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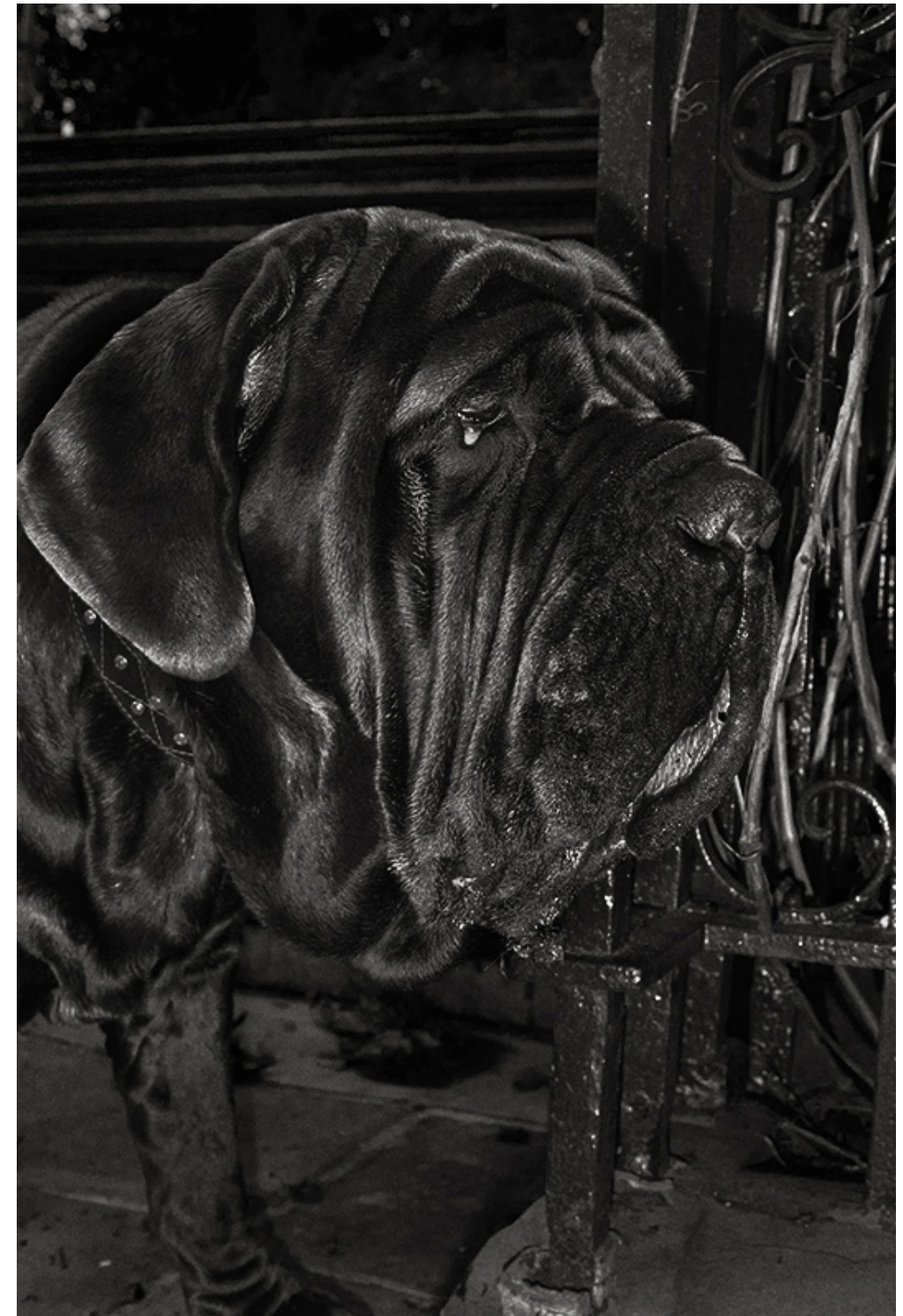
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untitled, Mark Peckmezian

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The history of philosophy is tautologically a history of philosophical thinking, but who was the thinker and, perhaps most interestingly, her companions?

Asking our writers to engage in the many relations of humans and animals – the co-existences, the companionship, the antagonism – has led to a great amount of intriguing contributions. We decided to divide this wide range of texts into two parts, making #II. *inside animals / animals inside* a double issue. Alongside this first part, there is a second one collecting research on specific animals in the form of a bestiary.

If the bestiary plays with the notion of something escaping categorization, this part reflects on the act of categorization itself, gathering texts, poetry and interviews under the topic of Anthropocene, humanity and non-humanity. Investigating our companions has been a practice in listening, not only to the barking,

growling and tweeting, but also to the wind that sounds through the foliage, and to the cracking of the ice – the texts here are engaging in the non-human forms of being in general, building an issue extending from the micro bacteria within us to the planet Mars. Additionally, it has raised questions concerning the actual practice of listening, the experience of something else: a different shape and a different way of being, sounding, touching – moving outside of you, recognizable through you, sharing your world.

Philosopher Peter Godfrey-Smith argues that the history of animal consciousness is not best viewed as a clear break between non-conscious and conscious ways of being. To Differens, he explains it as a genuinely gradual process, starting with primitive but experiencing organisms evolving along different lines to the multitudes of consciousness that we see today. The take-away from his studies, Godfrey-Smith says, is not only that some animals experience the world in ways that seem ambiguous and non-intuitive to humans, but that there is more experience altogether in the animal world: “There is just more sentience around than I thought”, as he puts it.

In two theoretical contributions that perhaps are best read back-to-back, Oscar Tellini and Jeanne Degortes introduce a number of lesser known theorists of animality into the Nordic discussion. Tellini’s evocative essay presents the South American philosophers Julieta Yelin and Gabriel Giorgi and their contributions on biopolitics and post-humanism, in relation to developmentalism in South American literature. Closer to home, Jeanne Degortes leads us on a trail of the Belgian phenomenologist Baptiste Morizot, tracing his thoughts on the relation between human and animals, and the creation of the category of “Nature”, a conceptualization of something that is diametric opposition to humans.

How are we to understand what escapes conceptualization? Touching on the illuminating power of the paradox, art studio *Nonhuman Nonsense* describes how art and storytelling help us rethink fundamental questions, leading to new ways of understanding as well as more progressive political solutions. As an addition to this debate, we are introduced to the *Museum of Nonhumanity*, by the artist duo Gustafsson&Haapoja, that shows the historical construction processes in which the idea of the human, as separated from the animal, is formulated.

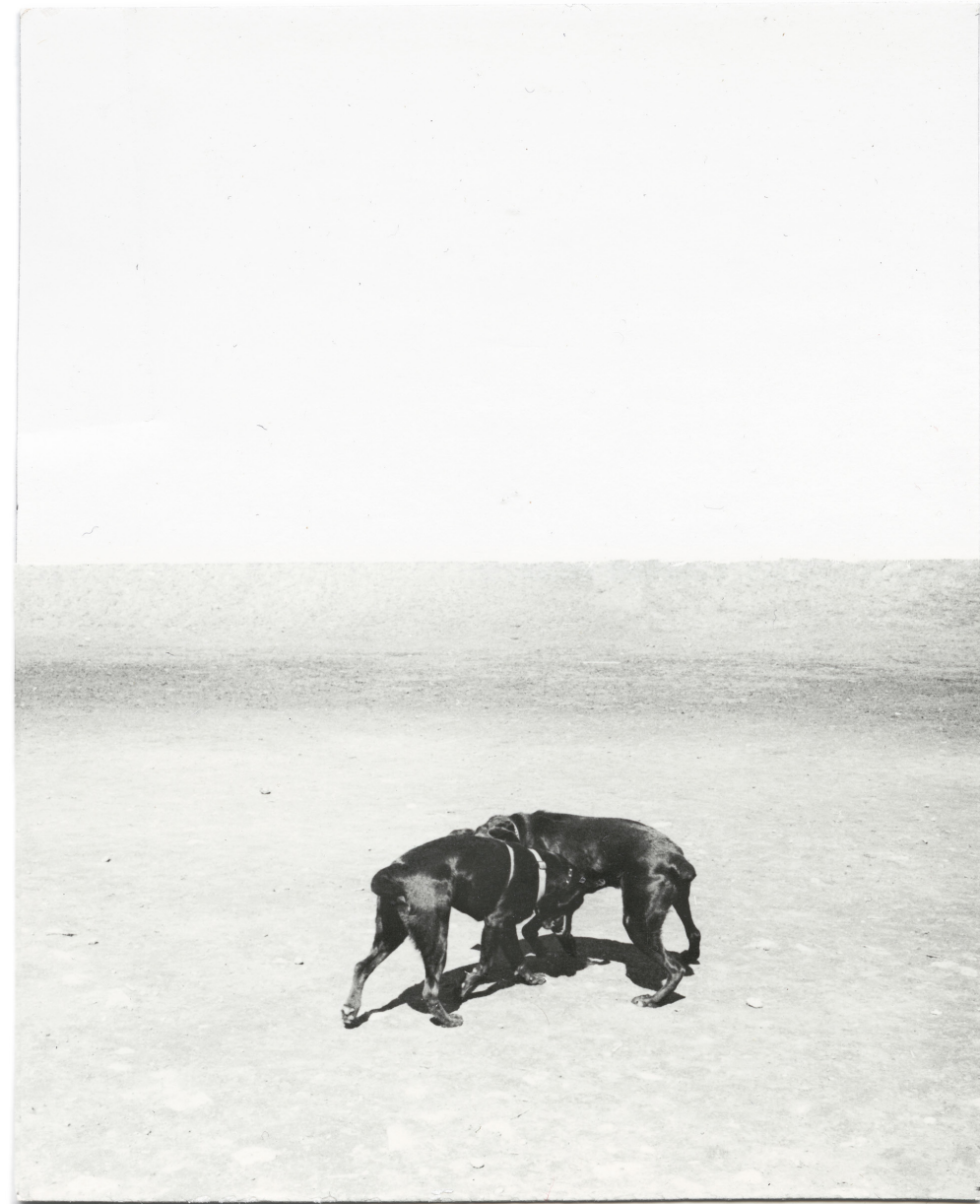
Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, these topics have taken on a different character. Despite the importance of the current ecological crisis and the need to rethink coexis-

tence, it has been hard for us to think about anything other than the people suffering in Ukraine and in other wars right now. We would like to spare a thought for the victims of the war and insist on that human cruelty is a tradition humans actively continue, it is not the destiny or determination of our species.

/ the editors of Differens Magazine



untitled, Mark Peckmezian



untitled, Mark Peckmezian

Dikter ur *Antropocen*

Jonas Gren

× × ×

Jag vet inte
hur många grodor som sett mig

Jag vet inte
hur det är att vara fästring
blind Hängande på bladet
Och när jag känner
lukten av smörsyra
kasta mig ut
i hopp om blod

Jag vet inte
hur det är att
växa upp som röding
i odlingsdammen Stå där och
vicka på fenorna
när vattnet strömmar in

× × ×

× × ×

Ömhet för blindliv

Tagelmasken Parasitiskt
levande inuti
gräshoppan

Allt detta mörker

Det sterila fostret
ännu inte badat
i slidans Kyssarnas
Avföringens Mikrobvågor

Dunkellivet Resistensen

Extremofilerna på Marianergra-
vens botten
I svavelsyrans grottor
I permkatastrofen

Det bor mörkervarelser i oss

× × ×

I samtal med Nonhuman Nonsense

Astrid Elander

Nonhuman Nonsense är en design- och konstnärsstudio som skapar experimentella scenarion någonstans mellan utopi och dystopi. Det är scenarion som drömmer sig bort ifrån men samtidigt speglar vår samtid, och som väcker frågor om hur vi ska förstå oss på och närma oss det icke-mänskliga. Som i förslaget att färga alla jordens kycklingar rosa, eller att ge planeten Mars en juridisk identitet. Differens har träffat grundarna Leo Fidjeland och Linnea Våglund, på länk från Stockholm till Berlin, för ett samtal om vad bergen vill säga, vad konsten kan göra, och om vad vi egentligen kan lära oss av djuren.

Hej Nonhuman Nonsense! Vi på Differens Magazine är väldigt glada att vi får göra den här intervjun med er. Vi gör ett nummer som reflekterar över djuret, ni kallar er för Nonhuman Nonsense, vill ni berätta lite om det namnet? Vad betraktar ni som Nonhumans, varför ska vi tänka på Nonhumans, och varför Nonsense?

Vi brukar säga att Nonhumans är djur, objekt, ekologi och teknologi, men också de varelser som ligger mellan eller bortom de kategorierna. Vi är intresserade av relationen till det icke-mänskliga eftersom den verkar vara kopplad till många av de globala problem vi ser idag, såsom ekologisk kollaps och ”extractivism” – försöket att utvinna så mycket som möjligt ur jorden.

Vi kallar oss för Nonsense för att vi försöker skapa scenarion eller berättelser som inte säger till folk vad de ska tycka, utan istället skapar paradoxer som öppnar upp för olika perspektiv, som möjliggör för reflekterande och för ett undersökande av fundamentala filosofiska frågor. Och för att det i slutändan blir nonsens att försöka separera det icke-mänskliga från det mänskliga. Det är inte så lätt att säga var den gränsen går. Om vi undersöker vad vi upplever som det mänskliga riktigt noga så finner vi till och med att det uteslutande består av icke-mänskliga element. En transformerad relation

till det icke-mänskliga innebär därmed en förändrad relation till jaget, och vice versa.

Vi ser nonsense som ett försök att göra historier utanför common sense, att ifrågasätta det och peka på de narrativ och sanningar vi lever under, saker så fundamentala att vi inte ens tänker på dem som idéer. Lite som ordet naturlig – Timothy Morton har sagt att naturligt bara betyder normativt, men att den normen är så stark att vi ser den som inbakad i sakerna själva, en kvalité i världen ”där ute”.

I The Pink Chicken Projekt vill ni genmodifiera alla jordens kycklingar för att sätta färg på berggrunden och sprida ett aktivistiskt budskap. Varför kycklingen?

Vi började med att utforska antropocen och de maktstrukturer som är inbäddade i global ekologisk kollaps. Sedan hittade vi geologisk forskning som föreslog att kycklingben skulle vara ett av de huvudsakliga spåren efter antropocen. Det fastnade, det var något vi kom tillbaka till flera gånger. Det är en så konstig bild, att det framtidens varelser kommer mötas av om de undersöker spåren av en plötslig och kraftig förändring av jordens biosfär är massa kycklingben. Kommer de tro att det bara var en massa kycklingar som levde här? Sedan stötte vi på citatet ”reoccupying the strata”, en rubrik från ett manifest av Kathryn Yusoff som vi aldrig riktigt läst, men bara titeln var tillräckligt inspirerande. När vi sedan kombinerade det med syntetisk biologi tänkte vi – vänta, kan vi återta stratomet genom kycklingen?

Ni vill kritisera människans ingripande i ekosfären genom att gripa in i den. Är det inte problematiskt att använda berggrunden som ett slags debatt-vägg, en arena för åsikter? Varför inte bara avstå från att ockupera? Varför re-occupy och inte de-occupy?



Photo Sara Kollberg

I projektet föreslår vi användandet av en ny genteknologi som heter ”CRISPR Gene Drive” för att ändra färgen på alla kycklingar, och det är ju absolut ett våld mot en art, att gå in i och ändra den i global skala, helt utan samtycke. Det intressanta med att förändra berget genom ett narrativ är att det pekar på skalan på det som händer just nu, på att vi lever på ett sätt så att det här händer i bergen, det är såhär det kommer se ut i framtiden. Vad skulle vi göra om syftet var att av-ockupera stratomet? Föreslå att vi ska sluta odla miljarder kycklingar i jättefabriker? Det som händer nu är så absurt och samtidigt så normaliserat att det ibland är svårt att prata om. Vi ville komma åt de underliggande frågorna, utan att säga till folk vad de ska tycka: Hur hamnade vi här egentligen? Vad är det i vår relation till kycklingen som är destruktivt?

En del blir ju arga på det här projektet, men det är intressant *hur* de blir arga, för de säger inte ”rör inte min companion species” utan ”rör inte min mat, jag vill inte ha rosa ben i min mat”.

Vi guidas mycket av vad som känns roligt, av humor. För oss pekar det ofta på kärnan i saker. ”Något händer här men jag vet inte riktigt var det handlar om”, humorn kan användas för att komma fram till den kärnan. Det är också ett sätt att skapa en mer öppen diskussion. Hade vi sagt de-occupy hade det varit som att gå direkt in i ett dömande, och då blir det jättesvårt att ha en diskussion. Eller så blir det bara såhär: ”okej, bra idé”.

Det som också gör det här projektet intressant för oss är att vi själva inte vet svaret på frågan om bioteknik. Vi är fortfarande inte säkra på hur vi ska förhålla till den här teknologin, när den är användbar eller inte. Öppenhet och nyfikenhet är väldigt viktig för att kunna skapa ett projekt som har den balansen. Ja, jag har gått från att vara jätteför all bioteknik till att bli jätteanti. Nu vet jag inte riktigt vad jag tycker, men jag ser fler nyanser, och att det beror mycket på hur det används. Även om intentionen är god så är det lätt att få en övertro på vår egen kunskap och förmåga att styra världen. Men verkligheten är mer unknowable. Antropologen Eben Kirksey pratar i vår bok om Pink Chicken Project om att



The Pink Chicken Project, ongoing, Nonhuman Nonsense



The Pink Chicken Project, ongoing, Nonhuman Nonsense

vissa teknologier har också en sorts wild, unruly, eller rowdy karaktär, vilket gör dem extra oförutsägbara och svårhanterliga.

Skapandet av ett projekt är mycket ett sätt för oss själva att komma underfund med hur vi ska tänka kring ett problem eller dilemma. När vi gjorde det här narrativet förstod vi inte riktigt vad det handlade om. Det är så många strukturer inblandade: jordbruk, bioteknik, geologiska tidsskalor, berättande, makt och sociala strukturer. Det var först när vi visade upp och pratade med andra om det som vi började förstå. De berättade för oss hur de tolkade projektet, och vi ba aha, ah, åh vad najs. Och det var kanske här humorn och paradoxen gjorde sitt, de öppnade ett konstruktivt djup där vi kunde se mer grundläggande filosofiska frågor än när vi skapade narrativet.

Det vi gjorde då var att försöka samla den här förståelsen i en bok. Det är en samling av essäer och intervjuer med olika filosofer, antropologer, aktivister och andra som varit i kontakt med projektet. Vi skrev den under pandemin och jobbar med att få den publicerad nu.

Ni är intresserade av österländsk filosofi och Indigenous Knowledge, på vilket sätt influerar de här tanke-traditionerna ert arbete?

På senaste tiden, när vi pratat om att vi inte är uppbyggda av människor utan av nonhumans, och att vi alltid är i kontakt med nonhumans, har buddhismens koncept interbeing varit inspirerande. Det speglar det som inom posthumanism kallas entanglement.

Vi försöker verkligen hitta en balans. Vi är pro science, eller vi jobbar gärna tillsammans med forskare och vill att projekten ska vara grundade i vetenskap. Men

just vad gäller gränsen mellan det mänskliga och det icke-mänskliga och någon sorts icke-dualism finns det mycket kunskap inom österländsk filosofi, också vad gäller att koppla samman vetenskap med spiritualitet eller känslor.

Indigenous filosofier eller ”kosmologier” är ofta väldigt relationella och konstruktiva. Särskilt när det gäller vår relation till ekosystem och natur. Vi har jobbat en del med ”personhood”- utvecklingen på Nya Zeeland. Där har de jättemycket erfarenhet och kunskap om att ha en dialog med det icke-mänskliga, en kontakt och en närhet. Ordet tabu kommer från det – människan måste ibland avhålla sig saker av respekt för det icke-mänskliga. Det intressanta är att det har skrivits in i lagtexterna på Nya Zeeland. En text vi läste (från 2014) beskrev hur ägandet av en nationalpark hade flyttats från regeringen till en ny laglig konstruktion – nationalparken själv. Det skrevs in i lagen att all mänsklig aktivitet på området skulle regleras av en grupp bestående både av representanter från staten och från den Māori-iwi som har sitt ursprung och hem i området, och att besluten skulle grundas på maoriernas kosmologi och kunskapssystem, de principer om förvaltning och relation till andra var- elser som kommer ur den idévärlden. De radar upp flera icke-västerländska, epistemologiska begrepp som ska ligga till grund för gruppens beslut och beskriver det som ett sätt att helt ta bort ägandet av marken - området äger sig själv - det är jättespännande.

Det är inspirerande också av en annan orsak, för om vi säger att vi lever under en massa narrativ som säger hur världen är, sanningar som kanske inte behöver vara sanningar, är det intressant att också kunna komma med exempel på andra sätt. Det får en att tänka att det finns hur många sätt som helst att tänka på.

Hur vet man vad ett berg vill?

Det kanske är lite svårt för oss som bor i städer och köper all vår mat inslagen i plast att veta det. Vi har kanske glömt eller förlorat den kunskapen.

Vi är inte experter på hur man vet vad ett berg vill, men vi läste en spännande intervju med Tamati Kruger, huvudförhandlaren i den iwi som bor på det här området på Nya Zeeland. Han sa att "those who know the land and love it know how to read the signs that nature is trying to tell us", och gav ett exempel från en person som säger ungefär såhär: "när jag var ute igår var det inga bär

på marken, det är juni och det borde finnas bär på marken”. Vad han menar är att naturen försöker ha en dialog med oss, men att vi behöver lära oss hur man lyssnar.

På ett sätt är det kanske inte så himla svårt att veta vad naturen vill just nu. Det är ändå rätt så tydligt. Det är jättemycket bränder i Kalifornien, öknar breder ut sig, korallrev dör, tusentals arter går under, insekterna försvinner, Corona...

Tror ni att det västerländska sättet att tänka har bidragit till den här utvecklingen?

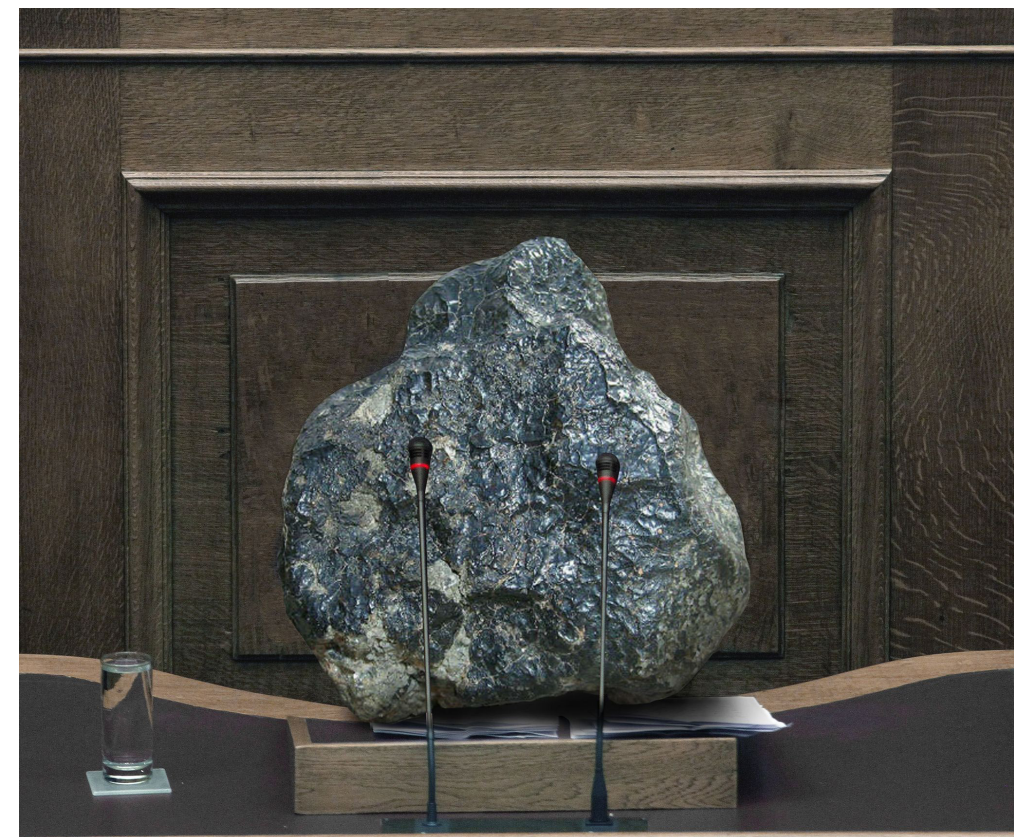
Absolut. Det är väl hela kritiken mot antropocen. Tänker vi att vi är mycket viktigare än alla andra är det ganska lätt att utnyttja andra. Tänker vi dessutom att vi är utvalda av gud och har en särskild plats på planeten är det nästan svårt att tänka något annat. Det är svårt att ändra på någonting och fortfarande ha den idén. Samtidigt sägs det inom västerländsk religion att just eftersom människan är utvald av Gud så har hon ett jättestort ansvar att förvalta sin position och ta hand om miljön.

Många tänker ju fortfarande att djur inte är medvetande eller existerar på samma sätt som människan. Det är att avhumanisera det andra - det är roligt att det är det enda ord vi har, avhumanisera - att framställa det som helt skilt från oss själva. Det har studerats av många, det leder till minskad empati, stänger av kopplingen till det andra. Det är samma mekanism som gör oss kapabla till krig eller folkmord.

Den andra extremen är ju att ignorera alla skillnader mellan arter och säga att alla är lika mycket värda. Det är inte så simpelt att vi bara kan säga att vi ska vara snälla mot djuren - ska vi vara snälla mot kaniner eller mot rovdjuren som äter kaniner?

Det handlar om att komma bort från idén om den upplysta människan som verkar särskild från en mekanisk bakgrund, det är en våldsam fantasi.

Kan särskiljandet från djuren innebära en begränsning för också synen på oss själva? Så att exempelvis vår idé om språk, istället för att innefatta också de uttryck vi delar med andra djur, inskränkts till att avse den fixerade, skriftliga utsagan? Apropå att vi glömt hur vi kan lyssna till naturen: har vi fått svårare att lyssna till och tala andra djurs språk?



Det där får mig att tänka på Alex the Perrot, en papegoja som var väldigt bra på mänskligt språk och kunde kommunicera genom att prata med människor. Alla menade att det här var en jättesmart papegoja. Men är det inte bara en papegoja som är jättebra på att prata människospråk? Det betyder väl inte att den är jättesmart, eller att alla papegojor som inte pratar människospråk är dummare?

I projektet Planetarian Personhood projicerar ni ett människoansikte på planeten Mars, sätter stenar framför mikrofoner i konferensmiljöer och ger dem personpass. Ni leker med projektion som ett sätt att leva sig in i andra typer av varande. Finns det några problem med att utgå från människan för att förstå det icke-mänskliga?

Det är intressant att skilja mellan antropocentrism – att sätta människan i centrum, tänka att vi är väldigt speciella och har ett unikt sätt att existera på eller existerar mer än alla andra, och antropomorfism – att projicera det mänskliga sättet att vara på andra varelser. En del filosofer menar att det är svårt att komma ifrån antropomorfism, eftersom det mänskliga just nu är vår enda tillgång till verkligheten och att vi därför inte kan låta bli att projicera den på annat, men att det inte behöver betyda att det mänskliga är det bästa eller ens enda sättet att existera.

Dessutom gör andra varelser samma sak tillbaka. Det är inte bara åt ett håll någon tittar. Om ett får tittar på oss får morfar det oss. Timothy Morton säger till och med att när vi käkar vindruvor antropomorfar vi vindruvorna men vindruvorna grapemorfar oss tillbaka. Jane Bennet föreslår användningen av “strategisk antropomorfism” för att skapa empati för icke-människor. Hon skriver exempelvis att “We need to cultivate a bit of antropomorphism - the idea that human agency has some echoes in nonhuman nature - to counter the narcissism of humans in charge of the world.”

Det finns en studie på en grupp får. Forskarna ville veta hur de agerade när ingen såg och satte en GoPro på ett av fårens huvud, för att komma in i deras värld. Men då började alla får bete sig jättekonstigt. Efter ett tag insåg forskarna att det var för ett får hade en konstig grej på huvudet. Ett annat exempel är en kvinna som ville observera apor ”utifrån” och satte sig ner tyst för att studera deras beteende. De började också bete sig jättekonstigt, de ba: ”men vem är det där som sitter och tittar på

oss? Jättekonstigt.” Snart förstod hon att det enda sättet att förstå dem var att komma dem nära och leva tillsammans med dem, att bli en apa själv.

Angående att djuren också kollar på oss – måste inte både vår och deras blick vara väldigt färgad av hur vi har behandlat dem, burat in dem eller på andra sätt försökt manifesteras vår överlägsenhet? Det blir ju ett märkligt möte.

Det finns ett intressant konstprojekt, History of Cattle, som tittar på relationen till kossan genom historien. För länge sen, 10 000 år sedan eller nåt, var kossan en mer avancerad varelse som levde i flock, men genom relationen till människan har den blivit mer och mer fördummad. Genom avel och i och med att vi brutit upp deras strukturer, gjort dem beroende av oss eller hållit dem fångna. När vi pratade med Heather Davis sa hon en fin grej: “why would we want to render the other beings, that we share the world with, more stupid?”

Det där finns inbakat i det som händer inom teknologi och industriellt jordbruk, att göra saker i stor skala, få en förutsägbar skörd, alltid tomater i butiken. Hela den relationen blir fördummad. Vi kan göra tomaterna förutsägbara, få dem när som helst, styra hur de kommer fram – men de smakar ju inget

Det är intressant också i förhållande till utrotande. Inte bara arter försvinner utan också olika sätt att vara på. Och sätt att ha relationer på. Det är jättesorgligt.

När vi var i ett biosfärområde i Sverige fick vi veta att i nästan allt skogsbruk i Sverige hugger de ner alla träd innan de blivit vuxna, vilket innebär att alla träd som lever är barntred. De vet inte riktigt hur de ska bete sig, för i vanliga fall blir de lärda av de äldre träden hur de ska vara. Det är bara massa bebisar. Och kycklingarna blir avlivade när de bara är sex veckor. De är avlade för att växa snabbt, så om de blir äldre än så kollapsar de under sin egen vikt eller får massa sjukdomar, hjärtattacker.

Engagemanget för djur och natur har exploderat, inte minst på kulturens område. Samtidigt är det väldigt lite som faktiskt händer – vi fortsätter slakta djur och bränna skogar. Kan konst förändra? Varför ser det i så fall ut som det gör?

Jag tror faktiskt att det händer jättemycket, att saker är i rörelse och håller på eller har förändrats. Att säga att ingen gör något eller att inget händer kan förhindra att saker förändras. UNFCCC har ju försökt komma överens jättelänge om internationella begränsningar av koldioxid och parisavtalet är ju ett enormt framsteg, att hela världen ändå samlas och kommer överens.

Jag såg ett talk härom veckan med Christiana Figueres, som var med när de förhandlade fram parisavtalet. Hon sa två intressanta saker, dels att många länder tar stora steg mot att reformera sina ekonomier - att 70 eller 65 procent av globala BNP redan är på väg mot klimatneutralitet - dels att det händer mycket vad gäller samarbeten, att om folk ska köpa ett företags produkter kan de inte vara så exploaterande. Sedan tror jag också att Fridays For future och hela ungdomsrörelsen, som inte bara är ungdomar – hela folkrörelsen – får mycket att

hända. Figueres pratade om optimism, inte om naiv optimism och tro på att allt bara kommer bli bra, utan om att fråga sig vad man tar med sig in i hanterandet av ett problem. Donna Haraway skriver “It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories.”

Vi är en del av en större diskurs. Inom konsten ifrågasätter vi saker hela tiden, förflyttar normer, förändrar. Vi får bara fortsätta göra bra saker. Det är också viktigt att jobba med sig själv i det. Det är intressant att undersöka hur de krafter som finns inom en själv också finns utanför en. Det finns en koppling mellan ens egen ilska och krig ute i världen, det är samma drivkraft. Det som



Planetary Personhood, ongoing project, Nonhuman Nonsense

leder till krig är inte bara något som finns där ute utan också inom mig. Eller inom ett system. Eller – systemet finns inte bara där ute utan också inom mig.

Vad tror ni att konsten kan bidra med som inte filosofer eller politiken kan?

Vi kan ta saker som är svåra att greppa och få fler att förstå. Skapa ett slags mittpunkt som kopplar ihop olika områden och möjliggör diskussion. Vi kan bidra med just stories, människan förstår världen bland annat genom historier. Det blev tydligt när vi var med vid ett FN-konvent 2018. Där var det väldigt politiserat, folk hade starka åsikter, för eller emot – om gene drives skulle vara tillåtet eller förbjudet, om teknologi kommer lösa våra problem eller leda till nya. De kunde inte diskutera eftersom det alltid var för tidigt eller för sent: när en teknologi är ny är det lätt att avfärda diskussioner som spekulationer, och svårt att veta hur teknologin kommer användas och hur den borde regleras; när folk redan har börjat använda teknologin är samhället redan investerat, vi kan inte sluta flyga för vi är beroende av det.

I det forumet kunde vi bidra med att skapa ett exempel som var vetenskapligt relevant, som skulle kunna hända, men som samtidigt inte bara baserades på siffror, tabeller eller evidens. Det gjorde att många ville komma till oss för att prata om de etiska problem som de egentligen hade olika åsikter om men inte kunde nå fram till. Förhandlingarna där var så tekniska, det skulle vara ett precist, juridiskt språk osv. Inom design och konst finns en annan möjlighet till självkritik och att tänka i nyanser. Konst och storytelling kan gestalta inneboende motsägelser. Vi överraskades av hur viktigt det var med exempel, något som inte är det bästa eller det sämsta, för då dör diskussionen lite. Tvetydigheten skapar en öppenhet och en nyfikenhet som kanske möjliggör för förståelse.

Apropå optimism, visst var det knäppt på många sätt när vi var på FN-konventet, mycket pengar och makt,

men det verkade vara viljan till en bättre värld som drev många där. Det finns så många människor som jobbar aktivt för att vi inte ska få en klimatkatastrof. En miljon, kanske mer! Det är väldigt positivt.

Till sist, vad tror ni att vi kan lära oss av djuren?

Att vi aldrig kan veta vad som pågår inom en annan varelse. Att vara ödmjuk inför andra sätt att vara. Det är väldigt ”rikt”, hur många sätt det finns att vara och uppleva saker på. Det är bortom oss, går inte beskriva eller att komma åt. Det känns så inspirerande. Att det går runt så många varelser omkring oss som har massa andra sätt att vara på, sätt som inte är bättre eller sämre utan bara andra. Det finns ett Timothy Morton-citat som säger att det är omöjligt att bevisa att en arkitekt agerar och att ett bi bara beter sig. Det är något vi tänkt mycket på, att det inte går att veta.

Det är kul att möta djur för man måste hitta ett språk eller ett sätt att kommunicera, ibland är det med kroppsspråk, ibland med ljud.

Samtidigt kan vi se hur lika vi är andra djur. Även om det har andra sätt att vara på går det att känna en stark koppling till dem. Det djuren också gör, varje sekund, är att försöka vara lyckliga, de vill inte heller lida. Vi är kanske inte så olika de andra varelserna som vi delar världen med. Det är en enorm närhet på något sätt. Vi kan mötas och inte mötas.

Vi hade en katt förut. När man ser en katt brukar man tänka: ”äh, katt”, applicera den etiketten på varelsen och baka in en massa saker i den. Han brukade komma upp jättenära en på natten, bara några centimeter från ansiktet och bara titta en djupt in i ögonen. Och då, när jag var så nära kattansiktet, kände jag så starkt hur lika vi ändå var. Som att han och jag var lika varelser men i olika kroppar. Vi hindrar oss från så mycket när vi hela tiden applicerar etiketter på saker.



Crisis of Humanism, Alternative Biopolitics and Developmentalism in Latin American Animal Literature (1950-1970)

Oscar Sebastian Tellini

I. Introduction

Animals share the same planet with humans and, since prehistoric times, they have been subject of various human artistic representations, such as cave paintings and sculptures. With social and technological transformations, cultural references to the animal world begin to appear in written form, in the texts of thinkers and philosophers. Most of the philosophical writings that have remained intact until nowadays reveal that, within Western philosophy, until the last decades of the previous century the human-animal relationship has been conceived by emphasizing the oppositions between humans and animals and by claiming the superiority of the human being due to its capacity of reason. After Aristotle's writings, the most famous are those of Descartes (1596-1650) and Kant (1724-1804), which have not only influenced the development that philosophical thought was to follow with respect to the question of the animal, but also, and above all, the way in which the human being was going to relate to animals, and to the environment of which the animal is part, in everyday life. Indeed, as the American eco-feminist philosopher Carolyn Merchant (1980) points out, between the 16th and 18th centuries the human thought of domination over animals and nature began to extend beyond the religious and philosophical spheres and to spread in the social and political domains to legitimize the industrialization of the period and the related exploitation of the environment.

However, since the last decades of the 20th century and with the upsurge of the current ecological crisis, the animal question produced a turn in culture, with the emergence of *Animal Studies*. Animal Studies is a branch of cultural studies which challenges that tradition of Western philosophical thought by highlighting the affinities and contiguities between human beings and animals and by advancing new ways of understanding the animal beyond Western cultural currents. Within Animal

Studies, the human-animal relationship has been studied through a variety of philosophical poststructuralist approaches (Deleuze, Guattari, 2002; Berger, 2009; Derrida, 2008); from biopolitics and its emphasis on the control over life, bodies and populations and on the political significance intrinsic to biological bodies (Agamben, 1998); from an ecological perspective that is primarily concerned with the ecological consequences of certain types of relationships that humans establish with animals (Wolfe, 2003; Hesie, 2016); and from a critical perspective which focuses on the animal to explore racial and social class issues (Gossett, 2015; Ko & Ko, 2017). It is through these latest cultural approaches to the animal that the human-animal dichotomy is destabilized, as the animal begins to be considered no longer as a being "other pure and primitive" (Wolfe, 2003: 17), but rather as a part that constitutes the human being itself.

Although *Animal Studies* emerged in the last decades of the 20th century accompanying the rise of the awareness about the environmental destruction, Latin American literature, which is the expression on which I will focus in the following chapters, has been notably concerned about the status of the animal, the human-animal relationship, the treatment of animals and the ethical awareness about the animal from more remote times.

Within *Animal Studies* there is a distinction between the focus on the animal and the idea of animality. While the former implies a concern for the living conditions of non-human animals, the latter does not express a clear interest for the defence and welfare of animals. Rather, starting from representations of the animal in cultural products, it aims to analyse how cultural ideas about animals are constructed and to initiate discussions related to, for example, human politics, ideas of otherness fixed in culture and the condition of human beings (Lundblad, 2009). In this essay, my approach to the animal combines the focus on the animal and the focus on

animality since, starting from Latin American literary representations of animals, I reflect both on the life and conditions of real animals as well as on issues related to human identity, politics and economy.

II. Animals in the cage, the death of the metaphor and the crisis of humanism

An influential literary critic within Latin American *Animal Studies* is the Argentinian Julieta Yelin. In her literary analyses, Yelin (2009, 2010) draws from the theoretical perspectives of the philosopher John Berger (2009), who has reflected on the contiguities between humans and animals and on the place that animals occupy in modern times. Berger (ibid.) underlines that both humans and animals are dominated by a deep incomprehension when they meet the gaze of another being, and he concludes that language is an element that supports a false superiority of the human being with respect to animals insofar as it allows the human being to attenuate this incomprehension by communicating and finding a confirmation in the other. However, this incomprehension continues to dominate the human being, who realizes it when he finds himself in front of another being with whom he can not communicate through language. Berger (ibid.) also analyses the nature of the encounter between humans and animals in zoological gardens and indicates that in these spaces it is possible to experience how animals, although they are physically close to human beings, are isolated from their natural context and completely marginalized. Thus, in a zoo, when crossing the gaze of an animal, the human being can only feel infinitely alone and realize that there is no longer any type of authentic relationship with the other.

Starting from Berger's (2009) ideas, Yelin (2009) explores the capacities of literary language to challenge an anthropocentric perspective. She points out that a literature which wishes to break any hierarchy between human and animal is filled with metamorphic processes, zones of passage and transitional becomings that are neither human nor animal but rather zones in which human and animal coexist and are indistinguishable. Yelin (2010) also explores how the animal presence in Latin American literature illustrates the crisis of humanism in its questioning of human identity. To do so, she analyses the short poetic prose in *Bestiario* by Juan José Arreola (1918-2001) and the *Zoos* by João Guimarães Rosa (1908-1967), in which the animal is located in zoos or similar environments where human violence against

animals materializes. It is worth mentioning here that, as Yelin (ibid.) underlines, "post-war writers frequently went to the zoo, the botanical garden, the aquarium, as if looking for a way – the only one, perhaps, after the brutal effects of Nazism – to talk about the human world" (ibid., 3, my translation). According to the literary critic, the rupture of the tradition of animal metaphors in these works highlights an intimate link between human and animal and foregrounds a space where the distinction between human and animal becomes imperceptible, thus questioning the identity of human beings. The metaphorical ruptures in the literary language criticize the disappearance of animals in modern times at the same time that they are expression of the identity loss of the narrator (and of the whole humanity): looking at animals in the zoological garden, the observer neither recognizes the animal nor himself and is therefore unable to establish an equivalent relationship with the animal through language and metaphors. These works thus highlight a bond between human and animal which is generated by a shared precariousness: the human being, who had always defined himself in relation to the animal, no longer recognizing the exploited animal in front of him in the zoo and becoming unable to have a natural contact with the gaze of that animal, is now no longer able to recognize and define himself.

III. Strange Shapes and Animal Bodies for Alternative Biopolitics

Another influential study in Latin American animal criticism is *Formas Comunes. Animalidad, Cultura, Biopolítica* (2014), in which Gabriel Giorgi traces a genealogy of the animal in Latin American culture. Giorgi (ibid.) underlines that since the sixties the distinction between human and animal begins to become precarious, leaving space for an animal life that commence to function as an organic, affective, material and political "continuum" (ibid., 12, italics in original) with the human. Giorgi (ibid.) points out that the animal presence in Latin American literature of the period shatters a series of distinctions such as nature/culture, irrational/rational, alive/dead, which had ordered and classified bodies and forms of life, thus sustaining a neoliberal market order. Starting from Giorgio Agamben (1998), who through his conception of bare life underlines that "the novelty of modern biopolitics is, strictly speaking, that biology is, as such, immediately political and vice versa" (ibid., 187, my translation), Giorgi (2014) suggests that this animal literature, which emphasizes



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diseases, passions and affections of both human and animal bodies, and in which bodies which are neither human nor animal appear without defined shapes and borders, proposes alternative biopolitics as a reflection on the ethics of the living. Therefore, following Giorgi’s reasoning, through the abundance of animal figurations that break the human-animal opposition in literary works, Latin American culture of the sixties offers tools to destabilize biopolitics which traces the Foucauldian distinction between lives that deserve to be lived and lives to be abandoned. In other words, through its animal configurations, this literature questions a body-centered politics by inviting us to reflect on concerns linked to economy and politics as forms of control over bodies, lives and populations.

IV. Critical Zoographies of Developmentalism

The 1960s coincide with developmentalism in Latin America, a period in which the environmental impact of development narratives linked to the expansion of economic models to maximize productivity by extracting natural resources were becoming evident (Svampa and Antonelli, 2009: 15, 114). With the main purpose of counter-acting Communism in the region, the United States implemented a series of economic programs which began to use the country’s resources to support development in Latin American countries, whose economic stagnations represented a threat to the United States itself (Heffes, French, 2021: 211). This period was marked by an important advance in industrialization, as well as by efforts to displace product manufacturing into the regions, in the company of ideas of progress (ibid.). These industrialization processes had immense human and ecological costs with harmful consequences for Latin American ecosystems (ibid., 213). In this context of development, the animal becomes part of an imaginary linked to production and performance (food, furniture, remedies), to human entertainment (zoos) and to industrial sectors (medical, weapons, technological) (González Gallinas, 2015: 6) that would lead to great extinctions of species, in many cases due to the alteration of their habitats.

In the short story *Alta Cocina* by Amparo Dávila, a narrative voice painfully remembers the moment when he witnessed some snails from the market being cooked in the home of a bourgeois family. The human narrative voice is able to perceive the suffering of these beings and painfully alludes to the fact that they were torn from the

earth to be taken to the market and, thereafter, destined to die in the haute cuisine. I argue that the presence of a shared pain between the dying animals and the observer narrator shatters, in *Alta cocina*, the human animal opposition as if to criticize the tearing of the animals from their natural environment and their sale in the market. In the 23 short poetic prose which constitute Juan José Arreola’s *Bestiario*, the narrator and observer metaphorically compares the animals in the zoological garden of Chapultepec with industrial machines or animal products while he alludes to the environment from which they were torn away to be taken to the zoo. I argue that, through this metaphorical language, the short poetic narratives highlight a state of shared precariousness between human and animal – precariousness that is caused precisely by the irruption of industrial elements that overlap both the voice of the narrator and the animal configurations – which allows the emergence of a judgment regarding the rapid industrial development of the moment and its consequences on both human and non-human communities. Finally, in the 38 poems of the poetry collection *El gran zoo* by Nicolás Guillén, the poetic voice mingles the animal with institutions, military and technological objects, classes of people from various social backgrounds and meteorological phenomena. According to Schulz-Cruz (1992), *El gran zoo* raises a criticism towards corrupt institutions and demagogues that appear, in animal forms, caged inside the zoo as a metaphor of society. From his side, Valle (2003) argues that the book aims to foreground vices and misfortunes of contemporary civilization.

Collectively, these three works produce a literary-critical animal discourse of the narratives of progress in Latin American developmentalism due to the fact that the animal configurations raise critical questions regarding the industrialization, the commodification and the disappearance of the animal as well as the exploitation of the environment. Although in a different way, the idea of animal disappearance is central in these three works. In *Bestiario* the animal disappears from the environment when it is captured to be brought to the zoo; in *Alta cocina* the animal disappears from the environment and ends up being cooked in a pot; in *El gran zoo*, the animal disappears as it is blurred between technological and military objects. The foregrounding of the animal torn from the environment and the evocation of products and objects obtained from the industrialization of the animal – such as sausages, clothes and soap – in Arreola; the highlighting of the horror of the snails in the pan

whose screams structure a cultural history of Mexican bourgeois gastronomy in Dávila; and the animal put in contiguity with a list of objects that include weapons, human beings and institutions in sarcastic visions of the space race and of the confidence in modern technological development in Guillén, can be said to constitute instances of criticism of developmentalism in these three works.

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, Latin American literature of between the late 1950s and early 1970s shows that in the Latin American culture of the time the animal was not conceived as a being “other pure and primitive” (Wolfe, 2003: 17), as the criticism from which the more recent Western *Animal Studies* starts. Indeed, the gift borne by this literature is its desire and ability to shatter – despite using language which is an exclusively human domain – any human-animal opposition and to bring to light a series of contiguities between humans and animals. By foregrounding an intimate relationship between hu-

mans and animals, this literature leads us to reflect on the identity of human beings in a period in which both anthropocentrism and the certainties of humanism are collapsing. At the same time, the animal in these works functions as a political sign that dismantles the biopolitical distinction between lives that deserve to be lived and lives to be abandoned in order to question the control of economy and politics over bodies and populations. In addition, these animal configurations also raise critical questions towards the industrialization, the commodification and the disappearance of the animal as well as the exploitation of the environment, all of which are socio-environmental issues related to the narratives of progress in Latin American developmentalism. Thus, Latin American animal literature of between the 1950s and 1970s not only leads us to undertake philosophical and biopolitical reflections starting from the animal, but it harbors also various and diverse perspectives to understand our approaches to companion species, as the American feminist and postmodernist philosopher Donna Haraway calls them, and repair the damage we cause to animals and their environment.

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Searching for the roots of consciousness: an interview with Peter Godfrey-Smith

Johannes Stenlund

Some years ago, philosopher Peter Godfrey-Smith started to scuba-dive regularly in the ocean off the south-east coast of his native Australia. The creatures that he met there - cephalopods, such as giant cuttlefish and octopuses, displaying strange but unmistakable forms of intelligence - made him devote more time to the questions of how vastly different animals came to be conscious and what that tells us about consciousness today. Since then, he has laid out his views in two books, with a third on the way.

Godfrey-Smith is in no doubt that consciousness is real and that humans - and probably many other animals - are capable of having rich qualitative experiences. As a materialist, however, he does not think that mental experiences are constituted by any special properties, such as an immaterial soul. This means he faces an explanatory gap - that between our best physicalist theories of how brains work and what it actually feels to be something. While many approaches to bridge the gap set out from those rich qualitative experiences - of being overwhelmed by the intense colour of a painting, say - Godfrey-Smith tries to approach it from a different direction.

Experiences of qualia, he says, are real - when you let the redness of a Rothko painting wash over you, you are experiencing a state of what it can be like to be a conscious being. But it is not the paradigm example of being conscious. Instead of bridging the explanatory gap from the starting point of qualia, we should start with subjectivity - why animals have a point of view at all. That, Godfrey-Smith says, is a byproduct of agency, a much less contentious evolutionary concept. That animals had to do things brought subjectivity with it, which was the first step towards the complex mental experiences that are part of our lives today.

In Godfrey-Smith's evolutionary framework, consciousness is not a switch that was suddenly turned on at a cer-

tain point in history, but a genuinely gradual process that passed through intermediate stages of partially experiential animals. Even today, Godfrey-Smith claims, we can expect to find borderline cases of animals that we cannot categorise as either conscious or nonconscious. That idea has met resistance from philosophers for several reasons. First, the idea of a partial experience seems to go against intuitions of consciousness as a binary state. Even when we feel our consciousness altered or impacted, there is a sharp cut-off point between being conscious and not being conscious. In a partially experiential subject, the question of what it is like to be something would need a very different kind of answer. Second, it raises ethical questions. Ascribing moral status to subjects based on their level of consciousness is harder in a case where experiencing is partial. Are there borderline cases of experiencing subjects where there is no answer of how we ought to behave towards these animals?

Taking a closer look at the varieties of consciousness in animals as different as octopuses and humans and many animals in between, Godfrey-Smith's evolutionary view also brings up the question of what base is needed for certain mental experiences to arise. Can the same mental state be realised in different physical kinds or do mental experiences only exist as part of their specific make-up? Peter Godfrey-Smith holds that these challenges should not cause us to abandon the view of partially experiencing subjects, but to get used to thinking about a world of genuine gradualness, even if it means developing new concepts that go against our current intuitions. He has laid out these views in *Other Minds* (2016), a book about his field-work with octopuses, and *Metazoa* (2020), which takes a broader look at the history of animals. He is currently writing a third book in the series, focusing on the ethical implications of his view. He is also the 2022 Jean Nicod Laureate and will hold the lectures in Paris in June this year.

What made you start with this project of looking at octopuses and the origins of animal consciousness?

Other Minds began as a consequence of spending time with those animals in the sea when I was back in Australia while I was teaching in the US. I first thought of it as a fairly minor side-project, but once the book got going I invested quite a lot in it. The book is organised around the common ancestry that links humans with cephalopods - that the common ancestor was such a long time ago and still there are these similarities between us and a sense that we can make contact with the animals. So *Other Minds* was about one group of animals and one part of the tree of life.

With *Metazoa*, I thought I would apply the same kind of framework but much more broadly - looking at the whole history of animals, including non-bilaterian animals and land animals. That meant looking at common ancestry and relationships to some extent, but also using the history of animal life as a way to cast light on philosophical questions about minds and bodies. That was the transition from *Other Minds* to *Metazoa*.

Now I'm writing a third book, which is going to broaden out even further and look at the place of life within the history of the earth. It will include fairly detailed discussions of policy questions, questions about farming, the use of animals in scientific experiments, climate change, habitat destruction - standard pressing moral questions. So in the very last part of the third I'll be trying to ask what we should do in light of the picture that is being put together across the three books.

As you have shown, octopuses are fascinating animals that raise philosophical questions. Did you also have a theoretical interest that guided you towards studying them?

No, that came afterwards. Before meeting octopuses, I met giant cuttlefish and they are just such astounding animals. I took a lot of photos of them and began to think about them. That led to these themes about the tree of life in *Other Minds*.

Then octopuses as other cephalopods are relatives and there just happens to be lots of octopuses in the Sydney area. I think most people don't realise that because they are so camouflaged, but once you start looking there are lots and lots. So the theoretical interest came after the

contact with the animals.

Was there a particular moment when you realised that your spending time with octopuses was relevant to your philosophical interests?

It was when I began to think about the fact that these animals are molluscs and that means that they have this very deep evolutionary relationship. It is such a complicated animal, with some of them interested in me, but their relatives are oysters and clams and snails. That really was a bit of a revelation and I thought "okay, that is amazing".

Also, when I began reading about them, I read *Cephalopod Behaviour* [by Roger Hanlon and John Messenger], which was the standard scientific summary at the time. They alerted me to the fact that their nervous system is such a different one in architecture from ours. They talked about how the nervous system in the arms of an octopus are "curiously divorced from the central brain". That was the phrase that they used. It wasn't trying to make the animals exciting, it was just what it looked like. That also made me think that this is philosophically quite important and something to follow up.

Octopuses have always had a kind of cameo role in philosophy of mind. Hilary Putnam occasionally used them in his early discussion about multiple realisability. To use the semi-caricature, if you have a simple identity about the mental where pain is the firing of C-fibers, that suggests that if you don't have C-fibers, you can't have pain, and that presses towards multiple realisability. Putnam realised that very early on.

But your conclusions are quite different from Putnam's when it comes to multiple realisability.

I think that nervous systems are special in the area of explaining how experience is possible. Bearing in mind that everything we say on this topic has to be fairly cautious, the view in *Metazoa* of how experience came to exist and what it's like - how there can be something it's like to be us and so on - is a view that gives a certain role to physical peculiarities of nervous systems.

That makes it somewhat antagonistic to the strongest forms of traditional multiple realisability, the Putnam, [Jerry] Fodor sorts of views. But not to all forms. It's a guiding idea in my work that you don't have to have

a vertebrate architecture to have consciousness, or C-fibres to have pain, or the particular kind of nervous system that we have to have experience.

So the octopus as a guide to multiple realisability as pioneered by Putnam stays on the table, but not the kind of very abstract "every physical substrate will do" position that they developed. Then one has to work out how to fill that idea out.

Years ago, I co-authored a paper with Rosa Cao from Stanford where we tried to redo the whole question of multiple realisability in a way we referred to as 'grain-sensitive materialism'. Here's one way to get into the idea. When functionalists talk about functional profiles or properties of nervous systems, they say that any system that has the same functional properties as a human brain has to have the same mental state.

Well, that phrase 'the same' there is really quite misleading. If the functional properties of the system are what the system does, then there are both very fine-grained and very coarse-grained specifications of what the system does. Suppose you lift your arm on two occasions. There will be micro-differences between the two events. It's not really 'the same' action in the strictest possible sense of the word 'same' - there are small differences.

Do those differences matter? In a coarse-grained view, they don't. And functionalists are used to thinking about things that have a very stereotypical output, like Coke machines, or a computer program that is designed to have a stereotypical output, where if you type on the keyboard the key H you get an H every time you type. But brains are not like that, and organisms are not like that. Everything they do is a little bit different on different occasions, so there are very fine-grained and very coarse-grained functional profiles.

The whole idea of functional identity as something that could be seen across systems that have very different physical make-ups I think is really a little bit of a myth. If they're made up differently, they will do things differently. The what-they-do side will be different as a consequence of the what-they're-made-of side. Maybe only in fine-grained ways, but then the question is which of those fine-grained differences matter and which ones don't matter.

This I'm going to have to work through carefully. Not for the third book in this series because it's too technical - but I'm going to give the Jean Nicod lectures in Paris next year, and one of the aims of those lectures will be to do some of the things that were done in a fairly low-key way in the book in a lot more philosophical detail. And multiple realisability is one of those things.

Most people would accept an evolutionary picture of life and yet there seems to be a lot of resistance to the idea that our mental experiences also started this way. I understand your book as a way of untying some knots in thinking about this. What's the first tool you would give people to set people on the right track?

There seems to be at least one thing that people do seem reluctant to accept about this. That is the idea that the history could be truly gradual, in the sense where there is a time when experience does not exist and there is a time when it does exist - that there is an evolutionary process that gets us from here to there, and on some of the in-between stages there is no fact of the matter. Experience is sort of present, sort of not present. There is something there that is quasi-experiential or partially experiential, but if you ask "is there something it's like to be this guy in the middle?", the answer is "well, sort of". A lot of people really don't like that feature.

A view that a lot of people are okay with is a view where there's a discreet step that gets you from no to yes, and that yes is a simple but a hundred percent genuine form of experience. Then you have a gradual process that makes it more complicated, more elaborate, richer, and so on, but there's got to be that discreet step from no to yes. I think of it as an escalator - there's a single step you take onto the escalator, and then the rest is gradual, but there has to be a step onto the escalator.

I think it's true that it's more convenient to think in terms of a discrete step of no to yes and then a great gradual process. But that's just our habits of thought and the concepts that we presently have. There's no way that that could constrain the evolutionary story. We just might have to revise our thinking in this area and get used to the idea of true gradedness. The only conclusion that I can see that makes sense is that our concepts might be poorly adapted to the facts in this area and we'll just have to revise our concepts. That gradedness about experience might be real is something that we just have to get used to.

This will have consequences for the distribution of experience in animals around us. If someone asks us whether earthworms have experiences, or very small arthropods like mites, I think there is quite a good chance that the answer will be “not really yes and not really no”. They’re in the middle.

I think this is the locus at the moment of real resistance to an evolutionary story about experience. Most philosophers are not so resistant to a gradualist story about belief or the information-processing side of things, but they are resistant to the gradualist view about experience.

For example, Michael Tye has a new book out [*Vagueness and the Evolution of Consciousness*] that is unusual because he embraces a kind of panpsychism. Tye has never been even close to radical ideas like that before, but in his book he goes all the way to a partially panpsychist view, and does so because he thinks that the presence of consciousness, in one sense of that term, has to be a binary thing, it can’t be a matter of degree. To me, that’s quite extraordinary: it’s such a constraint on the story for it to be gradual that if that means we have to be panpsychists, then that’s okay. This is what Tye argues in his book.

When it comes to approaching the gradualist question, a pair of concepts that I found quite helpful were *subjectivity* and *agency*. How do those concepts help in thinking about this?

Agency and subjectivity are not concepts that solve the problem, but they have this useful framing role when thinking about it. Animals are specialised in action, and they do things on a multicellular scale. They’re large objects, several trillion cells in our case, that can act as wholes. Evolutionists are interested in agency because it’s a big thing from an evolutionary point of view, and agency brings with it subjectivity.

Agency and subjectivity are somewhat complementary concepts, because a coherent agent has to not just be able to act but act in certain circumstances: do this in circumstances X, do something else in circumstances Y. And this will be a matter of how things seem to the agent.

Now, once we talk about how things seem, subjectivity is beginning to get into the picture. Thomas Nagel, especially in some of the books like *Mind and Cosmos* and *The*

View from Nowhere, says that understanding how subjectivity is possible is the big problem for philosophy. I still think that’s a good way of looking at the problem, but once you say it this way, it’s not so bad. Subjectivity is complementary to agency, it comes along with it, and agency is something that has a very deft evolutionary rationale. Animals live by means of agency, we may say.

Those are the two steps: the evolutionary perspective on agency and the fact that subjectivity comes along with agency. It’s not that you could be a coherent agent and not a subject at all. In order to act in a way that is not just internally coordinated but coordinated with environmental events, you have to sense. You will do better as an agent if you have a coherent perspective on the world, a point of view. And the more elaborate and refined aspects of subjectivity, such having a world model with you as a part of the world - here I’m drawing on the work of Björn Merker, a Swede - the more you get the link to agency that makes them evolutionary natural or explicable.

Some philosophers do not like the fact that there could be cases where we neither determinately do nor determinately do not have moral obligations towards certain animals. In a review of *Metazoa*, Jonathan Birch contrasted your gradualist picture with a dualist’s, saying “the dualist’s ontology may be more complicated, but their moral view is simpler”. How do you see the ethical implications of your view?

This is one of the main things that I’m trying to think through at the moment. The way I’m approaching it is via revisiting, rereading and in some cases just reading a lot of stuff in meta-ethics trying to work out what kind of thing we can take ourselves to be doing when we engage in moral discourse and moral judgement.

I wrote a review of Christine Korsgaard’s book *Fellow Creatures* earlier this year. That’s a good book, for a lot of reasons. One is that it tries to give a very naturalistically based version of a Kantian argument for why we have to have a certain kind of concern for the well-being of other animals. I don’t think there’s a ‘have to’ to be gotten in this area. I don’t think the kind of compulsion that the neo-Kantian project is looking for can work. I’m more of a constructivist about values, quite influenced by Simon Blackburn’s work in the book *Ruling Passions*, but I’m going to have to build it all and I don’t think I’ve done that yet.



untitled, Mark Peckmezian

Earlier I was talking about discussions of gradualism where there is the more difficult version of genuinely indeterminate cases of consciousness, and the easy version where there's a kind of step onto the escalator and then you're in the yes category and then after that it can be gradual. Birch put on a conference where we talked about this in quite a lot of detail, and the view that Birch finds so difficult to accept ethically is this truly gradualist picture - it's not that he thinks that that shows that the non-gradualist view is true, but I think he very much hopes it's true because he thinks the ethical implications of a fully gradualist view would be very awkward. I agree with that, I think they are awkward, but again it's something that we may have to deal with and accept.

[That the moral world is simpler] is true even if you're not a dualist but if you have this very discreet treatment of presence versus absence of experience. If you're a non-gradualist materialist, there's the same kind of simplicity.

In another review, David Papineau wrote that your approach could help to invigorate the field of philosophy of mind, which in his view has gone stale with predictable battle lines. Would you agree with that?

I certainly appreciated the Papineau review, but I wouldn't want to advertise or talk about what I think of as good or better [about the book]. A thing that feels distinctive in the development of my view is the idea that the evolutionary history – not a kind of made-up one but an empirically informed one, one which takes seriously the transition from radial to bilaterian animals and the theories of where nervous systems arose – is important. And those deep evolutionary considerations are not just a constraint. It's not just that philosophy of mind has to fit in with them, but that thinking about the early stages, the origin of nervous systems and of action, provide a lot of interestingly surprising resources for trying to bridge the explanatory gap and make sense of

the mind-body problem. If there's something that feels distinctive from my point of view, it's that use of those rather ancient features of the evolutionary story.

Also, I obviously try to guide my story with the actual facts about animals around us now, but I don't think that's particularly novel, a lot of good philosophers are paying attention to what animals around us are like.

In the documentary My Octopus Teacher [where the film-maker Craig Foster spends a year bonding with an octopus on the coast of South Africa], the viewer gets a glimpse of the emotional connection that can be formed by socialising with octopuses. You have also spent a lot of time in the sea with these creatures. Do you think being physically close to octopuses can help in thinking philosophically about them?

I've not had experiences with individual octopuses that are anything like Craig Foster's, that particular kind of on-going relationship. I have had experiences with giant cuttlefish, the animals that I started with, that were a bit like that but briefer, where there's this strong sense of engagement on both sides. That made me realise that there's a lot more sentience around than I thought. There's just a lot more experience in the world than I thought. Once you have that gestalt-switch, it's quite powerful.

I think it's good to spend time with animals that are far from one's own species. It gives you the sense that they defy these simpler descriptions that people have attempted to give them - there's just more there, and a lot of it is very chaotic and inexplicable. It's a good experience to be confronted with the fact that there is a kind of noisy complexity in animals that are far from us. We're already used to that in some ways with domestic animals, but the idea that also invertebrate animals can have more happening I think is a valuable thing.



Repairing the Attention to the Living World: Following the Tracks of Nonhumans

Jeanne Degortes

You are walking in a forest. It is still early in the morning. After a good night's sleep, a warm cup of tea and a light breakfast, you have decided to take a walk in the forest near your home. Just to breathe fresh air before your day starts for real. So here you are now. Only surrounded by trees. You listen to the cracking of the dry leaves under each step, you enjoy the rays of sun that manage to pass through the dense branches high above your head, that warm you just enough for you not to think about it. Birds seem to celebrate by a sweet melody that you can catch from time to time. You continue your walk. The same path as usual. But you like it. It feels like it is never the same. The floor smells like mushrooms. It is a bit wet. Your eyes sometimes stop on small mounds looking suspiciously brown before realizing, inevitably, that you were tricked by a pack of leaves, as usual. But you like this game. You like this atmosphere, the fresh air, the green and brown and yellow colors. No gray, no road, no sign, no building. In this forest you feel free. Almost in a different world. You know you are lucky to live near such a peaceful place, and you are grateful for it. After some time you remember you should probably go to work. You turn around and take the same path in the other direction. It all seems faster. You reach the edge of the forest, and there you are, back to your busy life, ready for your day.

You might perhaps relate to this kind of soothing insight in a forest, or any other kind of natural environment. But were you not struck by something? Or, rather, the absence of something? I give my answer: animals. Animals were not part of your experience of the forest. Of course, you heard the birds singing. But you only heard them. You did not listen. You couldn't tell whether there were one, two or many birds calling to each other. You didn't pay attention to a specific pattern in their songs, to what species it could have been. One could add that you did not see the trail that appeared between the shaken leaves in some places, and the bark

of damaged tree trunks about a meter above the ground, which could have led you to guess the passage of a deer. Nor did you spot the rabbit droppings, a few steps away from your path. Not to mention the insects that swarmed on the ground, under the stones, on the trunks. So animals were not part of your experience of the forest. Yet they inhabit it, they shape it. How is it that you did not perceive their presence? You entered that forest with the desire to break from your habits and daily life, to encounter the natural world surrounding you, but, even though you were paying attention to some elements of that natural environment, some animals among them, in the end, these elements were part of the landscape. You did not interact with them. They were only part of the whole scenery you came for.

This little thought experiment highlights several interesting points regarding the western relation to the living world and to other animals. This article aims to illustrate the view of the French contemporary philosopher Baptiste Morizot, who teaches philosophy at Aix-Marseilles University. Morizot develops a reflection about the place non-human animals have in our life and our relationship to nature. The little story we started with can illustrate and help us follow his argumentation.

But before going into a more detailed analysis of Morizot's main concepts and arguments, it is important to have in mind Philippe Descola's criticism of the western dualism between nature and culture (2005). Western cultures have separated the natural world from the human one, the human culture becoming a distinct space from natural ones. In our example, wanting to have a little walk in the forest before starting your day, wanting to be immersed into nature before going back to your life, is a way of illustrating the strong demarcation we draw between a forest, its inhabitants and its dynamics, and a city, its rules and people. So, in this dualism, as

Descola and Palsson (1996) explain, nature has taken a different place in respect to different paradigms. Some, for instance, have considered environmental constraints as what social institutions and culture had to adapt to in order to build themselves; others that the natural scientific discourse was what gave legitimacy to social actions. But in all cases, nature was something different than our human culture, and, in addition, little attention was given to non-western conceptions of nature, if such a concept makes sense elsewhere.

From this analysis and from his anthropological fieldwork in non-western cultures, Descola draws four ontological categories that include non-western conceptions of nature, namely animism, totemism, analogism and naturalism (the western one). By this he aims to show that our western distinction between nature and culture is not the only conception possible, and that we should not take it for granted. In other words, he aims to debunk ethnocentrism. Descola's criticism has been influential in the following works in social sciences and humanities. It has also influenced Baptiste Morizot's reflection about our relationship to non-human animals.

Morizot's analysis suggests another way to look at the other animals and to reconcile the "natural world" and the "cultural world". First of all, he analyzes our current relationship to non-human animals as a "crisis of sensitivity". Non-human animals indeed have a very specific status for us. Apart from the violence with which we treat those we breed in order to kill, we have made them a subject of interest only for children. To care about animals, to be interested in them, is not "serious". Only sensitive people do. Therefore, our sensitivity to non-human animals has become illegitimate, as well as our perceptivity. This is a first aspect of the crisis of sensitivity he describes. But it mostly refers to a more general analysis:

By 'crisis of sensitivity', I mean an impoverishment of what we can feel, perceive, understand, and weave as relationships towards the living. A reduction in the range of affects, perceptions, concepts and practices linking us to it. We have a multitude of words, types of relationships, types of affects to qualify the relationships between humans, between collectives, between institutions, with technical objects or with works of art, but much less for our relationships with the living. (Morizot, 2020: 17)

The crisis of sensitivity thus describes our weak ability to reach the living that surrounds us, to perceive it and to interact with it. We have unlearned to understand and see all the relations and issues that each living individual deals with every day, everywhere, at the very places we go to and live in. In the case of the walk in the forest, we saw that non-human animals were absent from your experience. You did not perceive all the signs that could have helped you understand the events happening in that place. And it was not because you were not attentive enough or because you are not a specialist in ecology or biology. It is because, according to Morizot, we do not live in a world that we think about as shared. He thus identifies the need to acquire a less anthropocentric representation of the world, open to otherness.

To do so, Morizot mobilizes a specific methodology that also nourishes his philosophical works: the philosophical tracking (*pistage philosophique*), which takes for him a deep and specific meaning:

Trailing means deciphering and interpreting traces and footprints in order to reconstitute animal perspectives: investigating this world of clues that reveal the habits of the fauna, its way of living among us, intertwined with others. Our eye, used to unobstructed perspectives, to clear horizons, is initially only accustomed with difficulty to this shift of the landscape: from in front of us, it has moved under our feet. The ground is the new panorama rich in signs, the place that now calls our attention. To track, in this new sense, is also to investigate the art of living of the other living beings, the society, the plants, the cosmopolitan micro-fauna that makes the life of the grounds, and on their relations between them and with us: their conflicts and alliances with the human uses of the territories. To focus the attention not on the beings but on the relations. (Morizot, 2018: 21-22)

To Morizot, tracking thus means to change the focus of our attention, to be attentive to clues and signs that non-human animals leave behind us. It is, in fact, about adopting their perspective in their apprehension of their environment. Just as Descola went among non-western cultures to understand their relationship to what we call nature, to understand according to which categories they think and interact with plants, non-human animals, natural elements, spirits and, of course, each other, Morizot immerses himself into the perspective



untitled, Mark Peckmezian

of the animals he tracks. He provides long stories of tracking wolves in the Alps, following their prints, hair, droppings, analyzing the direction of their movement, how they can leave only one trail of prints in the snow when they are a pack of up to ten individuals. He relates how he slept in a tent, at the top of a mountain, how the wolves noticed his presence, how they responded to his calls... By doing so, we understand their perspectives, their way of thinking, of moving and behaving, it feels like discovering the world all over again. Remember when the forest almost felt like a new world for you.

But in your case this was a bit different. Indeed, you felt so because the forest belongs, according to our common categories, to the natural world. Thus, you had the perception that different dynamics than the ones we are familiar with in cities were shaping that place. It was, for you, another kind of place. But Morizot's point is not to show how different each of our worlds are, how everyone lives in their own bubble and does not have access to the other ones. It is rather to show that we share the same world, the same kind of places. They can

take different meanings for different cultures and different species, but this does not separate us. We only have to pay attention to the network of relations that constitutes a place to understand that we are only a part of that network. This is what was lacking in the walk in the forest.

The acknowledgment of these relations provides a different perspective on what we consider as a natural place, and also on the categories in which we put animals. They become partners of interaction, which can even teach us other ways of considering and behaving with the living otherness:

Animals are not more bestial than we are, nor are they more free. They do not embody an unbridled and ferocious savagery (this is a myth of domestication), nor a purer innocence (this is its reactive reverse). They are not superior to humans in authenticity or inferior in elevation: they embody above all other ways of being alive. (Morizot, 2020: 24, author's emphasis).



untitled, Mark Peckmezian

Paying more attention to the clues they leave in the world is a way for Morizot to debunk the categorization of animals, along with our insensitivity to their environmental relations.

In addition to all of that, you may have noticed that the notion of inhabiting a place is quite recurrent in Morizot. His analysis opens a reflection about sharing a common world with other species, respecting their dynamics, their needs and their representation. In other words: cohabitation. He points out a phenomenon that he calls “eco-fragmentation” and which is for him the spatial dimension of the crisis of sensitivity.

[This fragmentation] originates first of all in our blindness to the fact that other living beings inhabit: the crisis of our way of inhabiting comes down to denying others the status of inhabitants. The stake is thus to repopulate, in the philosophical sense to make visible that the myriad of forms of life which constitute our donating environments are also, since always, not a decoration for our human tribulations, but the rightful inhabitants of the world. (Morizot, 2020: 29, author’s emphasis).

Having fragmented our environments, having delimited forests and cities – forests and home in our case –, is therefore a result of this blindness to the relations other living beings have with their environment. By not considering that they inhabit them, because they do it differently than we do, we have excluded them from the considerations of cohabitation. This issue at stake here is thus spatial. There is a strong spatial dimension in the reconnection to the living world and the interrelations that connects its members.

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All in all, through his analysis of the crisis of sensitivity, with its spatial dimension, and the philosophical trailing suggested to counter it, Morizot claims that a new form of relationship to the living otherness is necessary to recover a contact to the other species with whom we share this world, and to thus be able to share it better. In fact, according to Morizot, this reflection, and especially the crisis of sensitivity, is closely linked to the ecological crisis and the erosion of biodiversity that we are facing all around the world. Indeed, the ecological crisis leads to more destroyed places, more fragmentation, and also less opportunities to encounter other species, as they are decreasing. Non-human animals become de facto less present in our lives. The crisis of sensitivity could thus be thought of as a consequence of the ecological one. But it can also be thought of as its cause, since it may be because of the lack of sensitivity and perception that human activities have led to it. It is hard not to harm something or someone that you are not aware of. This is why recovering a form of sensitivity to non-human animals and their relationship to their environment (which we share with them) appears as the basis for a more general and global conception of the non-human living world as being an ethical subject, that could nourish the overall reflection of how to share this world together and live freely without harming the others. Paying better attention to the clues the living leaves in its environment is a way to do so. Morizot’s reflection may thus have global ethical consequences, because it is not about a reconciliation and acknowledgment of non-human animals, but about debunking our distinction between nature and culture, and rebuilding our relationship to otherness, to the world in general, and each of the elements that it is made of. Including us.

Museum of Nonhumanity

Gustafsson&Haapoja

The Museum of Nonhumanity is a utopian museum in the form of a 70-minute, 10-channel video installation that displays historical divisions between humans and animals and reflections on their resultant oppression of the non-human. Behind the museum is the collaborative artist duo Gustafsson&Haapoja, consisting of the Helsinki based author Laura Gustafsson and the New York based artist Terike Haapoja.

As an author and playwright, Laura Gustafsson has published several books and produced works in various fields, such as theatre, visual arts, and tv. As a consistent theme for her writing, she like to nourice perspectives of the unforeseen, whether the topic is motherhood or the end of the world. Gustafsson's debut, Huorasatu [Whory Tale] published in 2011, is an anti-Aristotelian novel that embraces the whole herstory of life, dealing with mythologies spanning from ancient Babylonia to the era of MTV. This work was later nominated for the Finlandia Prize by the Finnish Book Foundation. Her latest novel Rehab, from 2021, raises questions on how we are to deal with waste and how we could come to terms with the materiality of our bodies. Her works have been translated from Finnish to German, French and Turkish.

Terike Haapoja's large scale installations, writing, and political projects investigate the mechanics of othering with a specific focus on issues arising from the anthropocentric world view of western modernism. Some of the works she produced are Closed Circuit – Open Duration (2008-2013), an exhibition and series of works focused on questions of mortality, co-existence and the relationship between humans and nature, and The Party of Others (2011), a project entailing the appropriation of the form of a political party, to study the status of species and groups excluded from juridical systems. In addition, Haapoja contributes regularly to Finnish and international art publications and represented Finland at the Venice Biennale in 2013 with a solo show in the Nordic Pavilion. Her work has been awarded with the Guggenheim Fellowship (2022), the ANTI Prize for Live Art (2016), the Dukaatti

prize (2008) and the S  de prize (2009). She is currently employed as an adjunct professor at NYU Steinhardt and Parsons Fine Arts, New York.

As Gustafsson&Haapoja, Laura Gustafsson and Terike Haapoja produce exhibitions, stage works and publications that focus on problems arising from anthropocentric worldviews of Western traditions. Their first large scale exhibition, Museum of the History of Cattle, was first shown in Helsinki in 2013 and the accompanying book History According to Cattle was published in 2015. In 2014, they produced the participatory court room performance The Trial, commissioned by the Baltic Circle Festival, in which they explored the notion of nonhuman legal personhood and rights of nature. As Flow Festival's Visual Artists of the Year, Gustafsson&Haapoja presented in 2016 the work Embrace your Empathy! The same year of 2016, the exhibition Museum of Nonhumanity opened for the first time in Helsinki and has since then been on tour around the world. In 2020 at the Helsinki Art Museum, they presented Becoming (2020), a 3-channel, 3-hour video installation that discuss emergent notions of being human, historically shadowed by Western worldviews. Their most recent works, Waiting Room (2019) and Pigs (2021), explore the biopolitics of industrial animal agriculture.

With a wide international span of appearances behind them, including exhibitions at Taipei Biennale, Momentum Biennale, Helsinki Biennale, The New Tratyakov Gallery Moscow, Turner Contemporary, Santarcangelo Festival, Flow Festival Helsinki, Droog Gallery Amsterdam and Prague Fotograf Festival, Gustafsson&Haapoja was awarded with Kiila Prize for socially engaged art in 2013 and Finnish State Media Art Award in 2016.

Differens Magazine could not be prouder to be able to once again present some of the duo's thoughts and materials, here in resonance and dialog with the topic of our second issue, Inside animals / Animals inside.



Museum of Nonhumanity, Gustafsson&Haapoja. Photo Terike Haapoja



Museum of Nonhumanity, Gustafsson&Haapoja. Photo Terike Haapoja

Towards a time after “the animal”

Terike Haapoja

Museum of Nonhumanity is a utopian museum in the form of a 70-minute, 10-channel video installation that displays the division between human and animal, and the resultant oppression. The content of the video installation is made up of archive materials, selected quotations from key works of the tradition of western thought, and dictionary or encyclopaedia definitions that exemplify the mechanics of animalization in the history of western culture.

The *Museum* interrogates the way we interpret ‘animal’ and ‘human’ as ecological and biological species concepts, and suggests that moves towards inter-species justice overlook the ways in which conceptual discrimination between human and animal in western thought has acted as a tool for marginalizing and oppressing humans and other species. Here I will examine the distinction made between animal and human via three different conceptual frameworks: first, as a species concept that references biological categories; then as a key question for posthumanist thought about the structural connection between the concepts of human and animal; and finally as a demand, arising from decolonial frameworks, to locate the boundary between human and animal within the colonialist paradigm of racialization.

Speciesism and the circle of rights

In human-rights discussions the animal-rights movement is often seen as a pastime of a white elite, which betrays that elite’s lack of concern for human-rights issues. Inside the animal-rights movement, meanwhile, the accentuation of the intrinsic value of humanity looks like a negation of the rights of nature and other species. Underlying this conflict is often the way in which the two sides view the human/animal distinction primarily as a species question. When humanity is seen as a synonym for the species *Homo sapiens*, and animality, in turn, as a common denominator for all other species, “animals” are seen as a single group who compete with marginalized human groups for recognition of their rights.

The concept of speciesism made famous by the moral philosopher Peter Singer derives from this basic con-

figuration.¹ The term speciesism identifies the same mechanism as being behind the oppression of animals as is behind racism or sexism: an arbitrary marker (skin colour, gender, species) has been co-opted to justify oppression, even if in reality the issue is simply one of subjugation. The background to Singer’s thinking is Kant’s moral theory, which roots human dignity in the capacity for self-reflection and autonomous thought.² According to Kant, animals do not have these capacities, and are consequently only means, not ends in themselves. Singer points out that, in reality many animals are capable of self-reflection and are also autonomous, while many humans – for example, those with severe disabilities or illnesses, the very young or old – are not.³ For the argument to be coherent, the inherent value of a living being and its fundamental rights should be formulated according to the individual’s actual attributes, and not species boundaries. This would potentially move some humans into a category with limited human rights, and correspondingly make some animals the holders of a variety of fundamental rights to be determined case by case. To those who are worried that shifting human rights onto a sliding scale makes human individuals vulnerable to exploitation, Singer replies that in current thinking the price of that fear is paid by the billions of animals who have no rights at all.⁴

The notion of non-human animals possessing cognitive capacities that forms the basis of Singer’s argument is nowadays a universally acknowledged fact in zoology and other science disciplines. Research data on the abilities of non-human animals to use language, form social relationships, use tools, and even view the world aesthetically – all abilities that were previously seen as exclusively human characteristics – has shattered the idea that human beings differ biologically from all other creatures. Faced with scientific evidence and the sixth extinction the idea of animals having legal rights has broken out of the margins and moved closer to the mainstream.

The Nonhuman Rights Project founded by the US lawyer Steven Wise has long campaigned for the recognition of the fundamental rights of non-human animals, and in recent years NHRP campaigns have reached as high as the state supreme court.⁵ The NHRP’s arguments echo Kant’s moral theory and the Singerian conceptualization of speciesism: According to Wise, it is specifically the capacity for autonomy that is the basis of human rights, and if we take this seriously, many autonomous

animals that also have human-like cognitive abilities, such as chimpanzees, orcas and elephants, should be moved from the category of objects to the category of persons possessing legal rights.⁶

NHRP’s strategy is to bring court cases on behalf of captive animals with the aid of the *habeas corpus* method. A writ of *habeas corpus* demands that the court investigate whether the detention or imprisonment of a person has been done lawfully, and compels the prosecutor either to free the detained person or to charge them with a crime.⁷ This judicial procedure, which dates back to the middle ages, has been used in historic anti-slavery trials, which have then served as precedents in proving the illegality of slavery. Underlying the NHRP’s argument is the idea of the historical advance of fundamental rights in ever-expanding circles: first, slavery was banned; then came recognition of the rights of women, children, people with disabilities and other minorities; and now it is the animals’ turn. So, the NHRP’s approach, although radical, does not call into question the figure of the autonomous, Kantian human being as the norm for determining legal rights. That is why its potential for bringing non-human beings within the circle of rights is limited: the less human-like a being is, the harder it is to justify its inclusion in the category of persons with rights.

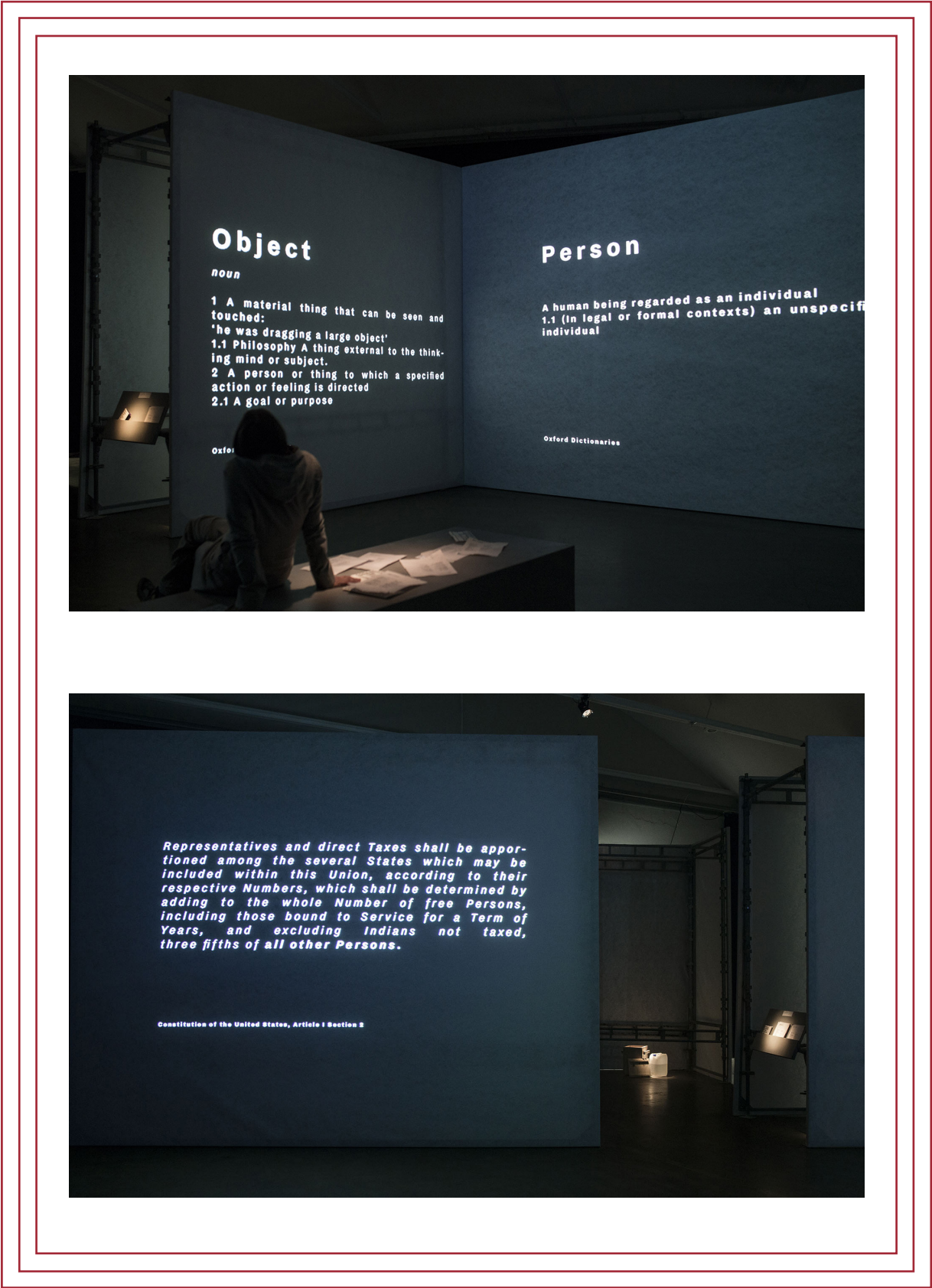
Another problem with the concept of speciesism is the way it overlooks the fact that universal, equal human rights have not been implemented fairly, and that a large portion of the world’s human beings are still excluded from rights. The understanding of the concepts of animal and human as a division rooted in biological species is echoed in discussions of social justice in which human uniqueness is specifically seen as the foundation of human dignity and legal rights.⁸ From this viewpoint the biggest problem is not the division between human and animal, but the *porousness* of that divide: a substantial portion of humans are in reality treated “like animals”. When the concept of justice is founded on human exceptionality, any attempt to dismantle the division between human and animal endangers the whole basis for social justice. The way the NHRP compares the plights of enslaved humans and of animals kept in zoos has prompted criticism for precisely that reason: after all, throughout the ages, the oppression of humans has been justified specifically by comparing them to animals.⁹

The inability of the mainstream animal-rights movement to answer this challenge deepens the rift between the two fronts. Carol Adams applies the linguistics concept ‘absent referent’ in her examination of the violence hidden underneath language.¹⁰ For example, “meat” is a referent that conceals beneath it the real animal and its actual suffering. According to Adams, the way animal-rights movements compare the treatment of animals to slavery operates on the same mechanism: the oppression of humans becomes a rhetorical tool used to talk about animal suffering, and thus violence experienced by humans is concealed or even instrumentalized.¹¹ In the process, a mechanism that nullifies violence and makes it invisible, and under which countless humans still live, is reproduced. When the human/animal division is understood as referring to a boundary that divides species, the consequence is almost inevitably a conflict in which human rights and animal rights are opposed to each other, or even mutually exclusive. Posthumanist thinking seeks to bridge that chasm by viewing the concepts of human and animal not as biological categories, but as social constructs.

The unstable construct of humanity

Human and animal are not in reality biological concepts that refer to species. *Homo sapiens* is one of the great apes and belongs to the continuum of species just as other animals do. Modern zoology has overturned every attempt to define human uniqueness on the basis of biological difference. Science has failed to demonstrate that there exists any property that is unique to the human species, and which is absent from all other species, nor is there any one factor that unites all other species, and which is correspondingly absent from humans. As Matthew Calarco writes, the question of the animal actually contains two different questions: one concerns conceptual opposition between human and animal, the other the concrete relationships between humans and other species.¹² But it is impossible to dismantle the violent relationship between humans and other species without first confronting the construction of the binary opposition human/animal in the Western tradition of thought.

The numerous strands of posthumanism are united by their critical approach to Greco-Roman political theory and to the essentialist understanding of the figure of the human being in Enlightenment thinking. Zakiyyah Iman Jackson writes about how these discussions often



Museum of Nonhumanity, Gustafsson&Haapoja. Photo Terike Haapoja

draw on the writings of poststructuralism and especially of Michel Foucault, which present the human figure as a construct tied to a particular paradigm of knowledge, not as a natural state of affairs. If the distinctive ‘being’ of the human is replaced by the idea that the human is a product of a particular historical and socio-epistemic system, it is also possible to call into question and dismantle the concept of the human.¹³

One main starting point for posthumanist theories is that humans have humanized themselves by rejecting their own animality. Dismantling the human/animal opposition is thus a crucial measure for re-imagining the concept of the human. Giorgio Agamben applies Foucault’s analysis of the relationships between biopolitics and democracy to the construction of the human/animal polarity in a way that is useful for critical animal studies and posthumanism. In *The Open – Man and Animal* (2004) Agamben traces the distinction between human and animal from the wellsprings of western thought to modern philosophy.¹⁴ Agamben uses numerous examples to demonstrate how the attempt to separate humanity from its animal body constitutes a constantly recurring problem for western thought.¹⁵ A common feature of Agamben’s examples is the inability that recurs throughout history to define the human in positive terms – the definition is always done through a negation of the animal. The western conception of the human is founded on this negation process, which perpetually and forever unsuccessfully seeks to separate humanity from the animal. This process is possible because, ever since Antiquity, it has been thought that the human is made up of two different levels: on the one hand, the human being is the basis of organic life or the animal-body, and on the other hand, it is, as it were, the layer of humanity that exists on top of it.

In ancient Greek thought, which also defined Aristotle’s philosophy, *zoē* describes the basic form of life common to all living things, while *bios* describes the good, political life characteristic solely of humans. The human is the only being that combines both *zoē* and *bios*: *bios* is, as it were, the layer of social life on top of the basic form of life. It is precisely this dual nature and the juncture or fissure that it produces that makes it possible to strip away the humanity from a human – i.e. returning the person in the eyes of the law to being the animal-body hidden beneath the form of “humanity”, so that the laws that protect a person who possesses legal rights and obligations do not apply. Agamben calls this historical process the “anthropological machine” – a lethal

mechanism at the core of western thinking that makes anyone potentially “bare life”.¹⁶

But Agamben is not interested in the figure of the animal or in the plight of concrete animals. The figure of the animal is linked in his thinking with the mechanisms of violence of western political theory, mechanisms that ultimately make totalitarianism and extermination camps possible.¹⁷ For posthumanist thought Agamben’s theory offers tools for interpreting the concepts of the human and the animal, not as species concepts, but as terms that define a being’s relationship with the law and the rights conferred by law. If there is no natural positive basis for humanity and the only thing that separates the human from the animal is that the human “recognizes itself as human”, then an animal can be literally anyone or anything. Human and animal are, thus, not biological, but social and moral categories. Cora Diamond criticizes Singer’s speciesism by pointing out that in the real world moral categories do not come about by observing differences in the natural world, but by *naming*. The naming of one being as “human” and another as “animal” discursively produces two mutually different beings that are subject to different moral norms and legal principles.¹⁸

Dehumanization is thus not such an effective mechanism of violence because some humans are more like animals. It works because “animal” is not a species concept. “Animal” means a being that is killable, which in law means a non-human, and hence also a non-person that cannot have rights. In the conceptual system in which human and animal are each other’s binary opposites, everything that is associated with the human (dignity, rights, status) is absent from the very outset from the definition of animal.¹⁹ Violence directed at literal non-human animals thus also *produces* the category of ‘humanity’ protected from violence. As Maneesha Deckha writes, human-to-human violence that resembles the normalized violence directed at animals makes that violence more acceptable, precisely because violence directed at non-human animals constitutes the foundation of humanity. Violence directed at animals thus also constitutes an example and testing ground for the dehumanization of humans.²⁰ The animal thus emerges as a category whose most important function is to create a space where it is possible to commit violence in broad daylight. Because the category of ‘animal’ exists, anyone can be thrust into that space, where they can then be treated “like an animal”.

The category of animal can thus in practice include anything and anyone, regardless of species. Because the ideal human of the western tradition of thought is the white, European man, anyone who deviates from that norm is in danger of being animalized. Seen from this viewpoint racism, sexism and xenophobia are all forms of animalization: the structure of animalization is itself a necessary precondition for them. Cary Wolfe sees the biopolitical field as a “species grid” or matrix, its nodes being humanized human, humanized animal, animalized human, and animalized animal.²¹ Instead of a binary division into human/animal, the biopolitical hierarchy appears in the light of Wolfe’s thinking more like a pyramid, with the protected zone of the rights-bearing subject located at its pinnacle, and the substratum of object-beings made to be killed on its lowest level. The concepts of human and animal act as levers in this structure, ceaselessly moving beings up and down.

Posthumanist thinking thus approaches the concepts of human and animal as social constructs intrinsically bound up with the mechanisms of biopower and violence. Thus, the conceptual opposition of human/animal already produces the structures in which any encounter with other species occurs: already beforehand, animalization governs how we approach other species. Seen through the lens of animalization non-human animals are irrational, bloodthirsty, hypersexual, primitive, simple – in other words “women”, “blacks”, “natives”, “homosexuals”, “the disabled”, i.e. everyone that is categorically rejected by the ideal of humanity as defined by Eurocentric white supremacy and the patriarchy.

No analysis of the encounter with other species can be made without taking into account how the mechanics of animalization also enable the oppression of human groups and individuals. Consequently, it is not an adequate goal of rights struggles to get one or a few species across the human/animal dividing line if that very line is to be left where it is. The ultimate goal should be a fundamental questioning of that division and the construction of a non-anthropocentric ethics.

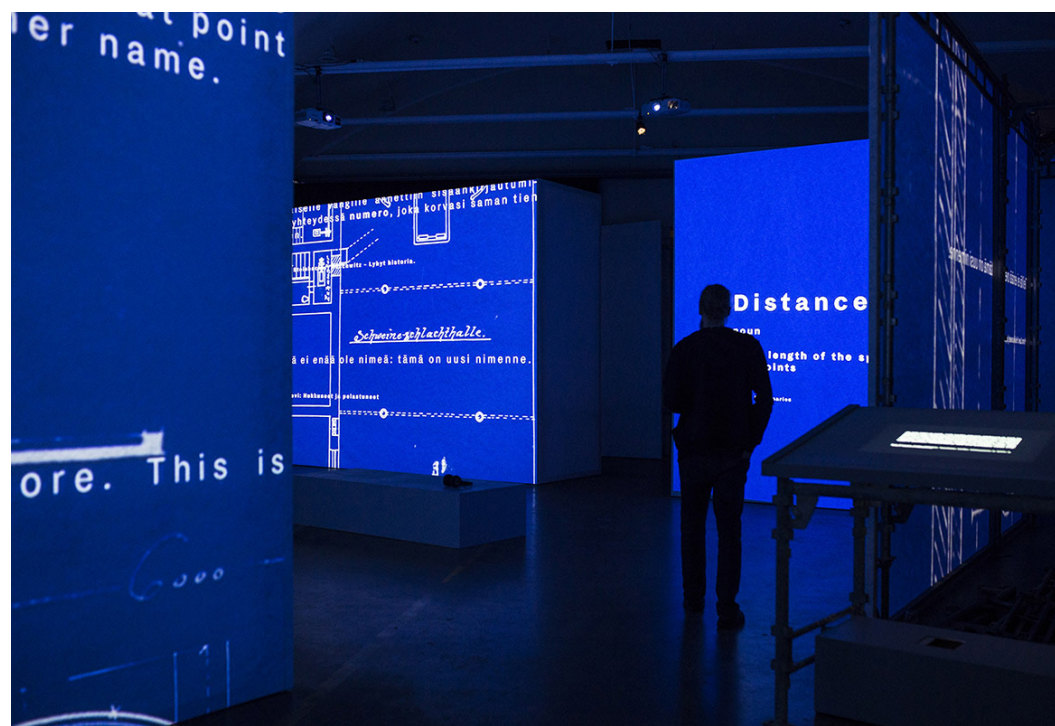
Racialized animal – animalized human

Several thinkers who approach the concept of the animal from the viewpoint of postcolonial and decolonial thinking criticize both the mainstream animal-rights movement and the posthumanism that derives from the Continental philosophy tradition for not taking into ac-

count the relationship between modern racism and the human/animal polarity. According to them, the critique of the western conception of the human and the related mechanism of animalization also has a long history in non-western traditions of thought and in postcolonial theory, which posthumanist thinking rarely takes into account.²² In these traditions dismantling the concepts of animal and human is not just a theoretical problem, but literally a deadly serious task that affects the necessary preconditions for human life and liberty. From this viewpoint posthumanist thought that disregards non-western and postcolonial traditions of thought and the knowledge they produce is in danger of reviving the ideals of colonialist European thinking.

According to the sociologist Ramón Grosfoguel, the universalization of the western conception of knowledge was preceded by a wave of genocides and epistemicides.²³ The idea of the objectivity and universality of the western tradition of thought and its methods – still often prevalent in western academic research – is only possible because other traditions of thought have been concretely destroyed. Grosfoguel identifies four genocides/epistemicides that preceded the universalization of the knowledge ideals of the enlightenment: against Muslims and Jews in the conquest of Al-Andalus; against the indigenous peoples of the Americas; the enslavement of large sections of the African population; and the destruction of women’s traditional knowledge in witch hunts. Descartes’ famous phrase “I think, therefore I am” was only possible because it was preceded by centuries of white Europe’s “I conquer, therefore I am”.²⁴ Western science is founded on colonialist violence. At the same time, it is also a foundation for the current conception of the human, which is determined by the logic of racialization (do s (de to afctual genoocide which the old way of being human is endangered).

The philosopher Syl Ko writes that the mechanism of racialization produced by European colonialism also fundamentally changed the way the concepts of human and animal are understood.²⁵ Ko points out that understanding the human/animal divide within the framework of today’s world also requires taking into account the logic of racialization. As Grosfoguel says, the encounter between the Spanish colonialists and the indigenous peoples of the Americas put into question the humanity of what in the eyes of the colonialists were “people without religion”, and who thus also potentially had no soul. If, in the 16th-century European worldview, humanity was



Museum of Nonhumanity, Gustafsson&Haapoja. Photo Terike Haapoja

primarily defined by the individual's relationship with God, a human being with no relationship with the divine recognizable to Europeans appeared to be a person who lacked the most essential element of what makes someone human. Eurocentric racism thus emerged as a way for European colonialist conquerors to construct within the concept of the human an ontological hierarchy that divides humans proper from 'sub-humanity'.²⁶ The transatlantic slave trade universalized this principle and inscribed blackness as a signifier for 'sub-humanity', while white Europeanness signified pure humanity.

As Ko says, the construction of humanity in such a thought model is fundamentally different from what is proposed by a universalist, posthumanist critique. The conceptual opposite presumed by the human proper is no longer so much the non-human animal as the racialized 'sub-human'.²⁷ Other species and their historical oppression get drawn into this configuration and accordingly racialized, the grounds for this being their assumed proximity to the 'sub-human' in the great chain of being. The animal and the racialized human are thus not distinct positions in the identity game, positions that compete with each other for recognition, but two different manifestations of the Other required to maintain the Eurocentric, colonialist image of humanity. This also has consequences for the human-rights viewpoint: According to Deckha, humanism's idea of universal, equal human rights never really secures minorities' rights, because the humanist conception of the human is founded on the exclusion of racialized and animalized others.²⁸ Destabilizing the conceptual boundary between human and animal would be a better approach. On the other hand, talking about animal rights as an expansion of the circle of human rights does not take into account the interweaving of racialization and animalization. As Che Gossett writes: "For many in animal liberation and animal studies, abolition is imagined as teleological; first slavery was abolished and now forms of animal captivity must be, too. It is as though animal is the new black even though blackness has already been racialized through animalization."²⁹ Thus, the concepts of human or animal cannot be dismantled without also dismantling the mechanisms of racism – and correspondingly, as Syl Ko emphasizes, dismantling racism requires a re-conceptualization of the relationship between human and animal.

For Agamben the concentration camp is an extreme manifestation of modern biopower without a historical parallel.³⁰ Alexander Weheliye, nevertheless, asks what Agamben's analysis would look like if he had taken the transatlantic slave trade and not the holocaust as his starting point.³¹ From this viewpoint, within the realm of the sovereign we can see a third possible position: that of an object that can be owned. Being able to be owned links both non-human animals and racialized, enslaved humans to the sovereign field. In the biopolitical arena the object (of rights) is thus neither an outlawed human being nor a sovereign power, but the thing that makes them possible and which is their foundation (land, animals, anonymous nature as a resource, enslaved humans, wombs controlled by the patriarchy, and so on). Although Agamben criticizes the 'anthropological machine' that violently produces the division between human and animal in western thought, he still inhabits an anthropocentric, Eurocentric framework, seen from which the racialization of the concept of the animal is invisible. Zakiyyah Iman Jackson also criticizes posthumanism's blindness to non-western traditions of thought and their critique of the enlightenment's conception of the human. Other ways of conceptualizing the human have always existed, and still do. Jackson asks whether it might be the case that the 'beyond humanity' proposed by posthumanism points not to a temporal, but to a geographical beyond – an area beyond the west.³²

Bringing racialization into the "animal question" opens up a channel to the constructive articulation of the relationships between human rights and other species. This viewpoint also makes possible an alliance between antiracist action and the animal-rights movement in a way that is difficult, if the posthumanist critique does not take into account the link between racism and the modern world's animalizing mechanisms, or non-western critiques of the enlightenment conception of the human; and even impossible, if the human/animal polarity is understood as following a species boundary. In their book *Aphro-Ism – Essays on Pop Culture, Feminism, and Black Veganism from Two Sisters* (2017) Syl Ko and Aph Ko set out an antiracist vegan practice, *Black Veganism*.³³ The sisters stress that Black Veganism is not only a veganism practised by non-white people, but also an ethical theory. Refusing to take part in the oppression of non-human animals is also a resistance to white supremacy and the logic of animalization inscribed in it.

Thus, anyone can practise Black Veganism, but racia-
lized humans have special experiential knowledge of
what it is like to be shut outside of humanity. That ex-
perience can lead to an understanding that ‘animal’ is a
polymorphous social construct that includes both hu-
mans and other species.³⁴ Hence, the viewpoint of Black
Veganism offers a place from which the human rights
movement can approach other species via an antiracist,
inter-species alliance. As Ko points out, by the same to-
ken the animalization of other species is inscribed into
their embodied experience. But even if the animals as-
signed as other species experience oppression, they do
not internalize their own animalization like humans do.
The oppression of humans and other species are thus
not psychologically identical: other species can hardly
have the ontological experience of a lack of humanity
resulting from internalized racism of the kind Syl Ko
describes. In Ko’s words, they have epistemic resilience
to the logic of animalization,³⁵ which makes them good
allies for critics of Eurocentric humanism.

In Conclusion

The transatlantic slave trade is the foundation of modern
capitalism. For example, the British cotton factories and
working class could not have come about without cot-
ton plantations run on slave labour. Thus, the mecha-
nisms of animalization cannot be understood without
their links to the history of European racism, colonialist
violence and capitalism. Capitalism needs animal bodi-
es: it is dependent on the non-human beyond the reach
of rights and made killable, whose labour, body and re-
production are a central precondition for capitalist pro-
duction. This class is not defined according to species
boundaries, but is in constant motion: the pinnacle of
the biopolitical pyramid takes the form of a white space
of humanity and legal rights, to which, for example, cha-
rismatic megafauna – lions, tigers, orcas, chimpanzees,
elephants – can be raised, while the base of the pyramid
is constituted by an ever-greater number of humans and
individuals of other species who have been instrumen-
talized as disposable parts of the production economy.
A critique of capitalism thus has to begin by challenging
not only the concept of class, race and gender, but also
that of the animal.

If posthumanist art or critical animal studies view
the animal question solely as a problem related to the
question of species, it wastes an opportunity to create
a connection with movements promoting social justi-

ce. The worrisome whiteness of posthumanist and ani-
mal-rights discourses does not solely tell us that these
academic and art spaces are closed structures of pri-
vilege. Rather, it says that their way of articulating the
question of what comes after humanity does not appear
meaningful to those humans who find themselves con-
crete objects of the violence associated with the concepts
of animal and human. It is also problematic to produce
information about a phenomenon if an essential aspect
of it – in this case, the connection between the concept
of the animal and structural racism – is seen as a side
issue in the discourse. Thus, at the worst, the knowledge
produced, instead of calling into question an epistemo-
logy based on colonialist violence, actually carries on
the epistemicide referred to by Grosfoguel.

Intersectionality and decolonization are terms that are
also in danger of being diluted if they are adopted as
part of the Eurocentric academic tradition, without
challenging the underlying values of this canon and the
institutions and practices that support it. It is crucial to
understand that decolonization is not a metaphor, as
Eve Tuck powerfully argues.³⁶ Along with many other
things, decolonization means restoring the land rights
of indigenous peoples and recognizing their right to
national self-determination and self-governance. Every
act of knowledge production that aims at the decoloni-
zation – i.e. at side-lining the white, Western perspec-
tive – should also commit to supporting this concrete
goal.

The ‘after humanity’ called for by posthumanism will
not come about if we do not let go of the concept of
the human elevated to the status of universal. That uni-
versality is a smokescreen that conceals the ascendancy
of whiteness and Eurocentricism. The “human” of the
modern, western tradition of thought is always defined
by racialization . This challenge also presents itself in
the opposite direction: in social-justice movements it
is often difficult, if not impossible, to elevate the rights
of nature and other species alongside human-rights
struggles, because in the short term humanity appears
as a refuge from the violence of animalization. That is
why in the critique of humanism put forward by post-
humanism there needs to be an emphasis on an analysis
in which the racist, colonialist roots of humanism are
made visible. Only then will we be ready to break out
of the paradigm of the human into a time beyond ani-
mality.

Museum of Nonhumanity makes visible the way that
the concepts of sub-human and animal are rhetorical
devices that justify violence. The *Museum* reveals the
conception of the human at the core of the western
tradition of thought to be the basis for the oppression
directed at both human and non-human beings. Dehu-
manization generally occurs first on the level of langu-
age and conceptualization, and then in action. The ten
different themes of the *Museum of Nonhumanity* exhi-
bition examine this act of definition as it occurs on the
level of language in different sub-areas of western cul-
ture. The final theme of the exhibition is “the museum”,
which as a historical institution is an intrinsic part of
the mechanics of dehumanization. The institutions that
produce and display knowledge justify hierarchies that
have material consequences, often deadly ones. A mu-
seum can *speak something into truth*, in which case it
becomes a part of social reality. Thus *Museum of Non-
humanity* is, in Laura Gustafsson’s words, “a perfor-
mance in which the actor’s role is played by the public,
which by believing in the Museum’s narrative of the end
of dehumanization makes it momentarily true.” At the
same time, the term museum expands also to refer to
institutions that are responsible for showing art more
broadly. If posthumanism aims at a world in which the

normative “human” produced by white supremacy and
patriarchy as an image of themselves has been side-li-
ned, what will that world’s museum or its viewers be
like? Can a museum – an institution whose history is
specifically rooted in the construction of that normative
image of the human and in the maintenance of othering
representations – truly be decolonized, or do we need to
seek to move towards traditions in which not only the
conception of the human, but also the conception of art
and creativity, are situated differently?

In *Museum of Nonhumanity* these and other open ques-
tions are considered in various venues in the form of
discussions, lectures and workshops tailored to match
the local situation. Through these discussions *Museum
of Nonhumanity* also calls into question the premises
for its own existence. It does not seek to be a solution,
nor to paint an image of a new paradigm. Utopian thin-
king becomes dangerous if it projects onto the future an
idealized, totalized version of the current value system.
Museum of Nonhumanity is a bridge towards something
that we cannot even imagine; a bridge that has been
built to break through to the other side that follows the
transition.

Footnotes

1 The concept of “speciesism” was developed by the philosopher Richard Ryder in 1970 (see Ryder, 2010). It was subsequently brought to the awareness of the general public in Peter Singer’s Animal Liberation – A New Ethics for Our Treatment of Animals (1975).

2 Kant 1997. “Animals are not self-conscious and are there merely as a means to an end. That end is man.” Kant 1963, 239.

3 Singer 1990, 568-570.

4 Singer 1990, 578-581.

5 The Nonhuman Rights Project, <https://www.nonhumanrights.org>

6 The Nonhuman Rights Project website puts it like this: “The Nonhuman Rights Project is leading the fight to secure actual legal rights for nonhuman animals through a state-by-state, country-by-country, long-term litigation campaign. Our groundbreaking habeas corpus lawsuits demand recognition of the legal personhood and fundamental right to bodily liberty of individual great apes, elephants, dolphins, and whales held in captivity across the US. With the support of world-renowned scientists, we argue that common law courts must free these self-aware, autonomous beings to appropriate sanctuaries not out of concern for their welfare, but respect for their rights.” <https://www.nonhumanrights.org/litigation/> (11.11.2019)

7 See Nonhuman Rights Project website: “Habeas corpus is a centuries-old means of testing the lawfulness of one’s imprisonment before a court. It was used extensively in the 18th and 19th centuries to fight human slavery, and abolitionists often petitioned for common law writs of habeas corpus on behalf of enslaved individuals. The most well known such case is Somerset v. Steuart (1772) in which the Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales granted the writ to a human slave, freeing him unequivocally and essentially transforming him from a legal thing to a legal person. We argue common law courts should do the same for our nonhuman clients.” <https://www.nonhumanrights.org/litigation/> (11.11.2019)

8 The “argument for marginal cases” is a term used in animal rights theory and linked to a problem that arises out of the partial overlap between the cognitive abilities of humans and other species. The argument seeks to show that any categorical moral separation of human and animal is impossible, because some animals have abilities that not all humans have. For example, a new-born human does not have a capacity for language or autonomy, while many nonhuman animals are able to express themselves in language as soon as they are born. According to the counterargument moral categories are based on generalizations behind which are the average differences between species: because humans in general are independent, they should be treated as a coherent moral category. (see, e.g. Tanner, 2009.)

9 For example, New York Post headlined an action taken by the Nonhuman Rights Project in New York state’s supreme court as follows: “Lab chimps likened to enslaved blacks at animal-rights trial” NY Post, 2015, <https://nypost.com/2015/05/27/lab-chimps-likened-to-enslaved-blacks-at-animal-rights-trial> (11.11.2019)

10 Adams says on the Earthling Liberation Kollektive website: “The absent referent is a term I politicized in “The Sexual Politics of Meat”. The absent referent is the literal being who disappears in the eating of dead bodies. There are three ways I see the absent referent functioning. Literally, an animal killed to become food or “meat”. Physically, the animal is dismembered – cut up, generally – sold off as body parts. So the reminder that the animal was a full being, living a life, disappears. Then the third way is metaphorically. Their oppression, someone else’s oppression, becomes a metaphor for another group’s oppression. Where being treated “like a piece of meat” is, would be an example of the metaphor of the absent referent.” <https://humanrightsareanimalrights.com/2016/01/01/carol-j-adams-politics-and-the-absent-referent-in-2014/> (11.11.2019)

11 In 2015, the essayist Antti Nylén wrote a column in Suomen Luonto (Nature of Finland) magazine with the heading “Sika on maailman N-” (the pig is the N- of the world). The text appropriated Yoko Ono’s famous saying: “Woman is the N- of the world”. The text, to my mind justifiably, enraged many minorities, and is a model example of the absent referent: In Nylén’s case a globally oppressed human group was made a means for speaking about the subjugation of another being. (Nylen 2015. See also Hubara 2016).

12 Calarco 2008, 2.

13 Jackson 2013, 670.

14 Agamben 2004.

15 Agamben 2004. For Agamben the Ancient Greek terms describing “life” zoë and bios form the foundation for Aristotle’s thinking, in which life is for the first time arranged hierarchically; the organic lifeforce that unites all of life and the sensoriness that links all animals culminate in human rationality. Starting with Aristotle’s thinking, these levels are discernible in the human figure: the level of general life, the level of the animal, and the highest level of the human being. This structure is echoed at the roots/origins of modern science in the thinking of the enlightenment thinker and anatomist Marie François Xavier Bichat, in which the being of organisms is seen through a kind of double exposure: present in an animal, on the one hand, is its “organic life” and, on the other hand, its sensory or perceptual life. For Christian eschatology the Resurrection is a headache, since even if specifically the human soul comes from God, it inhabits an animal body. What, then, happens to the animal body in Heaven? From the viewpoint of modern science and taxonomy the attempt to define an essential difference between humans and other great apes is an impossible task, which the father of modern taxonomy, Carl Linnaeus, tries to get out of by saying that the human is an ape that “recognizes itself as human”. In Heidegger’s thinking, in turn, between Dasein and the animal there is an “unbridgeable chasm”. Agamben also deals with the problem of the end of history in 20th century critical theory in the light of the human/animal distinction.

16 As Agamben says: “Both [the premodern and the modern anthropological] machines are able to function only by establishing a zone of indifference at their centers, within which – like a ‘missing link’ which is always lacking because it is already virtually present – the articulation between human and animal, man and non-man, speaking being and living being, must take place. Like every space of exception, this zone is, in truth, perfectly empty, and the truly human being who should occur there is only the place of a ceaselessly updated decision in which the

caesurae and their rearticulation are always dislocated and displaced anew. What would thus be obtained, however, is neither and animal life nor a human life, but only a life that is separated and excluded from itself – only a bare life.” (Agamben 2004, 37-38.)

17 Agamben 1998, passim.

18 Diamond 1978, 470.

19 Ko 2017, 111

20 Deckha 2010, 37.

21 Wolfe 2003, 101.

22 See, e.g. Ko 2017; Gossett 2015; Jackson 2013, 2015 and 2016.

23 Grosfoguel, 2013.

24 Grosfoguel 2013, 77.

25 Ko 2017.

26 Grosfoguel, 2013, 81. See also Ko 2013 and Palang 2019.

27 Palang 2013, 10-11.

28 Deckha 2010, 45-46.

29 Gossett describes this idea, for instance, like this: “In contrast to the vision of abolition offered by Douglass, for many in animal liberation and animal studies, abolition is imagined as teleological; first slavery was abolished and now forms of animal captivity must be, too. It is as though animal is the new black even though blackness has already been racialized through animalization. Critiques of “human exceptionalism” and anthropocentrism in critical animal studies often presume that the human in the human/animal divide is a universally inhabited and privileged category, rather than a contested and fractured one. Blackness and its relation to animality and abolition is often left in what Saidiya Hartman and Frank Wilderson call “the position of the unthought.” (Gossett 2015)

30 Agamben 2000, 37-49.

31 Weheliye 2014, 33-36.

32 Jackson 2013, 681.

33 Ko 2017, 50-56, 120-127.

34 Ko 2017, 124.

35 Palang 2019, 20

36 Tuck, 2012.

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Museum of Nonhumanity, Gustafsson&Haapoja. Photo Terike Haapoja



untitled, Mark Peckmezian

Dikter ur *Antropocen*

Jonas Gren

× × ×

Det börjar med läckorna i taket Insipprande
vatten som uppviglare Landar
på kalkstensbyster Akvaraller Rinner
genom bokhyllor och hårddiskar Nothäften
och ritningar Mikrosamhällena
tågar in Goddag Nu är vi här Allesamman

De sköna konsterna ska invaderas

Men innan dess

Innan prokaryoterna
amöborna och möglen
tar över börshus och gallerier

Innan maskarna äter sig upp genom
boningshus och kontor Och strandpromenaderna
eroderar i sjön Kyldiskarna
fylls med vatten och andmat Där ormarna
simmar Medan grizzlybjörnen
ropar efter fjärilar
mellan pärmarna Och räkorna
växer till sig i Trump Tower

Medan
fästringarna biter sig fast i de nordliga älgarna
Och korallreven lyser som tandrader
Medan rödingarna rymmer till gäddorna

Och björndjuren går i evig dvala
Medan spindlarna regnar mot ett öde
Krakatau Och krillynglen
söker skydd mellan elbilarna Undan
valarna Medan stararna härmas

i skenet från lysmasken Och tranorna
springer längs leriga landsvägar Järnsparvarna
följer trädgränsen uppåt Medan
tagelmasken letar gräshoppor
bland fåren
på Trafalgar Square

Innan elefanterna försvinner
Innan grodorna försvinner

Medan
kajorna flockas bland myggorna
och hästarna i mässhallar Och kråkorna
pratar med grävlingarna
i flygplansskelett Där humlorna bor
Och fladdermössen hänger
i väntan på natten
Medan lämlarna följer
de uråldiga stigarna Och syrsorna
vaknar i sensommarhettan
Skogsmyran släpar i höstvinden
Läppstekeln kryper ner i sanden
Örnen jagar drönare
Och extremofilen vaknar ur isdjupet
Medan visenterna betar
i de blekingska skogarna I duvans rop
Och vildsvinen trippar över ekande golv
Medan maneterna
når herravälde i haven

Innan dess

Ska människorna finnas i väte och ljus

× × ×