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Animals . . . In Theory

Nine Inquiries in Human and Nonhuman Life

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SISTER CAT

Cat stands at the fridge,
Cries loudly for milk.
But I've filled her bowl.
Wild cat, I say, Sister,
Look, you have milk.
I clink my fingernail
Against the rim. *Milk.*
With *down* and *liver*,
A word I know she hears.
Her sad miaow. She runs
To me. She dips
In her whiskers but
Doesn't drink. As sometimes
I want the light on

When it is on. Or when
 I saw the woman walking
 toward my house and
 I thought *there's Frances*.
 Then looked in the car mirror
 To be sure. She stalks
 The room. She wants. Milk
 Beyond milk. World beyond
 This one, she cries.

(Mayes 1995, 23)

HOW NOT TO SPEAK OF ANIMALS? WE KNOW FROM JACQUES DERRIDA THAT IN talking this way we are asking two related questions, each of which reminds us that what is still confusedly called “the animal” is best held open *as* a question, or rather in the unruly space *between* two questions, quite possibly more.¹ In the first place, an interrogative: a query that calls for a certain vigilance and responsibility when it comes to thinking about animals, and that affirms the importance of parsing the ways in which animals and animality are differently figured, the rhetorics or tropologies as well as the theories, cultural practices, systems, and histories that make animals knowable. These animal discourses include those that render nonhuman life both fungible and all but morally illegible, discourses that are nothing less than planetary in their unprecedented reach and effectiveness. But “how not to speak of animals?” also means that there is no way *not* to speak of them. Put in the positive, speaking of animals is more than analyzing and describing them, as important as these tasks are, now more than ever: it is also a vow to tell. Put more radically, it is possible that *we are* that unwitting vow, and that we bear witness to the absolute precedence of animal lives, the indubitability of their mortal exposure, without necessarily knowing that we are doing so.

Speaking of animals, in other words, includes speaking in ways that remain unavailable to the speaker. The origins of this promise, automatism, and necessity, this new categorical imperative or better, this law of the earth, are somehow both elusive and conspicuous, thereby unnerving

the opposition between the obscure and the immediately to-hand that is sometimes put to use in the disavowal of “theory,” animal and otherwise. We have always dwelled with nonhuman animals, and nonhuman animals have always dwelled with us, even if this originary mingling makes it impossible to settle once and for all what it means to be “human” or “nonhuman,” much less to determine in advance how these distinctive creatures will be “with” each other in the future. Whatever we say about animals, moreover, is pronounced in the wake of the fact that they are as different from each other as they are from themselves. That archaic differentiation and singularization makes human and nonhuman animals answerable to a “language” or a trace-structure that is older than life.³ In Derrida’s more phenomenological terms, there was never a time when human beings did not fall under the gaze of the animal, and lived mortally in the midst of their precarious lives, regardless of whether that look was acknowledged, much less thoughtfully considered or acted ethically upon. And as the French philosopher says of this moment of being “seen seen” by animal others, “Thinking perhaps begins there” (Derrida 2008, 29).

Where on earth is *there*? “How not to speak of animals?” shades imperceptibly into another question, another problem, namely, where to start the enormous and pressing task of speaking of animals in ways that do justice not only to creaturely life and the environments with which that life is enmeshed, but also to the question of responsibility, ethics, and decision, “the unrescindable essence” of which, Derrida insists, lies in “casting doubt on responsibility, on decision, on one’s own being-ethical” (2008, 126). Where is the “there” where thinking and speaking about animals and animal ethics “begins”? Where but “here,” *in the thick of things*, without the security of an originating or saving vantage point, a lofty place of absolute clarity against which other forms of thinking are too often dismissed as insubstantively or even irresponsibly “theoretical.” Indeed, the “in theory” of “animals in theory” stands not negatively for their dissipation in thought but positively for our irrevocable turn toward the enormity of all that has yet to be said and done regarding animals, even and especially if we cannot see in advance what those words and deeds will look like, much less the day in which all will be said and done. In other words, “in theory” means “animals might call upon

and obligate me in ways that I cannot fully anticipate” (Calarco 2008, 5). It is as if we are involuntary witnesses to an immeasurable event, and appointed to a task for which we are hardly prepared. Yet no post-historical world distracts or attracts the contributors to this volume, only historical possibilities born amid the specter of animal ruination. Speaking of animals, and speaking in particular of our still-unfolding obligations toward them amidst the throes of the dismal geologic epoch of the anthropocene, we might usefully recall Roger Simon’s insistence, after Theodor Adorno, “that for the sake of the possible, one must comprehend the impossibility of redemptive thought from the standpoint of an unredeemed world” (2005, 1).³ The enigmatic but no less irrepressible place of obliging animals in theory and in thinking is the *raison d’être* of this volume, named as such in its title.

The aegis under which these essays have been collected is a provocation and a lure to thought, both to the authors and to the broad spectrum of readers for whom they write. More specifically, in its telegraphed movements or moments, separated by an ellipsis, the title is meant both to evoke and to ward off two specters haunting animal studies today. First, the notion that thinking critically or theoretically about animals, by which I mean wrestling with the very thought of animals—principally but not exclusively in the shadow of Continental philosophy—is at best a pallid or playful abstraction of their existence, and at worst the subtlest instance of their violent disappearing at the hands of the hyper-rational creature that calls itself “man.” “Theory” is here summarily reduced to “theoreticism,” and is often normatively compared to what are imagined to be realer, more common-sensical flesh and blood “practices”: empirically based investigations of animal life, for example, or philosophical work that distances itself from the siren song of those nevertheless strangely alluring hybrids, “the mermaids of Posthumanism and continental ethics” (Cavaliere 2009, 97). But one of the propositions underwriting this volume is that in an age dominated by powerfully consequential neoliberal renunciations of humanistic inquiry, especially inquiries that feel threateningly indeterminate and that are quickened by Continental philosophy’s dilatory quality, not to mention its long-standing passion for nonknowledge, its critique of positivisms, its fascination with existential questions, and its willingness to tarry with absences and negations, *now* is

precisely not the time to so quickly abandon the tribulations and opacities of what the education scholar, Deborah Britzman, calls “difficult knowledge” (1998, 19).

What makes “difficult knowledge” *difficult* is that it is haunted by what remains unthought in thought, making thought irreducible to information, “preconceived, substantified, believed to be known in advance” (Felman 1991, 68). Perhaps we will discover that animals are the most arduous occasion of difficult knowledge, the most compelling reason for thinking to think against itself. Perhaps this is why Derrida suggests that thinking starts there, at the phantasmatic place where the becoming-animal of the animal and the becoming-human of thought are in some obscure fashion stitched together. In this regard, we could hardly do better than citing the German idealist and *Lebensphilosoph*, Friedrich Schelling, whose otherwise baroque philosophical prose is startled by the prospect of the opacity of nonhuman life. What he says in response to that resistance amounts to a kind of zoographical gnome, whose phrasing somehow combines wonder with resignation. “Animals,” he declares: “difficulty of explaining these” (1994, 57). That Schelling is giving a lecture on Descartes makes this interruption all the more telling. The philosopher’s suddenly laconic form *is* his content: the weird proximity of animals that are somehow also at an enormous cognitive distance makes it so. One of the wagers of this volume is that Continentally inflected theory, which after all revels in difficulty, precisely because it finds there the chance of ethics and politics, is uniquely situated to explore what Derrida so memorably calls “the *question* of the animal” (2008, 8).⁴

My working premise is this: what we—human and nonhuman animals alike—need today is a broader not narrower range of thinking about animals, the better to do justice to each and every one of them. Since we cannot *not* think and theorize animals, let us avoid the temptation categorically to abject some forms of thinking about animals as mere “theory,” and instead devote our efforts to considering ways in which to conduct many kinds of theoretical labor *well*.⁵ In other words, let us try as best we can to avoid falling into the trap of saying that some theory “has” an animal world, whereas other theories are intrinsically poor in that world, and still others have no animal world at all. “Animals . . . in theory” thus says, in so many words,

that even an extremely wary relationship with the rich intellectual debates and histories of Continental philosophy—which we see in Paola Cavalieri’s forceful contribution to this volume, for example—is better than abandoning them altogether, as if they were good for nothing. It is worth emphasizing that debates within animals studies—the conflict between “theory,” so-called, and its various philosophical others, actual and imagined—are not happening in an intramural vacuum but rather in a specific historical setting that wholly overdetermines their terms and uptake. In the name of purging animal studies of its “foreign elements” (Cavalieri 2009, 94), for example, the field risks reproducing the broad anti-intellectualisms that seek aggressively to privatize every aspect of human existence, with an eye to dissolving the public spheres in which a politics and an ethics of nonhuman life will happen, if they are to happen at all.

I said that there were two ghosts to whom the scholars gathered together in this collection are called to speak. The other specter is perhaps as old as thinking—or what is called “thinking”—itself: namely, the compulsion to make animals appear to the sight of the human spectator (θεωρός or *theoria*, “one watching a show”) who claims to know what living creatures *are* and therefore to be in a position to speak commandingly for them and of them. In the house of being, animals, like the proverbial bourgeois children of a bygone age, should be *seen* and not heard. According to this claim, “theory” reproduces the representational logic that transforms each existent—including animals—into “a thing whose presence is *encountered* by *rendering* it present, by bringing it to the subject of representation, to the knowing self” (Derrida 2004a, 139). The biopoliticization of all forms of life—not just “man’s” own life—on the planet is presumably the most vivid instance of this unforgiving administrative and indeed concentrationary impulse, the truest expression of the empire of the *sapiens*. “Theory” in this instance is complicit with the Heideggerian notion of “representational man,” the virile creature “with hard eyes permanently open to a nature that he is to dominate . . . by fixing it in front of himself, or by swooping down on it like a bird of prey” (Derrida 2004a, 139). We should recall that Derrida characterizes this notion of the ruling and viewing subject as a “caricature,” a consequential ideogeme rather than a neutral anthropological

description. That “representational man” can both hold the world away and remain hungrily desirous of it is the first clue that even the most knowing of knowing subjects have messily embodied relationships with the objects that they make appear before them in thought and action. Nonetheless, as creatures that deem themselves to possess the unique ability to watch but not be captivated by or implicated in what they watch, human beings in this theoreticist mis-en-scène model an intelligence that seals itself off from the difficult knowledge of the animal. But what’s telling is the way in which the suspicion of panoptic “theory” in this impoverished sense can start to mimic elements of the theoreticism it disavows—specifically its faith in the indemnifying powers of thinking at a spectatorial remove from the hurly-burly of the debates about animals.

Consider, for instance, Paola Cavalieri’s robust description of the stated objectives of “contemporary rational ethics in the analytical philosophy.” As she says, this body of thought avoids the pitfalls and atavisms of Continental philosophy by ensuring that it is “autonomous insofar as it does not depend on other domains, homogeneous insofar as it employs its specialized theoretical tools, and clear insofar as it is based on explicit argumentation” (2009, 95). To what degree does this imagined condition of autonomy re-inscribe the exclusive and representational logic of *theoria*? And more troublingly, does this carefully calibrated remove risk what Cora Diamond calls a “moral noncommitment to the good” (2001, 128), a distancing from the question of justice in the name of a certain methodological purity that it would otherwise wholly reject? In other words, it is as if the intra-academic and bloodless conflict *within* animal studies between what is too quickly called “analytical philosophy” and “continental philosophy” or “theory” reproduces and internalizes the more eventful “war” that Derrida argues is being “waged *between* those who violate not only animal life but even and also . . . [the] sentiment of compassion and, on the other hand, those who appeal to an irrefutable testimony to this pity” (2008, 28–29; emphasis mine).

And yet it is the premise of this volume that “the question of the animal,” which is not one question among many, means theorizing otherwise than the logic of representation and its rather serenely self-contained notion of *theoria*. When we speak of animal theory as abstracting spectatorship, we are

in fact talking about theoreticism, a *theoria of theoria*, or a normative claim about how to think about thinking about animals, one that is conspicuous for protecting itself against Continentally inflected forms of inquiry by claiming that those inquiries fail to address the concrete “truths” of animal life. Strangely, “analytic philosophy” here objectifies “Continental philosophy,” holds it at a safe distance, in a manner that uncannily repeats “theory’s” putative abstraction from animal life. But a hypothesis that this collection tests is whether thinking the thought of the animal—and these gestures would include pronouncing the end of theory’s thought of the animal, made in the hope of formulating as yet unthought thoughts—means that no matter where we turn, theory’s conjuring of the animal has already begun and begun again. More: animals in theory may form the content of thinking, right up to and including the apparitional beginning of thinking, but that does not make them unreal or ethically illegible.

In the spirit of what Calarco wisely calls a kind of animal “agnosticism” (2009, 73), let us for the moment set aside these debates, centered as they are on largely unexplored notions of proximity and distance, clear-mindedness and obscurantism, rationality and atavism, familiarity and foreignness vis-à-vis animals. The essays assembled in this volume instead ask, often in very different registers: What does it mean to cross paths with life—plural, heterogeneous, and singular—in the mode not of knowing certainty or methodological purity but of open-ended inquiry, as an advent or address that is ventured, without the prospect of return, in the face of an other’s advent or address? In this instance, the duplicity of Derrida’s genitive works wonders: “the question *of* the animal” means the questionably animal, the animals who question, animality in question, and the answerless questions asked of animals and by animals, both “in” and “out” of theory (assuming these locations of thought could be definitively ascertained, assuming one could occupy the utopic place from which a thinker could say, “I am no longer speaking of animals ‘in theory’”). Amid this surplus of sense and indeterminacy of location, the animal is usefully understood as the paradigmatic instance of the Stranger, the foreign one who arrives unexpectedly amid our all too Apollonian discussions and desires. The animal who arrives is the incommensurable one to whom absolute hospitality should be rendered—which is

to say, without knowing ahead of time what all of our obligations are or what forms they will take.

To recall something Derrida says about the troubling entrance of the *xenos* in Plato's dialogues, the animal is the creature who poses "the unbearable question" (2000, 5). Could any question worthy of the name, much less the evocative, ancient, evasive, sublime, and unavoidable name of "animal," be anything but unbearable? If we can only forgive the unforgivable, as Derrida suggests elsewhere (2001b, 32), then perhaps we can only truly be asked to bear the unbearable. We note that Plato's example of the unbearable question is a query that unsettles the hitherto untrammelled division between "the being that is and the non-being that is not." The regulation of this difference, I dare say, has had long-standing and deleterious consequences for how we have viewed and treated nonhuman animals. Long before Heidegger, the Stranger brings troubling news of the *Seinsfrage*, whose supposed primacy Derrida in turn displaces with the "question of the animal." Giorgio Agamben will radicalize this postontological possibility in *The Open*, where he calls for us "to let the animal be" (2004, 91), by which he means, in part, to create worlds in which *Homo sapiens* might abandon the human, all too human, question of being. No longer absorbed by the strife of the concealedness and unconcealedness of being, a concern that Agamben says is essential to the endless process of distinguishing *Dasein* from animality, "man" releases creaturely life from its immemorial bondage to the "anthropological machine."

Where Derrida and Agamben agree is that the animal question must be as burdensome as it is surprising, the occasion of wondrous suspension and unmasterable labor. One suspects that if the question of the animal is unendurable, it is partly because anthropocentric discourses (which include those written in the name of the "end of man" and "the death of the animal") have played host to an animal guest or *mètèque* who has always been with "us," and who therefore renders impossible the very thought of an "us" at some spectatorial remove from the precarious life that "we" too often observe, hurt, and observe being hurt. Whatever "we" are, we are by virtue of our capacity to watch and harm animal others with relative impunity. In other words, where "humanity" begins there is already a suffering ancestor, which makes for a delirious natality or primal scene that "we" simultaneously mark

and erase by resorting—in a manner that is nothing if not tellingly anxious in its endless reiterations—to the word, the original *animot*, “animal.”⁶

In a reversal that could hardly be said to be symmetrical, nonhuman animals in effect “theorize” human beings, dispossessing their discourses of the human and nonhuman by exposing them to the irrepressible possibility of this discourse’s unthought, or to what I would call *the post-animal, the animal-to-come*.⁷ As Derrida points out, thinking has never *not* found itself under the querying gaze of the animal, even if looking away from that disconcerting face may not so much trouble a certain hegemonic strand of philosophy but constitute it. The turn of phrase “animals . . . in theory” thus stands in a critical relationship with the “sound and profound” philosophical discourses in which “everything goes on as though this troubling experience had not been *theoretically* registered, supposing that they had experienced it at all, at the precise moment when they made of the animal a *theorem*, something seen and not seeing” (2008, 14). Derrida’s careful phrasing momentarily holds apart the making-*theorem* of animals, in which living creatures are transformed into “something seen and not seeing,” from a “theoretical register” that might make trouble for thinking.

There is more to “theory” than animal *theoria*, and this excess emboldens us to ask a question: What if the vision of *theoria* turned out to have little to do with seeing and sight-lines, but instead demonstrated what Derrida has called “the *truth* of the eyes, whose ultimate destination they would thereby reveal: to have imploration rather than vision in sight, to address prayer, love, joy, or sadness rather than a look or a gaze” (Derrida 1993, 126)? Only a dogmatic “anthropo-theological discourse” claims that “man” sees “that tears and not sight are the essence of the eye” (126), yet denies animals the capacity to weep and to be seen weeping. What if the “in” of “animals . . . in theory” evoked not an interiority, an incorporation and sublation of animals, but the surprise of an irreducible remainder that makes its presence felt in the form of an entreaty to see the tears of the other? What happens to theory *after* the animals—“after” here taking on the reversal that we see in Derrida’s play with the senses of “following, to follow” (*suivre*): thinking follows animals, both tracking them down, running them to ground, *and* finding itself after the fact belated and indebted. With animals, thought is always already an

after-thought. But as with Freud's notion of *Nachträglichkeit*, this is an "after" that needs to be thought as something other than a privation, for in our delay regarding living creatures, we remain answerable to them. It may even be, as Derrida hints, that thought *is* that deferred action. We cannot but fall under the animals' gaze, but what we glimpse in their eyes, and hear in their sighs, remains to be known.

"I would like to have the plural of animals heard in the singular" (Derrida 2002, 415): each of the essays collected in this volume responds to the spirit of Derrida's invitation, even if they differently wrestle with the letter of his arguments about the question of human and nonhuman life. So much depends upon the ellipsis that at once adjoins and separates the two key words, "animals" and "theory." Those ellipses or tracks here register a certain hesitation, as if thinking and writing at the brink of an abyss, an aporia that asks the unbearable question, unbearable especially for thought, much less philosophy: "whether we know how to think about animals *at all*" (Calarco 2008, 5). The essays gathered together all but abstain from answering that query in the affirmative, but this is a modesty and a reluctance that, far from leaving us with nothing to say about animals, in fact spurs more thinking, more theorizing. Animals in theory remain a speculation, a wager, a precocious testimony as much as an attempt at an analytical description. "Take your time," the ellipsis between "animals" and "theory" says, even though the opening word (which is more than a word, more than what is said; it is also something closer to a saying, a beseeching), namely *animals*, translates a supplementary commandment" that we hear in Derrida: "but be quick about it because you do not know what awaits you" (2001a, 56).

With animals, and this of course includes the animal that we already are, we are never quite ready: in this sense, "in theory" means something closer to its colloquial expression, "that which has yet to be met, tested, and corroborated." In this formulation, the plurality of animals, their irreducibly singular and heterogeneous life, is neither subsumed by theory nor abandoned or ignored by it either. As Derrida says, in the obscure yet irrepressible presence of his little cat, "Nothing can ever rob me of the certainty that what we have here is an existence that refuses to be conceptualized" (2008, 9). For "conceptualized" we might well read "theorized." But we must be careful here

not to misread Derrida as naively refusing conceptualization, assuming that such a disavowal could not only punctually happen but also happen in a way that would be legible. No concept or representation is adequate to the coming of the singular animal; “there are never enough words or the right words, there is never enough time or the right time, and never enough listening or the right listening” (Laub 1991,77) to conceptualize and articulate the animal that cannot be fully captured in thought, memory, knowledge, and speech.⁸ But for that very reason, we are left with nothing but a future of concepts and representations that honor the fruitful answerlessness of the animal-question: How does the singular animal query me? What obligations does that creature instantiate? What does it mean to be human and nonhuman, post-human, and post-animal? What does it mean to bear witness to grievable life? More questions to follow. Or to switch Derridean registers: in the name of some imagined postanthropocentric asceticism or methodological purity, we cannot avoid speaking of animals. Let us then think of animals in ways that are hospitable both to them and to thinking, including the impure thought of the creaturely *there* where thinking begins. How can we not speak of animals? We cannot evade the burden of incorporating them into our thoughts, our ethics, or politics, now more than ever. So, to return to a point that I made earlier, *it is a matter of learning, in the midst of an unredeemed world, how to do this work well.*

That unsaved creation, teetering on the threshold of the sixth mass extinction, is close to hand. Consider for a moment the creatures who enliven and trouble the pages of the essays collected here. On a Berlin subway, a whippet named Tania attends to the malaise of her fellow passengers, taking a measure of the melancholy of those human others whose gaze will not and cannot meet hers. In an American abattoir, a Holstein steer bellows not at the prospect of her impending demise but at the more immediate worry that she will be separated from the comforting reassurances of her mates in the herd. In a South African animal welfare clinic, a shamed professor shovels the corpses of euthanized dogs into an incinerator, and in that all but unremembered act discovers a moment of grace in the dominion of the dead. In the gardens of London’s Zoological Society, an orangutan named Jenny awakens disconcerting questions and queer affections in a Victorian

scientist who can confide these difficult thoughts only to the privacy of his notebooks. An elderly and sickened dog whimpers in pain and dies a death that haunts a philosopher's waking dreams with an uncanny repetitiveness that makes a world of difference. An estranged German political theorist likens the bare life of the millions of stateless and rightless souls populating postwar Europe to so many stray dogs; in this deprived universe, she suggests, a parodically Adamic calculus operates: those few animals who bear names stand a slightly better chance of surviving than the millions who have none. What's in a name? A pit bull named "Pit" observes the unspeakable cruelty of his human masters, only himself to die at the hands of scientists in the pay of the American military-industrial complex. So many *animots*, animal words and animal figures, vie for attention in these texts, populating a zoosphere that their authors both invent and analyze.

Where animals are, it seems, so too are thoughts and theories of sorrow and loss, suffering and extermination. Once one lets go of the promise of clarity, homogeneity, autonomy in thinking about animals, it proves tellingly hard not to give in to the vicissitudes of melancholy. This "giving in," however, may not be a capitulation. In the age of extinctions, the age newly named the anthropocene, perhaps this mood—if that is what it is—is inevitable. I think that it is entirely significant that, notwithstanding the wide range of critical positions, archives, subject matter, and methodologies characterizing the essays in this issue of *The New Centennial Review*, they are imbued with a complex sense of attachment and loss vis-à-vis animal life, a mixture that is perhaps no more palpable than at those moments—and there are many of these—in which the animal other arrives, *in* theory, as it were, and beckons to readers as a suffering other. The wager of this collection is that writing and thinking in the wake of Continental philosophy—from Nietzsche to Derrida, and from Freud to Adorno—is not only uniquely attentive to the singularity and plurality of nonhuman life but also vulnerable to its quivering vulnerability. It is the risk and the passion of exposure—nonhuman and human—that threads through these essays, rhizomatically weaving them together with filaments of feeling perhaps none of them could have fully anticipated. Here *theoria's* look can hardly be mistaken for a cruelly indifferent stare, much less a form of philosophical voyeurism, whether "analytical," "Continental,"

or otherwise. Our contributors are the farthest thing from merely interested bystanders to the animal catastrophe unfolding around them. But neither are their interventions simply the rigorous and representational work of analysis, although they are most certainly that too. At a level that is as much affective as it is knowing, these essays also demonstrate that “eyes are not made primarily for seeing but for crying” (Derrida 2000, 115). If the death and dying of animals haunts these pages, it does so in the context of an abiding affirmation—a vow, so to speak—of their creatureliness. In the mode of a promissory gesture and a testamentary address, they demonstrate that animals in theory are ineluctably more than the making-*theorem* of animals.



NOTES

I thank the members of my 2011 graduate seminar, “Regarding Animals: Theories of Non-Human Life,” for their intellectual courage in the face of “the question of the animal.”

1. Derrida asks, for example, “How *not* to speak, today, of the university?” (2004a, 129). As he makes clear in another context, to pose the question in this fashion means, “How if one speaks of it, to avoid speaking of it? How not to speak of it? How is it necessary to speak of it? How to avoid speaking of it without rhyme or reason? What precautions must be taken to avoid errors, that is, inadequate, insufficient, simplistic assertions? (1992, 82).
2. I am here recalling a point Derrida often makes in his work, but neatly summarized in “Violence Against Animals” (2004b, 63). The trace-structure that exceeds the opposition of life and death is also a subject that Cary Wolfe takes up. See, for example, *What is Posthumanism?* (2010, 90–91).
3. Simon cites Adorno: “Even its own impossibility [thought] must at last comprehend for the sake of the possible. Beside the demand thus placed on thought, the question of the reality or unreality of redemption itself hardly matters” (Simon 2005, 1; citing Adorno 1974, 247).
4. As Calarco notes, “Derrida uses this phrase often throughout his writings on animals, and specifically in regard to his critical confrontation with Heidegger around this issue” (2008, 4).
5. Here I remember Derrida’s remarks in “‘Eating Well,’ or the Calculation of the Subject”: “The moral question is thus not, nor has it ever been: should one eat or not eat, eat this and not that, the living or the nonliving, man or animal, but since *one must* eat in any case, and since it is and tastes good to eat, and since there’s no other definition of

- the good [*du sein*], how for goodness' sake should one *eat well* [*bien manger*] . . . 'One must eat well'" (1995, 282).
6. I borrow this turn of phrase from Robert Pogue Harrison: "Just as humanity begins where there is already an ancestor, language begins where it has already begun" (2003, 72).
 7. For a further discussion of what I am calling "the post-animal," see Clark (2010; 2011).
 8. My remarks are a direct echo of Dori Laub's impeccable account of the vicissitudes of bearing witness: "The imperative to tell and be heard can become itself an all-consuming task. Yet no amount of telling seems ever to do justice to this inner compulsion. There are never enough words or the right words, there is never enough time or the right time, and never enough listening or the right listening to articulate the story that cannot be fully captured in *thought, memory, and speech*" (1991, 77).

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