

**Animal Scents: Tracking the Betrayal of Animality
Otherwise with/in Merleau-Ponty, Derrida and Levinas**

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Abstract

This book is a guide for tracking an animal in a text or in a jungle. It offers a non-dichotomous, non-totalizing, primordially ethical relation of self to animal. A relation where the self is not radically detached, disinterested and alienated from a marginalized and valueless animal other. Out of this work emerges alternative 'conceptions' of animal alterity. Conceptions where the self is fully imbedded in and has responsibility to the other, yet does not (only) appropriate its alterity into conception. Here I explore the structure, economy and dynamics of species differentiation between the human and the animal, within the realm of knowledge, and beyond, with the goal of capturing the animal otherwise—as uncapturable. The animal I am tracking recedes like the horizon upon approach, yet it could not be more intimately close to me. To help us track the trace and scent of our messianic quarry I draw on the works of Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, and Derrida.

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Stuhlmann, traveling in the Semliki valley [Congo] in 1891, saw a piece of striped skin used in a belt and *mistook it for that of the zebra*...

The *actual existence* of the okapi was only made *known* to *science* as late as 1900 by Sir Harry H. Johnston...

[In 1915 a] calf okapi *only a few days old* was brought into Bambili... The little animal was eventually *brought to Europe*, and arrived at the Zoological Gardens at Antwerp in August 1919. Unfortunately *soon after its arrival it sickened and died*...

In 1913 I had the good fortune to shoot a young male in the Ituri forest near Mawambi after an *ardous two days' hunt*, in which *the animal was tracked for me* by two of my little Bambute friends...

While in the forest near our camp he [Hedemark] *suddenly* came upon the *fresh tracks* of an okapi, and a hundred yards further saw the animal quite *unconscious* of the danger, feeding with its head amongst some leafy boughs. *It was an easy matter to shoot it*...

He [Reid] *heard* some large animal break away. After following it up, he fired at what he *thought*, in the *half-light*, was a buffalo, but which proved to be a fine old male okapi...

During the eighteen months I spent in the Ituri-Aruwimi forest I saw the living okapi on several occasions. Generally I only *caught a glimpse, sometimes at very close quarters*. Probably no animal is so *shy*, or so *ghost-like in its movements through the forest*. It is, *I should think*, the *most difficult* of all beasts to *catch* even a *sight* of in its *dim and far-off solitudes*. For the *European* to have any chance of success he must first *secure* the confidence of the little men to whom the forest *belongs*. This being accomplished—and it is far from easy—weeks of hard work searching and tracking have to be endured, often on hands and knees, with a heavy gun, sometimes in waist-deep swamps, *for the forest is not all uniform in character*. Months have been spent in practicing forest craft with little trackers, and in *learning to interpret the meaning of every noise*, of every stick-crack, for the *hunter, like the animals, is almost wholly dependent upon his ears*...

On two occasions I had one *in front of* me at a distance of thirty yards or less in the *dark forest*. *I could see* nothing but the white on the *face and legs*, which *I did not recognize as part of anything living*, till the animal bolted and I wasted my shot...

My little companion, with his *nose* to the ground searching and feeling for footprints... with me close behind him... *Without looking round*, he pointed intently with his *bent forefinger*.... *I looked and looked*... *I could see nothing save a patch of light which I took to be a ray of sunshine*...¹

Christy, *Big Game and Pygmies*, 1924.

There is an animal loose in this text. I want to capture this animal. But should/can/must animals be captured? To capture something, in a paper or in a forest, not that these can be separated, nor amalgamated, it must first be made into a thing. To capture this thing one must decide where 'they' end and the 'animal' begins. But what are animals? Perhaps the question of 'what' is the wrong one to ask, it seems to dictate a response of knowing. Should the response be ethical rather than ontological? Can the realm of knowledge be separated from that of ethics? Can knowledge capture animals, which is to ask: can one experience an animal in thought? Is it even possible to not think of animals? That is, if there are problems with, or limits to, the posture of knowing animals can one simply do away with the thought of animals? Are there alternatives to the relation of thinking of animals? The thought of animals constantly presents itself, even, or especially when one is attempting to know oneself as human. The posture of knowing, most notably, knowing oneself, supposedly a human self, has always been

preoccupied with knowing the animal realm, qua understanding. In this way the configuration of humanity presupposes animality. Thus any change in the understanding of animals involves a change in the human. Knowing the animal clearly, with the light of reason, allows us to see where in fact the boundary between the so-called animal and the so-called human can be established. But animals always seem to break out of the fences they are put in. Fences always need to be maintained, for if it is not the 'domesticated' animal breaking out, it is the 'wild' animal breaking in. A fence marks the limit of one's property—what is supposedly proper to the human. Humans are what act properly. Animals, on the other hand, are unruly. The fence between species establishes a realm of propriety for the human self. But as it turns out, animality is not so easily tamed. From where do these species differences (fences) arise? I would like to explore the 'structure', economy and dynamics of species differentiation, most notably, that between the human and the animal, within the realm of knowledge, and beyond, if such a thing is possible. This is in the hopes of reconfiguring the primacy of responsibility over capturing. But we will always be too late to capture this primacy of responsibility. Yet this is precisely the paradoxical goal of revealing the animal otherwise.

This discussion can be seen as a guide to tracking animals. It is a re-conception and exploration of the animal beyond conception. I want to challenge and situate the human–animal relation as it congeals in understanding, phenomena, ontology, and representation. A keen tracker will already have caught the scent of the animal disturbing and supporting understanding. This keen tracker will have noted the breaches in the fence where the animal has been slipping through all along. As I have just claimed, one reason to put up a fence is to establish what is your property—what is properly human. This is already a recognition of the animal—what is to be kept out. This tie between propriety and understanding is a key tip in this tracking guide. These breaches in the fence and improprieties reveal the movements and perennial migration patterns of animals along little *known* but well worn paths. I think we can learn much from the movement patterns of animals around and through fences. But learning itself may prove to be quite a hindrance. Is it not learning that wishes to fortify, multiply and expand the fence? Is learning not an attempt to master the unknown? Let us turn to the gaps in the fence where there are disturbances in understanding and learning so that we join in on the chase, with no hope of catching or fencing in the animal. At least there is no hope of seeing the animal in the shadowless light of high noon². The animals that I'm after, the ones that we can learn the most from, learn the most about learning, are those which are the most elusive. The animals that live in the shadows, like the okapi. These are the animals that are not known or seen clearly. However, we may catch their scent. The trouble with tracking an animal whose appearance, or lack thereof, will be in the form of a trace, is that if you finally think you have captured it, you will lose its inspiring scent, or the scent inspired. The animal I'm tracking recedes like the horizon upon approach. The trace of the animal is so elusive that it cannot even be captured by the concept of trace. But we have to capture the animal if it is to figure in new ways in its relation to humans. Should we not just do away with the project of capturing, and all the violence that entails, altogether? This assumes that we can do away with capturing? I do not think we can or should. The

animal is always already captured as soon as the human, the 'I', the fork, the thought, and the pen arrive. (In both senses of the word pen: (a) the writing implement, and (b) the tight fenced enclosure for animals. And the fact of this equivocation is anything but parenthetical or coincidental. It is the central theme of this paper. Why is it no coincidence that the central theme should make an appearance within parenthesis, that which is to be tangential? The animal will always be marginal, outside of the major themes, the farmhouse, reason, and the city. You may have noticed that the explorers searching for the okapi were never able to see it face-on. The animal I am tracking will be on the horizon. This is an important tip for those wanting to track animals, especially the animal loose in this paper: always note the irreducible ambiguity of writing's structure and that of animal's habitat—let us call it the ambiguity of the pen). To assume that it is possible to make a clean break from capturing animals only serves to mystify its violence. I feel that we have an obligation to capture animals otherwise. I want to capture animals as uncapturable. This is what I feel an environmentalism that truly respected difference would entail.

Why do I want to capture the animal differently? As we saw in the quote that opened this paper, the style used to track and capture the elusive okapi, a style that is perhaps the most dominant in western thought, often resulted in their death. Death is one way to capture an animal. Perhaps it is the best way to master it and subdue its feral ways. Killing animals often proves very useful for science to understand animals. Killing is the ultimate way to objectify. But this dominant style does not always result in the death of the animal. It could be argued that we can better understand animals alive. But what will soon become clear is that, dead or alive, understanding animals will always involve capture. However, even within this text/jungle, quoted above, that exemplifies the dominant posture of knowing/capturing animals, there is another human-animal relation. There was an elusive okapi of which the scientist only got a glimpse. It had a 'ghost-like' presence, he claimed. It was present as a positive absence, or trace. This animal was precisely what slipped away from the European scientist's direct gaze. This scientist, who ventured to the frontier of the 'dark' continent, was traumatized by the inconsistency of the jungle. The animal trace was mistaken for a ray of light. It was beyond the clarity of the light. It is this uncapturable animal, present as a trace, that I want to capture.

To help us with our messianic quarry, a quarry that will always have yet to arrive, I will draw on some of the work of Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, and Derrida. I will draw on their works in a way that leaves tensions between them. Tensions are unresolved. If they were to be resolved they would close up on the animal and capture it in understanding. The animal we are after is beyond understanding. These tensions will provide the openings for the animal to come into understanding as a trace. This is how we will understand the animal otherwise (than understanding). It is in these openings that we will catch the animal's scent. I will track this scent through the following general tensions. Broadly, I see Merleau-Ponty pulling the tension in the direction of composition. By composition I mean that he composes or tames the animal relation in an orderly fashion. He tames the animal enough to get a *good* glimpse of it. Perhaps he gets too good of a glimpse at it, for remember the animal is what is refractory to the gaze. This being said, we still must always take a good look at the animal if only to realize that it is beyond that look.

Pulling the tension in another direction will be Levinas' theories. In his theories will be the potential to decompose the human-animal relation. He will perhaps offer an animal that will traumatize and rupture any orderly understanding of the animal. This animal will be encountered beyond understanding in an ethical relation. Put generally, Derrida will put tension on both these authors. He will show both the necessity and impossibility of both composing and decomposing the animal. In this way he will push and pull Merleau-Ponty and Levinas at the same time, towards and away from their positions of composition and decomposition. One way he will do this is with his deconstruction of the text-animal dichotomy. However, the other two writers will pull back against Derrida. In a paradoxical way, this tug-of-war between all three of them will serve to form their alliance. They will compliment each other via their opposition. Out of this (dis)equilibrium will form the opening where we will catch a whiff of the animal.

But before I take a more detailed look at their respective works I will first provide a sketch, a composition, of the human-animal relation and how I envision we go about tracking the animal through the terrain of this composition. This will involve a generalized appeal to Merleau-Ponty, Levinas and Derrida to help us catch the scent of the animal disrupting this arrangement. The animal's rustling will disturb this composition enough to form a crack where we will catch a glimpse of it.

The Vision (of Scent and the Scent of Vision)

“The okapi was one of the last animals to be *discovered* by modern man. In fact, for a long time, it was sort of a ‘*mysterious* animal.’ No one really *knew* what it was.”³

Schlein, On the Track of the Mysterious Animal.

My Vision

A new story of the human-animal has to be told. The dominant western story of what is called ‘the animal’ allows for the horrors of its sacrifice to be invisible. But, is not the process of turning the animal into a story, bringing it into the light of reason, annexing it into the realm of knowledge, the problem to begin with? The gesture of knowing and representing the animal is an appropriating move. This move removes the alterity of the animal other in appropriating it into the human realm of the knowing human self. This appropriation happens in spite of, or better, precisely because of the exile of the so-called non-human into the realm of the animal. Further, this appropriation will still take place in my articulation. It will be argued here that it is a creature’s irreducible absolute otherness that allows for an ethical relation with it. It is in this otherness that one becomes responsible to the creature. However, it is this otherness that cannot be captured, ‘conceptually’ or ‘physically’ (not that these can be separated), by any delimitation of the human from the animal. It will be argued that the ethical relation with a particular creature is more primary, and precedes/exceeds any relationship of knowing. This otherness cannot be appropriated into a story, knowledge, or a representation. In fact, it is precisely what is refractory to knowledge.

But we are still left with the problem of having to tell a new story. Is it not this un-representable otherness, which, it will be argued, is the ‘source’ and realm of responsibility to animals, that which we want to, or better, have to represent? We must make the ethical obligations to animals visible. We must meet our obligation. Yet, as has been just mentioned, it is knowing, visibility, and representation that foreclose the ethical relation. The otherness of the animal must remain other. For as soon as it is known the other is reduced to a concept, a theme, a representation, and so on. Even if this representation challenges the dominant western themes of animal as object, resource, meal, spectacle, etc. the reduction will still take place. An animal is not a representation, it is other than that. We are left with a double bind or what I will call an *aporia*. We must represent the animal as other, but in doing so we consume it into sameness. But notice what strangely happens when one hits this double bind; the otherness makes a fleeting appearance, or at least a quasi-appearance. That is, when one tries to represent the unrepresentable, qua unrepresentability, which we must, the absolute otherness presents itself. Or better, it presents itself as an absence. When this *aporia* is lived through, which is the going through of an impasse, the experience of the impossible, the other becomes present as an absence, or

the absence of a presence. The other is given as a trace. By trace here I mean a positive absence, or absence of full presence. This trace is a betrayal. First, it is a betrayal of the otherness, because one is appropriating it. That is, one is betraying it in terms of not doing it justice by letting it remain other. But it is also a betrayal in the sense of a revealing, as in when a rustling bush betrays an animal's whereabouts (an occurrence well documented by those tracking the okapi). Or better, when a quarry's scent divulges its trail. Key to the betrayal of the animal is meeting one's obligation to it, as Caputo says: "To take on an obligation is to make oneself out as being in the wrong, to concede that the being-for-onself of the I spells trouble for the other"⁴.

If the animal is represented as the unrepresentable, as a double bind, it reveals itself as a trace. The tension of the *aporia*, however, must always be maintained; the impossibility of the venture, which one is setting out to accomplish, the making visible of that which will remain invisible, must always be kept in the foreground. If there is a relaxation of the tension between having to represent, but not being able to represent, there will be a breach of the impasse, and the animal will not be represented as that which is beyond. If the tension is relaxed, and there is a breach in the *aporia*, one will think they have arrived at the other, in full presence, not as a trace.

So here in my representation of the so-called animal, and the human-animal relation, I too must maintain the tension. I must show the absolute necessity of showing our responsibility to other creatures while all the while describing the futility of my venture. That is, my responsibility to an animal entails that I must tell a new story of the animal. I must do this, however, while realizing that this story identifies what is beyond identity. I want to show how structurally the I, identity, human, knowledge, and so on, always already poses a threat to the other. This is the only way that the animal will be revealed as a trace.

There is also something else strange going on in my analysis. I will describe the strange relationship between the representation and the represented as one where these two cannot be divided nor combined. If a strict separation between a representation and the represented cannot be maintained, which will soon become evident, then my representation of the animal as trace cannot be strictly separated from the animal itself. Just as the dominant western conception of the animal, as an object or a resource, comes to inflect and imbue the real and the phenomena, so too will my tropes, metaphors, symbolism and figures inflect the real. The animal as trace is no mere metaphor. Or better, when the relation between the metaphor and the real is complicated, when one is no longer able to separate them by a single limit, when one cannot tell (know, or see) where one ends and the other begins, when they are not seen as being in opposition, the metaphor becomes the real, and vice versa. As I opened up this paper by saying 'there is an animal loose in this text', I meant it literally. For once again, as will soon be shown, one is no longer able to delimit the literal from the metaphorical. This does not mean that the literal and the metaphorical can be collapsed into some third term. Quite to the contrary, it is their resistance to being collapsed which also makes them resist being fully separated. They have a peculiar relation so that there will always be realness to the metaphor, and a metaphor for the real. The real

needs the metaphor, and vice versa. Thus, I mean that there is literally, with a realness of the highest order, an animal in this text.

Further, the animal loose in this paper, the animal trace, is exactly that animal which is loose and causing such havoc in such binaries as symbolic-literal and metaphor-real. Remember the animal is an absolute other, that which is the very thing, or non-thing, that is refractory to reason, knowledge, the concept, a theme, visibility, thingification, and so on. Here, drawing on Levinas, I would like to make a dangerous, if not impossible distinction between absolute otherness and the otherness in the realm of knowledge, reason, ontology, phenomena, and so forth. The former is what exceeds and founds this latter realm. The absolute other founds the realm of ontology by infusing it with difference. It is the 'medium' in which such dichotomies as self and other can form. Further, absolute otherness is that which cannot be captured by such dichotomies as self-other. It disturbs and multiplies them. For my 'authentic' account of the animal I want to capture its absolute otherness. This absolute otherness is, let us tentatively say, 'the real' otherness of a creature, as opposed to the otherness that is captured in knowledge by such oppositions as self-other. I hope to capture an animal as the other of what is captured. It is the other of reason, which would hope to capture it with these binaries. However, the animal is what precedes them. Reason will only catch the trace of the animal other (or animal as other, or other as animal). Reason only catches the animal's scent. If reason were to catch the animal, in itself, in full presence, it would not be other but would be the same; it would no longer be an animal, but human.

Reason presupposes this animal other. This other is what allows for the peculiar dynamic and economy between the binaries. If not for the irreducible uncircumscribability of alterity there would not be the strange opening or distance between such binaries as the symbolic-literal, animal-human, self-other, subject-object, man-woman, and so on. Alterity infuses the self with the difference necessary for reason. In this way reason is reflection. Reflection needs distance. Distance requires difference. In this schema reflection is self-reflection. It is self-coincidence. Consciousness is self-consciousness. The self can only re-cognize itself. What is seen as truth is what is known, not what is unknown. The unknown is that which does not make sense. It is what is untrue. Here, the absolute other is not reducible to either the subject or object, or self and other. It is the condition of possibility for these oppositions to arise. Reason is resemblance, and resemblance needs irreducible difference. Reason needs otherness. Reason needs the animal. Humanity needs its other, that which supposedly has no reason, the animal. In this way, humanity is reason. The dominant conception of animals in western thought has always been one of privation. Animality is always the lack of a human quality. Yet, in spite of, or because of this, non-essence, of animals, they become essential to the forming of the essence of the human subject. The Animal sustains the limits on which humanity rests. Animality provides the opening for the human self to define itself within. It can only do so because of the absence that animality imports into imminence, and presence. Presence presupposes, thus follows, the positive absence of the animal.

In this schema the animal becomes the origin or source, of humanity, truth, presence, etc. However, this origin or source has to be understood in terms other than that of the realm of the human

self and its knowledge. Origins and sources understood within knowledge, which is the only way to understand them, are capturable in full presence, thus remaining immanent within the human sphere. We are after the animal that transcends the human and what is captured. This source or origin is beyond, as such. It is beyond the dichotomies that would want to get a hold of it, such as inside-outside, immanent-transcendent, self-other, and so on. Reason, with its dichotomies, always arrives late to the source. With the arrival of reason the absolute other is appropriated into the economy of self-reflection. Here the other is serving as the mere other to reflect the self. The arrival of the I, consciousness, knowing, and the personal self spells trouble for the absolute other. The absolute other has always just fled the scene. The animal I am after is extremely elusive, like the okapi. This can be illustrated through my experiences of growing up in the foothills of the Canadian Rockies where I several times caught a glimpse, and only a glimpse of a fleeing wolverine. Or better, I caught a glimpse of the fleeing, more than the wolverine fleeing, but never enough to identify it with certainty. Identity too, arrives late to the animal I am after. Identity requires the certainty and clarity of understanding which is sameness, not the unknown. We are after animal otherness, not how animals have served in human configuration. The animal as source or origin, both understood otherwise than understanding, is an absolute horizon that will always be out of reach for the self. The animal I'm after, like the wolverine and the okapi, is always fleeting, and I am always after it, be it at the edge of a mountain meadow or in a paradoxical turn of phrase in an essay, not that it is even possible to determine the difference between these two, nor unify them.⁵

Yet, as I see it, the 'self' does have a primordial contact with this source. However, this contact happens before the self arrives, so it cannot really be said that it happens to the self. The arrival of the self presupposes this primitive contact with the absolute other in so far as it is the medium and condition of possibility for the opposition of self and other to emerge. But again, as with 'source' and 'origin', one must be very careful not to understand this primordialness in terms of knowledge. It is before knowledge. The very process of knowing this primitive contact, like my attempt here, is a movement away from it. The contact happens before one tries to know it. But this 'before', and temporality in general, is already understood in terms of knowledge. Thus the primordial contact is before this before. In this primordial contact with the absolute otherness of the animal, the animal's otherness has a priority over the human. The human, with its opposition of human and animal, comes late to the animal's otherness. The human self, and the human-animal dichotomy, presupposes this contact with the animal other. The human-animal dichotomy, and knowledge in general, can be seen as a response to this primordial contact. Otherness here, infuses the self from before the beginning. The self is otherness in its very origin. Paradoxically the beyond is what is closest.

Here, metaphor in general can be tentatively located in the realm of knowledge, logos, representation, and so on. Thus metaphor too arrives late to its source. Metaphors, like reason, attempt to capture this 'primitive contact'. There will always be a lagging behind of the metaphor. It will only catch the scent of the animal that is its source. *But notice my metaphor for the metaphor--it is animality.* In this paper, in my representation, animality is a metaphor for the relationship of metaphors to animals.

Like metaphors I am trying to catch the uncatchable. What is important is not only the futility of my task, but the fact that I too must appeal to the animal. If my goal in this paper is to re-present the animal, as it is, I must have contact with it. I must transcend myself and make contact with the other. This primordial contact with the other must infuse the self. At the very limit of the self, at the point of contact, at the limit of metaphor, the threshold of the self must always draw on the animal. What soon becomes (un)clear is that it is impossible to strictly separate or collapse the metaphorical from the literal. The metaphorical presupposes the literal and the literal requires the metaphorical to manifest in representations. Here my metaphor for the animal, and the human animal relation, *is the animal*—which is not (only) a metaphor at all. The animal must always be understood literally and metaphorically, yet neither just literally nor metaphorically. Consequently, given that my metaphor for metaphor is the animal, that that is not (only) a metaphor, we must take it literally—there is an animal loose in this text.

The precise moment when the metaphorical and the literal (or any of the other dichotomies) are the most equivocal is the moment of contact. That is when my text makes contact with the animal. That is when animality is revealed (betrayed). That is when there is communication between the human and the animal. This communication will be received, from the perspective of the human subject, as a disturbance. Otherness, what is unknown, what is contradictory, what has yet to be made clear, is unsettling. It unsettles what is settled in the self and its sameness. However, this disturbance does not come from afar, it comes from within the subject, for as we have seen the self's contact with otherness is its very origin, but an origin that cuts across any opposition of inside and outside. This disturbance sustains the subject.

This disruption will be seen as a violence towards the self. But perhaps a good violence to those of us who see the identity of the human and the animal, and all the boundaries that this entails, as problematic. That is, it could be argued that the dominant western conceptions of the human-animal relation is increasingly preoccupied and dominated by a relation of knowing. Perhaps some of the factors contributing to this preoccupation with and valorization of knowledge, to name but a few for the purpose of example, were the enlightenment period and the scientific revolution. The problem with seeing the relation of knowing as the problem is that I do not think it is possible to avoid it, or at least I do not think it is possible to identify its increase with a particular epoch. One problem I see with the identification of particular epochs with particular problematic postures is the dependence of this type of historical analysis on the dichotomization of the particular from the general. I see all 'problematic' postures as always both particular and general. How are we then to account for the undeniable increase in the unprecedented slaughter of animals over the past few centuries? Perhaps the problem is not so much with the relation of knowing but with an increase in the closing off of the known. When the known gets so heavily valorized it seems to get reified, cut off and decontextualized away from its dependence on and subordination to the other. But it seems to be in the 'nature' of the known to cut itself off, so I am not sure this is something that can be avoided definitively or correlated with a particular epoch either. Perhaps then the cause for this unprecedented slaughter is an increase in the extent of the homogeneity of knowledge. Knowledge

can be seen as forming bigger and bigger monoliths with an ever-increasing imperialistic ferocity. With an increase in homogeneity of the known comes a decrease in otherness. However, I have some apprehensions with identifying the 'problematic posture' of humans to animals in this way. It becomes hard to tell if this homogenous monolith can be identified with an epoch, or is a consequence of the homogenizing effects of my *reasoning* in my own historical analysis. That is, I imagine that many of the historical generalizations I am making in this paper themselves wipe out many heterogeneous knowledges within these time periods and regions. Heterogeneities that were and could continue to serve as resistances to sameness. Thus the fruitfulness of this approach becomes limited. But not entirely. One cannot simply do away with the general and work only with the specific. This only reinforces the dichotomy of these concepts: 'general' and 'specific'. One still offers a generality even in the form of anti-generality, for instance, when one says: 'there is only the specific'. As has been said above, the 'problematic posture' of knowing is both specific and general and neither only one of these, or reducible to some third term. What is key is that the *brutality* of the appropriation of reason, the human, knowledge, the self, and so on, is not something that is to be done away with definitively, nor something inevitable. This brutality cannot be captured by this opposition. In fact this opposition, like all the other oppositions of reason are exactly those that capitulate this brutality. It is these oppositions, like that of the human and animal, that must be disturbed by the 'good violence' of absolute otherness.

This disruption will disturb the self with its reliance on the known—the tame. The self, with its attempt to establish boundaries will be traumatized by contact with the animal. Animality is what is supposedly wild. The human attempts to cast the wild outside of itself, to quarantine wildness in such concepts as 'animal', or in such regions as 'parks' (again, not that a concept can be separated from a region). To aid in this quarantine are all the fences and boundaries that have already been mentioned. But the absolute otherness of the animal exceeds, disrupts, overwhelms and multiplies these boundaries. It is a wildness that cannot be tamed. It is what is alien to the limits imposed on it. It rebels, complicates, bucks, equivocates, blocks, multiplies, the establishment of a pure subject. To think that the wild can be cast out of the human and isolated in an oppositional category called 'the animal' only mystifies the wildness 'within' 'us'. Animality is always already at work in humanity, and by giving voice to it we will literally hear the animal.

Lippit offers a good summary of the ways in which 'the human' can communicate with 'the animal' via alterity. He highlights how "the animal becomes intertwined with the trope, serving as its vehicle and substance"⁶:

The question of language, which is inextricably linked to human and animal beings, is necessarily implicated in the encounter with animality and the figure of the animal. If the animal is said to lack language, to represent the site of radical alterity, then words cannot circumscribe the being of animals *as animals*. The contact between language and the animal marks a limit of figurability, a limit of the very function of language.⁷

This 'lack of language' here ironically serves as the means of possible communication between the human and the animal. It is at the limit of language that this contact or encounter will take place. I,

however, drawing on Levinas' work, that we will turn to below, would challenge, or perhaps extend Lippit when he says that "words cannot circumscribe the *being* of animals" (my emphasis). I would suggest that the absolute alterity of animals is beyond being. I would place being within the realm of language. But more will be said about that when we turn to Levinas. Lippit continues:

The intervention of the animal figure raises questions about the origin of the metaphor, its place in the world of language. One might posit provisionally that the animal functions not only as an exemplar metaphor but, within the scope of rhetorical language, as an originary metaphor. One finds a fantastic transversality at work between the animal and the metaphor—the animal is already a metaphor, the metaphor an animal. Together they transport to language, breath into language [inspire], the vitality of another life, another expression: animal and metaphor, a metaphor made flesh, a living metaphor that is by definition not a metaphor, antimetaphor, "animetaphor." ...The animal brings to language something that is not part of language and remains within language as a foreign presence.⁸

One might conclude from this, that when Lippit suggests that animality is the metaphor of metaphor, he places animality in opposition to language. However, I am using this passage to conclude, again, perhaps pressing or extending Lippit's comments here, that, again paradoxically, that the relation of metaphor and language to animality is not oppositional. Or better, the paradox of their apparent opposition is that they are not opposed. Through the metaphor, metaphorized as animal, the animal becomes essential to metaphor and language. It is precisely the animal's "foreign presence" that is the necessary alterity that serves as the 'source' for language.

Vision

There is only one place in the world that the okapi lives: deep in the tropical rain forest of central Africa. To anyone not accustomed to the rain forest, it is a mysterious and dangerous place.... The trees are gigantic. Their uppermost leaves meet 100 feet up, blocking out the *sunlight*... They did not *know* what this animal was. And it was so shy, and ran away so quickly, they could never get a *good look* at it. One explorer might just get just a *glimpse* of some stripes, and he would say he *saw* some kind of zebra.⁹

Schlein, On the Track of the Mysterious Animal.

Thus far I have introduced some strategies for tracking animal's trace with/in language, knowledge and reason. I will now turn our focus to the animal's trail picked up in vision. However, this is not to suggest that vision, and the other senses, can be fully separated from reason (which would be part of the very traditional separation of the intellectual from the bodily, perhaps best exemplified by Descartes mind/body split). On the contrary, tracking of the animal's movement as it disturbs this dichotomy will be one of the most important and prolific habitats to catch a glimpse of animals in this paper.

In order to schematize the human-animal relation, which is impossible, I would now like to consider the animals 'surface' as a reflective mirror. As has been argued above, I am tentatively considering all human representations and understanding as mere reflections of the human realm. Thus, it is not a matter of getting to a representation or understanding that is beyond the reflection. Ironically, it

is only through the acknowledgement that all understanding is reflection that an encounter with the beyond will occur. If we are to get beyond the current understandings, beyond our own reflection, and have a 'genuine' account of another creature then we must track the disturbances, paradoxes, tensions, ironies, and contradictions that are hidden in the mirror image. We must track the trace, the animal as trace. It could be argued that a flat mirror juxtaposing the spectating subject would be the scientific ideal. And it is exactly this conception of the animal, and the human animal relation that I want to disturb. However, it must be remembered that this articulation of science and its ideal are representations themselves. Consequently, they too, have already undergone the violent appropriation of all understanding and representation. These representations mask and annex heterogeneities in scientific practices and ideals. That is why they must be considered only as tentative. This ideal of self-coincidence in reflection already presupposes its own inappropriateness. Gasche explains:

The alterity that splits reflection from itself and thus makes it able to fold itself into itself – to reflect itself – is also what makes it, for structural reasons, incapable of closing upon itself. The very possibility of reflexivity is also the subversion of its own source....It opens itself up to the thought of alterity, a difference that remains unaccounted for by the polar opposites of source and reflection, principle and what is derived from it, the one and the Other.¹⁰

If one looks attentively at the reflection, there will always be cracks. And sometime, when looking at a crack, out of the corner of your eye (a trace can never be seen directly, only obliquely), one will catch sight (if it can even be called sight, perhaps it is the unseen in the seen) of the tain in the mirror. This tain is the absolute other. This is the other creature that supports the reflection. This other is more primary than the reflection. It is the source of the reflection. It is here at this contact with the tain, the tain within the subject and its reflection, that there is hope for a genuine encounter with the absolute other. Here the other can imbue the self with its inexhaustible plenitude. It is in this encounter that there is hope in understanding the ethical obligations to this animal other.

When one is attentive to a crack at the limit of reflection the mirror metaphor begins to break (for instance, it becomes hard to separate the crack from the tain). The crack is more like a tectonic fissure spewing forth lava—a dehiscence of the other from within the subject. However this 'within' cannot be captured by the dichotomy of inside-outside, and should not be understood as an idealism, or the like (in fact, this dehiscence is what breaks through the idealism of a self-reflecting subject imminent in sameness). Within this geothermal framework reflection still has its place¹¹. As the lava begins to cool a thin semi-reflective skin can begin to form on its surface. Eventually the fissure, as it cools, produces massive rigid plates, but at the source it is as though one can see the magma. Though of course, all one can see is lava at the surface. Magma will always be beyond, but lava presupposes magma. In the lava one will find its trace. One can almost follow its currents from the cracks in the lava. We have reached the limits of phenomenology at the threshold of the fissure. In this schema the lava figures as what is known. It also figures as the phenomena. Thus, I am limiting phenomenology to the known. However, the absolute other, the unknown, enters into experience through this dehiscence, as a trace. This is the

possibility of experiencing the impossible human-animal relation. It is only when this relation is understood that phenomenology and the known are dichotomized from the absolute other.

Scent

No matter what he [sic] is doing, or where he is, the okapi must always stay alert, because he has many enemies, lying in wait. He knows his enemies. They are snakes, and leopards, and sometimes man. It is mostly his ears and his nose that warn him of danger, rather than his eyes—for in the rain forest, things are hidden. He has keen hearing and a good sense of smell. At any slight sign of danger—an odor or rustling in the vegetation—he will run, dashing deeper into the rain forest along the okapi path.... How do they find each other as they wander alone through the tangled forest? As the female walks through the forest, she leaves a trail of strong scent that comes from glands in her feet. The male will not see her at first. But he will follow this smell-trail.¹²

Schlein, On the Track of the Mysterious Animal.

Nietzsche, one of the truly great philosophers of the flesh, the first philosopher to philosophize with his nose, whose genius is in his nostrils, is one of the few philosophers to have a nose for the smell of the other and to have organized his thought around the order of rank.¹³

Caputo, Against Ethics.

As this quote suggests, Nietzsche's nose led him to the other. Although I'm not directly drawing on Nietzsche, he had a tremendous influence on Merleau-Ponty, Derrida and Levinas. This is one of the reasons I am recruiting their nostrils on our hunt for animals.

Perhaps the resistance of the animal to being captured by reason is better captured by an olfactory trope than a visual one, such as the tain or magma tropes just explored. In the western tradition vision has been the dominant metaphor for truth. In Plato's cave allegory it is the sun that is the origin of knowledge and not the derivative shadows in the cave. The enlightenment placed the subject and object under its light of reason. For Descartes, God is the origin of natural light, which has an exact likeness to the human mind's light of reason. As Vasseleu, drawing on Derrida, points out that "for Descartes, while the existence of God is put into doubt, natural light is never subjected to radical doubt but rather is the medium in which doubt unfolds."¹⁴ This indubitable doubt remains hidden in reason's blind spot. Descartes' clear and distinct criteria for certain and truth propelled western thought into the posture of valuing only thought. A true thought is one known clearly. An object known with certainty is one seen in the brightest light possible. In critiquing this visual model for the relation between humans and nature, I am not suggesting that we do away with clarity, vision, reason and knowing. On the contrary, I do not even think that is possible. In fact, in some ways this is not even a critique. 'Critique' is already understood in terms of lightness and darkness and the visible and the invisible. These are the dichotomies that I am attempting to problematize and contextualize. For instance, critique is often a matter of illuminating contradictions that are what refract clarity and light. My goal here is to show the limits of knowledge and vision, and show their subordination to and dependence on animality. I want to demonstrate that there is more than what is known clearly by the so-called human and I want to make this as clear as possible.

One way to situate clarity and the dynamics that make a concept possible is to shift to an olfactory trope. Animals have always been conceived as having a superior sense of smell to that of humans. Already scent places a limit on heliocentrism. Humans are almost oblivious to the complex world of animal odors. The shift to the sense of smell further reinforces the ungraspable realm of the animal to language. Hearne highlights this in the following: “We can draw pictures of scents, but we don’t have a language for doing it the other way about, don’t have so much as a counter for representation of something visible by means of (actual) scent.”¹⁵ What is noteworthy here is not that the visibly is richer than odor (which can be concluded from this passage) but that the olfactory is refractory, if you will, to (visible) representation. It offers just the intranslatability into representation that can(not) capture the animal’s alterity.

The world of scents, one can only speculate, is anything but objectifiable. To even call it a world is to go against the positive absences of the trace. Hearne explains that our *understanding* of scent “is a metonymy for knowledge usually, the way the notion of a Bloodhound’s nose is used in detective fiction to refer to intuition. What we have is a *sense* of smell—for Thanksgiving dinner and skunks and a number of things we call chemicals.”¹⁶

What could be more helpful to us on our quest to track the animal than a tracking animal? Hearne explores the radical incompatibility of knowledge to scent by looking at how understanding has tried to understand the trace. She looks at some studies that the U.S. army conducted in trying to defeat the enemy’s trained tracking dogs:

In these tests trails were laid through “impossible” terrain... large fields were sprayed with gasoline and burned after tracks were laid through them. Foreign odors, organic and inorganic, attractive and repelling, were introduced on top of previously laid tracks. Tracklayers were picked up in cars and driven several hundred yards where they continued the tracks, or they removed their shoes along the trail, replaced them with a sterilized pair, and continued the track. Tracklayers entered rivers, swam down stream under water with snorkels and emerge on the opposite bank to continue the tracks. None of these tactics or devices consistently defeated the trained tracking dogs used in these tests.¹⁷

What is noteworthy here is scent’s incommensurability with understanding, as such, which is shown by the army’s attempts to understand tracking animals. Tracking appears to operate in a manner antithetical to *logos*.

As well, the experience of smelling seems to offer a relationship that is more open to the other. In the visual conception of the self and other, as exemplified by the scientific gaze, the subject is a removed disembodied spectator viewing the objectified other from a god like perspective, from above, or from everywhere. Smelling is a relation of inspiring, in both senses of the word. The subject breathes in the other into its core. The other is not seen as an obstacle to be concurred, mastered, known, and appropriated. Rather, when breathing, the other inspires, as in being a source for vitality—a muse. When one takes deep breaths one often feels ‘grounded’. Knowing comes late to the experience of this ground. Here the relation of knowing and smelling can be distinguished, but it cannot fully be separated,

yet nor can it be collapsed. One's state when breathing has yet to be tapped as a locus for human-animal communication.

Moreover, scent, while remaining a metaphor of intertwining embrace of self and other, seems to preserve a distance. The other is beyond its scent. Yet this is not the distance of the consuming gaze that allows for theoretical knowing. Smell situates the subject within the mutual unfolding of subject and object. Smell challenges the intelligible-sensible dichotomy that more readily can be applied to vision. However, my move to scent is not an attempt to reinstitute a hierarchy of the senses with smell now at the top. Rather, I would like to show that the features that characterize the self-other relationship in scent are also to be found in vision. There are times, for politically strategic purposes, to focus on the structures of scent, just as there are other times to focus on vision. I would see my project parallel to Irigaray's when she speaks of the touch of light.¹⁸ Here Irigaray, by showing the tactile aspect of vision, situates and embodies light. Thus there are different ways of touching even within the visual. Both the hand and the eye can grasp, hold at a distance, which is really a taking for oneself. I would posit as an ideal the eye that touches with a caress. Such as that of lovers, where the ideal is a pure gift with no hope for exchange (although gift and exchange will always have an ambiguity).¹⁹ The visual caress shares an openness to the other with the sense of smell. As well, smell's ephemeral character keeps it open to the alterity of the future, smell cannot be sustained as a thought. That is, smell is not graspable in the sense that it dissipates, thus leaving an opening for the new—the always future smell. This absolute future aspect of smell is a characteristic of the animal I am after. One that is always to come. This is the messianic quality of animality. If it comes it will be made human, tamed, or domesticated. Paradoxically, as Lippit points out, smell also has an exceptional affinity for recollection and the past. It seems to act as a threshold to the unconscious, another other within the self²⁰.

What is also interesting about my appeal to scent in comparison to vision is that vision stinks. Let us not forget that what we see as vision is a metaphor. Or at least any theory or phenomena of vision can never be separated from metaphor. And the dominant metaphors for vision stink. They stink in so far as they are not very good. They miss much of the ways in which vision is like scent, which also makes them stink. All of the characteristics that I have pointed out in scent, such as an openness to the other, an intertwining of the subject and object, and so on, can be found in parallel forms in vision. For instance, scent seems to have a material thickness of the medium of communication between humans and animals. This situates the phenomena within the particular context of the interaction. Vision too has a material medium. However, the dominant western metaphors for vision skip over, are blind to, and repress this aspect of vision. And this is no coincidence. As I have amply demonstrated, vision and reason form alliance whose quest has been to transcend the material realm and its situatedness in the hope of the universal.

Additionally, the sense of smelling reveals animality within the human. It has always been considered a 'primitive' sense. Animals live in the realm of scent. The animal is a scent. We are on that scent, and will always be following it. Lippit elaborates the veiled presence of both scents and animals

well when he states: "Smells then, like animals, but unlike conventional signs, do not open the world from which they have come. Or rather, scents and animals do open the world they inhabit but open that world [to us] as closed, shrouded, as a world that has faded, without ever having been present..."²¹ My goal here is both to represent the animal as a scent, and to follow that scent. It is only in that scent and as a scent that I will be able to do justice to the animal. This is the only way that I can live up to my responsibilities to the animal. My (respons)ibility to the animal is to reveal how its dominant metaphors stink. These responsibilities will be exactly those that have been passed over, repressed, and resist domination by the dichotomy of human/animal. This is the task of representing animality otherwise. And this otherwise will be perennial.

The discussion thus far has presented an outline, a vision, which has drawn heavily on the works of three writers. Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, and Derrida form an enigmatic constellation of positions along the impossible experience of *aporia* that betrays the animal. They seem to form a strange triad of vectors that result in an equilibrium of tensions. As I see it, this balance, that I cautiously bring together here, would be disrupted if I did not include all three. Yet what I highlight in these authors comes at the expense of other aspects of their thought. Their relationship itself presents the unnegotiable terrain that animals thrive on, and again, I mean this literally. That is, the aspects of their theories that I am focusing on form an aporetic relationship that becomes inseparable from that experienced in an animal encounter. I hope to present certain aspects of each thinker in a fashion that will cultivate the most fertile ground for animals, and thus, for animal tracking. This will involve maximizing the tensions between them and highlighting ways in which they problematize each other. This will fortify the impasse of the double bind, of having to represent the unrepresentability of the animal, in order for us to betray the animal. If not for the impasse that their interrelation forms we might think we have arrived at the animal. But the animal's arrival signals its departure.

I hope to present specific manifestations in their work so that when reading one will be forced to live through the *aporia*²² of the human-animal relation. For an *aporia* can only be lived through. An *aporia* is an impasse. It barricades thought. It is thought's limit. But this 'what cannot be thought' can be 'experienced', if I dare to make a tentative and all too problematic distinction between thought and experience. It is the experience or living through of the impossible. It cannot be thought through, which I am trying to do here, because it is precisely what stops thought. The 'living through' happens 'before' thought arrives. However, it is impossible to separate 'thought' from 'experience' (for instance, no matter how thetic thought is, it is still an experience). This impossible dichotomy, of so-called thought from so-called experience, arrives with reason to the impasse, and my articulation of the impasse here is no exception, which only serves to reiterate the impossibility of thinking through it. *Aporias* must be lived through for another reason. There is no choice in the matter. The choice of the personal thinking self is blocked at the door of the *aporia*. The experience of the *aporia* cannot properly be said to happen to the self. It happens before one can choose—they must choose. It is unavoidable (like, for instance, the *aporia* of death). Yet the experience of *aporias* could not be closer or more rightfully belong to the self

(also like death). It is at this intimate encounter, the experience of the impossible, that one will have an encounter with the alterity of the animal. It is here where the human-animal border will be breached and the self will be inspired by the other. This encounter will prove fruitful on a tracking venture. This is why I am presenting Merleau-Ponty, Derrida and Levinas's theory in an *aporetic* arrangement. This is in the hopes of getting the reader to experience the impossible, the animal's otherness. This will involve maximizing the specific tensions between their theories in a fashion that parallels an animal encounter.

In spite of, or because of, the differences of these three thinkers, they seem to form a strange unity. However, this unity is anything but stable. It is a tentative, precarious, abysmal, unrepresentable unity that rebels relentlessly against any unification. It could be said that all three offer a similar conception of alterity that will aid us in being responsible to animal others. This generalizable conception of alterity, which is the antithesis of generalization and conception, is only imaginable with selective readings of each author. Further, this fragile unity is in some way an amalgamation that does a violence to the absolute singularity of each of the authors and their writings. A singularity that cannot be captured by the singular-multiple binary, which would see singularity as one within a series. But it is here, in their (un)generalizable singularity that we will find the tentative general conception of alterity. Moreover, each of these authors on their own, and within their own works, is by no means homogenous. Furthermore, if all three did offer a generality, it would undermine their respective projects. The tentative precarious unity I am importing into this discussion is a unity that cuts across any binarism of the specific and the general. In my selective readings I will present certain ways of re-imagining, tracking and negotiating animals. All three offer rich condensations of paradoxes. And when one brings these three thinkers together into a tenuous constellation, these paradoxes proliferate. This is ideal territory for having an 'authentic' interaction with an animal, *right within the text itself*. Because, as will soon be made more (un)clear, it is out of these paradoxes that transcendence of humanity is possible, where there can be contact with the animal. It is through the paradoxes that originary meaning about the animal will be born/give birth. Within the text there will be contact with the animal 'outside'. However, this cannot be understood in terms of knowledge. That is, in terms of the oppositions of inside/outside, imminence/transcendence, metaphorical/literal. This contact outside the human with the animal antedates, or is on the hither side of these oppositions—but it is within these oppositions that we will inevitably understand this contact. This is why the animal encounter within this text will be understood as (not) only metaphorical.

Composed Flesh: Merleau-Ponty and Animal Refractions

The mucus is an interior which could not be more intimately me, yet which evades my mastery.²³
The bodies interiority is ungraspable in so far as it is unopposable to any other thing, and is refractory to concepts of containment and dissipation, penetration and recollection, visibility and form. To describe the indeterminacy of the mucous as unrepresentable would be to miss the point. The mucous is a continuation of the body beyond its existence as a phenomenon or an indistinguishable contiguity and porosity of interiority and skin.²⁴
Vasseleu, *Textures of Light*.

As soon as the baby is born, the first thing the mother okapi does is to clean it off. She licks off the blood and mucous so that enemies cannot smell it. Then she hides the baby in a safe place in the underbrush.²⁵

Schlein.

'These are the tracks of the animal,' they said. 'These are the tracks we should follow.'²⁶
Johnston's Pygmy guides

In the dominant western tradition the human-nonhuman relation has become one of a detached subject acting as a disinterested spectator removed from the objectified non-human. Here, in what Merleau-Ponty called the "analytic attitude", the subject, which has the distance necessary to re-reflect, is removed from the non-human that appears as inert, alien, meaningless matter. Nature becomes a totality of homogeneous things that are laid out before us. It is no wonder that a popular conception of nature is as a spectacle to be gazed at behind the lens of a camera, or through the cage at the zoo. Or more telling is the figure of nature as a resource whose only meaning is in its usefulness for humans. Here, the relation to the non-human is one of knowing. The non-human is stripped of its alterity and becomes determinate. The human subject is a reasoning disembodied spectator with a vantage from everywhere, God's perspective, which amounts to a vantage from nowhere. In this dualistic schema, which has a strong Cartesian lineage, the emphasis is on separation and disjuncture. Merleau-Ponty's writing offers an alternative to this dichotomy of human from nonhuman. Merleau-Ponty suggests that all perceptual experience, be it 'mental' or 'physical', is bodily, and dependent on the body-world interaction.

Merleau-Ponty positions his corporeal being in opposition to both the rationalists and empiricists' conceptions of perception. The rationalists posit that perception is the action of an autonomous mind made of pure mental substance acting as an external spectator using its logic and reflection. The empiricists hold that perception is the side effect of the body which is an instrumental object made of pure matter. Merleau-Ponty's account, in contrast, emphasizes the primordial embeddedness of a participating, situated, corporeal subject intertwined with, and dependent on, the other, including a valued nonhuman other. But, what is the most valuable about Merleau-Ponty's account is that this tenuous conjuncture of the self and other is not at the expense of alterity. For Merleau-Ponty the perceiver is part of the perceived world by means of a dialogue (which includes the world of language, history and

sociality). However, a dialogue also requires a separation. Merleau-Ponty elucidates this disjunction with his sustained critique of the homogenizing effect of dualisms that would wish to abolish it.

In the *Phenomenology of Perception* Merleau-Ponty gives us a new articulation of a world that is pre-objective, and of which we are apart of. He writes:

[T]he sensible is nothing but a *vague beckoning*... ..Thus a sensible datum which is on the point of being felt sets a kind of *muddled problem* for my body to solve. I must find the attitude which will provide it with the means of becoming determinate, of showing up as blue [if looking at the blue sky, for instance]. I must find the reply to a *question* that is *obscurely expressed*. And yet I do so only when I am invited by it, my attitude is never sufficient to make me see blue or really touch a hard surface. The sensible gives back to me what I lent to it, but this is only what I took from it in the first place. As I contemplate the blue in the sky I am not *set over against* it as an a-cosmic subject; I do not possess it in thought, or spread out towards it some idea of blue such as might reveal the secret of it, I abandon my self to it and plunge into its mystery, it *'thinks itself within me'*.²⁷

In the *Phenomenology of Perception* Merleau-Ponty offers a new schema that articulates a relationship which is pre-subjective and pre-objective. Both subject and object presuppose and are dependent upon this originary relation, a relation that highlights the primordial interdependence of these two realms, an interdependence, Merleau-Ponty claims, is not at the cost of difference. These two realms, and their supposed separation as found in Cartesian dualism, only arise with the arrival of thought. With thought, comes nature as meaningless object. But thought arrives late. Before thought gets there human and non-human are already in a relation of embrace and mutual unfolding. This is an anonymous pre-personal dialogue with a 'world' of which 'we' are creative members. This pre-personal dialogue is pre-rational. And this 'pre' of the 'pre'-rational cannot be understood in terms of the rational. When reason comes to the scene the Cartesian schism seems to congeal and fissure. But if we are to give voice to the non-human in a way other than as a valueless object, we must bring this pre-rational relation into reason. Merleau-Ponty suggests we have a responsibility to do so.²⁸ But at what cost? He also mentions a violence in making the pre-rational rational.²⁹ In Merleau-Ponty we see the double bind mentioned above. For Merleau-Ponty, the only way we can meet our responsibility to the animal, to live through the impossible double bind, is through a corporeal relation that problematizes any conception of a disembodied, intellect, reason, concept, mind, consciousness, thought, and so on. Yet this problematization should not be seen as a demonization or call for the abandonment of reason, and the like. On the contrary, Merleau-Ponty sees it as an opportunity to re-own reason. In this way he points out what the Cartesian binary represses and masks. The disruption of dualism serves to articulate the legitimate and contextualized experiences of a reasoning body-subject. It is in the pre-personal embodied dialogue that the Cartesian conceptual schema will be disrupted. It is only out of the lived embodied interspecies relation that an originary account of the animal will emerge.

There is a very important shift that takes place from Merleau-Ponty's early works, including the *Phenomenology of Perception*, to that of his later works, such as *The Visible and the Invisible* and *Eye and Mind*. In a working note from 1959 Merleau-Ponty writes: "The problems posed in *Ph. P.* [*Phenomenology of Perception*] are insoluble because I started there from the 'consciousness'-'object'

distinction—...and the purported 'objective condition...is a way of expressing and noting an event of the order of brute or wild being which, ontologically, is primary. This event is that a given *visible* properly disposed (a body) hollows itself out an invisible sense ['sens']³⁰ Langer asks:

What are we to make of this cryptic note? Has not Merleau-Ponty at every step of his analysis in the *Phenomenology [of Perception]* endeavored precisely to *overturn* the traditional distinction between 'consciousness' and 'object' by disclosing incarnate subjectivity as a *third kind of being* which is irreducible to either consciousness or objective body? Has he not taken pains to show – in his analysis of habitual behaviors, for example – that the body-subject *incorporates* the world's structures into its own space? Has he not insisted that the world is not to be regarded as a totality of *objects*, nor subject as a spectator *consciousness* surveying the lot? Has he not emphasized repeatedly in the *Phenomenology* that there is a *genesis* of subject and object in pre-reflective perceptual experience? Has he not throughout his study of perception drawn attention to the *distortions* stemming from our adherence to the classical distinctions? Has he not consistently attempted to illuminate the primordial experience which antedates any such distinctions?³¹

If we answer all these questions with a yes, as Langer does, and I would have to agree, then what is Merleau-Ponty concerned about in his working note?

In the *Phenomenology of Perception* Merleau-Ponty took as his starting point the traditional distinctions of consciousness and object (the so-called objective body and the world). He then went about demonstrating that all lived experience, be it 'mental' or 'physical' is the result of a pre-objective, pre-subjective, pre-personal, pre-rational dialogue. However, the very conditions of possibility of this dialogue remain somewhat dormant in the *Phenomenology of Perception*. He does not fully explore the genesis of the dialogue. Rather than elaborating the abysmal, paradoxical, pre-dichotomous, originating field, out of which are born all the dichotomies, he presupposes the distinction of a perceiving subject and perceived object. Certainly, the originary field of what he calls 'brute being' or 'wild being' (his use of the terms 'brute' and 'wild' here attest to the untamed and unruly character of being before it is fully known. Further, his appeal to animal tropes here is extremely important. This importance is compounded by the fact that his appeal to brutes happens at the precise location in the text that proves to be the most brutish. It was brute or wild being that became unruly and caused havoc in *The Phenomenology of Perception*. It required taming in his later texts. This convergence of animal as vehicle and substance of the text is what Lippit referred to above as an *animetaphor*. This moment 'in' Merleau-Ponty's text was an animal encounter, the transgressing of the impossible threshold between metaphor and literal, human and animal, and so forth. It is also astonishing, though not coincidental, that we caught this glimpse of the animal, in his text, in a working note, and in my text, in parenthesis. The animal we are tracking will always make a(n) (dis)appearance oblique to the central focus. And this is not the only parenthetical peek at an animal that we get in this paper). was present throughout the *Phenomenology of Perception*. However, it remained rather unelaborated. It is not so much a matter of his earlier works being 'wrong' or incompatible with that of his later ones. Rather, the shift in focus and starting points in his later works eliminates some possible confusions (some unruliness to conception) that might arise in his earlier ones.

The shift is from seeing the body as a locus from which we perceive experience to seeing the body as an index within the always already underway perceiving-perceived 'experience'.

In the unfinished, posthumously published *The Visible and the Invisible: Followed by Working Notes* we find Merleau-Ponty taking up the task of going back to the brute silent being of the primordial originating experience-source. This is the source of the very distinctions found in reflection, such as 'source' and 'experience'. This is that source that cannot be recaptured by reflection, due to the necessary distance required by reflection. This source precedes and exceeds knowing. However, paradoxically this is the source that must be recaptured in reflection, as futile as this attempt may be. It is this very paradoxical futility that allows for the possibility of experiencing the impossible, the new, the other. It is only paradoxical from within the domain of the self and the same with its quest to make sense of the other. But this is the region that is to be transcended. It is the experience-source of the paradox, at the seams of reason, that is the birth of new meaning out of, not separate from, the old.³² This paradox is the brute being which Merleau-Ponty is after and which he names flesh.

Flesh, as developed in *The Visible and the Invisible*, is the inscription of otherness within sameness. Flesh always has an irreducible reversibility. That is, it is always both otherness and sameness, and can switch between, sensing and sensed, subject and object, self and other, ideality and materiality, and so on. This reversibility of the flesh is a 'being's' ability to fold back onto itself. An example of this reversibility is when one feels one's hand with the other. Both hands feel each other 'within' but are also felt by each other from the 'outside'. In this experience of the feeling-felt there is an inextricable intertwining, yet a divergency. One can only inhabit the touching of one hand at a time. When one hand is touching the other becomes the touched. But this touching-touched is reversible. Out of this reversibility one can touch touching. What is important here is that one is not reducible to the other and vice versa. There is a non-coincidence of the feeling-felt. There is a type of 'unity' with internal divergence. One cannot touch one hand without the other being touched. The touching of one hand needs the touched. It is only through the touched that the touching is born. The touched is born from the touching that is drawn through it. As well, that which is touching must in turn be touchable. It must take its place in the world of the tangible. Here the body always has the capacity for reversibility. However, as was noted earlier when discussing the shift from Merleau-Ponty's earlier to later work, the body does not perceive, rather it forms, is a momentary crystallization, is a term, or an index within the reversibility of the flesh. The body only arises and is significant as perceived, or perceiving out of the perceiving-perceived flesh. Merleau-Ponty is here exploring how it is that corporeality manifests form within the double sensation of the reversibility of the flesh, the crossing over from feeling to felt. Reversibility implicates the subject in the object and the object is in part constitutive of the subject and *vice versa*. The name flesh seems to do the impossible and capture both the objective (substantive, stuff of the world/self) and the subjective (situated, experiential and embodiedness of the world/self).

This self-sensing characteristic of the flesh cannot be understood within the traditional conceptions of self/other, human/world, and anthropocentric/biocentric (hence its tremendous importance

to environmental politics that often employs these terms). On the contrary, these terms are what the flesh disturbs. It becomes impossible to draw a line between these oppositions, which, paradoxically, are the opposite of being in opposition. As Dillon explains:

Far from the anthropomorphizing some have taken this [self-sensing of the flesh] to be, it is actually a decentering of human reflexivity: our flesh is incorporated within worldly flesh; human reflexivity is but a phase of worldly reflexivity and is intrinsically mediated through contact with other beings. Alterity, the distance which alienates us from ourselves and other beings in the feedback loop of reflexivity, is here conceived as essential to the intimacy of self-identification: we sense ourselves through the world (e.g. we touch things only by being touched by them), but since we are ourselves worldly, this is the world sensing itself through that part of itself which we are. Worldly self-affection is the core idea of ecological ontology.³³

Extending Merleau-Ponty's conception of flesh to the question of the animal, this is precisely how humanity is dependent on animality. It is animality that infuses difference into the human. The animal puts the human out of phase with itself thus creating the distance necessary for human reflection, perception, phenomena, sensing, and most important for this paper—articulation—which is why there must be an animal in this text. If not for the alterity of other animals and the world that 'we' are apart of, 'we' would not inhabit the part of the world, and not the only one, that is self-sensing.

For Merleau-Ponty, the reversibility of touching can be, in a way, generalized to all the other senses. For instance, there is a reversibility of seeing with the seen, invisible with the visible. When it comes to visibility, reversibility is not as easily understood as with touch. For instance, in traditional conceptions of vision, especially in mainstream representations of contemporary science the object is at a distance from the subject (although this is a gross generalization, in fact, many critiques of mainstream conceptions of vision have been put forth by scientists³⁴). Merleau-Ponty wants to show how the seer's visibility conditions vision itself, and the reverse. That is, he wants to describe how the flesh implicates the subject's vision in the object and the object is in part constitutive of what the subject sees. To illustrate visibility as flesh Merleau-Ponty often looks at the vision of a painter. The painter's vision is able to transform new meaning, which is invisible, into the visible realm. As Langer observes in Merleau-Ponty:

Painters transform the visible from within it through a seeing which is at the chiasma of eye and mind. The painting of a self-portrait is an example *par excellence* of the 'coiling over' of vision which enables a new meaning to emerge from vertical Being. Simultaneously seer and seen, the painter belongs to the fabric of the visible and folds that fabric over so that a fresh meaning is hollowed out. The painter's vision is a seeing from within the visible itself – as such self-portrayal most readily shows. It thus becomes understandable that our own vision likewise 'installs' itself in things...³⁵

The hollowing out of the invisible from within the visible produces the coiling over or wave formation. That is, as has been said, reversibility is the ability to turn back and forth between the experience of perceiving and perceived. This turning back is the coiling over which entails a hollowing out. What is key is when this wave folds over itself, the 'inside' 'surface' (the invisible, meaning, ideality or perceiving side) is hollowed out without a hole in brute being. A hole would entail the disembodiment of

the subject from the object. Paradoxically, it would allow for the distance necessary for an objectifying gaze that could grasp and appropriate the other. It is only through an embrace, with no hole, that the alterity of the other can be preserved. The two sides are intertwined yet divergent. Perceiving in this wave trope figures on the 'inside' and is invisible because it has an intimacy and primacy to the visible. It 'precedes' the appearance of visibility, which arrives late, hence the seen's exteriority. The dimension of height in the wave is its sameness, the visible, what is known. The height is the result of many corporeal sedimentations. As the body-subject learns, and what is known increases, the self's sameness grows up, as a mound of sand raises with each new deposit. The sediment layers of the wave are the corporeal habituations. Out of the folding over of this sameness will come the other from 'within' the self as a dehiscence. In the embrace of the wave the contours of the sensing beckons the sensed as the sensed solicits this beckoning. The wave builds on, and is another trope for, the relation of subject and object, human and animal, and so on, as was the trope of the flesh. The chiasm of the wave can be seen as its inside-outside surface. Out of the chiasm of the flesh is the dehiscence of meaning, whose play gives birth to separation and similarity, for instance, that of the human and the animal. It is the flesh that is before this meaning and sustains it from behind.

The coiling over of the painter's vision is not limited to self-portraits. Merleau-Ponty points out that many fifteenth century Flemish paintings (and many others) contain a convex mirror that includes the painter's reflection of him or herself painting. This highlights the impossibility of distinguish between what sees and what is seen, what paints and what is painted.³⁶ Similarly, Merleau-Ponty explains (while quoting Marchand): "so many painters have said that things look at them... 'In a forest, I have felt many times over that it was not I who looked at the forest. Some days I felt that the trees were looking at me, were speaking to me.... I was there, listing.... I think that the painter must be penetrated by the universe and not want to penetrate it.'"³⁷ This reversibility of vision is not a pantheism. There is a type of asymmetry in this reversibility (the question of this asymmetry will become important in the comparison of Merleau-Ponty's work with that of Levinas below). This type of asymmetry, or non-coincidence in reversibility, is explored here where Merleau-Ponty states reversibility is:

always immanent and never realized in fact. My left hand is always on the verge of touching my right hand touching things, but I never reach coincidence; the coincidence eclipses at the moment of realization, and one of two things always occurs: either my right hand really passes over to the rank of touched, but then its hold on the world is interrupted; or it retains its hold on the world, but then I really do not touch *it*—my hand touching [or the tree seeing me], I palpate with my left hand only its outer covering.... I am always on the same side of my body: it presents itself to me in one invariable perspective...[but]...this is not a failure.³⁸

This is not a failure for Merleau-Ponty because this is the non-coincidence, the 'hiatus', the present absence that is incompletely 'unified' in the flesh. But what is this quasi-unity like when it is not one's own hand but another person or an animal one is sensing? For Merleau-Ponty the division of self and other, and human and animal form a new arrangement when considered as flesh. The question of reversibility of others in the flesh needs more exploration, but first the flesh itself must be fleshed out.

Characterizing visibility as flesh, and vision as that of a painter, shows the limits of the dominant conceptions of scientific vision. At least this challenged the dominant conceptions of science in Merleau-Ponty's time. Much writing, for instance, in the field of critical science studies, as has already been mentioned, has problematized these conceptions, however, they still remain quite dominant. His characterization of vision shows the limits of vision from above, which would want to posit, possess and penetrate the object for manipulation, prediction and control. As Merleau-Ponty says: "Science manipulates things and gives up living in them."³⁹ To conceive of vision as a disembodied spectator omnisciently gazing at a distant object gets one sidetracked away from the primordial embrace which generates and sustains visibility.

In the following passage, Vasseleu summarizes well the generative properties of the chiasm well. Keep in mind that it is this chiasm to which the scientific posture, of treating everything as an object-in-general, would become anesthetized. It is to this generative 'source' in the flesh that objectification must acknowledge its debt:

The challenge of the chiasm for Merleau-Ponty is to gather, if incompletely, what comes of nothing, what comes out of the void. Chiasm is the name Merleau-Ponty gives to the motion of perpetual dehiscence, in which perception is understood as a being in momentum. This is a departure from perception understood as an object of subjective synthesis or a pre-given schema determining the recognition of things. Merleau-Ponty makes full use of dehiscence as a *generative* term, taken in biology to refer to the splitting apart of fruits, seed pods, or organs to bring forth a flesh which differs from but is of their flesh⁴⁰. There is an interiority of 'being within flesh' that comes to the surface in the chiasm, as an opening of the perceptual world. The arising of sense is a 'fleshing out' of embodied existence, with flesh disclosing its (in)coherence or 'carnal meaning' in its differentiation of itself.⁴¹

For Merleau-Ponty language can also be understood in terms of the folding over and dehiscence of the flesh. That is, language and materiality have the same chiasmic relation as that described by Vasseleu above, with all the parallels in her metaphor to that of the mirror tain, magma, painting and the wave. Here language itself is in an equivocal flesh relation with the so-called signified. It is only out of the old language that the new will emerge. Here the transcendence of language, the import of new meaning, is an immanent transcendence. It never leaves language. Language is not something to be left, or something that could be left. Paradoxically, the new erupts out of the coiling over, without a hole, of the old. There is never a clean break with old language. One is dependent on the old, even to posit it in opposition, for the birth of the new. Moreover, a word and the signified form that chiasmic relation where they cannot be either separated nor collapsed.

Merleau-Ponty further elaborates how the opposites of language/object and self/other are not in opposition at all. He posits instead an anonymous intercorporeality that precedes the division of the me and not me.

It is said that the colours, the tactile reliefs given to the other, are for me an absolute mystery, forever inaccessible. This is not completely true; for me to have not an idea, an image, nor a representation, but as it were the imminent experience of them, it suffices that I look at the landscape, that I speak of it with someone. Then, through the

concordant operation of his body and my own, what I see passes into him, this individual green of the meadow under my eyes invades his vision without quitting my own, I recognize in my green his green... There is no problem here of the *alter ego* because it is not *I* who sees, not *he* who sees, because an anonymous visibility inhabits both of us, a vision in general, in virtue of the primordial property that belongs to the flesh...⁴²

In *La Nature: Notes, Cours du College de France*⁴³ Merleau-Ponty explores this anonymous intercorporeality in interspecies relations. There he proposes that the animal is a “loophole” that refutes and rebels against the Cartesian dichotomies.⁴⁴ His appeal to the animal as a loophole parallels Lippits description of the animal as an animetaphor. The animal’s absolute alterity is the threshold or loophole through which difference is transported into the human. It is the animal’s irreducible otherness that rebels against human conception. To allow this rebellion to flourish, to be attentive to the anonymous interspecies corporeal dialogue, Merleau-Ponty proposes a harmony of physiognomy, or bodily styles. To reach this harmony Elizabeth Behnke⁴⁵, drawing on *La Nature*, suggests the use of Merleau-Ponty’s conception of an improvisational compartment in interspecies situations. This improvisational posture represents a shift from the project of knowing animals, as if they could be known, as if the known should be valorized, to the project of interspecies dialogue. A shift from docile being to brute being. For Merleau-Ponty and Behnke this compartment is improvisational in that it is not determinate. Yet, this does not mean that anything is allowable. Rather, what is required must emerge from one’s participation in a shared interspecies field. The shift from knowing, which is the determinable, as such, to that of improvisation, allows one to be attentive to the echoes within the interkinesthetic field—the pre-human pre-animal flesh. Once one realizes that they represent the impossible position of being a product of this field, yet also a co-producer, there is a chance to resist the imperialism of human knowledge over the animal’s otherness. That is, one can meet their responsibilities in this co-production and create a different story of human-animal interaction.

It is also noteworthy, while on the topic of responsibility in the creative, generative, and productive role in the flesh, to look back at Merleau-Ponty’s painting trope for the flesh. By using painting to configure the primordial relation, the flesh, Merleau-Ponty places a mimesis, the act of representation, at the origin, thus installing an absence in the heart of presence. By making the origin a copy the origin will always be ever receding, thus wild—not fully capturable. It will contain an absence. It will point beyond itself and be open to otherness. This positive absence, which is not nothing, within painting and within the flesh, is what inscribes difference—the different, new, other—within reflection, the same, the visible and the old. As an originating trope, painting problematizes the opposition of origin/copy, creation/duplication as well as many other oppositions. Painting, as a trope for the flesh, captures the uncapturable wildness of brute being. And it is the brutes that we are after, thus Merleau-Ponty flesh has tremendous importance for our goal of representing animal’s alterity.

It is also interesting to note that the African ‘explorer’ Sir Harry Johnston who was ‘discovering’ the okapi was a painter from a young age. In fact, his main role on many scientific expeditions was as an illustrator of scientific diagrams.⁴⁶ Here we have the quintessential creative act of painting paradoxically

at the heart of the quintessential act of discovery. This only serves to highlight the inextricable ambiguity, rather than dichotomy, of creation and discover. It also emphasizes the non-oppositional nature of these terms. For instance, creative acts do not have to be seen as a threat to scientific discovery, to be hidden and repressed. On the contrary, they should be seen as augmenting and facilitating discovery. The same could be said about the role of fantasy and imagination in science. Initially Johnston believed the okapi was a unicorn.⁴⁷ Traditionally fantasy has been conceived as the antithesis of scientific truth. However, here we see these two terms in an equivocal rather than oppositional relation.

The reversibility of the flesh, the folding over or invagination of brute being which allows the invisible to become visible, is only possible because that which perceives, sees, touches and hears, is of the same ilk as that which is perceived, seen, felt and heard. They are of the same flesh. The perceiving and the perceived are mutually dependent; there is no room for a disembodied anonymous consciousness made of pure mental substance. The sensed and the sentient share a commonality which is the flesh. "Where are we to put the limit between the body and the world, since the world is flesh?" asks Merleau-Ponty.⁴⁸ They are the obverse and reverse sides of each other.⁴⁹ Or better, using a metaphor that Alphonso Lingis draws out of Merleau-Ponty's conception of the flesh, each 'side' is like the always shifting incomprehensible surfaces of the Mobius strip.⁵⁰

Within the flesh the inability to take up the other's perspective, to sense from their side, is not a threat or an opposition juxtaposed to the self (a point that perhaps differs from Levinas' conception of alterity). Rather, their alterity serves as a resource in reversibility. Merleau-Ponty explains: "I borrow myself from others; I create others from my own thoughts."⁵¹ Elsewhere he similarly adds: "Now why would this generality [of sentience of self and world, in general, found in the flesh], that constitutes the unity of my body, not open it to other bodies? The handshake too is reversible; I can feel myself touched as well and at the same time as touching.... Why would not the synergy exist among different organisms, if it is possible within each? This is possible as soon as we no longer make belongingness to one same 'consciousness' the primordial definition of sensibility."⁵² Rather, Merleau-Ponty would have sensibility be the return of the sensible upon itself in the mutual adherence of sentience and sensed.⁵³

One way of understanding my extension of Merleau-Ponty's work into my discussion of animality is to see the parallels of his navigation of the impossible relation of the visible to the invisible (sameness and otherness, perceiving and perceived, and so on) in my navigation of the human and the animal relation. He offers an incredible account of the impossibility of a unity of the terms as well as the impossibility of being separated. So too, have I attempted to tenuously capture these impossibilities regarding the human and the animal. One of many implications of this paralleling is the shift in orientations, that was spelled out above, from Merleau-Ponty's earlier to later works. Rather than presupposing the distinction of the human from the animal, I would like to see these two terms as already arising out of, exceeded and sustained by a pre-human, pre-animal primordial relation of quasi-asymmetrical reversible flesh. Here, the human and the animal are no longer seen as being in opposition. Rather, it is through the animal that the human arises. This gives a new conception of the

human, with the animal not (only) seen as a threat to be mastered, captured, determined, studied, or conquered. Rather, the animal other is the irreducible ambiguity and alterity required for the reflexivity of the human flesh. In this ambiguity there will always be animality in humanity and vice versa. Understood as flesh, the relationship, which is not really a relationship, with another creature is one that precedes, exceeds and sustains any attempt to demarcate and divvy up human from animal, and the resultant ontology into which these categories inevitably coagulate.

For Merleau-Ponty the animal is revealed within the flesh. However, as with all revealing there are both sides of the betrayal. Even as flesh, which is the inscription of otherness in the same, the other is appropriated. Merleau-Ponty appeals to animality somewhat tacitly in his constant reorientation of docile being into a brute being—being as flesh. As has been mentioned above, he also explicitly appeals to animals in such works as *La Nature*. This appropriation, although being of the greatest violence to animals, is not something that can be avoided. There will always be an equivocation to betraying the animal. That is, you will betray it in both senses: revealing it, and doing it a disservice by not leaving it as other, but appropriating it, even if for exposure. However, even though animal appropriation cannot be avoided, it should be avoided at all cost. And when this fails, which it will always inevitably do, it should be acknowledged. Merleau-Ponty does not acknowledge this failure when it comes to animals. I see Merleau-Ponty appropriating animality in a way similar to what Luce Irigaray identified as an appropriation of femininity and maternity in Merleau-Ponty's flesh.

Irigaray, similar to many other feminists who have taken issue with Merleau-Ponty,⁵⁴ acknowledges a great debt to his work. However, she challenges Merleau-Ponty's conception of the flesh in several key ways. For instance, rather than conceiving of the flesh as a reversibility akin to that of the double sensation of the two hands grasping each other, Irigaray offers a touching that is refractory to the grasping of reversibility. Not everywhere on the body can be touched, thus, not every touch can be touched touching. Irigaray points to the touching of two hands and fingers, when the fingers are extended, placed together with palms stationary and continuously pressed against each other. This touching is a sensibility that goes further than the notion of the flesh in challenging the thingification and coherence of the grasping of the double sensation of Merleau-Ponty. Thus, it is more resilient against the ontologizing forces of understanding. It is more rebellious to the human trainers wishing to tame the beast.

Irigaray further challenges Merleau-Ponty by suggesting that in spite of his subordination of vision there still remains in his work a primacy of visibility. This primacy is susceptible to a phallogocentric economy. Irigaray places the primacy on touch. This is best exemplified, she argues, by the possibility of blindness, but the impossibility of conceiving of a similar affliction of touch. A total loss of touch would result in a total loss of consciousness. She argues that subjectivity presupposes and is founded in tangibility. Merleau-Ponty fails to acknowledge this primacy, and his debt to touch. Irigaray posits a touching that is not susceptible to any division of visibility/invisibility. Irigaray's example of the tangible invisibility, that is beyond the visible and the invisible, is that of the lips. These are the lips of the

mouth and the labia. The touching of the lips together is not susceptible to a visible morphology. Consequently, they disrupt the distinction of the visible and the invisible. This challenges the division, as equivocal and ambiguous as it may be, in Merleau-Ponty's double sensation of the hands, between sensed and sentient, and things and ideas. Further, the lips also disrupt the dichotomy of interior and exterior by establishing bodily being as a threshold or passage,⁵⁵ further insulating the body against subject/object division.

Increasing this insulation is Irigaray's concept of mucosity. The mucus of the lips, and other tangible invisibles, further refracts dichotomies. As Grosz explains:

The tactile is related by Irigaray to the concept of the mucus, which always marks the passage from inside to outside, which accompanies and lubricates the mutual touching of the body's parts and regions. The mucus is neither a subjective touching or the toucher nor the objectivity of the touched but the indeterminacy of any distance between them. It escapes control, not being subject to the kind of voluntary slippage by which the touching hand becomes the touched. She suggests that the mucus may represent the toucher/touched indeterminacy more precisely than one hand grabbing the other.⁵⁶

Mucus' refractive ability does not end there. It is useful to revisit one of the quotes that open this section.

As Vasseleu explained:

The mucus is an interior which could not be more intimately me, yet which evades my mastery.⁵⁷ The bodies interiority is ungraspable in so far as it is unopposable to any other thing, and is refractory to concepts of containment and dissipation, penetration and recollection, visibility and form. To describe the indeterminacy of the mucous as unrepresentable would be to miss the point. The mucous is a continuation of the body beyond its existence as a phenomenon or an indistinguishable contiguity and porosity of interiority and skin.⁵⁸

As Whitford points out⁵⁹ Irigaray's mucus is neither strictly male or female, solid nor fluid, subject nor object, visible nor invisible, and cannot be detached. Thus, is not readily incorporated into male sexual fantasy, with its objectification and mastery. Mucus is always to some extent open, and therefore defiant to the closure necessary for control. Likewise (in a rather appropriating move of my own. That is, my appropriation of Irigaray's work into my question of the animal still recapitulates the appropriation of the feminine) a topology of animality as mucosity would also defy objectification and control. It would also allow for another visibility of the human and animal. As Vasseleu suggests, "[t]he blink maintains the eye as mucus, as a latency which, while not of the visible, resuscitates the eye as a body passage, or a reserve in which another vision can begin."⁶⁰

Irigaray's reconception of the flesh as a mucosity becomes extremely important in her look at sexual difference. For Merleau-Ponty the flesh, as chiasm, is un-opposable, it is the medium where oppositions arise and become opposed; it is pre-sexed. It is where (sexual) oppositions can crossover and what prevents their collapse. However, as Irigaray suggests, Merleau-Ponty latently codes the flesh with feminine and maternal tropes. The flesh in its dehiscence of the sentient and the sensed is a perpetual pregnancy and birth. For instance, as Merleau-Ponty says, in a quote that is representative of this latent coding elsewhere in his work: "The flesh of the lived body and the world is not inert matter, but

perpetual pregnancy, perpetual parturition, generativity and generality, brute essence and brute existence."⁶¹ The flesh is not pre-sexed, it is implicitly sexed as female, and Merleau-Ponty does not acknowledge his debt to and appropriation of the feminine. Within the flesh, this latent femininity figures as a lack. Within the reversibility of the double sensation of the hands there is a reflexivity of sexual difference. Yet, as Irigaray points out woman has no intrinsic propriety of her own. Woman has always existed as a male lacking, which is not a positive existence at all. Vesseleu writes:

Irigaray maintains that each being of woman is a materialization that differs in relation with itself such that no gathering of the difference is possible... an interior co-existence of different being(s) is not divisible phenomenologically. *The difference of this interiority is a resistance to closure exceeding the (in)coherence of flesh. Irigaray raises the question of whether Merleau-Ponty's configuration of difference is as radical as he suggests, or whether his non-dualist ontology can be criticized for allowing no space for radically other modes of existence.*⁶²

This poses serious problems for any appeal to Merleau-Ponty's work to explore the radically different existence of animals. Similar to Irigaray's claim that woman's existence is always a negation, Derrida shows that animals too are always an ontological lack with no intrinsic essence: "there is no category of original existence for the animal."⁶³ For him animals are the essential supplements for what does get to exist essentially. There is a slight solipsistic tendency in the reversibility of the flesh where the animal or woman is only the inversion of the human and the man. Reversibility still insinuates an isomorphism of subject and object, man and woman, and human and animal. This is not to say that Merleau-Ponty's chiasm is a problem that we should or could abandon. It is a profound articulation of a side of the double bind of having to represent the unrepresentability of animals. Further, Merleau-Ponty's location along this double bind is in no way fixed. This double bind parallels the tremendous problem of navigating the relation of ontological difference and species difference. This 'problem' in Merleau-Ponty's work, of allowing no room for radically other modes of existence, is not to be avoided. This is where one might catch the whiff of an animal in the breeze. Let us swelter in it. Waft it towards our face. However, and this may be the biggest 'problem' with Merleau-Ponty's flesh, it may smell much worse than he suspected. The smell of flesh is not always pleasant. I want to show how it can be repulsive. This leads me into my discussion of Derrida and Levinas. This shift is not to be seen as linear or hierarchical. Their work will in turn lead back to Merleau-Ponty's. None of them are in the lead here. The animal that we are tracing is in the lead. In/between these three thinkers will emerge the trace of the animal as trace.

If there is an alterity of the animal that exceeds Merleau-Ponty's (in)coherence of the flesh it is perhaps felt in the look of the animal. The speculative tone of this hypothesis (in the previous sentence) is still not enough to eliminate the appropriation of this alterity. However, the look of the animal is where I will now turn to try and traumatize Merleau-Ponty's flesh. I want to rip it apart and let it decay.

Decomposing Flesh: The Anti-Phenomenon Phenomenology

Indignation over cruelty diminishes in proportion as the victims are less like normal readers, the more they are swarthy, “dirty” dago-like. This throws as much light on the crimes as on the spectators. Perhaps the social schematization of perception in anti-Semites is such that they do not see Jews as human beings at all. The constantly encountered assertion that savages, blacks, Japanese are like animals, monkeys for example, is key to the pogrom. *The possibility of the pogroms is decided in the moment when the gaze of the fatally-wounded animal falls on a human being. The defiance with which he repels this gaze—“after all, it’s only an animal”—reappears irresistibly in cruelties done to human beings, the perpetrators having again and again to reassure themselves that it is “only an animal,” because they could never fully believe this even of animals. In repressive society the concept of man is itself a parody of divine likeness. The mechanism of “pathic projection” determines that those in power perceive as human only their own reflected image, instead of reflecting back the human as precisely what is different. Murder is thus the repeated attempt, by greater madness, to distort the madness of such false perceptions into reason: what was not seen as human and yet is human, is made a thing, so that its stirrings can no longer refute the manic gaze.*⁶⁴

Theodor Adorno.

The act of animalization anesthetizes one to violence. It makes one numb to one’s responsibilities to the other. It allows one to stay within the human realm of the same, of phenomenon, of knowledge. The structure of animality from the beginning is that it is that which hides violence. Thus, any unquestioned adoption of animality by an environmentalist only serves to undermine their goals. As Gary Wolfe, quoting from Etienne Balibar, points out “‘every theoretical racism draws upon *anthropological universals*,’ underneath which we find ‘the persistent presence of the same ‘question’: that of *the difference between humanity and animality*’ that is at work in ‘the systematic ‘bestialization’ of individuals and racial groups.”⁶⁵ Importantly, Wolfe also adds “that even though the *discourse* of animality and species difference may theoretically be applied to an other of whatever type, the consequences of that discourse, in *institutional* terms, fall overwhelmingly on the nonhuman animals.”⁶⁶

Responsibility to the other can only come as other, but animalization homogenizes thus foreclosing the ethical relation. However, Adorno points to a resistance of such attempts at animalization—the ‘stirrings’. The gaze of the animal that Adorno mentions resonates with Derrida and Levinas’ absolute alterity that traumatizes and ruptures the human subject and its attempt to ontologize and animalize. It ruptures the subject in so far as it infuses it with what cannot be fused. The gaze of the other, before it is named ‘animal’ or ‘human’, puts one violently and irrevocable out of phase with oneself. Alterity for Merleau-Ponty was not as traumatizing. His flesh was composed not decomposed. The flesh of the chiasm did not get cut open and begin to rot. There was not the putrid stench of carrion. Perhaps the animal looking back, the handshake with another, the petting of the pet, or better, getting bit by another creature and the resultant infected wound, exceeds the (in)coherence of Merleau-Ponty’s flesh. Perhaps the unity of Merleau-Ponty’s flesh, as precarious and disharmonious as it was, was still an attempt to humanize the other, which is what animalization amounts to. That is, to call another an animal is to annex it into the human realm with its clear limits of human and animal. However, as Adorno

suggests, in spite of such attempts to animalize (read: humanize) the animal still cuts across such limits. Thus, there is always hope for an encounter with the other, therefore hope of an ethical exchange.

Commenting on this passage of Adorno's, Lippit says:

Adorno's insight reveals that the animal as such is never a mere animal, its gaze exceeds the "thingness" of the nonhuman being and penetrates the human sphere—which is to say, that the "it's only an animal" utterance fails, in the first instance, to perform the immunity from guilt that the metaphor promises to the perpetrator of violence [The anesthetization is never sufficient to numb one completely to the animal's look]. Thus the series of pathic projections that lead inevitably to the pogrom begin with the collapse of the metaphor, with the failure of the figure to prevent a fundamentally *ethical* exchange: an irrevocable contact between human and nonhuman beings.⁶⁷

Here Lippit introduces what is perhaps missing in Merleau-Ponty's flesh—an authentic ethical exchange. For Levinas, Merleau-Ponty's ethics of the flesh remains imminent.⁶⁸ Levinas will argue that in the human face, and in perhaps the animal's face too, there is an ethical relation of responsibility that is more primary than ontology. Derrida the animal "has a point of view regarding me. The Point of view of the absolute other, and nothing will have ever done more to make me think through this absolute alterity of the neighbor than these moments when I see myself naked under the gaze of a cat."⁶⁹ Nudity is the epitome of non-insulation, and thus it is the removal of the insulation that animality provides against violence. Lippit suggests that this ethical exchange, that of the gaze of the animal's face, marks the collapse of the metaphor. This is where there is a breach in the human-animal border. Here is perhaps where we will pick up the animal's scent. Lippit continues on by saying: "Pathic projections, for Adorno, do penetrate and *affect* the ethical and linguistic structures of world. The animal and its remote, even technological being—Descartes, one recalls, likens animals to "automata"—are never far enough away to establish an ethical field distinct from that inhabited by human beings."⁷⁰ The fact that this pathic ethical contact is experienced as affect highlights how Merleau-Ponty's emphasis of the corporeal and affective experience cannot be so quickly discarded. This only suggests that there are both types of betrayal of the animal in his account of the flesh, as there is in Levinas and Derrida's as well.

John Caputo reconfigures Merleau-Ponty's conception of the flesh drawing on Levinas and Derrida. Caputo suggests that Merleau-Ponty's writing on the body (and the flesh) is still very much in line with philosophy's body, which Merleau-Ponty sought to challenge.⁷¹ This not only means that this body is a philosopheme, with all the identity, homogeneity and unity that that must entail, but also that "[p]hilosophy's body—from Plato and Aristotle to Merleau-Ponty—is an active, athletic, healthy, erect, white male⁷² body, sexually able unambiguously gendered, well born, well bred, and well buried." In a word, Merleau-Ponty's concept of the body and flesh was composed. Caputo wants to get at the body that is missed and neutralized by Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. His reconceived body is "disfigured, diseased, unburied, sacrificial, and ashen..."⁷³ For Caputo, flesh is antiphilosophical and antiphenomenological. "Flesh' is not the sight of the 'intertwining' of being and sense, but the scene of a disastrous tearing asunder, a scene of senseless laceration, ulceration, and incineration. Flesh is what happens to a body stripped of being and sense, that suffers the violent loss of its world."⁷⁴ This is the

aspect of the flesh that Merleau-Ponty did not focus on—vulnerability. We are flesh. We eat flesh. We can be eaten. The self decomposes, and it decomposes the consumed other. Caputo notes [p]hilosophical bodies by and large seem not to eat; or their meals are taken in private and go largely unnoticed...⁷⁵ Why has consumption not been focused on? Caputo continues:

We who eat are ourselves eaten. We who would like to think of ourselves as pure I or spirit, indeed we male philosophers who do not even breast-feed, we must confess to being flesh/ *Fleisch*⁷⁶, consumable, edible meat...We dread the loss of our substance.... [This] announces a haunting transformation and disfiguration of the flesh which never quite figures in *The Visible and the Invisible*: to become flesh is to become consumable: carnivorous and *caro*, eating and eaten...⁷⁷

Here we see how Merleau-Ponty remained too ontological, if you will. His conception of composed flesh, similar to knowledge, being, self, and so on, that he was challenging, longs to eat while remaining inedible. Knowledge appropriates (consumes) the other, yet does not acknowledge it. Caputo claims “[t]here is...an implicit if repressed ‘metaphysics of eating’ in metaphysics. ‘Spirit’ which wants to raise itself above flesh, is in fact a higher, more perfect, decontaminated flesh, a flesh that has been insulated against the possibility of being consumed.”⁷⁸ This insulation against consumption in Caputo’s analysis resonates with the above discussion of animalization of the other as an anesthetic to the animal’s gaze. One cannot separate the consumption of the subject’s reason from that of their mouth. The animal’s look is that which exceeds/feeds knowledge’s consumption. However, with Caputo, as with Adorno, and Lippit’s reading of him, this anesthetization and insulation is never sufficient. The fact that ‘our’ flesh must consume flesh, be it animal or plant (not that this division can be held) and, in turn, can be consumed, is repressed in Merleau-Ponty’s account. This is the shift that Caputo is making in his refiguring of the flesh. Drawing on Derrida and Levinas, Caputo wants to focus on flesh’s consumption and vulnerability. Both make us animal. Both reveal the animal in the human. Our consumption shows our *brutality*. Our consumability shows us we our mortal earthly creatures. Both consumption and vulnerability are necessary to flesh, not potential. These are two articulations of the flesh’s dependence on the other, most notably, the animal other. As Lippit noted above, where the insulation fails is the point of ethical exchange. With the self’s vulnerability, and the vulnerability of the other which it must consume, comes obligation. We have responsibility to what we violently consume with our mouths and our reason, once again, not that these can be separated, nor collapsed. These obligations are what Merleau-Ponty’s conception of flesh mystifies. This is why Caputo wants to shift the

paradigm from eye and mind and breath to *nose* and mouth and teeth and swallowing; that is why [he has] abandoned good form⁷⁹ for the improprieties of disfiguration. [Caputo is] less interested in the visible than in the edible and consumable or even...the flammable. For after all, flesh burns and turns to ash, and the foul *smell* of burning flesh is central to its scandal....Are ashes phenomena, beings that emerge into presence, or are they merely the ashen remainder [traces] of quasi beings, quasi-present, half beings and half nonbeing....Cinders make for obligation. Chiasmic intertwining is still too Greek....still too much a captive to the metaphysics of identity and propriety and of the belonging together of Being and thought.⁸⁰

Caputo offers us a good segue into the work of Derrida and Levinas. He also offers us a good tip in tracking animals: use your nose and mouth. Scent has an affinity for the ashen and absent presences, and present absence of the animal. The mouth reminds us that the self, with its knowledge, always means trouble for the flesh of the other. If we are to enter into an ethical relation with another, this will have to involve the economy, which is anything but an economy, of this violence (by economy here I mean movement of exchange). This ethical relation can only be spelled out in Caputo's (anti)phenomenological flesh. This will allow us to trace the animal through the an-archic relation of the metaphoric and the literal. This will allow us to track the animal loose in this text, in the hopes of an authentic ethical encounter. An encounter that can only take place at the limit of the human self. As Lippit suggests "metaphors end where they begin—in the mouth."⁸¹ He continues: "If the animal enters the world then, it does so not through representation but through incorporation.... When the metaphoricity of the metaphor collapses, the concept becomes a metonymic thing that can be eaten. Derrida has much to say about eating flesh well. Lets track the animal through this terrain which will allow us, in turn, to chase an ethical encounter with animal in Levinas, but first a little more on metaphors and writing with Derrida.

Derrida: The (De)composition of a Textual Animal

The atmosphere of the forest was almost unbreathable with its Turkish-bath heat, its *reeking* moisture, and its powerful *smell of decaying, rotting* vegetation. We seem, in fact, to be transported back to Miocene times, to an age and a climate scarcely suitable for the modern type of *real humanity*.⁸²

Sir Harry Johnston.

Often, the question of human ethical obligations to non-humans has pivoted on animals' ability to use language. Derrida takes a different approach which is nicely summed up by Wolfe in the following:

“rather than extending the ability of ‘linguaging’ outward, beyond the human sphere, one can instead move in the opposite direction and erode that notion of language from the inside out to show that if animals never quite possessed it, neither do we, with the result that language, rather than simplifying the question of ethics by securing the boundary between the human and the rest of creation, instead now reopens it— permanently...”⁸³

We can now see how questions concerning language, text, and writing are central to environmentalism. Now let us turn to one of these questions which I opened this paper with: how can there literally be an animal loose in this text? This is a good question given my claim that this animal is of a realness of the highest order (and this realness has meaning on many different planes). My goal here is to capture an animal as it ‘really’ is, and capture our ethical responsibilities to it. However, is it not the case that the only way animals can appear in a text or in writing is as a representation, metaphor, trope, or figure? Real animals are to be found outside of texts, in nature, or in the barn. That is the proper locus for environmental ethics and politics, it is usually claimed, at least in mainstream western environmental thought. However, this dominant schema all depends on very dominant divisions of the symbolic, metaphorical, textual, and written from that of the real, proper, material and literal (Here I am grouping these terms up into two general categories, which can be seen to oppose one another in the dominant schema. This does a disservice to the particularity of each term and its particular relations with other terms, not all of which will be fully explored in this paper). But what if these divisions do not hold? Or better, what if they do hold, for very real distinctions can be made between these oppositions, yet their manifestations form in rather paradoxical, ever multiplying, contradictory, and very un-oppositional ways? For instance, often the most real is found in the most metaphorical, and vice versa. For example, metaphorical poetry is often considered to best capture the real. From where do these oppositions arise? What ‘logic’, let us call it a ‘broader logic’, do they follow? It cannot be classical logic (by ‘classic logic’ here, I am grouping together a rather large diverse discipline that encompasses the study of logic from Greek times to contemporary Anglo-American analytic logic, formal logic, and so on. Not to mention many other meanings of the term logic) which philosophy valorizes and which is logocentrism, *par excellence*. Aristotle identified the first rule of classic logic as the law of non-contradiction: you cannot have both A and not-A. This ‘logic’ is broader in the sense that it exceeds and encompasses classic

logic. It is the logic of classic logic. 'Broad logic' thrives in contradictions, much as animals do. Contradictions are that which is wild to reason, what is unreasonable, like animality. This 'logic', in the broader sense, predates classic logic's arrival, and supports this arrival. Derrida has drawn parallels of this 'logic' to in his conception of writing and texts, also to be understood in this broader sense. Elsewhere he has described this logic as *differance*. However, it is misleading to think that there is some logic, medium, or what have you, that remains the same, and which Derrida describes with various names, such as writing, text, *differance*, etc. This is already to understand it in terms of understanding and such oppositions as same and different. Beyond or on the hither side of these oppositions Derrida explores the economy, structures and dynamics of the logic of oppositions. I would like to now turn to two of his works that explore this 'logic' in the use of metaphor and writing, with the aim of helping us understand how the 'real' animal, which we are tracking, can be in this paper.

In Derrida's essay *White Mythologies*⁸⁴ he looks at the use of metaphor. He argues that philosophy's and sciences' posture to metaphor, to use gross generalizations, must always be ambiguous. Metaphor must be both a loss and a gain. If philosophy is to establish itself as the realm of the concept, of the philosopheme, or the proper, it must establish its other as metaphor. In this opposition the proper is what is right, what is just right, and what behaves properly and rightly. Much as a proper noun, or at least the metaphor for one, is proper, its identity can be fixed. Metaphors are impossible to pin down. Metaphor could not come about without this opposition, and all the other oppositions of which it is a part. Philosophy needs a threat to establish its borders. Thus, on the one hand, philosophy sees metaphor as a threat; metaphor is the non-literal and improper; it is claimed that it is merely the representation or a copy of the real and not the real thing itself. A danger for philosophy is that it can be mistaken as the real. Another danger is its unruliness. It must, therefore, be cast out of the realm of the proper, the realm of the same, where it is ruining the uniformity of clear knowing, and made other-orientalism, *par excellence*. On the other hand, metaphor must always offer a gain to philosophy. Philosophy needs an other in which to see its reflection. There needs to be an opening, a departure, in order for there to be the re-turn of re-flection and re-cognition. The self needs an orientaled other in order to be re-presented with its truth. Truth as presence. Being presented with one's self in the other. Truth as self-reflection. Thus, philosophy is both threatened by and needs metaphor. Further, metaphor needs philosophy in this oppositional formation.

This ambiguity of metaphor can help one rethink some environmental political strategies. For instance, often it is useful to reveal the hidden metaphors of a dominant 'discourse'. That is, show how what is being taken as the thing itself, is really just a metaphor for it (and the thing itself will always be beyond). This tends to disturb the dominant discourses sedimentation, its reification, its claims to absolute authority, and so on. However, the problem with this approach becomes apparent when one notices the metaphors for metaphor that I just used above: 'reveal', 'hidden', and 'sedimentation'. These metaphors that were presupposed in my articulation of metaphor are themselves part of the very logocentrism that I am trying to disturb. The noteworthy point being that any project of revealing the figurative in the proper,

will itself be dependent on the figurative. The figurative cannot be avoided. Further, there will always be a figurative aspect that will be hidden—a blind spot to reason. Moreover, the whole opposition of the figurative/proper will always already be at play. Consequently, not only will such a project necessarily contain a 'metaphorical' component, but it will always have a 'proper' component as well. That is, it will assume to have found 'The Real', therefore denying its metaphoricity.

We are now a step closer to understanding what Lippit meant in the quote, in section (I) above, where he said:

One finds a fantastic transversality at work between the animal and the metaphor—the animal is already a metaphor, the metaphor an animal. Together they transport to language, breath into language, the vitality of another life, another expression: animal and metaphor, a metaphor made flesh, a living metaphor that is by definition not a metaphor, antimetaphor, 'animetaphor.' ... The animal brings to language something that is not part of language and remains within language as a foreign presence.⁸⁵

This is all key to tracking the animal traces, the animal as trace, in the animal flesh of my metaphors in this text, and the metaphors in the animal flesh in the forest or barn, or at the end of your fork. Lippit also notes: "The animetaphoric figure is consumed literally rather than figuratively.... At the edges of the mouth where the metaphor has ceased, one senses, perhaps tastes, the end of the world as such.... The animetaphor can be seen as a kind of *zoon*, inhabiting the edge of figurative language, marking the absence of subjectivity."⁸⁶

We can see a similar, yet different, 'logic' at work in Derrida's discussion of writing in his essay *Plato's Pharmacy*⁸⁷. In this essay Derrida explores the posture Plato took, in his dialogue the *Phaedrus* (and that Platonism/Philosophy/mainstream science takes) towards alterity. The otherness of writing is a manifestation of the unknown, the alien, what does not make sense, what is illogical, a contradiction. Plato attempts to master this otherness, fix it as writing, in the narrow sense of the word—writing as dichotomized and opposed to speech and the represented. Plato tries to keep the outsider of writing out and then fortifies the border.

Derrida, in a way, is not critiquing Plato for this. Derrida is showing how this Platonic posture towards alterity is guided by, and presupposes a more 'anterior' necessity (but not an anteriority understood in the usual sense, not understood in terms of understanding—reason). Derrida is showing that Plato had no 'choice' ('choice' already being fixed by the oppositions voluntary/involuntary, conscious/unconscious, etc.) but to see writing, as a threat, as a poison, by establishing truth as full presence.

The Platonic approach of mastering otherness as writing is futile. Writing cannot be fixed by such oppositions as writing/speech, *logos/mythos*, presence/absence, self/other, etc. In fact, it is precisely what cannot be dominated by these oppositions, what escapes them. Further, it is what allows them to manifest, materialize, ontologize. Writing, again here understood in a broad sense, opens up the element or medium these oppositions are 'in'. Writing in the broad sense is the 'source', but a source that is always already beyond, as such. A source that cannot be brought into knowledge. A source that only is

presented in knowledge as an absence that is outside the outside, as Derrida says (because an outside is already tied to, thus part of, an inside, within this reflective opposition).

Like the metaphor, writing cannot only be treated as a threat, however. Writing, like the term *pharmakon* (or drug) is an equivocation. For *pharmakon* not only has to be seen as a poison, it also has to be seen as a remedy. Writing then becomes a resource or supplement for the absent presence/origin/father/sun/king/etc. Derrida highlights a striking example of this equivocation. He points out that Plato makes an appeal to that which is to be excluded. Plato uses writing in the 'metaphor' of The Form's *inscription* on the soul, which are to be re-collected. The other, writing, is thus in the very heart of the same. Plato had to establish good writing via the bad. That is, while attempting to institute the realm of the proper, the realm cleared of any mere imitations, any writing, he appeals to writing. Derrida argues that writing must serve as an essential supplement to what it is opposed to. However, writing as a supplement for the absent presence can always be mistaken for presence (the sun mistaken for the father, the moon for the sun, the remedy for the poison, and so on.). Thus, the equivocation can never be fixed.

In terms of our current hunt for the animal other, Derrida's discussion proves very useful. How are animals a *pharmakon* and a supplement? Why are we trying to capture one? Can an animal be fixed? Derrida speaks directly, not that one can speak directly, to the question of animal in another work to which I now turn.

What is the relation between 'the human' and 'the animal'? Should environmentalists try to efface the difference between humans and animals? This is one way that some environmentalists, including myself at some points, have made an appeal to Derrida's work. What is the limit of the human realm like? How has the animal been used to configure the human realm and its borders? What happens to these borders when one is addressed by an animal? In Derrida's article *The Animal That Therefore I am (More to Follow)*⁸⁸ not only does he shed light on such questions as these, he also shows how he has been dealing with these questions all along.

In the article Derrida looks at what is happening when a human (although what is 'human', and what is not, is precisely what is under question) names another creature 'animal'. This process of naming the other 'animal', placing it in such a general category that it can include almost every other creature, enables the human to identify humanity. It is the casting out of the other. This animalization is the fortifying of the self, a self supposedly of pure reason, logos, identity, and so on. To set up the human-animal dichotomy is thus akin to those many other dichotomies that Derrida has dealt with during his career. Naming animals is the determining of what is proper to man through privation; humans have reason, language, consciousness, etc. because that is what animals allegedly lack. These property lines must be heavily guarded. Further, any transgression must be denied, ignored and repressed with tremendous vigilance. Such transgressions as sympathy for the death of an animal must not be given voice. Sympathy is identification with what is supposed to be on the other side of a mutually exclusive

binary. Derrida points out that it is this binary, with its denial of sympathy or any responsibility to what are called 'animals', allows for the unprecedented slaughter of countless numbers of 'animals'.

If this process of establishing the human-animal border causes such violence does Derrida suggesting that it should be broken down? This is indeed the approach that many environmentalists have taken. That is, putting forward a type of unity of human and animal. Derrida suggests quite the contrary in the following:

There is no animal in the general singular, separated from man by a single indivisible limit. We have to envisage the existence of 'living creatures' whose plurality cannot be assembled within a single figure of an animality that is simply opposed to humanity. This does not of course mean ignoring or effacing everything that separates humankind from the other animals, creating a single large set, a single great, fundamentally homogeneous and continuous family tree... ..it is rather a matter of taking into account a multiplicity of heterogeneous structures and limits.⁸⁹

Thus one should not try to unify humans and animals. The differences between humans and animals cannot simply be ignored. However, nor should one set up a single indivisible limit with opposing groups and two edges that can be traced and thematized. Derrida wants to think of the limit as a discontinuous abysmal rupture. He wants to "multiply its figures, to complicate, thicken, delinearize, fold, and divide the line precisely by making it increase and multiply."⁹⁰

Paradoxically, to set up a unilinear oppositional limit amounts to creating a homogeneous unity. The name 'animal' within this opposition remain within sameness. It remains within the same, the self, identity, knowledge, self-consciousness, and so on. Derrida calls for a rupture of this unity, a rupture with the self, a rupture which would be contact with the other. Here Derrida points to the unsettling experience of being seen by his cat (A topic we have already explored in Adorno's text above). This being seen is disturbing. It disturbs the self. It disrupts the unity of the single oppositional limit of human-animal. The other's gaze is an alterity and individuality that cannot be captured by an oppositional limit. It precedes it. But again, this preceding cannot be understood within the realm of temporality or knowledge, it is an anachronistic preceding. The realm of knowledge and the chronological is already the realm of single oppositional limits attempting to capture pure presence. This contact with the other that is called animal happens before this naming. The self arrives late to this other (I take this as one of the meanings of the word 'follow' in Derrida's title). The question now becomes: what can be gleaned from *this* contact with *this* irreducible creature addressing me with its gaze? This is Derrida's starting point in attempting to recognize the responsibilities of those erroneously named 'humans' to those erroneously named 'animals'. Derrida developed this (anti)conception of responsibility out of Emanuel Levinas' radical reorientation of ethics.

Levinas: Decomposition and Facing *The Animal Otherwise*

Levinas makes the ethical relationship more primary than the ontological one. The ontological relation here is everything that is. Ontology here is the study of being in all its manifestations and is manifestation, as such, be it materiality, phenomenology, existence, knowledge, or what have you. The ethical relation for Levinas is what is absolutely otherwise than being. And this radical alterity precedes and exceeds the opposition of being and not-being. This reorientation of ethics over ontology challenges most, if not all, western thought, including environmental thought, which has traditionally held ontology (knowledge, truth, being, substance, matter, reason, and so on, all of which Levinas sees as ontological) as primary. Consequently, Levinas shows, or shows how you cannot show, the limits of knowing. Specifically, he shows the limits, and the underlying 'causes', of knowledge in the ethical realm and in meeting our responsibilities to the other. Levinas highlights the imperialism of knowledge. The self appropriates alterity into sameness; knowing—consciousness—can thus be seen as self-consciousness, egoistic, and a nostalgic search for selfresemblance. Levinas claims that the primacy of being has fueled this imperialism of knowledge. Its totalizing effect eliminates otherness (or at least tries to) leaving only homogeneity. For Levinas, knowledge, being, and so forth, all presuppose and are dependent on the ethical relationship. All knowledge is always already in relation, and subordinate to our ethical relation with the other. The ethical relation 'precedes' knowledge. Thought arrives late to the ethical. The, by now familiar, scare quotes on the word 'precede' in the above sentence already attest to the hegemony of knowledge; 'precede' has always been thought of only in terms of thought. The radicalness of Levinas' ethical relation is that it is of a wholly other realm than thought (A realm that is not a realm. A realm that cannot be captured by the distinction of realm/non-realm). And importantly, it cannot be brought into the realm of thought, knowledge, being, etc. Thus, the ethical relation even precedes preceding. It is precisely what cannot be totalized under the imperialism of knowledge. It is the Absolute Other. Yet our responsibility to the other, given from a frailty and from a height in the face of the other, commands the impossible: one *must* bring the other into the same, one must represent the un-representable in knowledge. But it must be represented only as that which is beyond, while all the while keeping the futility of this venture in the foreground. This responsibility can never be satiated. In fact, for Levinas the more one meets one's responsibility the greater one's responsibility becomes. Through the double bind, that we have already discussed, of having to represent the un-representable, there is a betrayal of the other. But remember, betray has two meanings: (i) to do a disservice to, and (ii) to reveal. It is a revealing but only as a trace.

From this all-too-brief sketch we can see that Levinas is acutely aware of the limits of knowledge. That is, knowledge's imperialistic assimilation of ethical alterity into sameness. However, when it comes to the non-human other, it could be argued that Levinas seems quite unaware of the appropriating dynamics of knowledge. On the few occasions that Levinas does speak to the question of whether we

have ethical responsibilities to animals he is reluctant to say that they can have a face, in his ethical sense.

The face for Levinas is what surpasses the self's thought of the other. The face is where the other is revealed (betrayed) to the self. It exceeds the self because it is an encounter with the infinite—being's exterior. The face is what puts the self and its freedom into question. It makes the self responsible to the other. The manifestation of the self can be seen as already a response to the demand for responsibility to the face. This is in part what Levinas means by ethics' primacy. The self and knowledge are already subordinate and a reply to the other. His shift to the primacy of ethics over ontology is this subordination of the ontological into the context of responsibility. One always already finds one *self* responsible to the other. And the face is the porthole where the other presents itself otherwise than a mere negation of the self. However the term 'porthole', which seems to locate this exchange, is still ontological. Levinas shifts the exchange of the face to ethical less localizable terms such as command or demand, which also highlights the primacy of the ethical other. What *is*, or what we *are*, or what the animal *is*, is secondary to our responsibility to the injunction revealed through the face. This ethical relation is beyond what is, hence it can only be understood, or better, not understood, ethically. One's responsibility comes before understanding. When one must meet this responsibility one cannot understand it. One must give alms to the needy before, or in spite of not, making sense of the act. The face and the ethical act are what cannot be made sense of. Sense is of the self. The gift to the other will not make sense to the self. The self will want an exchange. Levinas characterizes the face as a vulnerability (which raises interesting parallels with Caputo's, and thus Merleau-Ponty's, discussion of the vulnerability of the flesh). Vulnerability demands the posture of giving to the other. Thus Levinas' ethical reorientation demands just the openness to the other that is crucial to animal tracking. If we want to meet our responsibility to the animal we must turn to its face. Also, in Levinas' theory, the face is not (only) to be limited to the phenomenon of the anatomical region of the front of your head. Perhaps the wagging of the tail can be 'face like', in Levinas' sense?

What is noteworthy here, is not whether animals do or do not have a face (although this question will be broached below), but whether Levinas can even make a *radical* opposition between the human and the non-human (or between the living and the non-living) or not? Is such an opposition not just the totalizing (logocentric) effect of knowledge? Is the animal other, qua other species, not an absolute other? Or is human ethical difference more primary than species difference? Can Levinas consistently maintain that the ethical other is wholly other and that it can only be human? Further, what are the reasons that Levinas maintains this opposition? What 'logic' or 'necessity' is there to the places where animality or 'the natural' shows up in Levinas' text? Was it a shortcoming of Levinas to not give animals faces (if he indeed did not)? Moreover, where do such questions come 'from'? Could these very questions already be a response to the call of the animal other—a (respons)ibility? Are not these very questions quite Levinasian? And do they not precisely represent the tremendous value Levinas' theory has to offer environmentalism? Or do these questions, which are (also) Derridian 'in nature', conflate

Levinas' ethical relation with knowledge? A lot of questions. Questions that index my long struggle in engaging Levinas' theory with environmental concerns. Not a lot of answers; but in spite of this, or better, precisely because of this (for answers prevent one from living 'through' an *aporia*, and there is more to things than what can be given in the form of an answer) Levinas' ethical reorientation has and will continue to prove fruitful for environmental thought. But what exactly is Levinas' relation to environmental thought?

A Face or Not a Face? Is that the Only Question?

Levinas offers some *answers* in an interview:

[Question]...*is there something distinctive about the human face which, for example, sets it apart from an animal?*

Levinas: One cannot entirely refuse the face of an animal. It is via the face that one understands, for example, a dog. Yet the priority here is not found in the animal, but in the human face. We understand the animal, the face of the animal, in accordance with *Dasein*. The phenomenon of the face is not in its purest form in the dog. In the dog, in the animal, there are other phenomena. For example, the force of nature is pure vitality. It is more this that characterizes the dog. But it also has a face.⁹¹

One way of approaching the question of Levinas and environmentalism is to give a face to animals. This, however, presupposes and further reifies the dualism between the human and the animal. Should not the absolute otherness of the face of another come before any *identification* of species? The dualism of human and animal arguably may be *The environmental problem*, for all the same reasons that Levinas himself points out in other dualisms, such as self/other, being/non-being, and so on. When it comes to the human/animal schema, Levinas seems oblivious to these dualistic dynamics. Dynamics that seem to get further mystified when one tries to determine if animals have faces.

If one puts aside the project of 'facing nature' for the time being, one may notice how the animal here, in Levinas' response, is always secondary and extrinsic to the human. Levinas is configuring the 'human' face out of a background of animality. Also of importance, he is foregrounding the alterity of the human face against the background of Heidegger's *Dasein*. Thus, the human/animal dichotomy is brought into, reinforces, and reflects Levinas' opposition to Heidegger, arguable one of the most influential oppositions in Levinas' texts. Further on in the interview we again see this configuring of the human out of the animal:

[Question] According to your analysis, the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' is revealed by the human face; but is the commandment not also expressed in the face of the animal? Can an animal be considered as the other that must be welcomed? Or is it necessary to possess the possibility of speech to be a 'face' in the ethical sense?

[Levinas:] I cannot say at what moment you have the right to be called 'face'. The human face is completely different and only afterwards do we discover the face of the animal. I don't know if a snake has a face. I can't answer that question. A more specific analysis is needed.⁹²

But this “more specific analysis”, here, in this context, would only conceal this configuration of the human out of the animal. A configuration that makes the animal an ‘afterthought’, when in fact, any talk of the ‘human’ must always presuppose the animal. Or, as he later says in the interview, “[i]t is clear that, without considering animals as human beings, the ethical *extends* to all living beings ...the *prototype* of this is human ethics. Vegetarianism, for example, arises from the *transference* to animals of the idea of suffering.”⁹³ Is this “extension” and “transference” not the appropriation of alterity by the same, *par excellence*? Moreover, the project of extending the face to animals seems dependent on the radical opposition of the human and animal; there can be no such project if no opposition is maintained. This project of transference, and his maintaining of this opposition, both only develop out of Levinas’ appeal to animality as a resource to configure the human face as the pure locus of the ethical relation. Moreover, this configuration and dichotomization represent the appropriation of alterity that Levinas was challenging.

When looking at the same configuration of the human out of animality in Heidegger, Derrida draws this conclusion: “There is no such thing as Animality, but only a regime of differences without opposition.”⁹⁴ He continues in saying that animality is a human artifact that is difficult to wield, and whose effect is to efface difference and to homogenize. If we are to assume that this conclusion can be applied to Levinas than it would appear that he is effacing difference, which is what he set out to maintain. As we saw Derrida state in section (IV) above (and it is important enough that it bears repeating again):

There is no animal in the general singular, separated from man by a single indivisible limit. We have to be able to envisage the existence of ‘living creatures’ whose plurality cannot be assembled within the single figure of an animality that is simply opposed to humanity. This does not of course mean ignoring or effacing everything that separates human kind from the other animals, creating a single large set... ...it is rather a matter of taking into account a multiplicity of heterogeneous structures and limits. Among non-humans and separate from non-humans there is an immense multiplicity of other living things that cannot in anyway be homogenized, except by means of violence and willful ignorance, within the category of what is called the animal or animality in general.⁹⁵

Again it would appear that Levinas’ human face is producing the exact homogenizing violence that it was to disrupt. For there can be no doubt that the configuring process that I have highlighted thus far is the exact process that Derrida is pointing to when he describes the “single figure of an animality that is simply opposed to humanity”. How could it be that Levinas has done what he set out to avoid? Was it just a matter of “willful ignorance” as Derrida suggests? This willful ignorance would amount to ignoring one’s responsibility to the other. Perhaps this is just the violent side of the betrayal of every articulation of the un-articulatable? That is, this violent totality that appears to have ensued out of Levinas concept of the face (that which was to have been the quintessential un-totalizable) may be the consequence of bringing the other into the same. This may be the necessary repercussion of the double-bind that Levinas confronted. We should not forget that the face will inevitably and equivocally manifest into a mere concept. Levinas was challenged with having to make the unreasonable reasonable. He had to spell out a relationship that is impossible to spell out, the relation that is the possibility of possibility and impossibility.

One should also notice the striking similarity between the multiplicity of species and living creatures that Derrida envisions, and the multiplicity of humans, races, cultures, bodies, etc. that Levinas himself envisioned in his paper entitled *Language and Proximity* that will now be discussed below. Is not Derrida just granting 'living creatures' a Levinasian face? This similarity is quite apparent when Levinas looks at the primacy of ethics in this paper.

Here Levinas shows the role of language in the ethical relation to the other. Levinas 'identifies' an aspect of language he describes as pre-originary or pre-language language. This is the ethical aspect of language, or language 'understood' ethically. Or better, it is language as ethics—pre-reflective contact with the other. Another way he describes language ethically is by identifying a double 'nature' of language. In language there is an "amphibology" (equivocation) of the 'saying' and the 'said'. The 'said' is language understood and appropriated by the self. The 'saying' of the other is what resists and transcends this knowing and appropriation. In the saying is our responsibility to the other. The other's saying is an irreducible singularity. But the saying hides in the said, or is present as a hidden. The saying gets trapped in the said. The saying's singularity gets reduced to/in the said. However the saying requires the said to be revealed. Ethics requires both and without their always entwined relation one could not meet one's responsibilities. There is always a saying in the said and *vice versa*

In this arrangement language is the approach to a singularity that is proximity with the other, or ethical contact. Here he says that "[l]anguage is the possibility of entering into a relationship independent of system of signs [one could also read: the said, unity, totality, genus, species, homogeneity, set, etc.] common to the interlocutors. Like a battering-ram, it is the power to break through the limits of culture, body, and race."⁹⁶ It seems to me that this is the multiplicity without unity that Derrida was just describing.

My choice of these two quotes (the ones most immediately quoted above by both respective authors) serves another purpose. The two quotes focus equivocations; the irony of this similarity is that Derrida and Levinas use this multiplicity of heterogeneity for opposite ends. Levinas, in the same paragraph, immediately preceding the one quoted above, claims the impossibility of a "...language that would be imprisoned in the particularism of a species."⁹⁷ Derrida, several lines down, in the same passage as the one just quoted above claims: "It would not be a matter of "giving speech back" to animals but perhaps of acceding to a thinking, however fabulous and chimerical it might be, that thinks the absence of the name and the word otherwise, as something other than privation." One could draw from this that 'animals' would have something along the lines of Levinas' saying or pre-language. Thus, 'animals' would have a face. But not a 'human' face "extended" from the "prototype" in its "purest form". Rather, it would be a face *qua* absolute alterity that would cut across species difference. A 'cutting across' that would not allow for any strong distinction between the 'animal' and the 'human', as such. This would be at odds with Levinas' apparent restriction of the face to the human. *But more importantly, it would be at odds with Levinas' unquestioned reliance on the dichotomy of human/non-human.* Perhaps Levinas went wrong with his premise that we cannot hear 'animals' speak? Adriaan Peperzak notes in summarizing the main characteristics of Levinas' transcendent relation that "[t]he human other's

otherness differs absolutely from the (quasi-) otherness of any non-human being because the former cannot be assimilated or integrated as a moment, part, or function of my consciousness, my knowledge, my plan, or my self-realization."⁹⁸ Maybe the 'animal's' otherness is not 'quasi' and cannot (and has not) be(en) fully assimilated?

Derrida-Levinas, Levinas-Derrida⁹⁹?

However, all is not that clear yet (not that clarity does not have its limits). One could say that the above 'critique', or better, deconstruction, of Levinas' posture to the non-human is a manifestation of a more generalized deconstruction of Levinas' theory by Derrida (or Levinas' theories deconstructing of themselves). For instance, in *Violence and Metaphysics*, and *Adieu* one could generally say that what Derrida is doing is 'classic' deconstruction. That is, he highlights the dynamics, structures, and economy of *differance* and logocentrism at work in Levinas' theory. For example, Derrida shows how Levinas may have dichotomized such oppositions as being/otherwise than being, ontology/ethics, said/saying, politics/ethics, etc. One way of reading this is Derrida showing Levinas that he has to be more vigilant to the effects of *differance*. Levinas does not focus on the inextricable intertwining of oppositions as much as he does the non-collapsibility of them. For Derrida, it makes no sense to speak of a pure saying if it will always already be intertwined with, yet not reducible to, the said. Similarly, Derrida shows how one cannot speak of a pure ethics. Ethics requires politics to be ethical. Politics here being a supplement, but a dangerous one too, a *pharmakon*. Ethics needs politics to be ethical, however, politics is what makes the ethical unethical. The same goes for all the other oppositions in Levinas.

It could be argued, as it was by Levinas,¹⁰⁰ that deconstruction is only applicable at the level of knowledge, and that Derrida conflates Levinas' ethical relation, proximity, approach, contact, saying, etc. with the realm of knowledge. Levinas claims that he is articulating the 'pre'-knowledge relation. The relation before thought gets there, where this before is not understood in terms of knowledge, which it has to be. Thus, it is a before before or an outside outside of knowledge. This is the pre-original pre-personal contact with the other where this 'pre' is not understood causally or as a temporal sequence, or using formal logic. It is the anarchical, anachronistic relation with the absolute beyond. Therefore, Levinas claims, deconstruction is not applicable to it. It could also be argued that Levinas was sufficiently attentive to the violence of the language—the said—he was imbedded in and to the workings of logocentrism. For instance, Levinas offers substantial critiques, perhaps the most substantial, of formal logic, reason, light, the said, etc. All of which are in harmony with, and acknowledged antecedents to, the very deconstructive 'technique' that Derrida is 'using'. All the more reason to conclude that if Levinas was this attentive to the workings of logocentrism, then perhaps what he offers is un-deconstructible.

I am not sure whether this tension (if it is that) between Levinas and Derrida should or can be eliminated. It could just be that it is a difference of emphasis. Both positions resonate with me. Sometimes they appear at odds with each other, sometime complimentary, and other times as both. It

does seem that Levinas is not as attentive to how he is always already embedded in the knowledge realm, and that Derrida's work does make a better bridge for the ethical to be political. However, it also seems as though something valuable in Levinas's theory is lost when you rigorously deconstruct it. Further, at times it appears that Derrida is distorting Levinas' ethical theory in an appropriating move that fits it in with 'his' deconstruction. Yet at other times Derrida seems to offer more than, and move slightly beyond, Levinas' theory. There are also moments when I think that Levinas' 'ethics as first philosophy' (a phrase Levinas uses to describe his theory of the primacy of ethics over philosophy and/or ontology) is the same as 'deconstruction as ethics' (a phrase Derrida develops in such works as *Force of Law*).

What is important here is that one can situate Derrida's deconstruction of Levinas' treatment of the non-human within Derrida's more general deconstruction of Levinas' corpus, and Levinas' responses. Consequently, we might now ask: Is it legitimate for Derrida to deconstruct species difference? Or is the ethical relation beyond such a 'critique'? Is something valuable in Levinas theory lost when it is deconstructed? These are the questions I would like to keep in mind while I take a look at two more texts by these authors.

We Must Eat, So We should Eat Well

The first text is an interview with Derrida called *Eating Well or the Calculation of the Subject*¹⁰¹. Levinas often characterizes the ethical relationship as that of being a hostage. One is a hostage to the other because the other comes from a height. The relation is asymmetrical. Your responsibility for the other comes before your relationship to yourself. Further, you are responsible for the other's responsibility. Thus, for other others. This responsibility is undeniable. If one were to decline their responsibility there would still be an acknowledgment of it. To ask 'am I responsible?' already presupposes responsibility. In fact, responsibility needs to be declinable. If there were no choice it would not be a responsibility. One may choose to meet one's responsibility or not, but one cannot choose being made responsible. It comes as a force. But as a force that cannot be captured by such dichotomies as freedom/necessity, conscious/unconscious, active/passive, and so on. This responsibility is exemplified by the command of the face that 'thou shalt not kill' the other, 'thou shalt not kill thy neighbor'.

What is of interest in this interview is where Derrida points out that '[t]he other, the neighbor, the friend, is no doubt in the infinite distance of transcendence. But the 'thou shalt not kill' is addressed to the other and presupposes him. It is destined to the very thing that it institutes, *the other as man*. It is to him that the subject is first of all held hostage."¹⁰² Levinas' other can only be a human, and humans can only be the other that should not be killed. By limiting responsibility to the human, Levinas ironically limits it to sameness in terms of species. And more importantly, Levinas' responsibility demands the dichotomy of human/non-human. In this exclusion of our responsibility to other species in Levinas' theory, and all of the Judeo-Christian tradition, Derrida wants to identify what he calls a "sacrificial structure."¹⁰³ This is the place left open "...for a non-criminal putting to death" (this would suggest that Levinas' responsibility to human others tacitly implies a consent to murder the non-human). Derrida continues: "Such are the

executions of the ingestion, incorporation, or introjection of the corpse. An operation as real as it is symbolic when the corpse is 'animal' (and who can be made to believe that our cultures are carnivores because animal proteins are irreplaceable?), a symbolic operation when the corpse is 'human'. But the 'symbolic' is very difficult, truly impossible to delimit in this case...." Therefore, it is not just a matter of putting animal flesh in one's mouth, where this is understood only within a physiological-biological-mechanical framework. A framework that has become all too reified in the dominant Western tradition. A framework whose metaphoricality and symbolism has been lost or repressed resulting in it been seen as The Real. As we have seen elsewhere in Derrida's works, the metaphorical or symbolic can never be fully separated or collapsed from the real or material. For instance, there will always be symbolism in the so-called real flesh on your fork and there will always be a materiality to the appropriation of the animal in representing it metaphorically. Certainly this sacrificial structure is intimately tied to the radical separation of the real/symbolic opposition. When one deconstructs the opposition of real/symbolic one can see that the eating of flesh understood physiologically is just one instantiation of the violent relation of self to other.¹⁰⁴ Just as with other oppositions the logocentric posture attempts to make an either/or out of a both/and¹⁰⁵. Derrida situates Levinas' ethical exclusion of animals within a "carno-phallogocentrism"¹⁰⁶ that permeates the relation of self to other, where the valorization of male virility is tied to the consumption of flesh. For instance, Derrida points out the overwhelming dominance of the head of states being male meat eaters. Levinas' tacit acceptance of the sacrificial structure falls inline with this bias.

As Wolfe points out, well quoting Beardsworth, Levinas articulation of the other as other is different than Derrida who wants to keep

the site of the other, "as complex as possible, as a 'play' of time and law, one which refuses the exemplary localization of thought".... For Derrida, "for the other to be other it must already be less than other" because the alterity of the other is always caught in what "Eating Well" calls the 'sacrificial economy' of carno-phallogocentrism; and hence, "one cannot welcome the other as other"; in consequence of which, as Beardsworth notes, "alterity can only be the loss of the other in its self-presentation, that is, the 'trace' of the other". What Levinas surrenders, then, is "a differentiated articulation *between* the other and the same," the effect of which "is the loss in turn of the *incalculable* nature of the relation the other and its others (the community at large)"¹⁰⁷

Levinas' theory of ethical difference and species difference parallels his discussion of sexual difference in many key facets. Fortunately, many remarkable writers have already identified a problematic structure in Levinas' work on the ethical and sexual difference. Consequently, I would now like to briefly outline these feminist works and extend them to Levinas' discussion of species difference.

For Levinas the ethical relation is primary before any differentiation of any other type. It is before differentiation, as such, and sexual difference is no different, if you will. As he puts it "It isn't woman who is secondary, it is the relation to woman *qua* woman that doesn't belong to the primordial human plan. What is primary are the tasks accomplished by man as a human being, and by woman as a human being".¹⁰⁸ As Vasseleu points out, "ethics is the necessary first principle in Levinas' account of humanity. Ethics is a relationship to an other which allows no other determination beyond otherness.... Levinas

argues that woman, or the feminine, is not secondary to man, or masculinity, but rather the inauguration of difference, which is secondary to ethics.¹⁰⁹ Irigaray offers perhaps the most illuminating analysis of Levinas' position on sexual difference.¹¹⁰ Irigaray shows that main problem with Levinas is that well operating under the guise of sexual neutrality, he presents the ethical relation in sexualized terms, specifically masculine ones. Levinas' account of the ethical relation in fecundity and the intimate caress is one example of this. Without fully elaborating this account here, it is sufficient to note that Levinas' account of carnal intimacy appropriates the feminine. It does so in so far as feminine is not an otherness of impossible determination but merely the corresponding negation of the masculine. Irigaray's claim here is that there is no account of the feminine that is not reducible to the masculine or to the self. Derrida commenting on this asks: "How can one mark masculine the very thing said to be anterior, or even foreign, to sexual difference?"¹¹¹ Vasseleu summarizes that: "What both Irigaray and Derrida are asserting is that it is not possible to argue for the asexuality of the ethical relation while specifying fecundity in (homo)sexual terms. Asymmetrical subjectivity [the asymmetry of Levinas' self-other ethical relation] which is the site of transcendence, is already conditioned by the exclusion in the form of sexual difference."¹¹² Chanter, speaking to Derrida's remarks, points out that by placing ethics over sexual difference has Levinas "not mastered femininity by mastering its origin, sexual difference [?]"¹¹³

Not only is it useful to understand Irigaray and Derrida's feminist critique on its own terms, it is also useful to transpose it into the question of Levinas's ethical relation and species difference. When Derrida asks above: "How can one mark masculine the very thing said to be anterior, or even foreign, to sexual difference?" Can we not ask of Levinas: How can one mark human the very thing said to be anterior, or foreign, to species difference? Using Vasseleu in a similar fashion we could similarly claim that Levinas' ethical relation, the supposed unconditional, *par excellence*, is already conditioned by exclusion in the form of species difference.

Vasseleu concludes that in Irigaray's statements about "the irreducibility of one sex to the other Irigaray is emphasizing that each sex is not entirely incorporable by the other; *between* the sexes, there is a material remainder. The remainder is the limitation within which Irigaray contends that there can be sexual existence The point of the non-substitutability of the sexual other for Irigaray is that sexual difference is the mark of the impossibility of determining the alterity of the other."¹¹⁴ So too could we not speak of an irreducibility of one species to an other? Similarly, species difference is the same mark as sexual difference of the impossibility of determining the alterity of the other. Here, after negotiating the *aporia* of thinking of species difference and ethical difference, in this 'remainder', do we catch a glimpse of the animal we are tracking. The Okopi, if you will. Irigaray's 'remainder of sexual difference' does not lend itself to support or act as the foundation for Levinas's masculine ethics. Without femininity as a resource masculinity, under the rubric of asexual humanity, cannot rise up to differentiate itself. Likewise, 'the remainder of species difference' does not permit the dichotomization of the human from the animal and thus the "sacrificial structure" Derrida identifies in Levinas's works. This 'remainder of species difference' does not sustain or support any delimitation of humanity above a justly edible animality.

Here again it is noteworthy to return to the animal tracking tip referred to earlier as the 'equivocation of the pen'. There will always be an equivocation between the non-criminal carnivorous consumption of animals that sustains humanity and the consumption of animality by reason, the word and *logos*, for instance, that sustains humanity. Because of this equivocation any animal tracker and any environmental theory must be vigilant to both manifestations of injustice.

In an attempt to do what Levinas did not—sacrifice the sacrificial structure, which structures and is structured by this carno-phallogocentrism—Derrida envisions an ethical encounter not reducible to the oppositions of human/animal or even by living/non-living. Here, it is not a matter of changing the demand of the face to 'thou shalt not put to death the living in general', but rather of passing the ethical frontier

...between several infinitely different modes of the conception-appropriation-assimilation of the other, then, as concerns the "Good" [*Bien*] of every morality, the question will come back to determining the best, most respectful, most grateful, and also most giving way of relating to the other and of relating the other to the self. For everything that happens at the edge of the orifices (of orality, but also of the ear, the eye—and all the "senses" in general [important for our discussion is the nose]) the metonymy of "eating well" [*bien manger*] would always be the rule.... The moral question is thus not, nor has it ever been: should one eat or not eat, eat this or that, the living or the nonliving, man or animal, but since *one must* eat in any case and since it is and tastes good to eat and since there is no other definition of the good, *how* for goodness' sake should one eat well?¹¹⁵

It seems that Levinas' tendency to dichotomize has resulted in the opening of the 'sacrificial structure'. In assuming that there is a pure ethical relation separate from politics, language, being, and so forth, Levinas assumed that it was possible not to kill. But the ethical is always inextricably intertwined with the violence of the political, language, being, etc., thus we must kill, we appropriate alterity—we must eat. It thus becomes, as John Caputo says, a matter of "...vigilance about the effects of these practices, about the waste and cruelty of excessive carnivorous practices."¹¹⁶ Again, this should be read into all the instantiations of introjection; 'we' get eaten, 'we' eat ourselves, 'we' eat women, 'we' eat non-whites, 'we' eat the third world, and 'we' eat the 'non-human'. Importantly, we eat the 'non-human' in many ways. Once the solid single limit between the real and the symbolic is disrupted, we can understand what Derrida means when he says: "Vegetarians, too, partake of animals, even of men."¹¹⁷ We eat animals by calling them animal. By assuming that they are a homogenous unit. We eat animals every time we other them under such monoliths as 'wilderness', 'spectacles', 'resources', 'environment', etc. It looks as if Levinas' inattentiveness to the problematic of oppositional limits is producing devastating consequences, especially in terms of his theory's utility for the environmental movement.

This hypothesis is only further confirmed when we see what Levinas has to say about eating. Remarkably, in the following passage, Levinas does deconstruct the real/symbolic opposition, and he also recognizes the necessary dependence of the self on the other, but not with Derrida's aim of eating well and minimizing the violence of assimilation. Rather, Levinas makes a move in an opposite direction by using eating to highlight the inexhaustible surplus of the other in relation to the self:

Eating, for example, is to be sure not reducible to the chemistry of alimentation. But eating also does not reduce itself to the set of gustative, olfactory, kinesthetic, and other

sensations that would constitute the consciousness of eating. This sinking one's teeth into things which the act of eating involves above all measures the surplus of the reality of the aliment over every represented reality, a surplus that is not quantitative, but is the way the I, the absolute commencement, is suspended on the non-I.¹¹⁸

It is beginning to look as though Levinas' theory is of no great import to environmentalism. Derrida is no doubt justified in showing how, despite all his groundbreaking ethical insights, Levinas unquestioningly adopts a very traditional and problematic posture to the non-human, and human. It is clear that humans have no direct ethical obligations to the non-human for Levinas. However, with an examination of another text, we cannot so easily draw these conclusions. Again, we must ask ourselves: is not something valuable lost when we rigorously deconstruct Levinas' theory? Does Derrida himself not confound the ethical relation with knowledge in doing so?

“I am Thinking of Bobby”,¹¹⁹ Meeting the Other as a Dream.¹²⁰

In a paper entitled *The Name of a Dog, or Natural Rights* Levinas does seem to sacrifice the sacrificial structure. After hinting (if it can be called a hint, which I will return to momentarily) at a parallel between the horrors of war and the killing of animal Levinas says: “Such idea make one lose one's appetite! In fact, they can also come to you at the family table, as you plunge your fork into your roast.”¹²¹ The family table being the sacrificial structure that Derrida just denied Levinas. But here we see Levinas draw attention to the opening where killing is acceptable. Astonishingly, in what follows we see Levinas follow Derrida's analysis almost exactly. Levinas goes on to say: “There is enough, there, to make you a vegetarian again. If we are to believe Genesis, Adam, the father of us all, was one!”¹²² But like Derrida, Levinas does not stop at the question of eating meat or not eating meat. Rather it is a question of eating well. Levinas continues: “There is enough there to make us want to limit, through various interdiction, the butchery that every day claims our ‘consecrated’ mouths!”¹²³ Levinas here offers exactly what Derrida envisioned; the sacrifice of sacrifice, and the move from ‘thou shalt not kill’ to the infinite metonymy of eating well. Which is exactly what Derrida rightfully concluded was an impossibility for Levinasian ethics. What spawned this insightful reversal of the otherwise dogmatic posture towards the non-human in Levinas' thought? Was it a response to a call?

This reversal appears within the context of Levinas recounting his encounters with a dog during his imprisonment in a Nazi concentration camp. Levinas describes how the prisoner's encounters with the guards and other non-prisoners “stripped us of our human skin. We were sub-human, a gang of apes.... ...We were beings entrapped in their species; despite all their vocabulary, beings without language.”¹²⁴ Amazingly, it seems that here we have Levinas acknowledging the problematics of animalizing. At least he is recognizing these problematics when it is humans that are animalized. And perhaps he is hinting, in some way, to the sacrificial structure's involvement in the condoning of the human genocide, but more on that in a moment. Levinas goes on to describe the humanizing abilities of the animal:

There were seventy of us in a forestry commando unit for Jewish prisoners of war in Nazi Germany.... ..about halfway through our long captivity, for a few short weeks, before the sentinels chased him away, a wandering dog entered our lives. One day he came to meet this rabble as we returned under guard from work. He survived in some wild patch in the region of the camp. But we called him Bobby, an exotic name, as one does with a cherished dog. He would appear at morning assembly and was waiting for us as we returned, jumping up and down and barking in delight. For him, there was no doubt that we were men.... ..This dog was the last Kantian in Nazi Germany...¹²⁵

How are we to understand Levinas' recognition of the horror of animalizing humans and this acknowledgment of the ability of animals to enter into an ethical relation with humans?

In his paper *Am I Obsessed by Bobby? (Humanism of the Other Animal)* John Llewelyn notes that Levinas "all but proposes an analogy between the unspeakable human Holocaust and the unspoken animal one."¹²⁶ I would have to similarly conclude that this analogy is 'present' in the paper as a whole. Such an analogy would have undoubtedly brought all of Levinas' anthropocentric ethics, elaborated thus far, into question. Perhaps that is why he all but proposes the analogy? Speaking to this analogy, or absence thereof, David Clark adds a caveat to Llewelyn's statement just quoted. "By characterizing the essay as doing everything *but* making such a proposition, we [namely Llewelyn] must be careful not to shrink from its double scene of sacrifice. For is this not *exactly* the proposition that Levinas is making, even and especially if he does not literally write it out for us to read?"¹²⁷ The consequences of Levinas proposing that there is a similarity (but still a difference) between the killing of the Holocaust and the allowable killing of animals are vast. This is a move that deconstructs the opposition of human/animal that is everywhere else found in Levinas' writing. This move allows us to consider the 'animal' as a neighbor. It gives the animal a face. Or better, *it allows us to imagine what it would be like to have an ethical encounter with the face of the Other before considering its 'species'*. Ethical alterity thus has a primacy over species alterity. Or more precisely, the alterity of species difference is not appropriated by a human/animal dichotomy and as such is as site for an ethical encounter. The human/animal dichotomy can finally be relegated to the realm of knowledge and ontology, which arrive late to ethical transcendence. Levinas permits us to imagine these possibilities—but only for a brief moment. Only for a moment, because the exclusionary dualistic ethics that we have seen everywhere else in Levinas' thought, are also peppered throughout this paper too. Nonetheless, there was this moment that left as soon as it came. A glimpse, trace, or scent of the animal at the precise moment were Levinas was describing his encounter with *an* animal.

If we linger in this moment and/or this scent what we see is a striking similarity between Levinas and Derrida's ethical visions. However, Derrida would most likely claim there could not be any pure ethical encounter wholly separate from ontology. That is, one could not put a clear limit between the other's ethical alterity in the face, and the other's alterity qua species (This is to say that there is no dichotomizing the alterity of the face with any other 'logical' or ontological alterity, which is the relational difference of something in a set, with every other thing in that set, for instance. This is not to say that there could not be a 'post-deconstruction distinction' made. As Derrida said above, the distinctions

between animals and humans are very real.) Derrida would also surely note that these two alterities could not be collapsed either. Thus, it is precisely through the animal's otherness *qua* species that one can contact the other *qua* face. This resonates with what Levinas often says, in entirely different contexts, about a point one reaches where they no longer need to see the other as a limit, but rather see it as inspiration, in both senses of the word. As Clark puts it: "Bobby's face cannot entirely be refused, not because there is something residually 'human' or 'pre-human' about it, *but precisely because of its nonhuman excess*, because that face... ..belong[s] uniquely to the animal, to *this* animal."(my emphasis)¹²⁸ Levinas himself describes the dog as "[s]omething that disrupts society's games (or Society itself)."¹²⁹

Let us return to the original question we put to Levinas: what is the relationship of Levinas' theory to environmental thought? If we remain and swelter in the moment in Levinas' theory where it is possible to envision an authentic ethical encounter in spite of, or precisely because of, species difference, we will see a tremendous resource for environmental thought. Namely, we will see the limits of the 'thought' in environmental thought. That is, we will use Levinas to go beyond thought and ontology to meet our responsibility to the other. Even if this means using a Levinas against his own thought, which he had to enter into.

The Animal's Arrival Announces its Departure

Finally we have captured the animal otherwise. We have caught a good enough glimpse of the animal loose in/outside of this text to meet our responsibility to it, to capture it otherwise. We have tracked its scent through the disruptions with/in the compositions of Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, Derrida, and the African jungle. The interrelation of these three authors' writings created the (dis)equilibrium of tensions necessary for an ethical encounter with an animal beyond conception.

Merleau-Ponty pulled the tension towards a composed animal, in his characterization of the chiasmic and ambiguous unity of the flesh. Here we saw that perhaps the animal's otherness is an alterity that exceeded the (in)coherence of Merleau-Ponty's conception of the flesh. Merleau-Ponty *presented* the relationship of the self and other, but in doing so he made the other—what is absent—present. But this is not (only) a failure for Merleau-Ponty. It can also be seen as the impossible double-bind of the animal's betrayal; Merleau-Ponty had to re-present the other to meet his responsibility to it, but in so doing he appropriated it.

Levinas pulled the tension towards disunity and decomposition. In place of Merleau-Ponty's ambiguity Levinas points to an-archy. For Levinas the other is an incommensurable difference that overwhelms and traumatizes the self. Levinas' other opens the self up with no hope of recovery. It is a relation of being a hostage rather than the site of intertwining. Merleau-Ponty brought the self and other into a relationship. Levinas showed how the other is what is completely unrelated to the self. His notion of the absolute other, if applied to the animal other, allows us to go beyond reason to meet an animal in an ethical encounter. However, in order to find this Levinasian ethical relation with animals we had to aggressively ferret it out of Levinas' texts. However, ferreting is a very legitimate and effective tracking technique.

Derrida applies pressure to the other two writers by showing that the animal is always in an equivocal relation of (de)composition. Derrida points out that Levinas may be correct in critiquing Merleau-Ponty's composition, unity, phenomenology, presence. However, Derrida also points out the impossibility of articulating (re-presenting) an absolute other that is beyond presence, phenomenology, composition, etc. Derrida explores this impossibility in terms of light in the following:

Who will ever dominate it, who will ever pronounce its meaning without being pronounced by it? What language will ever escape it? How, for example will the metaphysics of the face as the *epiphany* of the other free itself of light? Light perhaps has no opposite; if it does, it is certainly not night.¹³⁰

Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty and Levinas, in turn, tug back at Derrida. For instance, often it seemed that Derrida conflated Levinas' other with the realm of knowledge in order to deconstruct it. Levinas here can be seen pulling Derrida beyond knowledge and light. What is clear is that these author's interrelations form many tensions. Moreover, many of these tensions cannot fully be explored in a paper of this size. However, even to organize the differences between these authors with the figure of a tug-of-war is to resolve them. In many ways these author's differences end up being points of contact

and similarity. This complicates their interrelation, thus keeping these interrelations unresolved, therefore opening them up to the animal's scent. Adding to this un-resolve is the inability to fix these authors' positions in the tug-of-war. For instance, Vasseleu says:

Derrida has commented that, if one might argue that *The Phenomenology of Perception* falls within the metaphysics of presence or a belief in the possibility of coincidence between consciousness and being, with *The Visible and the Invisible* 'it is even harder to say'. Far from being a matter for judgment, the problematic linkage between language and embodiment which is opened up between the two philosophers—between phenomenology's bodily text and deconstruction's textual body—is an immensely provocative one... ..deconstruction's reference to phenomena owes a debt to Merleau-Ponty's break with the concept of perception as a natural coincidence of consciousness and things. On the other hand, so to speak, from the perspective of deconstruction, the chiasm is textual and is thus open to further reading.¹³¹

The unresolved interrelations of these authors prevented the text from coming to a close. This kept it open to an ethical encounter with an animal. If we had resolved the question of the animal we would have lost its scent. We would have thought we had arrived at the animal. But the animal arrived at in thought is tamed.

Tracking the scent of animal can be seen as *the way* to be political, in so far as animality serves as a flag-post, at the limit of knowledge, for what is not represented and is repressed. As Derrida said above, he has been doing nothing but speaking to the question of the animal. He later adds:

Must not the place for the Other be a human? If this is indeed the case, then the ahuman, of at least the figure of some—in a word—divinanimality, even if were to be felt through the human, would be a quasi-transcendental referent, the excluded, foreclosed, disavowed, tamed, and sacrificed foundation of what it founds, namely, the symbolic order, the human order, law and justice.¹³²

An ethical encounter with an animal demands a (respons)ibility in representation. In my response I have presented the absent animal as a present scent. But with this animal's arrival comes its departure. The animal's arrival is never definitive. As the opening quote on the okapi suggested, tracking animals is extremely exhausting, and there is no time to pause for a rest. I have taken a break from tracking in order to capture the animal in this paper. But in doing so, I have lost its scent. So again we must ask: where is the animal?

"[E]ven now, hidden deep in the rain forest, the okapi has been able in some ways, to remain a mystery animal."¹³³

End Notes

1 Christy, M.B., C.M., Cuthbert, *Big Game and Pygmies: Experiences of a Naturalist in Central African Forests in Quest of the Okapi*. (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1924), 52-57 (my emphasis).

2 Nietzsche, Friedrich "Thus Spoke Zarathustra." In *The Portable Nietzsche* Trans. and ed. by Walter Kaufmann. (New York: The Viking Press, 1968), 191 and 387-90.

3 Schlein, Miriam, *On the Track of the Mysterious Animal*. (New York: Four Winds Press, 1979), 1 (my emphasis).

4 Caputo, John, *Against ethics: Contributions to a Poetics of Obligation with Constant Reference to Deconstruction*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 213.

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- 5 Here I am employing the double meaning of the word 'after' in a similar fashion to Derrida using the double meaning of the word 'follow' in his work *The Animal That Therefore I am (More to Follow)*.
- 6 Lippit, Akira Mizuta, *Electric Animal. Towards a Rhetoric of Wildlife*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 165.
- 7 Ibid. 163 (my emphasis).
- 8 Ibid 165.
- 9 Schlein, 2. (my emphasis).
- 10 Gasche, Rodolphe, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 102.
- 11 Taussig uses the metaphor of geotectonic plates in *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses*. However, I have extended it significantly with my appeal to lava and magma.
- 12 Schlein, 47-8.
- 13 Caputo, 204.
- 14 Vasseleu, Cathy n, *Textures of Light: Vision and Touch in Irigaray, Levinas and Merleau-Ponty*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 3.
- 15 Hearne, Vicki, *Adam's Task: Calling Animals by Name*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 80.
- 16 Ibid. 80 (my emphasis).
- 17 Ibid. 82.
- 18 Irigaray, Lucy, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, Trans. Gillian C. Gill, Ithaca, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985).
- 19 I see the gift here in a similar way to Derrida in his book *The Gift of Death* where he sees the pure gift as an impossibility but still an ideal to strive for. It is impossible, at least to know the gift, because for a gift to be a gift both the giver and the receiver must be unaware that they are giving. If the giver becomes aware that they are giving then they may be doing it for selfish reasons such as making themselves feel generous, or what have you. Thus, exchange and the hope of something in return will slip in to the giving. The receiver cannot be aware of the gift for then they might feel an obligation to reciprocate. They may feel indebted to the giver. Therefore, exchange will always be apart of giving.
- 20 Lippit, 124-6.
- 21 Ibid. 127.
- 22 Much of my use of aporias here is informed by Derrida's book: *Aporias*
- 23 Vasseleu draws on Margret Whiteford here.
- 24 Vasseleu, 67-8 (I re-quote this passage later on in the paper).
- 25 Schlein, 50.
- 26 Schlein, 19.
- 27 Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *Phenomonology of Perception*, trans. Collin Smith, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), p.214 (My emphasis).
- 28 Ibid. xx.
- 29 Ibid. xx.
- 30 Merleau-Ponty, *The visible and the Invisible; Followed by Working Notes*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 200.
- 31 Langer, Monika, *Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception: A Guide and Commentary*, (Tallahassee: The Florida State University Press, 1989), 157-8.
- 32 Here I am thinking of a similar relation of the old and the new as found in Helen Cixous' conception of the bricolage as she explores it in many of her works. For instance see "the laugh of the Medusa," in Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, eds., *New French Feminism*
- 33 Dillion, Martin, *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1997), .xiii.
- 34 See for example Haraway's work "Situated Knowledges: the Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective" in here book *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: the Reinvention of Nature*
- 35 Langer, Monika, *Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception*, 162.
- 36 Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind." In *The Primary of Perception and Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics* ed. by James M Edie, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 168.
- 37 Ibid. 167.
- 38 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 147-8.
- 39 Ibid. 159.
- 40 She draws on Gail Stenstad's paper, "Merleau-Ponty's Logos: The Sensing of the Flesh", *Philosophy Today* 37 (1), Spring: 52-61.
- 41 Vesseleu, 30 (my emphasis).
- 42 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 142.
- 43 Merleau-Ponty, *La Nature: Notes, Cours du College de France*, ed. Dominiqu Seglard (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1995. or there is a version that I was unable to acquire that has been translated from the French by Robert Vallier and put out by Northwestern University Press).
- 44 Ibid. 269-78.
- 45 Behnke, Elizabeth, "Merleau-Ponty's Concept of Nature to an Interspecies Practice of Peace." In *Animal Others: On Ethics, Ontology, and Animal Life* ed. by Peter Steeves (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999), 98.
- 46 Schlein, 6.
- 47 Ibid. 5-6

- 48 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 138.
- 49 Ibid. 138.
- 50 Lingis, Alphonso "Sense and Non-sense in the Sexed Body." *Cultural Hermeneutics* 4: p.344-65. Also see Elizabeth Grosz's *Volatile Bodies*.
- 51 Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, 159.
- 52 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible* p. 142.
- 53 Ibid. 142.
- 54 See, for example, Judith Butler's "Sexual Ideology and Phenomenological Description." In *The Thinking Muse* (1989) and Alphonso Lingis' *Sense and Non-Sense in the Sexed Body* (1977)
- 55 Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, 170.
- 56 Grosz, 107.
- 57 Vasseleu draws on Margret Whiteford here.
- 58 Vasseleu, 67-8.
- 59 Whitford, Margeret, "Irigaray's Body Symbolic," *Hypatia*6(3), Fall: 192-203. See also Vasseleu's *Texture of light*, footnote 4, 137.
- 60 Vasseleu, 70.
- 61 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 115.
- 62 Ibid. 34 (my emphasis).
- 63 Derrida, Jacques, "Eating Well" or the Calculation of the Subject," trans. Avital Ronell, in *Points: Interviews, 1974-1994* Ed. Elisabeth Weber. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 111.
- 64 Adorno, Theodor, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott, (New York: Verso, 1974), 105 (my emphasis).
- 65 Wolfe, Cary, ed. *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal*, (Minneapolis / London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), xx. (Here Wolfe is quoting Etienne Balibar, "Racism and Nationalism," in Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, trans. of Balibar by Chris Turner (London: Verso, 1991), 56. (Wolfe's emphasis).
- 66 Ibid. xx (Wolfe's emphasis).
- 67 Lippit, Electric Animal, 168-9 (my emphasis).
- 68 For example, see Levinas' discussion in "Part 2 Merleau-Ponty and Levinas on Alterity." In *Ontology and Alterity in Merleau-Ponty*. 51-112.
- 69 Derrida, "The Animal That Therefore I Am," 380. (Wolfe also quotes this passage on p. 27).
- 70 Ibid. 169 (my emphasis). Here Lippit points to Descartes' "Discourse on Method." In *Descartes: Selected Philosophical Writings*, trans. Cottingham, Stoothoff, and Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 20-56.
- 71 Caputo, 194.
- 72 Also See, for example, Judith Butler's "Sexual Ideology and Phenomenological Description", in *The Thinking Muse* (1989) and Alphonso Lingis' *Sense and Non-Sense in the Sexed Body* (1977)
- 73 Caputo, 194.
- 74 Ibid. 196.
- 75 Ibid. 197.
- 76 The German word for meat.
- 77 Ibid. 198-9.
- 78 Ibid. 199-200.
- 79 I would see this point as an 'equivocation of the pen'. Note the equivocation of Caputo's writing style and his subject matter. This equivocation supports the conclusion that form and content are not dic hotomies.
- 80 Ibid. 202 (my emphasis).
- 81 Lippit, 169. Lippit here is paraphrasing Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, "Mourning or Melancholia: Introjection versus Incorporation," in *The Shell and the Kernel*, ed. and trans. Nicholas Rand (Chicago Press, 1994), 125-38.
- 82 Schlein, 19 (my emphasis).
- 83 Wolfe, xviii.
- 84 Derrida, "White Mythologies: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy." In *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 207-71.
- 85 Lippit, 165.
- 86 Ibid. 170.
- 87 Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," In *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 61-172.
- 88 Derrida, "The Animal That Therefore I am (More to Follow)," 415.
- 89 Ibid. 417.
- 90 Ibid. 398.
- 91 Levinas, Emmanuel, "The Paradox of Morality: an Interview with Emmanuel Levinas," trans. Andrew Benjamin and Tamra Wright, In *The Provocations of Levinas: Rethinking the Other*, eds. Robert Bernasconi and David Wood (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), p.169.

- 92 Ibid.171.
- 93 Ibid.172 (my emphasis).
- 94 Derrida, "On Reading Heidegger: An Outline of Remarks to the Essex Colloquium", in *Research in Phenomenology*, 17 (1987), 173.
- 95 Derrida, "The Animal That Therefore I am (More to Follow)," 415.
- 96 Levinas, Emmanuel, "Language and Proximity," in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. A Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), 122.
- 97 Here Levinas is drawing on Descartes with approval as Christian Diehm points out in his essay "Facing Nature. Levinas Beyond the Human," in *Philosophy Today*, Spring 2000, 54.
- 98 Peperzak, Adriaan, "Levinas on Technology and Nature", in *Man and World* 25:469-482, 1992
- 99 In the wording of this section title I am making reference to the relation Derrida explores with/in Levinas' texts of the relation between Judaism and Hellenism in Derrida's essay "Violence and Metaphysics An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas," in *Writing and Difference*. Specifically, I am playing on Derrida's use of 'jewgreek, greekjew' on page 153, for example.
- 100 Levinas, "The Paradox of Morality: an Interview with Emmanuel Levinas," 178-9.
- 101 Derrida, "Eating Well" or the Calculation of the Subject," trans. Avital Ronell, in *Points: Interviews, 1974-1994* ed. Elisabeth Weber (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).
- 102 Ibid. 279 (my emphasis).
- 103 Ibid. 278.
- 104 A point totally lost by David Wood's reading of Derrida in his essay "Comment no pas manger—Deconstruction and Humanism", in *Animal Others. On Ethics, Ontology, and Animal Life*, ed. Peter Steeves (New York: State University Press, 1999).
- 105 Brian Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 112.
- 106 Derrida, Eating Well, 280.
- 107 Wolfe, 27 (His emphasis). Here Wolfe quotes Beardsworth from p. 134, 124, 134 and 125 respectfully.
- 108 Levinas, "Et Dieu Crea al Femme", *Du sacre au saint*. (Paris: Minuit. 1977), 132-42.
- 109 Vasseleu, 111.
- 110 Irigaray, Lucy, "Questions to Emmanuel Levinas: On the Divinity of Love," trans. In Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley (eds) *Re-Reading Levinas*. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. 1991).
- 111 Derrida. "At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am", in Robert Bebert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley (eds) *Re-Reading Levinas*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 40.
- 112 Vasseleu, 110-11.
- 113 Chanter, Tina, "Antigone's Dilemma", in Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley, eds. *Re-Reading Levinas*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 143. Vasseleu also quotes Chanter on p. 111.
- 114 Vasseleu, 113. (Here Vasseleu is looking at Irigaray's work *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, 14).
- 115 Derrida, "Eating Well," 282. (Vasseleu also uses this Quote on p. 110).
- 116 Caputo, 198.
- 117 Derrida, "Eating well," 282.
- 118 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 128-9.
- 119 Levinas, "The Name of the Dog, or Natural Rights" in *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, trans. Sean Hand, (London: the Athlone press, 1990), 151-153.
- 120 Gans, Steven, "Levinas and Pontalis: Meeting the Other as a Dream," in *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other*, ed. Robert Bernasconi and David Wood, (London, Routledge, 1988), 83-90.
- 121 Levinas, "The Name of the Dog," 151.
- 122 Ibid. 152.
- 123 Ibid.
- 124 Ibid. 153.
- 125 Ibid. 152-3.
- 126 John Llewelyn, "Am I Obsessed with Bobby? (Humanism of the Other Animal)," in *Re-Reading Levinas*, ed. by Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 235.
- 127 Clark, "On Being "The Last Kartian in Nazi Germany." Dwelling with Animals after Levinas," in *Animal Acts, Configuring the Human in Western History*, 170.
- 128 Ibid. 191.
- 129 Levinas, "The Name of the Dog," 151.
- 130 Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 92. (Vasseleu also looks at this passage in *Textures of Light*, 91).
- 131 Vasseleu, *Textures of Light*, 32-3. Here she is paraphrasing and quoting Derrida at the beginning of this passage.
- 132 Derrida, "And Say the Animal Responded?," trans. David Wills. In Wolfe, Cary. Ed. *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal*. (Minneapolis / London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 134.
- 133 Schlein, 54.

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