality cannot be divorced from historical, social and political processes, was a sensibility she had long possessed. She was mindful of Gayatri Spivak's notion of textual representation as the 'worlding of a world on a supposedly uninscribed territory.'[9] The traveller knew to be cautious when wielding the power exercised by claims to 'know' and to represent the 'true' nature of things.

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7 Giorgio Agamben, 'Absolute Immanence' in G Agamben, *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, (Stanford University Press, 1999) 232.

8 David Abram, *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology*, (Pantheon Books, 2010) 28.

9 Gayatri Spivak , 'Criticism, Feminism and The Institution' , interview with Elizabeth Grosz (17 August 1984) in Sarah Harasym (ed), *The Postcolonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues* (Routledge, 1990) 1.

The naivety of any attempt to represent non human *being* in other than humanist terms was apparent from the outset. The discourses of ontology and phenomenology are, the traveller knows, contaminated by the 'capacity and curse of representational thought' which restricts their usefulness as means by which animal *being* may be explored and represented.[10]

Because she considered herself to be a responsible traveller and disliked heroic gestures, the audacity and conceit of her travel plans weighed heavily upon her. Not only was she seeking the surrender of humanism, she knew that the concept of animality itself would be exposed to danger. As Matthew Calarco has observed:

> 'Inasmuch as the notion of what constitutes animality has traditionally been figured over and against what is supposed to constitute humanity, when the notion of humanity is undercut, then the concept of animality suffers a similar fate.' [11]

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10 Giorgio Agamben argues that ontology is not an innocuous academic discipline, but in every sense the 'fundamental operation in which anthropogenesis, the becoming human of the living being, is realized.' Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, (Stanford University Press, 2003) 79

11 Matthew Calarco, *Zoographics: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida*, (Columbia University Press, 2008) 3.

Landscape: The Road Travelled

'Philosophy in general has never quite known what to do with animals or where to place them on the conceptual map.'[12]

Prior to the commencement of her journey, the traveller was aware that scores of other travellers, better equipped that herself, had passed over similar terrain, employing political, ethical and ontological arguments to critically investigate the ' animal question'. She was familiar with emergent dialogues in which the human/animal boundary had become a site of philosophical speculation and that:

> '[T]raditional human-animal distinctions, which posit a radical discontinuity between animals and human beings, have been relentlessly attacked from multiple theoretical, political and disciplinary perspectives.' [13]

Matthew Calarco argues, however, that limited by their anthropocentric origins, no human discipline will be able to provide a comprehensive account of animal *being*, nor of animal *life*. Each human discipline, he suggests, is unable to accomplish on its own the 'revolution in language and thought that is needed to come to grips with the issues surrounding animal life.' [14]

The traveller also knew that while much contemporary philosophy had succeeded in decentering human sovereignty and displacing human agency, it had demonstrated numerous blind spots when it came to non human animality. Indeed, as Matthew Calarco observes, an explicit concern with, and sensibility towards, non human 'others' has never been a significant concern for majority world philosophers of the 20th and 21st centuries.

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12 Peter Atterton and Matthew Calacarco (eds), *Animal Philosophy: Ethics and Identity*, (Continuum, 2004) xvii.

13 Calarco, above n 11, 3.

14 ibid, 6.

Recent explorers of 'the animal question' have observed that poststructuralism, while deepening the antihumanist critique, frequently fails to disturb the anthropocentrism of the humanist tradition.[15]

The traveller entertained no illusions that philosophical arguments alone would suffice to transform human thinking in relation to non human animality. Along with Calarco, she conceded that philosophy has only a minor role to play in the larger transformation that is necessary to do justice, in thought and in life, to animals. At the same time, the traveller considered that philosophy can provide us with the concepts we need in order for our

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15 See Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco (eds), *Animal Philosophy: Ethics and Identity*, (Continuum 2004) xxiii.

For example in the work of Emmanuel Levinas, the radical alterity he accords to other humans rarely extends to the other animal or to the animal as other. It is, Calarco claims, 'these stubborn and dogmatic remnants of anthropocentrism' that confirm Derrida's claim that Levinas's thinking remains a 'profound humanism.' Matthew Calarco, 'On the Borders of Language and Death: Derrida and the Question of the Animal' *(2003) Angelaki*, <http://www.faculty.sbc.edu/mcalarco/Calarco%20Essay,%20On%20the%20Borders,%20Angelaki.htm>

Jacques Derrida suggested that Levinas' philosophical project, 'cryptically reintroduces and is complicitous in the ontological presumptions that separate the human and the animal'. Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Marie-Louise Mallet (ed) [trans. David Wills] (Fordham University Press, 2008)

In 'The Name of a Dog' Levinas writes about Bobby, a stray dog who visited him and other prisoners in the dehumanising conditions of a concentration camp. Levinas wrote that while Bobby 'bore testimony to their humanity' he had neither ethics nor logos. Levinas suggested that, through a process of dehumanisation, Bobby served as an example of what the Nazis were trying to make their prisoners: animals. His essay explores the ways in which instigators of violence suspend the humanity of their victims in order to circumvent the ethical deterrents that would normally prevent the use of violence. In other words, the human subject of violence is objectified: they are treated like pigs, dogs, vermin, as 'sub-human'. Emmanuel Levinas, 'The Name of a Dog, or Natural Rights' in S Hand (trans) *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990) 153.

Julie Smith notes that while the poststructuralist distrust of human subjectivity has contributed to richer conceptions of and models of human consciousness, it has ultimately fallen short of a radical challenge to anthropomorphism. She suggests that by acknowledging both the fact of animal consciousness and the impossibility of rendering it in human language, many poststructuralist writers have served to accentuate anthropomorphism. Julie Smith, 'Sensory Experience as Consciousness in Literary Representations of Animal Minds' in M Pollock & C Rainwater (eds) *Figuring Animals: Essays on Animal Images in Art, Literature, Philosophy and Popular Culture,* (Palgrave, Macmillan, 2005) 231-246

thoughts to 'proceed otherwise' in relation to animals: ones which stand apart from traditional conceptions of animality and of the human-animal distinction:

> But 'what thought will encounter once reliance on these categories is surrendered cannot be known in advance; however, it *is* certain that any genuine encounter with what we call animals will occur only from within the space of this surrender.' [16]

The traveller took heed of Calarco's observation that while it is arguable that the human-animal distinction ought no longer be maintained, the consequence of the displacement of the distinction is, 'that thought is no longer certain how to proceed in this domain'.[17] She began to wonder whether a compass would be of any use to her on this journey.

As a reasonably seasoned philosophical explorer, the traveller knew that when we 'clutch hardest' at philosophical concepts, we only deepen the abyss between our thinking and the world that we hope to understand. She was compelled by Cary Wolfe's suggestion that the resistance to the world that philosophy offers cannot be overcome by the development of carefully crafted analytical arguments or by refined philosophical concepts. [18]

The traveller's sympathies lay, not with the systematic agendas of analytic philosophy, but with the rhizomatic thinking of contemporary continental philosophy.[19] It is an approach which identifies no single 'correct' starting or ending place for philosophical thought. She was reminded of Stanley Cavell's suggestion that the most appealing part of

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16 Calarco, above n 11, 4.

17 Calarco, ibid. 29.

18 Cary Wolfe (ed) *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003, 5.

19 Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy*? (H Tomlinson and G Burchell trans, Columbia University Press, 1994) .

the human condition is an acceptance that the demand for unity in our judgments is not the *expression* of the human condition but of the effort to *escape* it.[20]

Equipped with this sensibility, the work of Giles Delueze and Felix Guattari provided the traveller with uneasy companionship on her journey.[21] Their philosophical approach is one which identifies and performs the multiplicity and heterogeneity within which humanity is embedded and which attempts to facilitate modes of 'becoming' to destabilise the identity and unity of humanist ontology.

While the concepts of 'immanence' and 'becoming' may facilitate the traveller's safe passage through the cul-de-sac of 'being', she admitted to difficulties in coming to terms with the notion of immanence 'as both what must be thought and as what cannot be thought,' [22] as 'pure contemplation without knowledge. [23] James Urpeth has described the theme of immanence as 'a reality that contains no negations or boundaries, but only differences and 'thresholds' in which everything is implicated in everything else'.[24] Because the traveller usually had no difficulty making connections between ostensibly disparate phenomena, she derived comfort from Urpeth's description.

The traveller knew that Deleuze identified the terrain of life with immanence, a strategy calculated to avoid essentialist conceptions of being. One can say of pure immanence, Deleuze said, 'that it is A *life,* and nothing else.' Immanent life for Deleuze was 'pure potentiality', the 'movement of the infinite beyond which there is nothing,' 'a form of abeyance', a 'suspension of rules...between validity and abrogation.'[25]

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[20] Stanley Cavell, *This New Yet Unapproachable America*, (New Mexico Living Batch Press 1989) 86, cited in Stanley Cavell, Cora Diamond, John McDowell, Ian Hacking and Cary Wolfe, *Philosophy and Animal Life*, (Columbia University Press, 2008) 6.

[21] Deleuze and Guattari, above n 19.

[22] Giles Deleuze, 'Immanence: Une vie...,' (1995) 47 *Philosophie* 3, 6.

[23] Deleuze and Guattari, above n 19, 213.

[24] James Urpeth,, 'Animal Becomings', in Cararco and Attherton (eds) *Animal Philosophy*, above n 12 101 - 110.

[25] Deleuze, above n 22, 6.

The traveller thought (or thought that she thought – but perhaps she didn't) that other guidebooks would be of little use to her as long as she remained in this territory. Within the paradoxically complex terrain of indeterminacy and indecision, she came to appreciate the need for a flexible itinerary. And while at times this would prove to be frustrating, the traveller found consolation in Michele Le Doeuff's observation that 'digression is an integral part of the philosophical process'.[26]

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26 Michele Le Doeuff, *The Philosophical Imaginary*, (trans Colin Gordon, Continuum, 2003).

Morphology: Beyond Sameness and Difference

'Man is a fatal disease of the animal.'[27]

While preparing for her journey into the landscape of animality, the traveller informed herself of the dangers associated with common identification on the one hand, and alterity, on the other. She discovered that earlier explorations of the animal-human boundary had often become ensnared in dualisms of sameness and difference. The continuing enslavement of animals in 'the intellectual zoo of our conceptions', Alan Bleakley suggests, has frequently resulted in the humanisation of animals through anthropomorphism and/or the animalisation of humans through biocentrism.[28]

The traveller reflected upon Robert McKay's suggestion that attempts at common identification in which the boundaries between the human and the nonhuman are collapsed, might represent 'a facile gesture of dominance'. Conversely, that a focus on difference rather than identity may reflect an 'anthropomorphic disrespect'.[29] The traveller's initial itinerary had been developed around the identification of possibilities for a common ontology of animality. Early in her journey, however, she realised this to be ill-conceived and that any account of animality must take account of the inescapable structural asymmetry between humans and nonhumans and that an ethical relationship

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[27] Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, ed. A Bloom (trans A Stoekl et al), University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1985, cited in G Agamben, above n 10, 12.

[28] Alan Bleakley, *The Animalising Imagination: Totemism, Textuality and Ecocriticism*, (St Martins Press, 2000) 21.
Biocentrism is premised on an irreconcilable separation of humans and nature. Biocentric theory proposes that the structures observed in the universe are generated by organisms on the receiving end and are not pre-existing 'out there'. For example, subjective notions of space are a result of observations and the relationships which are inferred among them. See Robert Lanza, *Biocentrism: How Life and Consciousness Are the Keys to Understanding the True Nature of the Universe* (Ben Bella Books, Inc, 2009).

[29] Robert McKay, ''Identifying with the Animals': Language, Subjectivity, and the Animal Politics of Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*', in M Pollock and C Rainwater (eds) *Figuring Animals: Essays on Animal Images in Art, Literature, Philosophy and Popular Culture,* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) 207.

between human and nonhuman animals may need to be founded on this asymmetry.[30] Indeed, she hadn't travelled far before she was compelled to interrogate her own power and preconceptions. As she reflected upon Donna Haraway's suggestion that we (humans) have 'run aground on Western epistemological imperatives to construct a revolutionary subject from the perspective of a hierarchy of oppressions and/or a latent position of moral superiority', the traveller felt chastened.[31]

The traveller took heed of Donald Turner's suggestion that within interspecies encounters, animals are 'assimilated within a pre-existing humanist narrative'.[32] Turner recommends a middle ground between, on the one hand, the humanist view which recognises the 'otherness' of nonhuman animals in which they are 'raw material' for the satisfaction of human needs and desires, and, on the other, extreme forms of naturalism which focus on nonhuman animals' *sameness* to humanity. Much animal rights discourse, Turner argues, has resulted from a failure to consider fully the ontological differences between human and animal being and is predicated in an ethics of 'the same' which assumes that ethical relationships are essentially contractual and/or symmetrical.[33] Martin

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[30] Emmanual Levinas suggested that structural asymmetry and non-reciprocity are 'obvious and inescapable'. Although his discussion was confined to humans, he identified structural asymmetry in ethical relationships between humans based on their relative degrees of power or powerlessness, suggesting this asymmetry to be the source of the ethical relationship. Emmanual Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*. (Trans Alphonso Lingis) (Dusquesne University Press, 1961).

Donald Turner suggests that 'once the necessary structural asymmetry of the ethical relationship that Levinas illustrates is recognized, it becomes clear that the distinctions between humanity and animality …no longer serve as reason to exclude non-human animals from the realm of direct ethical relevance. Rather, they become the source for their explicit and radical inclusion. Instead, these distinctions can become the source for the explicit and radical inclusion of non-human animals in the ethical inner circle, as humans are led to extend human 'civility' to the non-human animal world. Donald Turner, 'The Animal Other: Civility and Animality in and Beyond Heidegger, Levinas, and Derrida' (2002) 12 *disClosure* 1, 12. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/6990535/The-Animal-OtherCivility-and-Animality-in-and-Beyond-Heidegger-Levinas-And-Derrida>

[31] Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, (Free Association Books, 1991).

[32] Turner, above n 30, 5.

[33] Martin Heidegger, 'Letter on Humanism,' in William McNeill (ed) *Pathmarks*, (Cambridge University Press, 1998) 265.

Heidegger recognized this asymmetry when he argued that the judgment of whether 'dogs have a right to vote' may be compared to 'the procedure of trying to evaluate the essence and powers of a fish by seeing how long it can live on dry land'.[34] Such 'detached mathematical calculations of interests and consequences', Turner suggests, are inappropriate in the context of relationships which are 'structurally non-contractual, asymmetrical and rooted in ontological difference'.[35]

While the focus of her journey remained upon the identification of possibilities for circumscribing humanist privilege in discourses of animality, the traveller had acquired a greater appreciation of the need to acknowledge that human and nonhuman animals do not encounter one another in a static, hierarchical binary relation, but engage in interactive processes of both harmony and of conflict. She knew that her 'journey of trouble' would entail the continual negotiation of the hazards of difference and of identity.

Turner's 'middle ground' acknowledges the limitations and contributions of formulations of animality based either on identity or otherness. He considers whether there may be an unnecessary dichotomy between assimilation and incommensurability, and in an attempt to move beyond such dualisms, Turner argues that we need to 'abandon the ontological imperialism of Being'. This exhorts us to envisage 'a non-reciprocal and asymmetrical ethical structure' which avoids the application of linguistic and rational standards to questions regarding the ethical status of non human animals. Instead, he advocates an ethical relationship between human and other animals grounded in 'a notion of civility towards a partially inaccessible other', one which enables us to reach *across* species barriers to increase our sympathies with nonhuman others:

> 'We must offer to non humans the radical gift of direct ethical consideration which assumes no symmetry or reciprocity.'[36]

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[34] Martin Heidegger, 'Letter on Humanism,' in William McNeill (ed) *Pathmarks*, (Cambridge University Press, 1998) 265.

[35] Turner, above n 30, 6.

[36] ibid. 5.

Such a middle course which affirms difference, promotes contact without assimilation, and meaningful exchange without complete harmony, is in contrast with traditional Kantian moral approaches which assumes that for direct ethical exchange to occur, it is necessary to break down the barrier between beings in a 'logic of identity': 'That the other must prove to be somehow like me.'[37]

Equipped with these sentiments, the traveller was again compelled to acknowledge the hazards of her proposed investigation of a reciprocal ontological status for human and non human animality. Increasingly, she became aware of the obstacles standing in the way of investigations of being in interspecies encounters. Feeling somewhat disappointed, the traveller began to search for affiliations with non human others based upon something *other* than uniquely human identity descriptors. Her attention shifted to the identification of concepts which preserve ontological differences without assimilating or excluding them. She realised that a truly reciprocal engagement of human and non human animality may have been a utopian fantasy and oriented her compass towards the location of an intermediate terrain, untainted by anthropomorphism, upon which contact between human and nonhuman animality might occur.

During the course of her travels, the traveller often felt compelled to identify and interrogate her motives for the journey. As Jutta Ittner observes, we (humans) want our investigations of animality to be meaningful and 'we want to be consoled by these meanings.'[38] As she reflected on her reasons, the truth of Ittner's sentiments resonated with the traveller. As a consequence, the traveller became increasingly vigilant lest her ostensible concern for non human animals concealed an unarticulated desire to co-opt them into a humanist agenda. Similarly, she knew that she would need to be cautious with her textual representations of animality lest they become a reflection of her own

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[37] Turner, above n 31, 3.

[38] Jutta Ittner, 'Who's Looking? The Animal Gaze in the Fiction of Brigette Kronauer and Clarice Lispector' in M Pollock and C Rainwater (eds) *Figuring Animals: Essays on Animal Images in Art, Literature, Philosophy and Popular Culture,* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) 99, 100.

concerns. The traveller was also wary of tendencies to romantice or idealise non human animals as representatives of a 'lost innocence'. As Akira Lippett cautions, mourning the loss of an imagined paradise may turn out to be 'a mourning for a self that has become dehumanised in the very process of humanity's becoming human.'[39]

Perhaps, the traveller reflected, she was imagining a romantic and idealistic vision of animal others and of the lifeworld in which they dwell. She was reminded of Luc Ferry's *The New Ecological Order* in which he writes of the 'allure and the danger' of ecology in contemporary environmental critiques.[40] Ferry, a staunch defender of liberal humanism, draws attention to the often uncritical nostalgia and romantic holism of some varieties of environmental thought, and suggests that some in the Deep Ecology movement are 'zealots of nature' who share the totalitarian sentiments of the Third Reich; ones predicated on a 'revolutionary hope of a radiant future'.[41] Aligned with Ferry's attack on Deep Ecology is his critique of animal rights philosophy. Arguing that 'the animal is programmed by a code which goes by the name of 'instinct'', Ferry's sole defining characteristic for the distinction between the human and non human animal is the former's capacity for volition and free will. While Cary Wolfe agrees that there are 'manifold dangers to democratic society of totalising moral schemes', he offers a profound and comprehensive critique of Ferry's thesis. Wolfe suggests that Ferry understates or ignores ethological research which demonstrates that many non human animals display degrees of the volition, free will, and abstraction that Ferry defends as the sole domain of the human. Moreover, Wolfe argues, Ferry overstates the degree to which the human being is not determined by nature; 'not bound by instinct, biological needs and intolerances, by sexuality, the body, and so on'. [42]

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39 Akira Lippitt, *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife*, (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2000) 18.

40 Luc Ferry. *The New Ecological Order*. Trans. Carol Volk. (University of Chicago Press, 1995).

41 Ferry above n 38, xxvi.

42 Cary Wolfe, 'Old Orders for New: Ecology Animal Rights, and The Poverty of Humanism' http://www.altx.com/EBR/EBR4/wolfe.html

The journey had only begun yet the troubles continued to mount. Perhaps, the traveller reflected, she had inadequate provisions to facilitate her safe passage to a ground of animality. Should she abandon her journey? Was the very idea of a non anthropocentric relational frontier a chimera, a quixotic delusion? It seemed to the traveller that the very *inaccessibility* of non human animals is what enables human animals to project their own states of being upon them.

It was becoming increasingly evident to the traveller that this journey was going to be as much about herself as it was about non human animality. She was mindful of Donna Haraway's suggestion that because 'we' humans are unable to avoid the limitations of our own human perspective, at the most we can only 'polish an animal mirror to look for ourselves.'[43] The traveller also reflected upon the impossibility of thinking outside human existence and of John Berger's quip that 'in the zoo, the view is always wrong.'[44] The traveller was forced to concede that, no matter how hard we may try to imagine non human being, perhaps we will always be condemned to meet our own projections. She was beginning to fear that that her explorations of nonhuman animality would inevitably lead to a humanist cul-de-sac. She sadly reflected that perhaps Foucault was right and that liberal humanism would continue to dwell in untroubled and sovereign territory. There would *be* no surrender.

But the traveller had come too far. She decided to postpone the next leg of her journey. She realised that if she were to proceed further, she would have to pass through a heavily guarded threshold.[45] It was time to pause, to reflect and to sort through her provisions.

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43 Haraway, above n 31, 20.

44 John Berger, 'Why Look at Animals?' in J Berger, *About Looking*, (Vintage, 1980) 21.

45 The traveller is reminded of *Stalker* (Mosfilm Studios, 1979) a film by Andrei Tarkovsky in which the guide, the writer and the professor must first pass through a guarded threshold, followed by a hazardous landscape populated by unseen forces in order to enter 'the Zone' – a place where one's deepest desires are fulfilled.

Threshold: Obligatory Passage Point

'The caesura between the human and the animal passes first of all through man.'[46]

Bruno Latour used the concept of obligatory passage point to denote 'nodes' on networks (of people, technologies and ideas) which *must* be reckoned with if one hopes to achieve particular outcomes within that network. The moves human actors make may be in harmony with particular passage points or may act in contradiction to them. So while Latour allows that 'obligatory' passage points are not mandatory , he identifies the difficulties of working against 'established translations' and of translating situations in other directions.[47] For Latour, there is no basic structure of reality or a single, self-consistent world. A multiplicity of worlds exist which human agents bring into being. While these worlds can be mapped, they are not capable of reduction to a single structure or explanation. The traveller speculated that Latour's obligatory passage points might assist her negotiation of undecidable thresholds and also, the identification of new ones.

The traveller's journey was also informed by Foucault's contention that processes of representation do not depend upon what one sees, `but upon elements that have already been introduced into discourse'. Foucault argued that taxonomies, classifications and dualisms are constructions dependent upon a primary, allegedly 'universal' language which represents a dominant view of the world. While this does not preclude the existence of alternative views of the world, because of their subordination to privileged constructions, they lack the same structuring influences. [48]

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46 Agamben, above n 10, 16

47 Bruno Latour *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory,* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

48 Foucault, above n 2.

The traveller considered that through the refinement of philosophical concepts and the means by which they are represented, she may be able to detour around established translations of animality and contribute to the creation of alternative ones.

The traveller knew this to be an ambitious gambit and felt like David facing the Goliath which is 'biopolitical power'. She had been persuaded by Giorgio Agamben's claim that the conceptual separation of animal from human was a form of 'originary ban', an exercise of biopolitical power which enabled the human animal to exclude other animals from the life of the polis.[49] For Agamben, the decisive political conflict which governs every other conflict, is that between the *animalitas* and the *humanitas* of man, that 'in its origin Western politics is biopolitics.'[50] The exercise of biopolitical power separates political and human life from the life of the animal and is 'the power to rule over life itself'. The 'politicisation of life' Agamben claims, is the metaphysical task *par excellence*, one 'founded on a community of the just and unjust'. [51] His thesis is that the determination of the border between human and animal, one 'defined at a prehistoric threshold', is a 'fundamental meta-physico-political operation in which humanity is decided upon and produced.'[52]

The traveller was not feeling confident of her ability to face up to, let alone successfully challenge, a 'fundamental meta-physico-political operation' on her own. Perhaps, she reflected, if she and others she had met on her journey could cause enough trouble, they may be able to contribute to new and emergent translations of animality.

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49 Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, *On Sovereign Power and Naked Life*, (Stanford University Press, 1995) 7.

50 Agamben, above n 10, 80.

51 Agamben, above n 47, 3.

52 Agamben, above n 10, 21.

Boundary: Troubling Humanism

'As I descended into impassable rivers I no longer felt guided by the ferrymen.'[53]

Although in the initial stages of her journey, the traveller had encountered a range of topographies. She knew, however, that she still had to successfully negotiate the obligatory passage point of humanism. If able to pass through this threshold, she hoped that *posthumanism* might provide conceptual tools to engender a sensibility of animality which avoids the bifurcation of human and nonhuman in which each is constructed and represented in terms of their differences to one other. She also hoped that they may enable her to circumvent analyses based on identity in which the status of nonhuman animals is assessed by the extent to which they are 'like us'.

Having covered the territory in earlier journeys, the traveller considered herself in familiar terrain with liberal humanism and posthumanism. She was aware that the sovereign subject of liberal humanism was 'discovered' or (more accurately), *invented* during the Enlightenment. This subject, as Myra Seaman describes it, is a historically independent agent who is at the centre of his, and consequently, *the* world, is defined by rational intelligence and able to manipulate the world in accordance with his will.[54] And as Tony Davies observes, this human is always singular, always in the present tense and inhabits neither time nor place but a *condition*; one which is timeless and unlocalised. [55]

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53 Arthur Rimbaud, *Drunken Boat*, (Le bateau ivre), 1871.

54 Myra J Seaman, 'Becoming More (than) Human: Affective Posthumanisms, Past and Future' (2007) 37(2) *Journal of Narrative Theory* 246. Seaman deliberately uses the pronouns 'his' and 'he', since, she contends, the subject of liberal humanism was informed by masculinist notions of identity.

55 Tony Davies, *Humanism*, (Routledge, 1997) 32.

She was also cognisant of posthumanist sensibilities in which the universal ethics, assumed rationality, and species-specific self determination of humanism had been problematised. [56]

The traveller knew also that she had been a beneficiary of the humanist tradition and had prospered as a consequence of humanist privilege, both in relation to her (anxiety ridden) dominion over non human animals and in her relations with others of her species. As an educated westerner she had enjoyed many freedoms and the disciplinary paradigms of her occupations as educator and lawyer were more often than not, predicated on liberal humanist precepts.

For example, in her work as an animal law educator, the traveller had become concerned with the readiness of animal advocates to resort to liberal humanism as a chief point of reference for animal interests, embracing a tacit assumption that change regarding animals is to be found in existing (humanist) legal and political institutions. Indeed, pro-animal discourse often has the effect of extending and deepening liberal humanism and, as Wolfe notes, of 'reinscribing the humanism it ostensibly attempts to unsettle'.[57] The traveller agreed with Calarco than animality discourse should function as a direct challenge to liberal humanism and the metaphysical anthropocentrism which underlies it. [58] Along with Cora Diamond she regarded non human animals, not so much as bearers of 'rights' or 'interests', but as fellow sentient creatures.[59]

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[56] But see Atterton and Calarco, above n 12 who argue that 'the end of humanism, is an 'apocalyptic shibboleth', one which has 'become a self-defeating utterance amid a discourse that has said hardly anything about animals'.

[57] Wolfe Cary, *What is Posthumanism*? (University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

[58] Calarco, above n 11, 6

[59] Diamond Cora, 'The Difficulty of Reality and the Difficulty of Philosophy,' in Cavell Stanley, Cora Diamond, John McDowell, Ian Hacking and Cary Wolfe, *Philosophy and Animal Life*, (Columbia University Press, 2008)

Topology: Sacrificial Ground

Les végétatiens eux aussi mangent de l'animal et même de l'homme. Ils pratiquent un autre mode de denegation. [60]

The traveller knew that the humanist concepts of identity and agency are inseparable from the discourse and institution of speciesism, and that the continued existence of the 'human' depends, to a significant extent, upon the sacrifice of the 'animal'. Certainly posthumanist critiques continue to problematise the ways in which humanism has been constructed through processes of exclusion. As Judith Butler observes, being and becoming human requires passing into a field of discourse and power that 'orchestrates, delimits and sustains' that which qualifies as 'human'. She suggests that *being human* in a fundamental sense, means 'not-being-animal' and that the exclusion of the animal is *constitutive* of the human community.[61] In *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Jacques Derrida suggested that this 'symbolic sacrifice', enables humans to engage in a 'non-criminal putting to death' not only of animals, but also of other *humans* by marking them as 'animals' or abominations .[62] Indeed, as Una Chaudhuri notes:

> 'The Elephant Man's cry of self assertion: 'I am not an animal, I am a human being' has echoed through our culture for centuries as the sheerest common sense, habituating us to the falsehood at its heart; the notion that 'human being' and 'animal' are not embedded categories but mutually exclusive ones'. [63]

Derrida characterised the sacrificial structure of western subjectivity as one which maintains the status of the 'human' by a violent abjection, destruction and disavowal of the 'animal'. The sanctity of the human depends, he said, upon its difference from

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60 'Vegetarians, too, partake of animals, even of men. They practice a different mode of denegation'. J Derrida, ''Eating Well' or the Calculation of the Subject', (trans P Connor & A Ronell), Interview with Jean-Luc Nancy, in J Derrida, *Points...Interviews 1974-94*, (Stanford University Press, 1995) 109.

61 Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*, (Routledge, 1993).

62 Jacques Derrida, Jacques *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Marie-Louise Mallet (ed) [trans. David Wills] (Fordham University Press, 2008) .

63 Una Chaudhuri, 'Animal Acts for Changing Times' *HotReview.org*, Hunter on-line theater review, http://www.hotreview.org/articles/animalacts.htm

animals, our representations of animality, and the material reinstantiation of that exclusion through various practices such as meat eating, hunting and medical experimentation, practices he referred to as 'carnophallogocentricism'.[64]

Lippett suggests that the superiority of humanity is achieved when 'animality ceases to occupy a proper space apart from humanity that succeeds, appropriates and enframes it.'[65] She argues that the systematic exclusion of non human animals from places 'proper' to them have resulted in their constant dislocation wherever it appears, so much so that this displacement itself has become its most recognisable trope. The most haunting presence (absence) of the animal is always, Lippett suggests, within or with reference to human subjectivity, in consequence of which the animal participates in a 'sacrificial economy' in which it becomes 'spectral', always remembered in absentia.[66]

Similarly, Agamben argued that humanity is decided upon and produced through the suspension and capture of the 'inhuman'. Homo sapien, Agamben states, is neither a clearly defined species nor a substance, but rather a device: an 'anthropological machine for producing the recognition of the human.' The machine functions, he argues, by means of both an exclusion and an inclusion. Because the human is already presupposed every time, the machine produces a 'state of exception' in which the inside (the human) is nothing but the exclusion of an outside (the non human).[67]

This exclusionary duality in which the non human animal is sacrificed to produce the human has resulted in animals often serving as tropes for moral and social corruption. For

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[64] Derrida argued that the western subject is organised around 'carnivorous virility'. The acquisition of full humanity in the west, he stated, is predicated upon eating animal flesh. 'For humans, eating meat enacts the cultural work of creating and maintaining a subjectivity that is imagined to exceed the natural.' Jacques Derrida, 'Eating Well or The Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida,' in ed. Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy (eds) *Who Comes After the Subject?*, (Routledge, 1991) 116.

[65] Lippitt, above n 39,53.

[66] ibid. 21.

[67] Agamben, above n 10, 37.

example, in his exploration of the historical links between slaughterhouses and extermination camps, Charles Patterson argues that processes of exclusion are used not only to justify violence against non humans, such as that directed towards animals in slaughterhouses, laboratories and factory farms, but also to justify practices of 'dehumanisation' in relation to certain categories of people who are, in effect, 'treated like animals.'[68]

It seemed to the traveller that humanism was founded on a paradox since it requires *both* the sacrifice of non human animals as well as being dependent upon them for its survival. That is, humanism is predicated on the existence of a radical 'other' and the *being* of the human *is* its humanness: one which is contrasted to the 'animality' of the animal. As Dominick La Capra observes, humanism not only depends upon the viability of the opposition between humans and other animals but additionally on the belief that humans, in some basic and not simply contingent sense, are not animals:

> 'If one were to play the game of seeking the elusive, decisive differentiating criterion, one might propose that the human is an animal that generates endless invidious distinctions, especially in the anxiety-ridden, self serving quest to distinguish itself from other animals.' [69]

The traveller was herself anxiety-ridden but not because she was seeking a means to distinguish humans from other animals. Rather, her anxiety resulted from the difficulty of her attempts to do otherwise. She had discovered how precarious her expedition had become but took some consolation in La Capra's suggestion that the human and the animal are always on an undecidable threshold with respect to one another, one that is

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68 Charles Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust*, (Lantern Books, 2002).
The traveller speculated that not only should humans stop treating humans like they treat animals, humans should stop treating animals like they treat animals. If this were so, non human animals would not function as tropes of denigration.

69 Dominick La Capra , *History and Its Limits: Human, Animal, Violence*, (Cornell University Press, 2009) 158.

being continually contested and negotiated.[70] This claim provided the traveller with a central compass point on her journey and she was enjoying the irony of an undecidable geophilosophical terrain.

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70 La Capra, above n 69, 173.

Hinterland: Posthumanism

'We gain knowledge, but only to lose the world.'[71]

In his proposal for a radical disruption of liberal humanism Cary Wolfe suggests, somewhat optimistically perhaps, that posthumanism is the worldview that will dominate Western thought**.** While not entirely sharing his optimism, the traveller was convinced that the poststructuralist assault on humanism was pivotal to the emergence of new discourses on animality. In *What is Posthumanism?* Wolfe identifies a pluralism that challenges anthropocentrism and speciesism and advocates an ethics of animality based on a fundamental reevaluation of what it means to be human.[72] While Wolfe's undertaking does not purport to provide an exhaustive map to the 'question of the animal', it supplies a set of coordinates for the identification of strategies by which a non anthropomorphic discourse of posthuman animality may be represented in contemporary theory and culture.

The articulation of a critical posthumanism which might circumvent the limitations of anthropocentrism and biocentrism has also been assisted by Giorgio Agamben's exploration of humanism in *The Open: Man and Animal*. [73] In it, the traveller was introduced to the concept of a 'non sovereign zone of indifference' within which life may be conceptualised and represented. Agamben describes this zone, which he refers to as 'the Open', as an area of 'virtual indetermination' and 'absolute indistinction'.[74] Within

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71 Cary Wolfe 'Introduction' in S Cavell, C Diamond, J McDowell, I Hacking and C Wolfe, *Philosophy and Animal Life*, (Columbia University Press, 2008) 5.

72 Wolfe, above n 54.

73 Agamben, above n 10.

74 'The Open' (*das Offene)* is an expression Agamben borrowed from Czech poet Rainer Maria Rilke who, in the *Duino Elegies*, wrote of the capacity of plant and animal life to inhabit a seemingly 'borderless surround'. Although difficult to translate, the Open seems to have been used by Rilke to describe a quality of consciousness, a quality of 'being here' or a state of relationship with the world without being possessed by performance. Rilke Rainer Maria, *Duino Elegies,* trans. David Oswald (Daimon Verlag, 1997) (first published 1923)

this non chauvinistic space, the difference between human and inhuman vanishes and the two terms collapse into one another. The traveller speculated that, within a zone of virtual indetermination was a prospect for developing a discourse which avoids both humanist conceptions of animality and the subordination of nonhuman to human life. For within this zone, Agamben remarks, 'neither human nor animal life is found', only 'bare life'.

Matthew Calarco suggests that within such a context:

> '[W]e encounter the possibility of rethinking the status of animals at the level of 'the political' and 'politics,' as well as the possibility of developing a non anthropocentric notion of *being with* that challenges the all-too-human tendencies of contemporary post-humanism.' [75]

It is a space, Agamben suggests, where the border between the human and the nonhuman animal may be reactualised and in which 'Paradise calls Eden back into question'.[76]

The traveller thought this to be an ambitious claim and while she appreciates the value of 'thinking otherwise' and of utopian possibilities, she was mindful of Dominick La Capra's assertions that posthumanism, or what he prefers to call 'nonhumanism', might be better served by a more differential, complex understanding of a field of distinctions, differences, proximities and possibilities than the construct offered by Agamben. [77] La Capra acknowledges that while Agamben problematises the distinction between human and animal, he also seems to assume or require a radical divide between them, and in order to envision an alternative to this divide he identifies a paradoxical aporia: his 'zone of indistinction'. Agamben's 'blank utopian longing', La Capra asserts, results in a discourse in which animals are not figured as diverse, complex and differentiated living beings but instead function as an abstracted philosophical topos:

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[75] Matthew Calarco, 'On the Borders of Language and Death: Derrida and the Question of the Animal' (2003) *Angelaki,* cited <http://www.faculty.sbc.edu/mcalarco/Calarco%20Essay%20On%20the%20Borders>

[76] Agamben, above n 10, 21

[77] La Capra , above n 69, 174.

> [T]he differences between and among animals…are more diverse and significant than any megadivide between (or foundational trauma separating) human and animals…One should not envision the human and the animal as two circles that are either separated by a gap/divide or intersecting with a shared portion forming a zone of indistinction. Rather, the two are superimposed like tectonic plates with multiple, variable, unpredictable, even seismic movements between – and within-them.' [78]

Having passed through a topography of virtual indetermination and philosophical abstractions, the traveller decided it was time to reset her compass, lace up her boots and enter into new terrain.

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[78] La Capra , above n 66, 173.

Habitat: Lifeworld

'*The spider knows nothing about the fly*.'[79]

It is trite to observe that all existence occurs within the constraints of the biosphere. This 'lifeworld', however, is not a coherent text with non negotiable and identifiable meanings available for humans to appropriate.[80] Human interpretative powers are necessarily partial, so any insistence that nature is an autonomous actor which exists independently from cultural ways of knowing, is fraught with danger. As David Abram observes:

> 'By conceiving itself as something entirely distinct from palpable nature, the rational mind of the enlightenment was empowered to pursue its giddy dream of comprehending and mastering every aspect of the material cosmos. Descartes' segregation of the mind and body authorised the modern mind to reflect upon the material world as though it were not a part of that world- to look upon nature from a detached position ostensibly outside of that nature.' [81]

While these are powerful sentiments and the traveller liked to think of herself as part of 'palpable nature', she also wondered if she could do otherwise than 'hold tight' to her awareness. With reference to the work of ethnologist Jakob von Uexküll, she understood her *umwelt* to be limited both by processes of signification and her functional limitations as an organism. Uexküll used the concept *umwelt* (plural *umwelten*) to refer to 'surrounding world'. More precisely the term translates as 'self-centered world' or 'subjective universe'. Uexküll theorised that organisms can have different *umwelten*, even though they share the same environment. Each functional component of an *umwelt* has a meaning and represents the organism's model of the world. It is also the semiotic world of the organism, including all the meaningful aspects of that world for that

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[79] Jakob von Uexküll cited in Agamben, above n 10, 41.

[80] Edmund Husserl introduced the concept of '*lebenswelt'* or 'lifeworld' in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. D. Carr. (Northwestern University Press, 1970) (first published 1936). Husserl postulated that in whatever way we may be conscious of the world as a coherent universe of existing objects, all beings *belong* to the world and live with one another in the world. The 'lebenswelt', Husserl argued, exists in our consciousness through this living together.

[81] Abram, above n 8, 150.

organism such as water, food, shelter, potential threats, or navigational points of reference. Because each organism creates and reshapes its own *umwelt* when it interacts with and interprets the world, Uexküll argues the subjective universe of each organism will be determined by its uniqueness and its history. [82]

Rainer Maria Rilke, in whose poetry the distinction between *being* and *beings* was abandoned, observed that humans are 'enclosed within an inner theatre of representations and mediations', one in which they are forever mapping and codifying object domains. He regards this as a defensive gesture which fulfils a human desire for mastery and possession. This 'enclosure' however, Rilke suggests, precludes the 'unimaginable enjoyment of self-being in otherness manifest by the creature':[83]

> 'Never, not for a single day, do we have
> before us that pure space into which flowers
> endlessly open. Always there is World
> and never Nowhere without the No: that pure
> unseparated element which one breathes
> without desire and endlessly knows'[84]

With reference to their respective relationships to their environment, Rilke distinguished human life from the way of being he called *die Kreatur*. He speaks of the capacity of plant and animal life to inhabit a seemingly 'borderless surround'; an environmental sphere he termed *das Offene* or 'the Open', speculating that 'with all its eyes the natural

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82 Cited in Agamben above, n 10. Consider also Ludwig Wittgenstein's 'absurd aphorism': 'If a lion could talk we could not understand him.' Wittgenstein is illustrating how much the meanings in our language are dependent upon our 'forms of life'. He suggests that a form of life, its concerns and practices, maybe so divergent to our own that we could not understand the meaning of what it might say. Ludwig Wittgenstein *Philosophical Investigations,* 3rd ed (Blackwell Publishing, 2001) (first published 1953) 190.

83 Cited in Eric L Santer , *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald* (University of Chicago Press, 2006) 2.

84 Rainer Maria Rilke, *Duino Elegy*, 1922 cited in Eric L Santer, *On Creaturely Life* (University of Chicago Press, 2006) 1. The concept of 'the Open' was subsequently employed by Giorgio Agamben in his exploration of biopolitical power, in *The Open: Man and Animal*, above, n 24.

world [*die Kreatur*] looks out into the Open.'[85] Rilke suggests that in certain states or phases of human life, such as death, a human may make brief contact with the dimensions of the Open:

> 'Nearing death, one doesn't see death, but stares beyond, perhaps with an animal's vast gaze.'[86]

Another state of human existence where humans may make contact with their animal being, one suggested by Heidegger, is that of boredom. Within a state of boredom, he wrote, we find ourselves 'in the suspension and withholding of all concrete and specific possibilities' and 'abandoned in emptiness'. While things are there, they have nothing to offer us, leaving us indifferent. Thus, Heidegger opined, 'Boredom brings to light the unexpected proximity of … the animal.'[87]

At this stage of her journey, the traveller had experienced many things, but she didn't consider boredom to be one of them. As she contemplated the cat (a faithful companion on her journey) napping beside her on the desk, she considered whether he might be bored, and if so, surely boredom isn't a bad thing.[88] Perhaps when he wakes up feeling hungry and/or contemplating the possibility of something to eat, he will become a 'world-forming' being, a state which Martin Heidegger reserved for humans.

Heidegger's analysis of animality is directed to understanding what he takes to be the uniquely *human* relation to world. He considered the (non human) animal's relation to

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[85] To some extent, Rilke's view may be likened to that of Martin Heidegger who made a number of distinctions between the ways in which humans and animals exist in the world. One was that humans 'dwell' in an historical form of life or world and are absorbed in a space of possibilities while animals 'inhabit' an environment. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson *trans*, (SCM Press, 1962) (first published 1927).

[86] Rilke, above n 81.

[87] Martin Heidegger, 'Letter on 'Humanism' in ed. William McNeill, *Pathmarks*, (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[88] As Lars Svendsen opines, 'Profound boredom is one existential experience'. Lars Svendsen, *A Philosophy of Boredom*, John Irons trans, (Reaktion Books), 2005, 11

world only in order to highlight, by way of contrast and comparison, what is essential to the human capacity for 'world-formation'. Heidegger's claim was that the human being's mode of access to the world in which it acts is substantially different from that of non human animals, leading him to conclude that the animal is 'poor in world' (*weltarm*) while humans are 'world-forming' (*weltbildend*) . For example, he claims that while animals 'inhabit' an 'environment', humans 'dwell' in a 'world'. He also postulated that, as the only species aware of their mortality, humans 'die' while other living things merely 'perish'. He concluded from this that only 'world forming' beings were capable of death 'as such'. [89]

The traveller returned to Jakob von Uexküll's biosemiotic discussion of subjective universes. Uexküll maintained that there is an infinite variety of perceptual worlds and that any belief in a single unitary world in which all living beings are situated is illusory. Other beings, he said, do not move in the same world as the one in which we observe them, nor do they share with us or with each other, the same experience of time and space. [90]

In his well known essay, 'What is it Like to Be a Bat?' Thomas Nagel argues that the fact that an organism has conscious experience at all means that there is something it is like to

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89 Martin Heidegger, 'Letter on 'Humanism' in ed. William McNeill, *Pathmarks*, (Cambridge University Press, 1998) 177.

For a critique of this view, see L. Sundararajan, 'Dwelling after Heidegger' (Excerpts from *Dwelling, building and thinking: From Heidegger to habitat theory*), paper presented at the International Society for Theoretical Psychology, Berlin Conference, April 1997

See also Matthew Calarco, 'Heidegger's Zoontology' in Martin Calarco and Peter Atterton (eds) *Animal Philosophy: Ethics and Identity* (Continuum, 2004) 18.
Calarco suggests that Heidegger's insistence on essential and oppositional determinations of the differences between human beings and animals was a problematic reinforcement of anthropocentrism: 'While Heidegger contests the Christian anthropocentric view that human beings are the center of all creation, he has little problem reinforcing the idea that the animal's being can be explained in negative and oppositional terms in comparison with the human'. What we find in Heidegger, notes Calarco, is an effective challenge to metaphysical *humanism* but, at the same time, a further reinforcement of the *anthropocentrism* of the humanist tradition. At least, Calcarco observes, Heidegger made a 'genuine effort to understand the animal's relation to world on its own terms':

90 Cited in Agamben, above n 10, 40.

be that organism. But no method exists, Nagel claims, which will 'permit us to extrapolate to the inner life of a bat from our own case', that is, from the mentalistic ideas that we apply unproblematically to ourselves and other human beings. He concludes that 'if extrapolation from our own case is involved in the idea of what it is like to be a bat, the extrapolation must be incompletable.'[91] Mindful of Nagel's claim and of the dangers of essentialising being, the traveller continued to proceed cautiously. Sadly she speculated that perhaps the lifeworlds of human and non human animals are indeed incommensurable.

JM Coetzee's novelist Elizabeth Costello, however, disagrees with Nagel's suggestion that the being of nonhuman animals is beyond human comprehension, suggesting that 'there is no limit to the extent to which we can think ourselves into the being of another'. It is, she says, philosophy's typical appeal to reason that renders it bankrupt because it 'lags our sympathies'. The burden of feeling for animals Costello says, must be placed on something other than our rational facilities since 'reason looks to me suspiciously like the being of human thought; worse than that, like the being of one tendency in human thought... not the 'being of the universe'.[92]

If we are capable of thinking our own death, Costello asks, why 'should we not be capable of thinking our way into the life of a bat?'[93] Such thinking involves the use of our sympathetic imaginations, for which poetry and fiction, Costello argues, is better equipped than is philosophy. Whether this imagination is capable of avoiding the

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91 Thomas Nagel, 'What Is It Like to Be a Bat?', Cited in N Block, O Flanagan & G Güzeldere (eds), *The Nature of Consciousness: Philosophical Debates*, (MIT Press, 1998) 521.

92 JM Coetzee, 'The Philosophers and the Animals' in *The Lives of Animals*, (Princeton University Press, 1999) 67.

Brenda Schildgen observes that Costello's position contrasts radically with a tradition which associates human superiority with the possession of a 'rational' intellect. Brenda Deen Schildgen, 'No Bounds to the Sympathetic Imagination' in J. M. Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello(2005) 2 (3) Comparative Critical Studies* 323-36.

93 Coetzee, above n 89.

anthropomorphism which infects human conceptualisation is not, however, an issue which Costello pursues.

As Giorgio Agamben observes, 'to speak of a being, human language supposes and distances what it brings to light, in the very act in which it brings it to light.' [94] Such sentiments are in accord with Georges Bataille's observation that, unavoidably, any discussion of non human animality will be reduced to the paradigms of human thought. Because of this, he suggests, any attempt to envisage phenomena without the human gaze is an inherently empty gesture:

> 'In picturing the universe without a man, a universe in which only the animal's gaze would be opened up to things…we can only call up a vision in which we see nothing, since the object of this vision is a movement that glides from things that have no meaning by themselves to the world full of meaning implied by man giving each thing his own…Unavoidably, in our eyes, the animal is in the world like water in water.' [95]

By now the traveller was convinced that the possibilities for articulating a reciprocal ontology for human and non human being had all but diminished. In a somewhat uncharacteristic accord, many philosophers and scientists seem to agree that non human being is incommensurable with human being, and that any attempt to represent the life world of a non human animal at an *experiential* level will be limited. An additional issue, however, is that while humans may be able to observe and analyse the 'natural' behaviours and habitats of other-than-human animals, the biocentric language of science can deflect consideration away from the processes by which 'nature' is determined.

Cultural geographer David Demerrit suggests that the discourses of ecology and ecosystem as the models by which humans 'know' nature may have the effect of reifying knowledge of nature into the thing itself. He reminds us that nature is not an empty stage upon which the drama of (human) culture is acted out and cautions that:

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94 Giorgio Agamben, 'Tradition of the Immemorial' in G Agamben, *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy* (Stanford University Press, 1999).

95 Georges Bataille, 'Animality', in *Theory of Religion*, trans. Robert Hurley, (Zone Books, 1992) 20.

> '[T]he recovery of nature as an autonomous actor in human history, a real thing independent of cultural ways of knowing it may prove to be a dangerous political maneuver. If nature simply 'is' then it becomes very difficult to talk about the power/knowledge relations enabled by the material and discursive preservation of nature's essential reality.[96]

The traveller's wanderings through *umwelten* had been fraught, yet fruitful. While the prospect of locating a 'relational frontier' of human and non human animality seemed elusive, she sensed that the concept of lifeworld may provide a ground upon which humanist sovereignty might be, if not eliminated, at least de-centred. Jakob von Uexküll's *umwelten* had provided her with the coordinates to continue her journey.

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96 David Demerrit, 'The Nature of Metaphors in Cultural Geography and Environmental History' (1994) 18 (2) *Progress in Human Geography* 163.

Detour: Vulnerability

'The agony of the rat or the slaughter of a calf remains present in thought not through pity but as the zone of exchange between man and animal in which something of one passes into the other.'[97]

Just as she was preparing to set out again, the traveller's journey was interrupted by an unanticipated dental appointment. While inconvenient, her dentist was a registered sedationist and knew how to make his patients comfortable. Indeed, on the occasions when she availed herself of the 'happy gas' on offer, her appointments provided her with a brief respite from her customary *umwelt*. As it transpired, this particular detour turned out to be both timely and serendipitous.

There is a television monitor suspended from the clinic ceiling together with a number of colourful posters; all calculated to provide distraction from the probing of one's intimate orifice. The program on the television is an 'animal rescue' type show called *Zoo Babies*. It wasn't long before the traveller became distressed by what she was viewing: an infant bonobo with (what she perceived to be) wide and frightened eyes was being prepared for invasive surgery in a high tech human theatre. As she waited for her dental cast to set, the traveller gestured to the dental assistant that she did not wish to view the program.[98] The assistant changed the channel to a sports program, at which point the traveller's attention shifted to the posters on the ceiling. One of these depicted a photograph of Uluru at sunset with the words '*there is nowhere in the world like your own territory*' inscribed across the bottom.[99] An aphorism that might have been written by Uexküll himself, the

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[97] Giles Deleuze Giles and Felix Guattari, 'Becoming Animal' in Atterton and Calarco (eds), above n 12, 87.

[98] Lacking in fortitude perhaps, the traveller also looks away from Humane Society advertisements depicting graphic scenes of animal exploitation. If one accepts the thesis that the mistreatment of animals is a direct consequence of humanism, there is a (probably unintended) irony associated with the charity's name. (*humane*: adj. 'characterised by tenderness, compassion, and sympathy for people and animals especially for the suffering or distressed').

[99] The poster was later identified as having been a 1985 promotion for the Northern Territory Government Tourist Bureau.

traveller marveled at the coincidence. When she returned home from the dentist, she reflected upon what had happened. Her empathy with the bonobo had precipitated significant emotional distress; indeed libidinal and visceral pain. Yet, from the clinic ceiling, Uexküll was reminding her that her subjective universe and that of the bonobo were, in significant respects, incommensurable. The traveller recalled the death of her own infant many years earlier and speculated that the relational engagement which had been eluding her may be located in the shared vulnerability of being. As she reflected upon her own fragility, that of her child, of the infant bonobo, and that of all the others with whom she shared the biosphere, she was reminded of Elizabeth Costello's sympathetic imagination:

> 'Anyone who says that life matters less to animals than it does to us has not held in his hands an animal fighting for its life – the whole of the being of the animal is thrown into that fight, without reserve. The fight lacks the dimension of intellectual or imaginative horror because their whole being is in the living flesh…my words lack the power to bring home the wholeness, the unabstracted, unintellectual nature of animal being.[100]

The traveller had learned some time ago that the human capacity for 'rational intellect' offered limited assistance in times of extreme suffering, grief and unimaginable horror. So, she reflected, while human and other animals may not inhabit identical lifeworlds, nor share the same perceptual world, what they share is the condition of precarious life.

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[100] JM Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello,* (Vintage, 2003) 110

Horizon: Embodiment and Precarious Life

'Far from restricting my access to things and to the world,
the body is my very means of entering into relation with all things.'[101]

The traveller, concerned to avoid the Cartesianism which characterises much western thought, had long considered bodies to be part of the perceptual worlds of sentient beings. [102] Both the limitations and capabilities of bodies affect the view of each situation that is encountered and there will always be aspects of the world that are hidden from view, dimensions that cannot be perceived directly.[103]

The traveller had long questioned the limitations of Cartesianism but knew that human engagement with non human animals was affected by shared, albeit different, types of *physicality*: of perceptual organs, bodies, excrement and emissions. The notion of shared embodiment might, the traveller reflected, present a complication to humanist sovereignty and offer possibilities for a relationality between human and nonhuman animality.[104] But while the human body has emerged from critical discourses of the late twentieth century as a complex social, cultural and natural entity, there has been less philosophical investigation of the physicality of animality in general terms.[105]

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[101] David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World,* (Vintage Books, 1996) 46.

[102] Descartes' philosophical dualism formalised a split between mental and material domains implicit in European thought . He identified these as *res cogitans* (thinking substance or mind) and *res extensa* (extended substance or matter). Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, John Cottingham trans, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) (first published 1641).

[103] The traveller reminded herself that the human is the only animal that gets dressed in the morning and that perhaps humanity is contemporaneous with clothing.

[104] An issue which will not be pursued in detail here is that of tool use. In *Being and Time* Heidegger identified the relationship of humans with tools as a distinguishing feature of the human. He argued that it is in the way in which humans experience the use of tools, that '*Weltlichkeit*' or our specific way of being in the world, becomes manifest. Martin Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, *(Sein und Zeit*,) 1927 (trans J Macquarrie & E Robinson), 1962, Basil Blackwell .See also Graham Harman, *Tool-Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects*, Open Court Publishing Chicago, 2002.

[105] See Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, (Allen & Unwin,1994); Moira Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics,. Power and Corporeality* (Routledge, 1996); Yannis Hamilakis,

In his novel *Disgrace*, JM Coetzee tells the story of David Lurie, a literature professor in South Africa whose career comes to an abrupt end after he has an affair with a female undergraduate and is charged with sexual harassment. Lurie moves to the country, where his daughter Lucy has a small farm, and begins to volunteer at the local animal shelter where he assists in euthanising the scores of animals, mainly dogs, for whom no homes can be found. Lurie has never thought of himself as 'a sentimentalist,' and had thought he would 'get used to it.' As related by Cary Wolfe, 'that is not what happens'. One evening as he is driving back from the clinic, Lurie stops at the roadside to recover himself. Tears flow down his face and his hands shake. 'He does not understand what is happening to him.' For reasons he doesn't understand, 'his whole being is gripped by what happens in the [surgical] theatre'.[106]

Wolfe observes that this moment acknowledges a kind of 'unspeakability': not only the unspeakability of how we treat animals but also that of the limits of our own thinking in confronting such a reality.[107] Coetzee, Raymond Gaita suggests, is urging us 'to attend to the role that the living body, the body of flesh and blood, plays in the constitution of our concepts, including our concepts of belief and knowledge.'[108]

Cora Diamond also reminds us that the awareness we each have of being a living body carries with it, 'exposure to the bodily sense of vulnerability to death, sheer animal vulnerability, the vulnerability we share with them' [109]

Thinking Through the Body: Archaeologies of Corporeality (Plenum Publishing, 2001) ; Daniel Punday, *Narrative Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Narratology* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

[106] JM Coetzee, *Disgrace* (Vintage, 2000) 143, cited in Cary Wolfe, 'Exposures' in S Cavell, C Diamond, J McDowell, I Hacking and C Wolfe, *Philosophy and Animal Life*, Columbia University Press, 2008) 1-2.

[107] Wolfe, 'Exposures' in S Cavell et al, above n 20, 3.

[108] Raymond Gaita, *The Philosopher's Dog*, (Text Publishing, 2002) 69.

[109] Cora Diamond, 'The Difficulty of Reality and the Difficulty of Philosophy,' in S Cavell et al, above n 20, 74.

Judith Butler contends that if humans share a condition of precariousness, both with one another and with non human animals, then this constitutive feature of being undoes the conceit of anthropocentrism. She proposes the concept of 'precarious life' as a non-anthropocentric framework for considering what makes life valuable.[110] Precarious life is common and shared in the sense that all beings are reciprocally exposed and invariably dependent, not only on others, but on a sustained and sustainable environment. Butler admits, however to 'struggling' toward a non-anthropocentric conception of the human, one in which human and non human being is connected through the idea of 'precarious life' in 'relations of exposure and responsibility.' [111]

David Abram agrees that the shared vulnerability of being gives rise to reciprocity and that it is the very structure of perception:

> 'We experience the sensuous world only be rendering ourselves vulnerable to that world. Sensory perception is this ongoing interweavement: the terrain enters into us only to the extent that we allow ourselves to be taken up *within* that terrain' [112]

And while Heidegger opined that a quality which differentiates human from non human animals is the former's awareness of their own mortality: that while humans 'die', animals merely 'perish', [113] Jacques Derrida suggested that 'one could point to a thousand signs that show that animals also *die*.' While Derrida's perpetual concern with difference and his recognition of the innumerable structural differences that separate one

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[110] Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, (Verso, 2004).

[111] James K Stanescu, 'Judith Butler's anti-anthropocentricm' in *Critical Animal*, <http://criticalanimal.blogspot.com/ > 17 July 2009

[112] Abram,above n 8, 58.

[113] Martin Heidegger Martin, 'Letter on 'Humanism' in ed. William McNeill, *Pathmarks*, (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

'species' from another caused him to be cautious about any discourse on animality in general, he observed that:

> '[A]nimals have a very significant relation to death, to murder and to war (hence to borders), to mourning and to hospitality, and so forth, even if they have neither a relation to death nor to the 'name' of death as such.' [114]

Because the 'question of the animal' bears on numerous social and political institutions governed by an anthropocentric concept of non human animal life and death, such as medical experimentation and slaughtering animals for their flesh, a deconstruction of the traditional distinctions used to separate human and animal death, Derrida suggested, was a political and ethical responsibility.

The traveller was reminded of Jeremy Bentham's well known treatise in which he opined that:

> 'The day may come, when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those which never could have been withholden from them but by the hand of tyranny... What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason, or, perhaps, the faculty of discourse? …The question is not, can they reason nor, can they talk but, can they suffer?' [115]

The traveller agreed with Butler that the vulnerability which human and other animals share, their common capacity to suffer and to die, belies the conceit of anthropocentrism. Derrida's entreaty that we respond to animals as our 'fellows in mortality, in life on this earth' had resonated with the traveller.[116]

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[114] Jacques Derrida, *Aporias: Dying—awaiting (one another at) the limits of truth*, Thomas Dutoit, trans. (Stanford University Press, 1993) 75-76.

[115] Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, 'Limits between Private Ethics and the Art of Legislation', (Chapter XVII, Section 1, 1789).

[116] Jacques Derrida, 'Eating Well or The Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida,' in *Who Comes After the Subject?,* ed. Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy (Routledge, 1991) 116–17.

Frontier: Becoming Animal

> '*The accomplishment of humanity lies in 'learning to meet the other and to welcome them in their difference, to be reborn thus in a fidelity to ourselves and to this other*.'[117]

The traveller's journey was coming to an end. It began as an exposition of the central anthropogenic features of western philosophical discourse, interrogating the ways in which the human and the non human animal are produced both within hierarchies of difference and sameness. She lingered for a while in the ontological terrain of being but having encountered a humanist cul-de-sac, decided to move on. Troubled but undeterred by obstacles, the traveller continued her search for a relational ground of animality which was capable of overcoming the human/animal opposition and of transcending notions of identity, imitation and representation. Throughout her journey, the traveller had been assisted by Deleuze and Guttari's rhizomatic map; one which facilitated her exploration of undecidable thresholds and topographies and which enabled her to pursue lines of flight without being wed to an inflexible itinerary. This was the sort of travel she most enjoyed.

Late in her journey, she returned to Deleuze and Guattari, this time to their performative text on animality.[118] Their project here was to abandon the ontological primacy of being in favour of the notion of *becoming*. In its most literal sense, 'becoming animal' means that one body perceives, abstracts, and then uses the affects of a different body in concert with its own. In this process, Deleuze and Guattari speculate, the individual perceives a certain capacity in another body, abstracts these affects and then actualises them in its life. In essence, the human can 'become' animal to the extent that the animal becomes something else – a set of affects and intensities. Animal becoming, remarks François Zourabichvili, is 'a truly vitalist knowledge' which enables us to experience the

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[117] L Irigaray, 'Animal Compassion' (*trans M.G. Rose*) in P Atterton & M Calacarco (eds), *Animal Philosophy: Ethics and Identity*, (Continuum, 2004) 201.

[118] Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, 'Becoming Animal' in Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco (eds), *Animal Philosophy: Ethics and Identity*, (Continuum, 2004) 86-110.

resonance of other lives in our own. It enables us to answer the question: 'Where, at this precise instant, is the other [animal] to which I am related, which I pursue and in relation to which my life is played out?'[119] Since the animal provides the human with another reference from which to gauge what sort of life is possible beyond the disciplinary sensibility located in humanist categories of socialisation, Zourabichvili suggests that the possibility of such a relationship is itself transformative.

Deleuze and Guattari's thesis recalls Friedrich Nietzsche's 'beastiary' in which he relates the story of Alcyone who 'becomes bird' by entering into an alliance with winged creatures.[120] The effect of this alliance, Acampora states, is a new economy of desire, one which draws Alcyone into a process of becoming *other* than what he is, creating a new conception which recasts the significance of the human.[121] At the heart of Nietzsche's beastiary is the recognition that the construction and representation of the human operates through exclusionary logic: by a set of foreclosures and radical erasures, terrain which the traveller had passed over early in her journey. By this stage of her travels, however, she better appreciated what Derrida meant by his suggestion that the 'troubling stakes' of such beastiaries were 'located at the origin of philosophy.'[122]

In *The Passion According to GH,* Brazilian novelist Clarice Lispector writes of an encounter between GH and a cockroach, which she almost kills by crushing it. [123] With the cockroach half-dead and white paste oozing out of its body, GH stops to consider her

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[119] François Zourabichvili, 'Six Notes on the Percept (On the Relation between the Critical and the Clinical)' in Paul Patton (ed) *Deleuze: A Critical Reader* (Blackwell, 1996) 189.

[120] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human* , trans RJ Hollingdale, (Cambridge University Press, 1986)

[121] Christa D Acampora, and Ralph R Acampora, *A Nietzschean Bestiary: Becoming Animal Beyond Docile and Brutal*, (Rowman and Little, 2004). See also Vanessa Lemm, *Nietzsche's Animal Philosophy: Culture, Politics, and the Animality of the Human Being* (Fordam University Press, 2009).

[122] Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Marie-Louise Mallet (ed) [trans. David Wills] (Fordham University Press, 2008).

[123] Clarice Lispector, *The Passion According to GH* (A paixão segundo G.H) (Editora do Autor, 1964).

relation to the paste and how some religious traditions declare such things to be 'abominations.' [124]

The traveller stopped briefly to reflect: this time on the notion of abomination and the species distinctions that human animals routinely make. Those for example between cane toads and frogs, moths and butterflies, pigeons and doves. [125] In each pairing the former is usually considered to be more 'abominable' than the latter. In an exhaustive engagement with Lispector's work, Helene Cixous has suggested that humans need to rethink their relation to all forms of being that are considered abominable, not only because of their marginalised existence, but 'because the 'elsewhere' of abomination is a site of profound joy'.[126]

Similarly, William Miller observes that what disgusts, 'startlingly, is the capacity for life, and not just because life implies its correlative death and decay: for it is decay that seems to engender life.'[127] Miller notes that the non human animal kingdom figures more insistently than the plant kingdom in our basic organising notions of disgust and that the 'contaminating' power of non human animals increases as we descend through the phyla. The 'disgust producing' capacity of things is intimately tied to their position in a rank-

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124 See Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1966) 2 in which she writes, 'Dirt is essentially disorder… it exists in the eye of the beholder… In chasing dirt we are not governed by anxiety to escape disease, but are positively re-ordering our environment, making it conform to an idea'.

125 Each paring of organism is identified as belonging to the same taxonomic order by the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature: *Anura, Lepidoptera and Columbiform*, respectively. Biological taxonomy is clearly not the sole determinant of an animal's capacity to 'disgust'.

126 Hélène Cixous, *Reading with Clarice Lispector,* Verena Andermatt Conley trans, (University of Minnesota Press, 1990).

127 William I Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust*, (Harvard University Press, 1997) 40.

ordered hierarchy, suggesting, Miller states, that 'scientific taxonomy writes our social arrangements large upon the natural world.'[128]

The traveller was reminded of Demeritt's assertion that nature is not an empty stage upon which the drama of human culture is played out.[129] She reflected on the need for humans to complicate the category of 'animal' and to trouble the homogenising consequences of a failure to do so.

The traveller returned to Lispector's cockroach encounter in which her narrator learns to see with the cockroach's eyes and experience its gaze 'in the service of the naked truth rather than with human expectations'. Lispector observes that its gaze has 'an extremely energetic indifference'. The only way to become truly human is to become un-human. The animal way to see is to see 'with the body', a look that is free of the constraints of human consciousness: to see without concepts, always in the moment and as if for the first time.

Lispector refers to GH's encounter with the cockroach as one of 'animalising'. She observes that the lack of common language safeguards its distance, its distinctness, its exclusion from and of humanity. It is an animality, in which ironically, the boundaries between animal and human 'seem to dissolve only to reappear more harshly than ever'.[130]

Lispector concludes that while animals and humans share 'essential being', all our efforts to transcend ourselves in acts of total identification with animals will ultimately fail. However, like Deleuze and Guattari, she regards the transformative effort as its own reward.

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128 Miller, ibid. 43.

129 Demerrit, above n 96.

130 Ittner, above n 38, 109.

Jutta Ittner has called *The Passion According to GH* 'the most far reaching literary inquiry into 'becoming animal', suggesting that its investigation into the contact with the animal other and it reaction of feelings, thoughts and physical sensations calls into question not only our preconditions of non human animals but of ourselves. [131]

With some regret, the traveller realised that it was time for her to pack up and head home. She noticed that her backpack was feeling lighter than it had at the commencement of the journey. While she had collected a lot of things along the way, she had also shed many of her expectations, preconceptions and assumptions.

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[131] ibid. 109.

Wilderness: Journeys End

'In wildness is the preservation of the world'.[132]

The traveller was nearing the end of her journey although she sensed that it was one that could never be completed. While she had covered a lot of territory, she also wondered how far she had really travelled.

Deleuze and Guttari observed that 'philosophy does not have an object but a territory. For that very reason it has a past form, a present form and, perhaps, a form to come…Thinking takes place in the relationship of territory and the earth.' [133] With this in mind, the traveller knew that the philosophical terrain she had traversed had not provided solutions, although it may have engendered relational possibilities.

While she had often felt troubled during the course of the journey, the traveller was not confident that she had troubled the sovereignty of liberal humanism. Had she, however, identified grounds upon which the conditions of creaturely life could be conceptualised in relational and non anthropocentric terms?

The traveller accepted that her human gaze rendered her a tourist in the lifeworld of other animals and that her attempts to imagine animal others revealed the dilemma of the human mind trying to think outside of itself. She knew that, until the time of her death, she would be unable to escape the limitations and the opportunities which human embodiment afforded her. She also knew also that the account of her journey was the artifact of a distinctly human perspective. Along the way, she had encountered numerous representational obstacles, causing her to consider that in order to engender truly relational encounters with other animals, traditional epistemological frames of reference which objectify them would have to be abandoned.

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[132] Henry Thoreau, 'Walking' in *Natural History Essays*, Gibbs-Smith, Layton, UT, 1989, 93.

[133] Deleuze and Guattari, 'Geophilosophy' in Deleuze and Guattari, above n 19. 101, 85.

As Deleuze and Guattari observed; if trying to understand the animal is a story's aim, 'its author is condemned to defeat' since we will always be trapped in projecting our own feelings and thoughts onto it.[134]

By the time she had reached the (uncompletable) 'end' of her journey, however, the traveller's sensibility had altered. In opening herself to the animal gaze she had transcended , if only fleetingly, her human limitations and had 'become' animal. She remained mindful of Deleuze and Guattari's observation that, 'becoming animal is an immobile voyage that is only comprehensible as an intensity'.[135]

While the traveller may not have discovered new territory, she felt that she had gained a lot of ground. She had not only 'become' animal, she had encountered her human self. She had discovered that 'explorations of animality have more to teach us about humans than they do about other animals'.[136]

Like Dorothy in the *Wizard of Oz*, the traveller came to appreciate that she had never left home. But by journey's end, her lifeworld had become a wilderness, and she one of its inhabitants.

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[134] Deleuze Giles and Felix Guattari, 'Becoming Animal' in Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco (eds), *Animal Philosophy: Ethics and Identity*, (Continuum, 2004) 86

[135] Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, in D Polan (trans) *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, (University of Minnesota Press, 1987) 35.

[136] Michael Haar, *Song of the Earth*, cited in Matthew Calarco, *Zoographics: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida*, (Columbia University Press, 2008) 29.

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