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Animal Ethics: Toward an Ethics of Responsiveness

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Abstract
The concepts of animal, human, and rights are all part of a philosophical tradition that trades on foreclosing the animal, animality, and animals. Rather than looking to qualities or capacities that make animals the same as or different from humans, I investigate the relationship between the human and the animal. To insist, as animal rights and welfare advocates do, that our ethical obligations to animals are based on their similarities to us reinforces the type of humanism that leads to treating animals—and other people—as subordinates. But, if recent philosophies of difference are any indication, we can acknowledge difference without acknowledging our dependence on animals, or without including animals in ethical considerations. Animal ethics requires rethinking both identity and difference by focusing on relationships and responsivity. My aim is not only to suggest an animal ethics but also to show how ethics itself is transformed by considering animals.

Keywords
animal rights, ethics of difference, Derrida, Freud, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty

In recent philosophy, the dominant discourse on animals has centered on animal rights and animal welfare. Analytic philosophers Peter Singer and Tom Regan have led the conversation with calls for animal liberation and for considering animals' interests. The Great Ape Project grew out of these concerns; and now several countries have adopted laws that go beyond outlawing cruelty to animals and toward animal liberation. The Great Ape Project has had some success in arguing that great apes are unique among animals in that they are our closest animal relatives and possess many of our defining characteristics and, therefore, should have special treatment among animals and equal treatment to people at least in terms of freedom and right to life.

Asked about the exclusionary vision of The Great Ape Project, Jacques Derrida responded, "to want absolutely to grant, not to animals but to a certain category of animals, rights equivalent to human rights would be a disastrous

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contradiction. It would reproduce the philosophical and juridical machine thanks to which the exploitation of animal material for food, work, experimentation, etc., has been practiced (and tyrannically so, that is, through an abuse of power)."[1] Derrida worries that giving rights to some animals but not all repeats the exclusionary logic of the Cartesian subject and the juridical conception of individuality and freedom resulting from it. As he points out, the exploitation of animals has been justified and practiced using this logic. Derrida is skeptical of extending human rights to animals, since the concept of right and rights is part of a tradition whose conceptual system trades on excluding, exploiting, and disavowing animals. He warns, "to confer or to recognize rights for 'animals' is a surreptitious or implicit way of confirming a certain interpretation of the human subject, which itself will have been the very lever of the worst violence carried out against nonhuman living beings."[2]

In other words, extending human rights to animals not only repeats but also shores up a notion of the human subject built upon the backs of animals. Extending human rights to a few select animals and not others makes the exclusionary nature of the Cartesian logic apparent. Moreover, it suggests the way in which rights are seen as possessions or entitlements of a select group whose interests are valued more than the interests of others, particularly others defined as having no interests. The juridical notion of rights leads to calculations of whose interests are more important and whose rights trump all others. The calculus of interests and rights is particularly vexing when weighing human rights against animal rights, which is bound to happen given the oppositional nature of the concepts human and animal and the exclusionary nature of the concept of right upon which animal rights (like human rights) are based.

In this essay, I will argue that we need a different approach to animal ethics that moves beyond the logic of exclusion inherent in rights discourse. Rather than consider the ways in which animals are like us, whether in their intellectual abilities or their ability to suffer, we need to develop an ethics that can extend our obligations even to those who are not like us. The lesson we learn from considering animals when thinking of ethics is that an ethics based on sameness is not enough. It is not enough when it comes to animals and it is not enough when it comes to humans. For we continue to wage war against

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1) Derrida, "The Animal that therefore I am (more to follow)," in *Animal Philosophy*, ed. Peter Atterton & Matthew Calarco, (London: Continuum Press, 2004), 65.
2) Ibid.

other people that we consider subhuman or like animals, people different from ourselves. In the name of the animal or animality, we kill these others that we refuse to recognize as possessing human rights.

Continental philosophies of alterity and difference may provide the necessary supplements to rights discourse and moral principles extended to those like us. An ethics of difference may help us address our ethical obligations to those not like us, including animals. But close attention to the role of animals in these philosophies shows that even twentieth-century attempts to articulate an ethics of alterity that does not assume a sovereign subject—philosophies that begin with the other rather than the subject—continue to exclude and denigrate the animal, animality, and animals. Indeed, the notion of the fragmented or decentered subject developed in these philosophies of difference continues to be constituted against an animal other. So, even as Continental philosophers have turned their attention to the ways in which the sovereign subject is constructed against its other, they not only continue to use the animal other to legitimate their own conceptions of subjectivity, they also, and at the same time, disavow that animal other. In other words, in their attempts to reveal how European philosophy has disavowed the place of the other in the constitution of its subject, they continue to disavow the place of the animal other in their own notions of displaced, fragmented, and decentered subjectivity.

An ethics of sameness is not enough to avoid the violence of exclusionary logics, but neither is an ethics of difference. Rather than look to qualities or capacities that make animals (or others) the same or different from humans (or us), I am interested in the *relationship* between the human and the animal, humans and animals, us and them. To insist, as animal rights and welfare advocates do, that our ethical obligations to animals are based on their similarities to us reinforces the type of humanism that leads to treating animals—and other people—as subordinates. Consideration of animals makes it more pressing than ever not to repeat exclusive gestures that justify our treatment of animals based on what we take to be salient about their nature or behavior using philosophies of sameness. If recent philosophies of difference are any indication, however, we can acknowledge difference without acknowledging our dependence on animals, or without including animals in ethical considerations. We can talk about both identity and difference without examining the relationship between them. What we need is to move from an ethics of sameness, through an ethics of difference, toward an ethics of *relationality* and *responsivity*. Animal ethics requires rethinking identity and difference, by focusing on relationships and response-ability. An ethics based

on response-ability must acknowledge that all creatures on earth are blessed and cursed with the ability to respond.

My aim is both to suggest an animal ethics and also to show how ethics itself is transformed by considering animals. In this regard, I am not arguing for animal rights but rather suggesting that considering the role of animals in its development would alter our entire conception of rights, based as it is on assumptions about autonomous human individuals. My project challenges assumptions about individuals, autonomy, and identity, upon which most of the work on animals in philosophy revolves today. It looks to an animal ethics that disarticulates the ways in which the concepts of animal, human, and rights are all part of a philosophical tradition that trades on foreclosing the animal, animality, and animals. But, as we learn from psychoanalysis and post-structuralism, these barred animals always leave traces; the repressed always returns. Indeed, even within the confines of various philosophical texts, animals cannot be contained. They break free of the roles defined for them by philosophers and "bite back."

In this essay and elsewhere, I call on philosophy's animals to witness to the ways in which the various animal examples, animal metaphors, and animal studies that populate the history of Western philosophy bear the burden of instructing and supporting the conceptions of man, human, and kinship central to that thought.[3] Hopefully, doing so not only tears down fences but also reveals how and why those fences were constructed. Can we imagine what we might call a "free-range" sustainable ethics that breaks out of the self-centered, exclusionary, and domineering notions of individuality, identity, and sovereignty by imposing limits on that very notion of the subject?

Why Turn to Animals?

In the face of domestic violence, endless war, genocide, ethnic cleansing, racism, sexism, and all the other forms of violence humans inflict on each other, the ethical treatment of animals seems secondary; indeed, focusing on animals in this context may seem unethical, a way of displacing the injustices inflicted on human beings and distracting us from the history of oppression, slavery, and torture whose bloody reach continues to mar what we call humanity. It is legitimate to ask, why turn to animals at a time when our

[3] Kelly Oliver, *Animal Lessons: How They Teach Us to Be Human* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

inhumanity to man continues unabated? Yet, following animals through the history of philosophy, particularly recent philosophies of alterity, can show how the practices of oppression, slavery, and torture are historically inseparable from the question of the animal. Tracking the animals through the writings of three centuries and more of philosophers, teaches us that our concepts of man, humanity, and inhumanity are inherently bound up with the concepts of the animal, animality, and animals. The man-animal binary is not just any opposition; it is the one used most often to justify violence, not only man's violence to animals but also man's violence to other people deemed like animals.

Within popular parlance, colonization, oppression, discrimination, and genocide are usually, if not always, justified through an appeal to the animality of the victims. This was (and is) the case with women, who traditionally have been considered closer to nature and to animals, especially in their reproductive and child-rearing functions. This was the case with slaves, who were treated like cattle or oxen to be bought, sold, and used on plantations. This was (and is) the case with people of color who have been stereotyped as hypersexual, immoral, or irrational like animals. These supposed subhuman groups do not deserve human rights or human justice because they are figured as inhuman monsters, beasts, or dogs. The identification between oppressed peoples and animals is not just an accident of history but a central part of Western conceptions of *man, human* and *animal*. Until we address the denigration of animals in Western thought, on the conceptual level, if not also on the material, economic level, we continue to merely scratch the surface of the denigration and exploitation of various groups of people, from Playboy bunnies to the Iraqi prisoners who were treated like dogs as a matter of explicit military policy.

Animal ethics, then, is not just about animals. It concerns whether or not we can conceive of ethical relationships beyond either continuism or separatism, beyond identity politics or abyssal alterity. Can we find a way of relating to others, whether or not they are like us, without excluding them on the basis of what makes them different or unique? In one form or another, this question has guided all of my research. What we learn from following the animals as they track and are tracked through the history of philosophy is that neither sameness nor otherness alone can be the basis of ethics. Rather, we must consider the relationship between sameness and otherness, identity and difference, man and animal. We must attend to the relationships that nourish and sustain us, the relationships that we disavow, and the relationships in the name of which we kill. We must revisit ethics, now as an ecosystem,

based on witnessing to the responsiveness of all creatures by virtue of which human subjectivity emerges. Until we interrogate the history of the opposition between animals and humans with its exclusionary values, considering animals (or particular animals) to be like us or recognizing that we are also a species of animal does very little to change "how we eat the other," as Derrida might say. Even if moving people or animals from one side of the man-animal divide to the other may change our attitudes toward them, it does not necessarily transform the oppositional logic that pits *us* versus *them* and justifies our enslaving, imprisoning, or torturing (not to mention eating) *them*. Perhaps if we quit treating animals like animals, we can quit treating people like animals.

From Animal Pedagogy to Animal Ethics

Beginning with a moment in the history of philosophy in which the obsession with nature's providence is perhaps the most dramatic, we can see the animal accidents at the heart of human necessity in the pre-Darwinian Romantic myths of the origin of man in texts by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Johann Gottfried Herder with an eye to how animals in these texts "bite back."[4] In crucial passages where they delineate what distinguishes man from animals, both Rousseau and Herder turn to animals to illuminate their arguments. Their animals do not merely serve as examples against which they define man. Rather these animals belie the very distinction between man and animal that their invocation seeks to establish.

In spite of their differences, for both Rousseau and Herder, men become civilized, become man, in relation to *eating* animals.[5] Rousseau identifies the evolution of men in terms of what they eat; he says that grain-eaters are the most civilized and that the cake was the first form of communion.[6] Man's superiority to other animals is based on the fact that he is an omnivore and can eat everything. Herder, on the other hand, distinguishes man from ani-

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4) Ibid., 1–22.

5) See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality Among Men*, trans. Maurice Cranston (New York: Penguin Putnam Books, 1984), 116, Johann Gottfried Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* (1784), trans. T. Churchill (New York: Bergman Publishers, 1800), and Herder, "Essay on the Origin of Language" (1772), in *On the Origin of Language*, trans. John Moran and Alexander Gode (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 87–166.

6) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Essay on the Origin of Languages," in *On the Origin of Language*, 5–74, here 35.

mal insofar as man eats fine foods and animals eat coarse foods, which makes man fine and animals coarse. If man becomes human by eating animals, he becomes a speaking being by assimilating animal voices through imitation. For both Rousseau and Herder, language, along with other characteristics unique to man, including spirit, reason, understanding, recollecting, recognizing, free will, and even fire, are *responses* to animals that men ape or imitate. Even the most masterful philosopher, however, cannot fully domesticate his metaphorical animals.

In the interview "Eating Well," Derrida argues that we cannot avoid assimilating the other; we need to eat and eating is good.[7] For him, the question becomes *how* to eat, not *what* to eat (which is why he can claim to be a vegetarian in his soul even though he eats meat). But we need to trouble the distinction between what and how, since *how* we eat is determined by *what* we take something to be. As Cora Diamond might say, it is not because people are capable of reason or language or because they can suffer that we do not eat them.[8] We do not eat them because we do not consider people food. If we did not consider animals *good* to eat, we would not consider them food, and vice versa. We eat animals because we consider them food.

From Rousseau and Herder to Freud and Kristeva, philosophers suggest that the human and humanity is determined by what we eat: whether they think that we are what we eat (like Rousseau and Herder) or that we are not what we eat (like Freud and Kristeva), man becomes human by eating animals. Indeed, Kristeva's *Powers of Horror* is devoted to rituals and prohibitions that govern what counts as food and how we become who were are in relation to what we eat; how "we" define "ourselves" is determined by what and how we eat/assimilate.[9]

Antihumanism's Dependence on Animals

More surprising than the role of animals in Romantic philosophies of man is the role of animals in post-humanist, post-Cartesian philosophies of subjectivity and otherness that remain conservative and traditional when it comes

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7) 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 (New York: Routledge, 1991), 96–119.

8) Diamond, "Eating Meat and Eating People," *Philosophy*, 53, no. 206 (1978): 465–79.

9) Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*. trans. Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

to animals. Like their predecessors, with few exceptions, they accept something like the Cartesian notion of the animal even while they reject the Cartesian notion of the human subject. We cannot, however, decenter the human subject without also calling into question the animal other. To try to fracture the human subject but leave The Animal intact, as these thinkers do, is to disavow our dependence on animals and what I call *animal pedagogy*—the ways in which in these philosophical discourses, animals teach us to be human. In other words, it repeats the very power structure of subject and object, of us versus them, of human versus animal, that ethics of difference is purportedly working against.[10]

By uncovering the latent humanism in antihumanist texts, we continue to witness the ambivalence toward animality and animals that has been definitive of Western philosophy and culture. This ambivalence is all the more striking in these philosophies of ambivalence. The very psychoanalytic notion of ambivalence itself is linked to the history of using and disavowing animals. We could say that some philosophers of ambiguity and otherness replace the chair and whips of previous animal trainers with love. From loving your symptom and embracing the other within, to learning to love the otherness of others and developing an ethics based on difference rather than sameness, these thinkers try to come to terms with ambiguity rather than deny it. Of these philosophers, Derrida in particular continually tries to show how mastery of either the other or one's self is an illusion.

In his first posthumously published book, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Derrida reminds us of the menagerie of creatures that he calls upon to witness to the beastliness of the categorical, oppositional, and exclusionary thinking of Western Philosophy.[11] With masterful consistency, he points to the impossibility of the sovereign subject of Western Philosophy's "I can," whether it is the "I can" of "I can train the others/animals" or "I can love the others/animals," which amount to the same thing if love is a matter of knowing, understanding, sovereignty, individuality, autonomy possession, mastery, law—those values at the center of the Cartesian Subject, not to mention Western ideals of citizenship, rights, morality, and politics. Derrida insists on the uncertainty, impossibility, and ambiguity inherent in Western attempts to maintain categorical oppositions between man and animal; this opposition gives rise to so many other dichotomies, in the name of which we torture and

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10) Oliver, *Animal Lessons*.

11) Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet, trans. David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

murder each other, whether it is man-woman, white-black, citizen-foreigner, pure-impure, righteous-infidel. Even the binaries love-hate, justice-injustice, giving-taking come under scrutiny as Derrida insists that we cannot always distinguish one from the other, that our ways of loving can also be ways of killing.

For the most part, the animals in these texts have been tamed, even maimed, in the name of philosophy or science and for the sake of determining what is proper to *man*, or in the case of Simone de Beauvoir, *woman*. For example, the entire first section of Beauvoir's seminal *The Second Sex* is devoted to biology, and more especially zoology, which she (inconsistently) uses both to vindicate females of all species and to uncouple traditional associations between woman and animal.[12] Both Merleau-Ponty and Lacan (who were close friends) are especially fond of citing animal studies to develop theories about perception, imagination, and consciousness in man. And animal studies, particularly one involving the dissection of a bee, figure prominently in Heidegger's comparative analysis of animals and Dasein. The development of the emerging science of ecology influenced the later work of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Lacan.

Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty use zoology, biology, and ecology in their attempts to navigate between mechanism and vitalism toward a theory of humanity that takes us beyond Cartesian dualisms of mind and body or subject and object.[13] But, their interpretations and use of the life sciences takes them on divergent paths and leads them to radically different conclusions regarding the relationship between man and animal. For example, where Heidegger sees in contemporary biology the most emphatic insistence of the uniqueness of man, Merleau-Ponty sees proof of continuity between man and animal; whereas biology confirms Heidegger's insistence on rupture and irruption of Da-sein, it further substantiates Merleau-Ponty's insistence on a type of continuity that cannot be reduced to biological continuism. Where Heidegger sees an abyss between man and animal, Merleau-Ponty sees kinship. And while both object to Darwinian theories of evolution, they do so for very different reasons. Ultimately, however, both of them engage in "animal pedagogy" by using animals, the animal, and animality to teach us about

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12) Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley (New York: Random House, 1949).

13) See Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, trans. William Mc Neill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Nature: Course Notes from the Collège de France*, trans. Robert Vallier (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2003).

men, the human, and humanity. Moreover, both treat their animal examples in ways that betray their attempts to avoid conceiving of the human as a dominating subject standing over against objects or other beings as their lord and master, having concern for them only insofar as they have instrumental use-value for their own projects.

Beauvoir and Lacan also use animal studies and animal examples in ways that oscillate between continuism and separationism and thereby demonstrate a certain ambiguity toward animals. While for Beauvoir we are not born but become woman, along with other animals we are born female (or male). She begins her discussion of biology claiming that female animals have gotten a bad rap, suggesting that by setting the record straight in terms of the black widow spider and the praying mantis, we can also reform our views of female human beings.[14] In the end, however, she merely replaces the man in the man-animal opposition with woman. Ironically, it is woman's weakness and pain in service to the species through childbirth that makes her distinct from other animals. Beauvoir does not revalue the feminine as it has been linked to denigrated animality; rather, she calls on women to transcend their animality to become equal to men. Given her ambivalence about animals, it becomes clear that Beauvoir turns to animals for the sake not of vindicating them in their own right but only insofar as they can help redeem woman, and then only insofar as she becomes more like man.

Lacan also identifies a weakness in man's constitution that separates him from other animals. If for Beauvoir fragility makes the woman, for Lacan duplicity makes the man.[15] According to Lacan, in addition to man's "premature birth," he differs from other animals in his ability to prevaricate. Like Beauvoir, Lacan frequently turns to animals to make his case. Although generally—we might say in the flippant tone Lacan himself often employs—he doesn't give a rat's ass about empirical science, particularly behavioral psychology, he loves animal studies. He variously uses animal studies and animal illustrations to point to a continuation between man and animals, on the one hand, or to insist on the radical separation between man and animals, on the other. In some texts, it seems that what separates man from animals is man's imagination; in others, animals share imagination, but what they lack is access to the symbolic; and in still others, while they have some access to the symbolic, they are unable to lie. Derrida analyzes the irony in making man's duplicity his distinguishing mark and challenges the distinction between

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14) Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*.

15) Lacan, *Écrits. The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: Norton, 2006).

reaction and response, which for Lacan becomes the ultimate stinger in the man-animal opposition.

It is noteworthy that Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Lacan, Beauvoir, Freud, and Kristeva all use empirical science to support and substantiate their speculative theories. Animal studies appear as facts that anchor their theories about the evaluative and interpretative nature of man. In other words, even as they challenge the fact-value distinction, they use animal studies to make their work appear more scientific, more factual. Although he is not so much concerned with animals themselves, the role of science comes under scrutiny, particularly the sciences of man and the science of ecology, in Giorgio Agamben's analysis of what he calls "the anthropological machine." In *The Open*, Agamben examines various ways that philosophies and science have created *man* against *the animal*, which he claims operates as the constitutive inside of the concepts *man* and *human*.[16] That is to say, the categories *human* and *man* contain within them a subhuman other that can be figured as *animal* and thereby excluded from the polis, even killed. Agamben's critical engagement with "the anthropological machine" illuminates the political stakes of animal pedagogy and animal kinship. The subhuman by-product of the anthropological machine is used to justify enslavement and genocide. Although he does not extend his analysis to the "enslavement or genocide" of animals, his conclusion, that in order to stop the anthropological machine we need a "Shabbat" of both man and animal, clearly has implications for the animal side as well as the human side of the dichotomy. In the end, however, Agamben's call for "Shabbat" merely returns us to the realm of religion for any hope of stopping the machine through which deadly oppositions are produced, without acknowledging the fact that religion has been, and continues to be, used to justify some of the most violent acts against both animals and humans. Rather than turn away from science and back toward religion, as Agamben suggests, Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of nature might provide resources for reconceiving of the mysteries of science such that its objects are not merely specimens under the microscope of human mastery, but fellow creatures, our teachers, our companions, our kin, even if it is a "strange kinship."[17]

Certainly, philosophies and sciences of man have treated animals as specimens for study, more often than not for the sake of discovering something about humans and not for the benefit of animals themselves. In various ways, these philosophers dissect, probe, exploit, and domesticate animals to shore

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16) Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004).

17) See Merleau-Ponty, *Nature*; and Oliver, *Animal Lessons*.

up their notions of the human and humanity. Like the circus trainer, they trot out the animals to perform on cue for the sake of man. But, the function that these trained and domesticated animals perform in their texts exceeds their stated ends. They are never mere examples, illustrations, or animal studies. Rather, they are the literal and metaphorical creatures by virtue of which we become human subjects. By looking closely at where they show up, and how they are used, my analysis reveals the unpredictability of the animal effects in these texts, particularly when philosophers use them to pull a metaphysical rabbit out of a metaphorical hat.

Freud is especially fond of trotting out animals to perform the Oedipal drama. Freud stages the Oedipal complex, along with castration, anxiety, neurosis, and the primary processes, using animals that appear on cue whenever his theory is in doubt.[18] Of the veritable zoological compendium running through Freud's work, he puts the spotlight on a few animals that made him famous, namely, the rat, the wolf, and the horse. Among Freud's most famous cases are The Rat Man and The Wolf Man, both named for the animals of their phobias. Along with Little Hans, who is afraid of horses, these animal phobics take center stage in Freud's development of his most important concepts, most especially the Oedipal and Castration complexes. Indeed, it seems that whenever Freud needs to prove the reality of the castration threat, he trots out the animal phobias, full of scary animals that threaten to bite off the penises of bad little boys. But, Freud's use of these animals both supports and undercuts his theory of the Oedipal Family Romance. Freud attempts to domesticate these animals in order to cure his patients. Yet, in significant ways, they escape their natural enclosures to bite back. But, it turns out that the threats represented by these animals have as much to do with womb-envy and sisterly identifications as they do with paternal castration threats. Not coincidently, behind every little boy afraid of animals is a beastly little sister and a wish to give birth to babies. For Freud, however, mother and sister figures remain linked to the natural world of the animal even as they are used to bring to light the prominent role of the masculine members of Freud's cast. Once we unleash both the animal and the feminine figures that work as beasts of burden in Freud's development of psychoanalysis,

[18] See Sigmund Freud, "Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy," trans. James Strachey in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud.* vol. 10 (London: Hogarth Press, 1909), 1–147; Freud, "Notes upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis," trans. James Strachey, in ibid., 10: 151–319; Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton & Company, 1913); and Freud, "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis," trans. James Strachey, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud.* vol. 17, (London: Hogarth Press, 1918), 1–124.

it becomes apparent that his most fundamental notions—castration, the oedipal complex—are produced against both the animal and the feminine other.

Kristeva develops and extends the connection between the feminine and the animal associated with Freud's uncanny. In *Powers of Horror*, she develops the notion of abjection in relation to the role of the maternal body, and its representatives, in food prohibitions, which regulate how we eat animals. The questions of how and what we eat, become, on her analysis, rituals for regulating the power of maternal authority in a battle between the sexes. Even as she uncovers this repressed maternal authority and complicates the maternal function as it operates within psychoanalysis, she perpetuates the association between woman and animal. In addition, although she diagnoses how repressed animality returns to the "speaking animal" through the maternal figure, she does not acknowledge the role of animals themselves even as they are eaten in rituals of purification. Her notion of the abject devouring mother is a reflection of a figure that remains in the shadows of her analysis, the abject devouring animal. Her theory of abjection both enacts and reveals a slippage between maternity and animality that founds psychoanalysis. In this regard, we could say that psychoanalysis is an animal by-product.

As with Freud, behind Kristeva's primary processes lies the animal. Except that, in Kristeva's reinterpretation of Little Hans' phobia, the mother now plays the role of the Freudian father. Although its human referent has changed, the role of the animal remains the same. It stands in for what we cannot think and for what we cannot accept about ourselves. Within this Freudian scenario, we eat what we are not, and vice versa. We do not eat our kin, and if we eat it, it is not kin. Human kinship is the result of animal sacrifice. And for Kristeva, the animal is deeply associated with the maternal and the feminine.

Curiously, another arena in which animals have been compared with women is in mainstream Analytic discussions of animal rights and animal welfare. Philosophers such as Peter Singer and Tom Regan compare animal liberation to women's liberation.[19] If animal rights and equality are analogous to women's rights and equality, then animal rights advocates could learn something from feminist criticisms of rights discourse. Just as some feminists reject rights discourse if it merely gives women the right to be more like men, animal rights discourse seems to give animals rights insofar as they are like men. Focusing on rights or equality and extending them to animals does not

[19] See Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (New York: Harper Collins, 1975), Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), and Regan, *The Struggle for Animal Rights* (Clarks Summit, PA.: International Society for Animal Rights, 1987).

address more essential issues of conceptions of *the animal, man* or *human* that continue to feed hierarchies not only among species but also among human beings, some of whom are figured as more like animals. In this regards, rights discourse does not challenge the presumptions of humanism that makes man the measure of all things, including other animals and the earth. Insofar as it leaves intact traditional concepts of man and animal, and traditional values associated with them, it cannot transform our ways of thinking about either. Again, perhaps we cannot stop treating other people like animals until we stop treating animals like animals, until we rethink what it means to be human or animal.

In this era of global warming, species extinction and shrinking biodiversity, endless war, military occupation and expanded torture, record wealth for the few and poverty for the rest, gated-communities and record incarceration, more than ever we need a sustainable ethics. A sustainable ethics is an ethics of limits, an ethics of conservation. Rather than assert our dominion over the earth and its creatures, this ethics obliges us to acknowledge our dependence upon them. It requires us to attend to our response-ability by virtue of that dependence. It is an ethics of the responsibility to enable responses from others, not as it has been defined as the exclusive property of man (man responds, animals react), but rather as it exists all around us. All living creatures are responsive. All of us belong to the earth, not in the sense of property, but rather as inhabitants of a shared planet.

Echoing Kant, a sustainable ethics is an ethics circumscribed by the circumference of the globe, which, if we pull our heads out of the sand, compels us to admit to our own limitations and obligates us to relearn our primary-school lesson: we need to share.[20] Given the environmental urgency upon us, generosity is a virtue that we cannot afford to live without. Acknowledging the ways in which we are human by virtue of our relationships with animals suggests a fundamental indebtedness that takes us beyond the utilitarian calculations of the relative worth of this or that life (so common in philosophies of animal rights or welfare) or economic exchange values to questions of *sharing* the planet. This notion of sharing does not require having much in common besides living together on the same globe. But it does bring with it responsibility. The question, then, is not what characteristics or capacities animals share with us but, rather, how to share resources and life together on this collective planet.

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[20] See Immanuel Kant, "Perpetual Peace," in *Kant's Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 93–130.