HOW TO MAKE A HUMAN

Animals and Violence in the Middle Ages

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For Alison
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HUMAN LIMITS

For anyone who doubts that a horse is by its very nature better than wood, and that a human being is more excellent than a horse, should not even be called a human being.

—Anselm, *Monologion*

Lest he eat grass like an ox, he has subjected the ox to himself.

—William of St. Thierry, *Physics of the Human Body*

The twelfth-century English monk Adam of Eynsham envisioned an afterlife in which King Henry II was made to ride an infernal horse while wearing white-hot armor, his bowels pierced through by the nails of his saddle, while “cruel tormentours, wykyd fyndis, ful gretly with derisions and scor- nys vpbraydyd him” (cruel tormentors and wicked fiends reproached him greatly with derision and scorn). No wonder: Henry had broken a crusade vow and encouraged the assassination of Thomas Becket. Henry could have been made to suffer for either of these sins, but Adam chose to condemn him for acts that would seem to be well within his royal prerogatives, namely the “sin” of executing poachers. Adam’s outrage is far from unusual. Like the other twelfth-century clerical opponents of poaching laws, Adam reasoned that because humans alone are made in the image of God, “by the


law of kinde” (by natural law) animals of the forest “ought to be slayne to euery man”3 (should be slayable for every man); therefore anyone who executed a poacher apparently valued animal life as much as or more than human life. Henry’s crime was therefore not against humans, nor against God, but against the human itself, for, as Adam’s contemporary William of Newburgh complained, Henry treated “cervicidas” (deer killers) no differently than he did “homicidas”4 (man killers): what but postmortem torment could expiate so abhorrent an offense?

Adam considers the human domination of animals only incidentally: he sees no need to prove a point that is, to him, self-evident. Rather, he wielded this most natural of orders to resist royal encroachments on monastic privileges.5 Likewise, through animal comparisons, elites justified their exploitation of peasants, Christians encouraged and condoned antisemitic degradation and murder, and conquerors consolidated their dominion over their new subjects.6 The shifting boundaries of medieval class, religious, and

3. Ibid., 122. The fifteenth-century translation follows the twelfth-century original closely. In Adam’s Latin, which Easting provides on the facing page, “de iure naturali communiter omnibus [irrational beasts] cedere deberent.”


5. To encourage other rulers to treat monks well, Adam observes that Henry’s sufferings are somewhat relieved by the prayers of the “religious men” to whom “in his life for God he was full benyuolent oftyn-tymes” (205). For more on Henry’s relationship with monks, see W. L. Warren, Henry II (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 394. For a recent treatment of monks’ use of animal narrative to advocate for their privileges, see Dominic Alexander, Saints and Animals in the Middle Ages (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008).

6. Paul H. Freedman, Images of the Medieval Peasant (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 138–46; in terms typical of medieval antisemitism, the twelfth-century Cluniac Peter the Venerable wrote, “Lest I lie, I dare not profess that you [i.e., the Jews] are human, because I understand that the rational faculty which distinguishes the human being from other animals and beasts and renders him superior has been obliterated or suppressed in you” (quoted in Jeremy Cohen, Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999], 259); for more on antisemitic animal comparisons, see Elliot Horowitz, “Circumcised Dogs from Matthew to Marlowe,”
ethnic prejudices, among others, and the mechanisms of their perpetuation have deservedly been much studied, yet the prejudice of “natural” human ascendancy over other animals, according to which Henry’s execution of poachers is necessarily outrageous and any “animalization” of humans opens them to atrocity, has received sustained attention only over the last decade in the rapidly growing field of critical animal theory. Critical animal theory can be characterized by its ethical concerns and renewal of posthumanist philosophy. Its ethical stance derives from critiques of the animal liberation movement’s persistent anthropocentrism. Per these critiques, thinkers such as Peter Singer and Tom Regan undermine their own goals by measuring animals against idealized human capabilities to determine which creatures merit consideration as ethical subjects. Critical animal theory counters this ethical provincialism by advocating for nonanthropocentric approaches to


8. For example, Wolfe, Animal Rites, 53, observes that so far as animal rights thinkers are concerned, “the animal other matters only insofar as it mirrors . . . the human form that is the ‘source’ of recognizing animals as bodies that have sensations, feel pain, and so on” (original emphasis).
determining the moral significance of animals: it reconceives the distinct subjects of animal rights thinking by describing humans and nonhumans as co-constituted by their shared worlds, and in place of rationalist patterns of rights, critical animal theory proposes affective nonprogrammatic relations of caring, protection, and humility.

Critical animal theory is also yet another assault on the integrity of the “liberal humanist subject.” Such assaults are commonplace in postmodern philosophy, which variously argues that the autonomous, self-willed subject is fraud, that it comes to be not through its own efforts, but through a secondary and ongoing relation to language, to the world, or to the infinite demands of the other. Critical animal theory argues that this philosophy has failed its own critical imperative by preserving the division between humans and all other animals and thus by preserving the subject even as it purports to critique it. Critical animal theory stresses that the categories “human” and “animal,” as well as the assumption of any absolute limit between human and animals, must be radically rethought; it argues, furthermore, that the category “human” is best understood by examining its dependent relation on the category “animal.” The standard lines of critique function exemplarily in Derrida’s critique of Lacan. Lacan (or, as Derrida emphasizes, the Lacan of the *Écrits*) argues that animals’ inability to ascend to the symbolic frees them from the constitutive imperfection of the mental order of human subjects: unlike humans, animals “lack the lack.” The freedom from this particular imperfection is, however, their only freedom, since Lacan traps animals in mere reaction while granting humans the flexibility of response. On this point, Lacan joins any number of other humanists, who, with as unjustified and unconsidered a confidence, deny animals an ethical life, moral significance, or moral protection by relegating them to the realm of mere instinct. Derrida’s critique of Lacan’s humanism characteristically collapses the facile distinction between reaction and response, remarking, for example, that the “logic of repetition” in the unconscious means that humans are, like animals, always instinctual, therefore never entirely autonomous, and therefore always to a certain degree reactive. Derrida does not

9. For the “liberal humanist subject,” see, for example, N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 85–86.

10. See, for example, Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism*, 122–26, particularly its mapping of philosophers on a four-section grid charting their relative posthumanism and humanism: Derrida, for example, advocates posthumanist posthumanism; Rawls humanist humanism; Regan humanist posthumanism; and Rorty posthumanist humanism.


12. Ibid., 125.
require the effacement of all distinctions between humans and nonhumans, but rather a “limitrophic” investigation, a study of “what abuts onto limits but also what feeds, is fed, is cared for, raised, and trained, what is cultivated on the edges of a limit.” Why “the animal”? What does this category accomplish? At the very least, a limitrophic investigation requires closer attention to the problematic of “response”—a concern of the last decade or so of Derrida’s career—and thus to the possibilities of responsibility, ethical and otherwise, whether in the so-called human or so-called animal. Lacan himself requires renewing or rescuing rather than abandonment. His thought on the fundamental misrecognition of self-identification, for example, lends itself to critical animal theory, if the human subject’s distinction of itself from nonhuman animals is understood as a product of the dynamics of the imaginary. Humans attempt to form themselves as human by (mis)recognizing themselves as “not animal,” and then by subjecting themselves to the impossible demands of living up to this ideal self, one distinctively rational, ensouled, responsible, linguistic, and so on. Faced with a constitutive and irreparable disparity between themselves and their human self-image, humans assert that animals lack what uniquely afflicts humans. To give this assertion strength, they treat animals “like animals,” as instruments available for labor or slaughter, violence which does not count as morally significant violence and which therefore qualitatively differs from the violence humans suffer. To a degree, this compensatory violence, this book’s very subject, covers the gap between the subject and its human self-image; but only to a degree. In my book’s closing, I will advocate not for an abandonment of some kind of structuring fantasy of self—such an abandonment, I agree, would be impossible—but rather for a less violent, less anxiously uncertain way of being in a world of other beings that may be recognized in turn as themselves being uncertain. Recognizing themselves anew, humans need not imagine themselves as singularly human, with all that implies, at the expense of what they understand as merely animal.

Heidegger has been as easy a target as Lacan for critical animal theory, but, just as reluctantly, he opens an approach for critically reappraising the human distinction from animals. Against conceptions of the human as an

13. Ibid., 29, which plays on the Greek trophe, “nourishment” or “nutrition.”
15. Derrida, Animal that Therefore, 5, “The list of ‘what is proper to man’ always forms a configuration, from the first moment. For that reason, it can never be limited to a single trait and it is never closed.” For more on Lacan and animals, see Oliver, Animals Lessons, 175–89.
16. Treatments of Heidegger on animals to which the following discussion is indebted
animal supplemented or transformed by additional qualities—reason or politics, for example—Heidegger asserts that the philosophical tradition has not been sufficiently humanist; humans are not extraordinary animals, for humans and animals are utterly incomparable. The assertion is not a complete loss: although Heidegger reaffirms the distinction of humans from animals, at the same time, by insisting that animals not be measured hierarchically against what humans can do but be understood on their own terms, he demands that animals be understood nonanthropocentrically. Heidegger himself does not fulfill the demand, as his work on animals marks taxonomic divisions that so happen to fall in just those places repeatedly articulated by traditional humanism. In the *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger distinguishes among the worlds of stones, animals, and *dasein*, the third of which is the being for which being itself is an issue. For Heidegger, stones are in the world but do not apprehend it in any way. Animals, being *weltarm* or “poor in world,” apprehend the world they inhabit without being able to “unconceal” it, that is, to reflect on, or even to apprehend, their distinctiveness within the world. Unlike *dasein*, animals are entirely “captivated” and thus can more accurately be said to be had by their world than to have it. As Heidegger admits, animals cannot in fact properly be said to be “poor in world,” since they cannot “have” any sense of a distinct world:

The animal possesses this being-open [*Offenheit*] in its essence. Being-open in captivation is an essential possession of the animal. . . . [T]he possession of being-open is a not-having, and indeed a not-having of world, if the potentiality for revelation of beings as such does indeed belong to the world.¹⁷

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¹⁷. *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 391–92, quoted in Josh Hayes, “Hei-
Only dasein can reflect upon itself in its world. Through this reflection emerges a host of other capabilities unique to dasein, chiefly dasein’s awareness of the world’s persistence after its death. Dasein confronts death by knowing that the world will go on without it. By contrast, animals, unaware of their own worldly captivation, and thus unaware of the world’s existence apart from themselves, do not die but merely cease. Because humans are uniquely capable of ontological reflection, they alone are dasein. Heidegger advances his argument with the insights of the founder of ethology, Jakob von Uexküll. Uexküll described the subjective world of the tick, its umwelt, as limited by the means by which it sates its desires and reacts to stimuli: the tick, blind and deaf, reacts to the smell of butyric acid, liquid at the temperature of mammalian blood, and hairy skin with an undercurrent of blood vessels. This is its whole world, or, at any rate, what Uexküll was able to perceive as its whole world. Heidegger argues that even this description would be a misnomer, given that it is improper to speak of any animal as having welt, world. Yet the creature’s worldless immersion in world, its (in)ability to discover the distinction between what it experiences as world and the world itself, should be the same, mutatis mutandis, for Uexküll’s tick as it is for a human, since every creature’s particular abilities (including its own ways of being aware of injuries and pleasures) constrain and shape its engagement and perception of the world:

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18. Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics, 388, “Is the death of the animal a dying or a way of coming to an end? Because captivation belongs to the essence of the animal, the animal cannot die in the sense in which dying is ascribed to human beings but can only come to an end,” quoted in Brett Buchanan, “The Time of the Animal,” in Guenther and Taylor, PhaenEx, 69. For a possible source of Heidegger’s denial of death to animals, see the excerpt from Arthur Schopenhauer’s The World as Will and Idea in Andrew Linzey and Paul Barry Clarke, eds., Animal Rights: A Historical Anthology (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 38, where Schopenhauer writes that “the brutes do not properly speaking feel death.” Anticipating much else of Heidegger’s animal theory, Schopenhauer also argues that time is for animals “a mere succession of presents” and that “between the brute and the external world there is nothing, but between us and the external world there is always our thought about us.”


20. John Deely, “Umwelt,” Semiotica 134 (2001): 126, “What Uexküll uniquely realized was that the physical environment, in whatever sense it may be said to be the ‘same’ for all organisms . . . is not the world in which any given species as such actually lives out its life. No. Each biological life-form, by reason of its distinctive bodily constitution (its ‘biological heritage,’ as we may say), is suited only to certain parts and aspects of the vast physical
not to understood humans as also had by their own umwelt, also unable to “unconceal” their position in their world completely. The supposedly abyssal distinction between dasein and animals (or indeed, as object-oriented philosophy suggests, between dasein, animals, and stones)\(^{21}\) is therefore as philosophically indefensible as Lacan’s humanist distinction between response and reaction. Heidegger’s question should have been, then, whether “man, the human itself, has the ‘as such.’”\(^ {22}\) Rather than being heard as a “reduction” of humans to animal limitations, the question might be heard as admitting animals to a differently conceived dasein: since humans can reflect upon the conditions of existence to a degree, why can’t animals, each in its own way? Humans and animals both might engage with their own death without ever being able to fully appropriate it to their consciousness.\(^ {23}\) This solution may at least allow for a fulfillment of the promise in Heidegger’s thought of a nonanthropocentric concept of animals, and for a rethinking of the clarity of the distinction between umwelt and dasein, by attending at once to the potential reflectivity and the insurmountable reflective limitations of all beings.

If humans cease to be thought of as possessing unique moral significance because of their purported sole possession of responsibility or their unique capacity for reflection, nonhuman animals would cease to be automatically available to humans as mere worldly objects available for use by their supposed betters. At the least, a newfound humility and uncertainty about nonhuman animals would vitiate the strength of the insult of “animalization.” Perhaps more than any other thinker, Lévinas provides the means to counter this violence, but his work also must first be rescued from his own profound anthropocentrism.\(^ {24}\) For Lévinas, the self comes to be through the shatter-

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ing encounter with the other. His ethics critique the “said,” the pretension to know the entirety of the infinite, ungraspable plenitude of the other, by arguing that the reduction to certainty does violence to the other. Against this pretension and violence he promoted the openness and uncertainty of “saying,” which allows the other to be an other and not simply a narcissistic reflection. Yet he asserts repeatedly that the other must be human: in Derrida’s summation, “this subject of ethics, the face, remains first of all a fraternal and human face”25: in other words, the so-called other is fundamentally familiar, not in fact foreign, and definitely not an animal. Furthermore, convinced that animals were driven by merely biological urges to survive—reactions, in essence—and thus were unable to act ethically, Lévinas asserted that humans could not ethically be “hostage” to animals. He refused to examine how the very term “animal” totalized the beings of animals, destroying their multiplicity by delivering them en masse to a human certainty that pretended to know itself as human. Critical animal theory has attended in particular to two moments in Lévinas’s work. The first is an interview in which Lévinas breathtakingly misapplies the lessons of evolution: he argues that because evolution split the human entirely from the animal, any ethical relationship between humans and animals can only imitate or suggest relationships between humans.26 That belief is most evident in his autobiographical feuilleton, “The Name of a Dog, or Natural Rights,” where Lévinas recalls a stray dog named Bobby, whose affection comforted Lévinas and his fellow soldiers while they were confined in a Nazi prisoner-of-war camp. Because the prisoners had no food to spare, Bobby could hope for no material reward, and, as Matthew Calarco remarks, Bobby was in danger because he belonged neither to the prisoners nor to the Nazis; in no obvious sense could he be understood as treating the prisoners as a means to a self-interested end. Faced with a dog that risked everything to do his ethical duty, Lévinas rightly called Bobby “the last Kantian in Nazi Germany.”27 In response, Lévinas might have felt himself called into being

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25. Derrida, Animal that Therefore, 106. See also The Beast and the Sovereign, ed. Michel Lisse, Marie-Louise Mallet, and Ginette Michaud, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 108, “So long as there is recognizability and fellow [sic], ethics is dormant. It is sleeping a dogmatic slumber. So long as it remains human, among men, ethics remains dogmatic, narcissistic, and not yet thinking. Not even thinking the human that it talks so much about.”


through an ethical relationship to this other being; he might have imagined Bobby’s altruism as evidence of Bobby’s own sense of infinite responsibility for Lévinas’s destitution. Lévinas instead wrenches his musing back into a doctrinaire humanist groove by denying that Bobby has “the brain needed to universalize maxims and drives,” which, as Derrida wryly observes, renders this supposed Kantian “anything but Kantian.” Because Lévinas then reduces Bobby to a reminder of the relations that humans ought to have towards each other, his attention to Bobby serves only as a humanizing analogy. The dog is otherwise faceless, an object—like any other animal. But Bobby’s very inability to universalize his conduct could have been understood as evidence of Bobby’s more authentic ethical life: if I strategically accept Lévinas’s constraint of Bobby’s capabilities, then I might recognize that Bobby could not have been following any pre-existent, universal ethical pattern, but was instead wholly responsible to the other in the moment of the encounter. My epilogue will return to Lévinas through Matthew Calarco’s call for a “universal consideration” that “would entail being ethically attentive and open to the possibility that anything might take on a face” and by marking points in medieval literature where moments of “universal consideration” countered an anthropocentrism as vigilant as that of Lévinas. Such moments model ways for humans to leave off the “said” of the animal and to live as more uncertain, humble, and responsible beings, less confident in the moral irrelevance of others.

This humility can be attained even without such moments simply by historicizing and thus denaturalizing the distinction of (human) subject from animal. Several scholars have remarked on the importance of Christianity in this history, with its mutually supporting doctrines of, on the one hand, the particularity of human reason, human responsibility, and ultimate human invulnerability realized in the resurrection of the body, and on the other, the relegation of the nonhuman world to everlasting nothingness in the conflagration preceding the Last Judgment. Tracking the development of the cat-

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egories human and animal through Christian thought and practice, and the alternatives suppressed, obscured, or abandoned by its still dominant way of classifying worldly beings, impedes the transhistoricism by which traditional humanism functions, even in its most sophisticated forms. It is to discover both the fabricated character of the human subject and the dismissals of other less anthropocentric traditions through which this subject became dominant. Less important, but still necessary, is tracking this development with specific attention to the Christian Middle Ages to counteract two often repeated, albeit disharmonious assertions: that Descartes inaugurated modern attitudes of human distinctiveness from animals, and that European thought between the Skeptics and Montaigne unrelentingly considered animals to have only instrumental value to humans. Joyce Salisbury’s work on animals, which argues for the shifting permeability of human-animal boundaries from the early to the later Middle Ages, has been enormously important for such projects, and is deservedly the starting point for the rare historically minded critiques of the animal/human distinction that consider the Middle Ages at all or in any detail.31 Her work differs from previous (and indeed some current) medievalist work on animals by considering them as living creatures sharing a world with humans, rather than as moral symbols or actors in political allegories;32 thus she focuses on human engagements with animals in law and violence rather than on bestiaries, heraldry, or fables.33 However, the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen” (1205), and concludes by offering the pre-Bonaventuran legacy of Francis as “a patron saint for ecologists.”

31. Salisbury, Beast Within; “Human Beasts and Bestial Humans in the Middle Ages,” in Ham and Senior, Animal Acts, 9–22. For appraisals of Salisbury’s historical narrative, see David Salter, Holy and Noble Beasts: Encounters with Animals in Medieval Literature (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: D. S. Brewer, 2001), particularly 5–6; and Guy Guldentops, “Albert the Great’s Zoological Anthropocentrism,” Micrologus 8 (2000): 243. When critical animal theory acknowledges the Middle Ages, it tends to do so via citations of Augustine or Aquinas, or sometimes both. Nick Fiddes, Meat: A Natural Symbol (New York: Routledge, 1991), 106, represents a standard approach to the Middle Ages in its claim—relying on an early work by ecofeminist Carolyn Merchant—that “In medieval days, for example, the idea of humans coexisting with a living earth was more general” (however, see Carolyn Merchant, Radical Ecology [New York: Routledge, 1992], 139, where she observes that the oppositional binary of human and nature [among other binaries] “originated in the philosophy of ancient Greece, [was] reinforced by Christianity in the Middle Ages, and codified by scientists of the seventeenth century”).

32. Beryl Rowland, Animals with Human Faces: A Guide to Animal Symbolism (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1973) exemplifies the earlier, allegorically focused, tradition; most recently, see the allegorical political readings in Alexander, Saints and Animals.

33. For another comment on the imperative of nonsymbolic historicist approaches to animals, see Laura Hobgood-Oster, Holy Dogs and Asses: Animals in the Christian Tradition (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 15, “Central to my thesis is the idea that reading animals as only and always symbol [sic] is escapist and serves to reinforce human superiority
her denaturalization of the human could have gone further: her suggestion that Marie de France’s “sympathetic portrayal” of a werewolf evidences a twelfth-century tendency toward “more compassion for the animal part within us all”\textsuperscript{34} works only if humans are understood to have discrete “animal” and “human” parts independent of the very processes Salisbury tracks. Dorothy Yamamoto followed up Salisbury with a literary examination of how peripheral, low-class, or ambiguous figures, such as amphibians, wild men and women, or even Palamon and Arcite in Chaucer’s \textit{Knight’s Tale}, contaminate any definitive categories of the human and animal.\textsuperscript{35} Like other historicist considerations of the category of the animal, Yamamoto observes that “no single factor indisputably distinguishing us from the rest of the animal kingdom has been discovered, despite the best efforts of philosophers over the centuries,”\textsuperscript{36} since humans and various nonhuman animals share the qualities that supposedly distinguish humans as a particular kind of animal, whether language, reason, tool-use, tool-making, and so on. Erica Fudge, in her survey of the operations and contradictions of pre-Cartesian rationalist traditions of distinguishing humans from animals, similarly asked, “When is a human a human, and when is an animal an animal?” and her reply, like Yamamoto’s, stressed the instability of human claims to the unique possession of reason: “Such questions are probably doomed never to be answered definitively.”\textsuperscript{37}

The very inability to settle the categories of human and animal has energized recent medievalist work in critical animal studies. To date, the most radically antifoundational historicist work on animals has been inspired by Deleuze and Guattari. By their insistence that animals, people, and things constantly, strategically recombine in unbounded becoming, animals cannot be wan, symbolic imitations of humans—as in psychoanalysis, where dream animals are epiphenomena of unconscious processes—because no secure animality, humanity, or thinghood, as such, exists; nothing can be reduced to being only with and for itself.\textsuperscript{38} Jeffrey Jerome Cohen draws on this work and dominance. Animals, as real in history and in body, can be denied reality as fully living beings because they can be relegated to the powerful but disempowering category of symbol.”

\textsuperscript{34} Salisbury, “Human Beasts,” 18.


\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 89. Original emphasis.

\textsuperscript{37} Fudge, \textit{Brutal Reasoning}, 5.

to chart how the masculine bodies of warhorse and knight and their military accessories intermingle to form the “chivalric circuit.” Cohen argues that animals, humans, and objects must be appraised together because they form temporary clusters of active being in which “no single object or body has meaning . . . without reference to the other forces, intensities, affects, and directions to which it is conjoined and within which it is always in the process of becoming something other, something new.” More recently, Cohen has considered monstrous animal bodies: the offspring of bestiality such as the half-man, half-cow in Gerald of Wales’s *Topographia Hibernica*, and creatures of shifting gender and sexuality, such as the corpse-eating hyena of Plinian animal lore. By imagining medieval writers exploring through such creatures “spacious corporeality beyond the specious boundaries of the human,” Cohen discovers in animal fantasies a way to abandon the illusion of a firm distinction between human and animal or indeed between subject and world or life and nonlife. At the least, this unbounded mobility, what Deleuze and Guattari called “becoming,” provides a purchase for a critique of the still influential medieval hierarchical conception of humans as balanced midway between angels and animals.

Nonetheless, to ensure that an attention to becoming does not ignore the advantages and operations of the human domination of animals, the recognition of the constructedness of the categories of human and animal and life itself must be allied with a consideration of the categories’ real effects and the limitrophic operations that sustain them, namely the written and social mechanisms that aim to nullify any threat to the human subject’s pretension of coherent identity. Salisbury argues that barriers between humans and animals weakened in the later Middle Ages, but, even if they did, the only “rights” protecting animals in this period were the property rights of their owners. Aquinas exemplifies this tradition when he explains, “He that kills another’s ox, sins, not through killing the ox, but through injuring another man in his property. Wherefore this is not a species of the sin of murder but of the sin of theft or robbery.” King Henry executed poachers for the

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42. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Bros., 1947), 2a2ae q. 64, a. 1 ad 3, “Whether it is unlawful to kill
harm they inflicted not against animals but against human elites’ control of hunting. In late medieval law, any domestic pig that ate a human was executed, while any variety of Christianity that denied the legitimacy of eating pork risked the accusation of heresy. Such acts of violence and of differential allocation of care, as I will argue throughout this book, are central to distinguishing humans from animals and indeed to creating the opposing categories of human and animal, a point made perhaps most pithily by Bertrand Russell: “we can destroy animals more easily than they can destroy us; that is the only solid basis of our claim to superiority.” This, plus the recognition of the legitimacy of the human domination of animals, is the “single factor” dividing human from animals that Dorothy Yamamoto vainly sought. The unilateral, legitimized domination of animals by humans resolves, or attempts to resolve, the various, shifting boundaries between humans and other worldly lives into a single line. These acts of boundary-making subjugation include the acts not only of eating, taming, and killing, but also categorizing, through which humans mark one creature as merely animal—as something that should be eaten, tamed, or killed, that is destined only for dust rather than for immortality—and mark another, themselves, as a life that deserves to be protected, mourned, and that should never be eaten (or, if eaten, only ceremoniously, sadly, or with the exuberance of reveling any living thing.”


45. From “If Animals Could Talk,” in Linzey and Clarke, Animal Rights, 92. See also Cathryn Bailey, “On the Backs of Animals: The Valorization of Reason in Contemporary Animal Politics,” in Donovan and Adams, Feminist Care Tradition, 346, “Reason did not first come into existence and then look for a venue to exhibit itself, [sic] rather, what much of philosophy came to define as reason only came into being as result [sic] of denying and quashing those attributes regarded as feminine or bodily.” For an allied statement, see Peter Comestor’s twelfth-century compendium of historiestic glosses on Scripture, the Historia Scholastica, which explains the name of Seth’s son Enos: “quod sonat homo, vel vir, quasi rationalis, et fortis” (which denotes “homo,” or “man,” as if rational and strong; PL 198: 1080).
in the forbidden), a life that, in sum, should never be treated instrumentally.\textsuperscript{46}

To put it simply, an animal is human when it can be murdered.\textsuperscript{47}

Though Deleuze and Guattari show both humans and animals ceaselessly transformed by conjunctions with objects, space, and other living things, and though knights in chivalric narrative sometimes wished they were killed in place of their horses, humans remain the masters: the knight owns the horse and may separate himself from a chivalric circuit by killing and eating his possession. Even medieval laws against hippophagy legislated only what could be \textit{eaten}, rather than what could be \textit{killed}.\textsuperscript{48} Though analyses that recognize only unfixed assemblages cannot dissipate what humans alone do and allow to be done within these assemblages, I do not reject Deleuze and Guattari; I acknowledge their insights, recognizing that they describe at once a world of utopian promise freed from essentialist fantasies, and the world’s actual shifting multiplicity. But I concentrate on animal instrumentality, which sustains the category of the human. Thus, for the majority of this book I concentrate on anthropocentric resistances or refusals to acknowledge the combinatory patterns tracked by Deleuze and Guattari, or, to put it more directly, I focus on the violence against animals through which humans attempt to claim a unique, oppositional identity for themselves.

\textsuperscript{46} For further discussion of animals and resurrection, as well as the anxieties and joys of anthropophagy, see my third chapter.

\textsuperscript{47} Objections to my distinction might be raised by pointing to the (unreliable) historical witness of Richard Fitzneale, \textit{Dialogus de Scaccario and Constitutio Domus Regis}, ed. and trans. Emilie Amt and S. D. Church (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), I.x, 81–85; however, for reassessment of the history and meaning of the murder fine, which displaces its origin from “French” and English postconquest relations to the time of Cnut (or, indeed, to the time of King Ine of Wessex), see Bruce R. O’Brien, “From Morðor to Murdrum: The Preconquest Origin and Norman Revival of the Murder Fine,” \textit{Speculum} 71 (1996): 321–57; Alan Cooper, “Extraordinary Privilege: The Trial of Penenden Heath and the Domesday Inquest,” \textit{The English Historical Review} 116 (2001): 1180–81; and Stefan Jurasinski, “Reddatur Parentibus: The Vengeance of the Family in Cnut’s Homicide Legislation,” \textit{Law and History Review} 20 (2002): 157–80. More to my point, see L. J. Downer, ed. and trans., \textit{Leges Henrici primi} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), which weighs differently the deaths of “Franci” and foreigners, slaves, and English; all such deaths, however, still count as homicide committed against a being of unique individual value; the laws consider animals only as unindividuated property whose injury or death can be undone with a simple substitution, as at 281, “If anyone drives someone else’s animals against their will into an enclosure or some kind of hazard, and they are there killed or injured, he shall provide similar ones in return, or he shall swear an oath with six supporters that he did not do this.”

This book implicitly asks Foucauldian questions such as “how are animals constituted as objects of our knowledge? How are we constituted as subjects in relation to our knowledge of animals? Does our discourse about animals relate to our construction of ourselves as human subjects?” The book is indebted to Foucault in its attempt to interrupt, historicize, and re-open the supposed givenness of the “natural” categories of human and animal. It will not, however, engage in a Foucauldian analysis of power dynamics between humans and animals. As Foucault explained, a relationship of power acts upon acts themselves, whereas violence “acts upon a body or upon things; it forces, it breaks on the wheel, it destroys, or it closes the door on all possibilities.” Power relationships cannot “exist without points of insubordination which, by definition, are means of escape,” whereas a relationship of violence may act against beings unable to resist. In essence, my concern is not with dressage, nor with the perspectives and modes of resistance of the animals themselves. My concern is with human acts against animals and with human attitudes towards their own and animal acts: not power, then, but capacities, which, in Foucault’s terminology, modify, use, consume, or destroy things. By no means, however, would a Foucauldian study of constitutive relationships between animals and humans be unwelcome.

I have allowed myself to be guided in my consideration of violence by


51. Ibid., 215.

52. Palmer, “Foucault, Power, and Animal/Human Relationships,” concludes with a model for such a study in its examination of the existence and experiences of a male Russian Blue cat named Yuri, bred to have a particular shape and color and to be tractable, capable of entering into a power relationship with its human master when it reaches maturity and begins marking its territory, and finally expelled from that relationship when it is inevitably castrated, abandoned, and/or euthanized. More recently, Sara Rinfret, “Controlling Animals: Power, Foucault, and Species Management,” *Society and Natural Resources* 22 (2009): 571–78, considers how the American protection of threatened wild species produces these species as docile, available for tourists, and anything but “wild,” an approach that would lend itself easily to studies of the animals of medieval hunting preserves. Another Foucauldian approach to power and animals might originate in his explanation, “There are three types of struggles: either against forms of domination (ethnic, social and religious); against forms of exploitation which separate individuals from what they produce; or against that which ties the individual to himself and submits him to others in this way (struggles against subjection, against forms of subjectivity and submission)” (“The Subject and Power,” 212). The animal could be understood to resist being reduced to being an animal; to resist having the product of its labor appropriated (one imagines a hunting dog absconding with the prey); or to resist being trained, or in fact to resist by training itself to some task or subjectivity independent of the needs of its human master.
a recent study by Slavoj Žižek in which he distinguishes between subjective, objective, and symbolic violence. Subjective violence, violence as it is typically understood, is committed by a “clearly identifiable agent”\textsuperscript{53}—an individual murderer, an anthropophagous pig, and so forth—whose act disturbs the supposedly peaceful relations of the status quo. Objective violence is the systemic and generally unacknowledged violence by which the status quo sustains itself, committed as a constitutive element of the “objective” status quo itself. Finally, symbolic violence is the violence of language, which distinguishes one subject from another (and thus renders a nonnarcissistic relation between subjects possible).\textsuperscript{54} My thinking with Žižek’s terms could, in fact, start with his own work. When he asserts that, because they possess language, “humans exceed animals in their capacity for violence,”\textsuperscript{55} he decides as confidently as any humanist that animals lack language, and, like any humanist, he sustains that difference by ranking human lives above animal lives: through the subjective violence of his own carnivorousness (exemplified by his notorious assertion that vegetarians are “degenerates . . . turn[ing] into monkeys”\textsuperscript{56}); through the objective violence of exercising the privilege of being human in a system that fundamentally values human life more than anything else; and finally through the symbolic violence by which he not only articulates a distinction between subject and world (a necessary activity for any thought capable of acknowledging others as others, for better or worse), but also posits an abyssal difference between animals and humans.\textsuperscript{57} All these violences work in concert to generate the human and the animal.

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54. Žižek uses the word “symbolic” in a Lacanian linguistic sense, not in the Gramscian hegemonic sense of “symbolic violence” described by Pierre Bourdieu (e.g., “the gentle, invisible form of violence, which is never recognized as such, and is not so much undergone as chosen, the violence of credit, confidence, obligation, personal loyalty, hospitality, gifts, gratitude, piety—in short, all the virtues honoured by the code of honour—cannot fail to be seen as the most economical mode of domination, i.e., the mode which best corresponds to the economy of the system,” Pierre Bourdieu, \textit{Outline of a Theory of Practice}, trans. Richard Nice [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977], 192).


57. Žižek is no better than Lacan on animals, e.g., “What distinguishes man from animals is thus again the excessive fixation on the trauma (of the lost object, of the scene of the shattering jouissance, etc.); what sets the dynamism that pertains to the human condition in motion is the very fact that some traumatic X eludes every symbolization” (\textit{The Plague of Fantasies} [London: Verso, 1997], 95; see, more recently, \textit{The Parallax View} [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006], 62–63 and 228).
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My position on the interoperative violences through which humans seek to segregate and sustain themselves as human is akin to the points articulated in the early section of the philosophical note “Man and Beast” in Horkheimer and Adorno’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, where they observe that among the ideas “fundamental to Western anthropology” is that the animal’s “lack of reason is the proof of human dignity,” and that the proof of this dignity relies upon the scientific mutilation of animal bodies during vivisection. However, because Horkheimer and Adorno ultimately do not seek to undo the categories of human and animal, I am by far most indebted to Derrida’s work, which recognizes that “power over the animal is . . . the essence of the human” and that acts of dominating themselves establish the polar categories of human and animal. As he wrote,

> Among nonhumans . . . there is an immense multiplicity of other living things that cannot in any way be homogenized, except by means of violence and willful ignorance, within the category of what is called the animal or animality in general. . . . The confusion of all nonhuman living creatures within the general and common category of the animal is not simply a sin against rigorous thinking, vigilance, lucidity, or empirical authority; it is also a crime.

This crime, “carnophallogocentrism,” subsumes any nonhuman animal

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58. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 203–4; “Man and Beast” mars its treatment of the animal by believing animals possess a kind of pre-Enlightenment thought now lost to humans, e.g., at 205, “The world of animals is without concepts. There is no word to hold fast the identical in the flux of phenomena, the same genus in the succession of specimens, the same thing in changing situations.” Their approach to the animal, then, has much in common with Lacan’s idea that animals “lack the lack.”

59. Derrida, *Animal that Therefore*, 93. Derrida began this line of critique at least as early as *Of Spirit*, 57, where he remarks that Heidegger posits, almost despite himself, a dialectical relationship between humans and animals, and, still earlier, in *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), which appeared in French in 1980; at 474 n51, Derrida writes “this discourse on the animal (in general) is no doubt consistent with all the categories and oppositions, all the bi- and tri-partitions of the system. And it condenses no less the system’s greatest obscurity. The treatment of animality, as of everything that finds itself in submission by virtue of a hierarchical opposition, has always, in the history of humanist and phallogocentric metaphysics, revealed obscurantist resistance. It is obviously of capital interest” (original emphasis). For a fuller survey of Derrida’s engagement with the animal, see Matthew Chrulew, “Feline Divinanimality: Derrida and the Discourse of Species in Genesis,” *The Bible and Critical Theory* 2.2 (2006): 18.1–18.22, and Calarco, *Zoographies*, 103–49.


61. For “carnophallogocentrism,” see ibid., 104.
into a monolithic category lacking whatever quality or qualities humanism considers essential and unique to humans, “speech or reason, the logos, history, laughing, mourning, burial, the gift, and so on”; for medieval Christianity, the “so on” includes, especially, the immortal soul and the resurrectable body, destined for eternity together. Because carnophallogocentrism traverses “the whole history of humanity,” the question of the animal “represents the limit upon which all the great questions are formed and determined, as well as all the concepts that attempt to delimit what is ‘proper to man,’ the essence and future of humanity, ethics, politics, law, ‘human rights,’ ‘crimes against humanity,’ ‘genocide,’ etc.”

The punning title—L’animal que donc je suis (The Animal that Therefore I Am/Follow)—of a posthumous collection devoted to the animal question presents his argument in miniature. Revising Descartes’ cogito, Derrida argues that humans are in all senses of the words before and after animals. They discover themselves not in isolation before a world they apprehend through (or doubt in) their private thoughts, but by repeatedly enacting domination against “animals”; through such acts, humans retroactively claim the category of the human for themselves, and consign all other species to animality, without, however, being able to escape their own animality. The inability itself requires the repetition of the violence by which the human seeks to “catch up” to itself.

To counter carnophallogocentrism, Derrida asks that we hear, instead of the general term les animaux (animals), the neologism “l’animot,” the “animals-animalword,” which puns on the homonymic presence of “mot” (word) in the “maux”-ending of the French plural, and whose jarring solecism of a singular pronoun used with a plural-sounding word aims at least to discomfit humans by reminding them of the crime of creating the homogeneous category “animal.” Through Derrida’s coinage, animals might be understood, as Matthew Calarco glossed the term, “in their plural singularity rather than their generality.”

This would frustrate the operations of carnophallogocentrism by, among other things, transforming the simple binary of human and animal into an a- (rather than anthropo-) centric network of relations in which humans would be one node among many. Thus, although I have claimed and will claim throughout this book that the human is an effect rather than a cause of its domination of animals; that the human cannot abandon the subjugation of the animal without abandoning itself; and that the human can therefore be said not to exist except in its action of domination,

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62. Ibid., 5.
63. Ibid., 14.
65. Calarco, Zoographies, 144.
this does not mean I am denying the existence of humans; furthermore, like Derrida, I resist “biologistic continuism,”66 which effaces the differences between all animals, including those between all humans. My objection is not with species per se, not with “dogs,” or “apes,” or “humans,” but with the word “animals,” especially when “an animal” is understood as existing (rather than as being produced) in opposition to “a human.”67 A further note on terminology is required. Throughout, I tend to use “humans” instead of the pronominal categories such as “we” or “us,” because these pronouns present humanness as a fait accompli and obscure the mechanisms by which humans depersonalize animals. With Nicola Masciandaro, I ask:

We who? We is a person immunizing themselves against this stupidity [of being, of individuation], someone hiding the senselessness of we inside its own repetition. Usually the human we (human as we), or some subset collectivizing itself as universal. (original emphasis)68

Throughout, I have endeavored to use the term “humans” to mean human animals, members of a particular species among other animals; “the human” to mean both the fantasy of human particularity (as linguistic, rational, ensouled, etc.) and also the practical and intellectual systems that aim to sustain this fantasy; and “the animal” to mean the fantasy necessarily conjunctive to that of “the human,” as “the human” sustains itself by generating the category “the animal.”69 In this book, where I have used the general term “animals,” and where it is clear that I am not speaking of the fantasized homogeneous group of creatures distinguished from “the human,” I follow Derrida in asking that I be understood as referring to animals in their “plural

66. Derrida, Animal that Therefore, 30.
67. Ibid., 41.
69. Laurie Shannon, “The Eight Animals in Shakespeare; or, Before the Human,” PMLA 124 (2009): 472–79, relying on the OED, claims that the general term “animal” “hardly appears in English before the end of the sixteenth century”; Middle English does tend to use “beste” for nonhuman (terrestrial) animals, and “animal” for anything possessing a soul. But in medieval Britain, English was of course not the only nor even necessarily the dominant language. While Latin tends to use brutum, fera, and pecus for nonhuman animals and “animal” for living things in general, it sometimes distinguishes “animal” from “homo,” for example, in grammatical treatises, which contrast the inarticulate “vox animalium,” such as neighing or mooing, to the articulate, linguistic “vox hominum”: see Thomas of Cantimpré, discussed in the next chapter, or the several examples presented in Christopher Cannon, The Grounds of English Literature (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 116–19; see also the Anglo-Norman Dictionary, s.v., “aumaille” (available at The Anglo-Norman On-Line Hub, http://www.anglo-norman.net/), where references to nonhuman animals predominate.
singularity”;70 readers are also encouraged to change the relative pronouns “that” or “which” to “who” or “whom” whenever they wish.71

The chapters that follow make and elaborate on the consequences of the following points: the human tries to distinguish itself from other animals by laying claim to the sole possession of reflective language, reason, culture, and above all an immortal soul and resurrectable body; it lays claim to these qualities for itself, and itself only, through acts of violence against others that, by routinely suffering this violence, are designated “animal”; because the category of the human is a retroactive and relative effect of the action of domination, no such human can do without the domination of animals without abandoning itself. Beliefs about the human and animal remain largely consistent throughout the texts and practices I examine; nor did dominant thought and practices ever discourage or condemn the human consumption of animals and other forms of animal exploitation, much less argue that humans should reciprocally offer themselves up to animals. The Middle Ages of this book therefore functions synchronically. Indeed, medieval Christianity’s doctrinal justifications for the human domination of ani-

70. In these arguments, my debt to Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (New York: Routledge, 1990), 25, should be obvious: “gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed.” I am also guided by Donna Haraway, When Species Meet, 25–26, where she writes that “relationships are the smallest possible patterns for analysis.” For an early appraisal of the role of “othering” animals in human self-definition, see Esther Cohen, “Animals in Medieval Perceptions: The Image of the Ubiquitous Other,” in Animals in Human Society: Changing Perspectives, ed. Aubrey Manning and James Serpell (New York: Routledge, 1994), 76. Other critics of the human have made similar points: as part of her observation that Early Modern considerations of reason always reference animal irrationality, Fudge, Brutal Reasoning, 36, argues, “In a world without animals, humans would not only lose companions, workers, sources of food, clothing, and so on; they would lose themselves”; Kelly Oliver’s engagement with Agamben’s The Open in Animal Lessons, 233, suggests that “we could say that the notion of the human acts as a transcendental signifier produced through the various and multifarious instances of its own failure. The truly human is an empty ideal produced through the continual disavowal of the failure of homo sapiens to escape its animality. The so-called abyss between man and animal is produced by abjecting animality from the concept of humanity”; and Carol J. Adams, “The War on Compassion,” in Donovan and Adams, Feminist Care Tradition, 22, observes that “human and animal are definitions that exist in tandem, each drawing its power from the other in a drama of circumscribing: the animal defining the human, the human defining the animal” (original emphasis). See also Carol J. Adams, The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory (New York: Continuum, 1990); Fiddes, Meat; and Julia Twigg, “Food for Thought: Purity and Vegetarianism,” Religion 9 (1979): 13–35.

71. Analysis of “who” can be found in Gaëtanelle Gilquin and George M. Jacobs, “Elephants Who Marry Mice Are Very Unusual: The Use of the Relative Pronoun Who with Nonhuman Animals,” Society & Animals 14 (2006): 79–105, which observes that “Changes in language . . . are not enough, because—as we have seen—the use of (who) with nonhuman animals does not necessarily reflect a positive attitude toward them” (99).
mals, based on arguments for the linguistic, rational, and ethical particularity of humans, can still be heard today, a persistent medieval voice despite the insights of evolutionary biology and modern ethology (yet, as I occasionally point out, some medieval works provide a more generous vision of being in the world than that offered by the dominant strains of either medieval Christianity or modern humanism). My broad claims require that I treat a broad variety of texts, sometimes at a gallop, including legal, doctrinal, and scientific literature, chivalric narrative, hymns, hagiography, and parody, primarily works written in English, French, and Latin, ranging from the early centuries of Christianity to the fifteenth century. I have focused on the Christian Middle Ages, specifically Western Christianity, leaving for future projects and for other scholars considerations of the operations of the human and animal in heterodox Christianities as well as in Islam, Judaism, and other religious systems and their rituals. My study continues to bear the mark of its inception, an abandoned dissertation on meat-eating in the Middle Ages. I have therefore been concerned from the very beginning with human violence against animals, broadening my research to inquire how and why humans make animals available to themselves for guiltless slaughter. My ongoing interest in medieval practices and thought concerning the violence inflicted on actual animals accounts for the absence of attention to the usual subjects of medievalist animal studies: there is nothing in here on the Reynard tradition or beast epics more generally, whether Ecbasis Captivi, Ysengrimus, or the Speculum Stultorum; little to nothing on fables, nor, for that matter, on Ramon Llull’s Book of Beasts or Chaucer’s Nun’s Priest’s Tale; nor is there any sustained attention to bestiaries or avian debates such as Chaucer’s Parlement of Foules. The inception of the project as a work on meat-eating also accounts for the relative lack of attention to animalized humans, appearing in, among many other works, Alcuin of York’s “Lament

72. Some such studies already exist: for example, Elijah Judah Schochet, Animal Life in Jewish Tradition: Attitudes and Relationships (New York: Ktav, 1984); and Richard Foltz, Animals in Islamic Tradition and Muslim Cultures (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), particularly 11–84, which discusses, among other things, the implications in the Qur’an that animals each have their own language and even prophets; injunctions against cruelty to animals in various hadith; a ninth-century poet, Qasim Yufus ibn Qasim, known for his “elegies to birds, cats, and goats” (67); and the extraordinary Case of the Animals versus Man before the King of Jinns, a product of the “Pure Brethren” of tenth-century Basra, in which animals argue against the cruelty of the “Adamites.” One of their works was adapted by a late medieval Catalan friar who converted to Islam: Anselm Turmeda, Dispute de L’Âne, ed. A. Llinares (Paris: Vrin, 1984) has a human and donkey argue over the relative honor of humans or animals; the human wins the argument by pointing out that God chose to incarnate in a human rather than animal body.

73. For a recent study of many of these works, see Jill Mann, From Aesop to Reynard: Beast Literature in Medieval Britain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
for a Cuckoo,” in which the author imagines a drunkard disciple as a dead bird;\textsuperscript{74} the humiliation of the *beani*, first-year university students, initiated into academic life by a ritual sheering of their hats’ goatish horns;\textsuperscript{75} the many genres presented in Jan Ziolkowski’s *Talking Animals: Medieval Latin Beast Poetry*;\textsuperscript{76} or, for that matter, any number of literary dreams in which humans appear as animals.

Matt Cartmill’s *A View to a Death in the Morning* considers the attraction of the now discredited paleoanthropological hunting hypothesis, which claimed that uniquely human traits evolved because Australopithecines forsook a cringing existence in the forests to take up hunting on the plains. Adherents of the hypothesis embraced it for various reasons—to justify violence as the most fundamental human trait, to mourn the human separation from the community of animals, to reinforce postwar expectations of the coming nuclear eschaton—but they all understood that violence made the human, for good or for ill.\textsuperscript{77} I argue that a version of the hunting hypothesis was prevalent in the Middle Ages. When Henry II denied other humans the right to hunt—that is, the right to dominate animals—he stripped them of the full possession of their humanity, confining them, as it were, to the trees with the other animals.

For this crime against the human, Adam of Eynsham made Henry suffer, turning Henry’s own horse—his own dominated animal, the animal almost requisite for personal, public display of nobility—into the primary agent of Henry’s suffering. What could have saved Henry from such a fate? What, but the deaths of animals?

**Overview of Chapters**

The book begins by discussing how the very arbitrariness by which humans distinguished their souls and bodies from those of animals supported their claims of human distinctiveness; next, human attempts to delegitimize animals’ independent violence; next, the ways that human violence entangled


immortal humans with mortal animals; then, having established the rules and problems of human violence against animals, I proceed to the embarrassment about this violence in works concerned with marginal human cases of monsters and ascetics; and finally, to the bloody relationship of butchers and pigs, the most human of humans and most animal of animals. This pessimistic narrative about the human finishes more hopefully in the epilogue, which attempts to imagine a less violent way for humans to be with others.

The first chapter, “How to Make a Human,” establishes my foundational arguments. Through an examination of several medieval encyclopedias and key doctrinal texts of medieval Christianity, I argue for the centrality of the domination of animals to the dynamic and inessential structure of the human. I concentrate first on the fifteenth-century Middle English catechetical verse encyclopedia *Sidrak and Bokkus*, which bases its claim for human uniqueness on animal degradation. In *Sidrak’s* tautological arguments, as in Augustine’s *On Free Will* and many other medieval works, reason allows humans to dominate irrational animals, and the proof of animal irrationality is their domination by humans. Human domination of what it calls animal thus produces the ideal categories of both human and animal, each with its constitutive mental and spiritual characteristics: on the one side, an immortal, reasonable soul, language, laughter, and so forth, and on the other, a mortal, irrational animal soul that enables only instinctual action. I then examine a textual tradition concerned with human and animal bodies. The tradition presents the stereotypical human form—upright, bipedal, manifesting no disabilities—as both the incarnation and the enabler of uniquely human mental and spiritual traits: humans can gaze upon the heavens and consider divinity, whereas animals, being prone to the ground, can think only about their food. Peasants, upright but living like beasts; monkeys, upright but animal; and humanoid monsters—these all challenge the tradition, which finally violates its equation of bipedality and reason by asserting that animals, as such, are irrational regardless of their shape. The assertion reveals that the claim for the inherent rationality of the bipedal body is, at its core, yet another instance of human domination of animals: bodily form matters not so much as the dominating act of categorization, an act most evident when it is most arbitrary.

The second chapter, “Mastering Violence,” examines the human monopolization of violence, the fundamental tool of domination. Through a combination of doctrine, narrative, and other practices, humans subjugated animals to human violence while delegitimizing their self-defense or -determination. Whether in hunting or hagiographic narrative, any independently violent animal that humans encountered would end up domesticated or dead. Such attitudes towards animal violence account for a peculiar feature of the
penitentials, clerical handbooks on Christian behavior written between the sixth and twelfth centuries. Nearly every penitential prohibited Christians from eating animals that had been killed by other animals, defining this meat as *morticinum*, carrion. I focus on a set of ninth-century works that provide virtually the only medieval justification of this prohibition: humans should not eat meat from animals they have not killed. The longest of these works, a letter to a German king, amends the prohibition to allow humans to eat the flesh of animals killed by hunting dogs under human control. As it explains, the hunting dog is no more responsible for killing an animal than a pen is responsible for writing a charter. Carrion should be understood as “pollution,” in Mary Douglas’s sense of pollution as a category scandal. To repair the scandal of independent animal violence, humans, or at least elite humans, did not simply discard carrion but rather distributed it to various kinds of outsiders: the poor, lepers, “bestial men,” and certain domestic animals. Through this action, elites undid the illicit violence of animal carnivorousness by simultaneously regaining control of the meat and showing their contempt for both the meat and the animal violence that produced it.

“In and Out of Mortal Flesh,” the third chapter, turns from the human control of carnivorous violence to the differentiation of human flesh from that of animals and to the ways that humans rendered the objective violence of the human status quo invisible. It begins by considering the exclusion of animals from hopes promised by most Christian resurrection doctrine. As Aquinas explained, there would be no animals in the afterlife, since humans would no longer need to eat them. He is but one of several medieval thinkers who characterized animal life as anthropocentric: Paulinus of Nola considers a cow that willingly offered itself up to sacrifice at Felix’s shrine, and Heinemann of Bonn pigs that refused to desecrate the Eucharist by eating it. Paulinus and Heinemann, writing at either end of the Middle Ages, insist that these animals should be understood only as reminders to humans of properly virtuous human behavior. Humans treat animals most instrumentally when they kill and eat them. Though this act distinguishes humans from animals, several Christian scholars worried that meat-eating also contaminated human with animal bodies. The violence of the human structure seems to turn against itself: humans intermingled with animals might become, like animals, unable to resurrect, or they might resurrect into bodies now eternally conjoined to those of animals. Similarly, scholars worried that humans eaten by animals might also be unable to resurrect. To neutralize worries about the loss of human bodily integrity and the resulting loss of human selfhood, mainstream medieval Christian resurrection doctrine declared that anthropophagous animals’ digestion had no long-term effect on the human bodies they ate, while human digestion either did not assimilate any food
to the “truth of human nature,” the only aspect that would resurrect, or it assimilated food so thoroughly that it became resurrectable human flesh. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of medieval anthropophagy texts. Humans defended themselves from anthropophagy in three ways: most simply by forbidding it; and by telling stories about it and not about the consumption of animals, which marks human lives as singularly worthy of commemoration; and finally by alimentary “interpassivity” (Žižek’s term for “enjoying through the other”), through which humans convinced themselves of their own superiority by imagining the intense desires their particularly delicious flesh provoked in others.

The fourth chapter, “Domesticating Beasts: Cynocephali, The Wild Herdsman, and Prudentius’s Indomitable Sheep,” examines marginal cases concerned with monsters and ascetics. All these works advocate the necessity of animal subjugation, but at the same time characterize those who engage in routine violence against animals as bestial. This maneuver enables the human simultaneously to recognize the necessity of domination to itself and yet to conceal the contingency of its claims to essential selfhood. Ratramnus of Corbie’s ninth-century letter on cynocephali, dog-headed people, and Chrétien de Troyes’ portrayal of the Wild Herdsman in Yvain each determine that their monstrous characters must be human, because they domesticate animals; yet Ratramnus insists that the cynocephali dominate their animals gently, whereas Chrétien portrays the Herdsman’s violence as bestial and sordid compared with the technological and honorable violence of his knights. The two works participate in a tradition of warnings that cautions against human cruelty to animals, not out of consideration for the animals, but so that humans inured to slaughtering animals might not endanger other humans. These and several other medieval texts profess sympathy for animals without recommending that humans renounce the domination through which humans sustain their sense of difference from animals. The chapter’s final section, on the “Ante Cibum” of the foundational Christian poet Prudentius, considers a similar deflection, this one concerned not with humans apparently too bestial but rather those too reluctant to exercise their domination over animals. “Ante Cibum” praises God for the gift of Creation to humans and humans for their ingenuity in hunting animals, but then characterizes a carnivorous diet as barbarous and inimical to the church. However, by imagining its ascetics as regal doves and sheep tyrannically subjugating animal carnivores, Prudentius preserves his status and that of his fellows as the most dominant of worldly creatures even while pretending not to be sullied by the implications of how he maintains his dominance.

“Pigs, Butchers, and The Ends of Humanity,” the penultimate chapter, concentrates on pigs and butchers. In a human system that produces the ani-
mal by dominating what it calls animal, pigs might be thought the emblematic animal: though humans raise them only to kill and eat them, pigs must be killed to be reduced to being merely animals, because they resemble humans so closely in their behavior, appetite, and internal anatomy. I examine Chaucer’s “The Former Age,” an anti-Muslim tale in which pigs kill and eat Mohamed, and an antisemitic tale in which the young Jesus transforms Jews into pigs, all of which imply that people who refuse to dominate animals properly, especially pigs, might as well be pigs. I explore the dynamics of the human domination of pigs in detail through the fifteenth-century Middle English chivalric narrative, *The Avowyng of Arthur*, which features an anthropophagous, butchering, and knightlike boar. In the tale, a huntsman’s inability to dominate the boar exposes him to being butchered like a boar himself, and even Arthur can distinguish himself from the boar, and imperfectly at that, only when he finally kills and dismembers it. I then examine butchery narratives and practices: the *Testamentum Porcelli*, a fourth-century parody popular in the Middle Ages, in which a butcher grants a pig time to dictate its last testament; Anglo-Norman and Middle English versions of a story in which Saint Nicholas resurrects three scholars killed, dismembered, and cooked as pork pies by a butcher; and finally the butchery legislation of late medieval London, which sought to conceal the trade and its waste products, and thus to conceal the contingency of being human. All these works and practices overtly articulate an anxiety that the other works I examine admit only reluctantly and indirectly: that without being recognized as human, without, at least, escaping the knife, the human is but an animal.

Having illustrated the dominant logic of human supremacy in the Middle Ages, my epilogue considers cases in medieval literature that offer more generous, less anthropocentric modes of being with others. I begin with the tradition of the fifteen signs of the Last Judgment, which sometimes evidences concern for the grief of the animals at the very moment when humans and God abandon them to their utter destruction; then a peasant’s hospitality for his oxen in an incident recounted by Paulinus of Nola; a ninth-century saint’s life in which a horse is buried as though it were a human; and finally *Sir Gowther*, a fourteenth-century Middle English chivalric narrative, which, in a moment of astonishing tenderness between a human and a charitable greyhound, temporarily dissolves the categories of human and animal. Inspired by the openness to nonanthropocentric considerations in these episodes, and by Haraway’s critique of identity, Ralph Acampora’s phenomenological notion of “symphysis,” and the ethical work of Leonard Lawlor and Derrida, I conclude by imagining how humans might cease to project, and to defend, their selves against other animals.
“Rabbits Bunnies
Pets or Meat
For Sale”
—Sign by Rhonda Britton in Roger & Me

Hospitality is the deconstruction of the at-home; deconstruction is hospitality to the other, to the other than oneself, the other than ‘its other,’ to an other who is beyond any “its other.”
—Jacques Derrida, “Hostipitality.”

I.
The Noise of Animals in the Last Days

Up to this point, I have argued that the relationship of humans to animals is irreducibly, necessarily violent. But where was the violence when Edward I of England sent his sick falcons on pilgrimage? In the wax images of animals left at Exeter cathedral as offerings pleading for the miraculous cure

3. See Robin S. Oggins, “Falconry and Medieval Views of Nature,” in Joyce E. Salisbury, ed., The Medieval World of Nature: A Book of Essays (New York: Garland, 1993), 50. For many more instances of raptors as recipients of prayers, including those in which a specially prepared coin was bent over the bird’s head, follow the references listed in Benjamin Byerly and Catherine Ridder Byerly, eds., Records of the Wardrobe and Household, 1285–1286 (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1977), xxxix n9, for example, 232, item #2239, “Eidem pro oblacione ad feretrum Sancti Thome Cant’ pro eodem girfalcone, iiiij d.”
of horses? 4 In the promise of an offering made to Saint Thomas Cantilupe if he cured a pet dormouse? 5 In the many medieval encomia for dogs? Thierry (or Théodorich), an eleventh-century abbot of St. Trond, laments that he can offer no memorial besides a poem for the dog Pitulus, which inspired love in all who met it—"Quisquis te vidit, quisquis te novit, amavit" (Whoever saw you, whoever knew you, loved you; 29)—and whose only "officium" (purpose) was "domino praeludere" (to play before its master; 17): Pitulus no longer occupies the purely instrumental existence to which humans typically relegated animals. 6 Since I have argued that humans knew themselves as human by esteeming humans as more valuable than animals, what should I do about Robert de Clinton’s horse, ransomed in 1360 for 13s. 4d. more than Chaucer? 7 Or the story of Lancelot, whose patience under his tutor’s blows turns to rage when the tutor beats Lancelot’s hunting dog; or the stories of the knights who, having had their horses cut out from under them, wish that they had been killed instead? 8

But violence nonetheless operates in these cases, not against the single cherished animal, but against all the rest. None of these special relationships demand that humans abandon their superiority to animals in general; none demand that humans allow themselves to become as vulnerable before animals as animals are before them; none calls for a general reverence for or reexamination of what constitutes life, human and nonhuman alike. Thierry wonders at his love for his dog, and justifies it by other literary animal epitaphs, but he never utilizes his critical engagement with burial rites to critique human particularity. Other beloved animals, such as Edward’s falcons and Lancelot’s dogs, helped their masters hunt and kill, as if to affirm the singularity of these bonds between human and particular animals. Similarly, when Alexander’s horse died, Alexander “made grete dole for hym and weped for hym riȝt sare” (mourned greatly and wept sorely for him), then had an enormous tomb erected for the horse, around which he built a city “þe whilke in mynde of his horse he gart call Buktyphalas” (which, recall-

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4. For these images, found on a ledge over the tomb of the fifteenth-century Bishop Edmund Lacey, see Ursula M. Radford, “The Wax Images Found in Exeter Cathedral,” The Antiquaries Journal 29 (1949): Plate XX.


ing his horse, he called Bucephalus); but Alexander’s love for Bucephalus did nothing to dull his enthusiasm for killing humans, monsters, and other animals. Cherished animals such as these, which their human masters would have refused to eat, which were used to harm other animals and other humans, and for which humans might even have sacrificed themselves, are examples of the operations of what Jonathan Elmer and Cary Wolfe calls “the logic of the pet,” which singles out a beloved one among animals as “the sole exception, the individual who is exempted from the slaughter in order to vindicate, with exquisite bad faith, a sacrificial structure.”

Consider Gawain’s horse Grissell, beheaded in the *Awyntyrs of Arthur*. Gawain mourns it to the point of madness, while explaining, “But for doel of the dombe best that thus shuld be dede, / I mourne for no montur, for I may gete mare” (except for sorrow over the mute beast that died in such a way, I’ll mourn for no mount, since I can get more; 554–55). One horse, but only one, merits vengeance, sorrow, and love, while Gawain consigns other animals to the indignity of being just beasts. Encompassed within a slightly more expansive “humanism,” promoted (to recall Butler) from nonlife to grievable life, the pet cannot dislodge carnalphylogencentrisch, or dissolve the categories of either human or animal. On the contrary: pets strengthen carnalphylogencentrisch by mystifying its exclusionary operations.

The logic of the pet is nowhere more obvious than in the lack of protection for other animals of the same species as the one beloved pet. Few medieval stories describe animal-human partnerships as devoted and intimate as that between the horse Bonus Amicus and the Catalonian knight Guiraut

9. John Stephen Westlake, ed., *The Prose Life of Alexander*, EETS o. s. 143 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1913), 9 and 107. The horse, given as a gift to Philip, Alexander’s father, is kept behind iron bars in a stable. Philip confines “thefeȝ and oþer mysdo-ers” (thieves and other criminals) with the horse, and, when Alexander discovers it, he “saw, bifoře þe horse, mens hend and fete, & oþer of þaire membris, liggand scattered here & thare” (saw, in front of the horse, men’s hands and feet and other members lying scattered here and there). These elements of the Bucephalus story date to some of the earliest recorded versions of the Alexander romance, e.g., Julius Valerius’s fourth-century Latin translation from the Greek, Bernard Kübler, ed., *Iuli Valeri Alexandri Polemi Res Gestae Alexandri Macedonis* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1888), 14, “sed est ei vitium beluile, namque homines edit et in huiuscemodi pabulum saevit”; at 19, Alexander hears it neighing, and is unsure whether he hears a horse or a lion (“hinnitusne aures meas an vero rugitus aliquis leoninus offendit?”). The horse submits to Alexander by extending its forehooves and making conciliatory gestures (“Nam et pedes priores extenderat et gesticulam mansuetudinis luserat et supplici quodam motu blanditus est”), and all wonder at the gentleness of this beast once accustomed to eating men (“edendi homines”). For a survey of the traditions of the horse and an attempt to arrive at their historical “core,” see Andrew Runni Anderson, “Bucephalas and His Legend,” *The American Journal of Philology* 51 (1930): 1–21.


11. Hahn, *Gawain*. 
de Cabrera, described in Gervase of Tilbury’s early-thirteenth-century *Otia Imperialia*. Apart from Bonus Amicus’s superlative skill as a warhorse, it was also able to use sign language to offer Giraut “sound advice in any distress.” After Guiraut was murdered, Bonus Amicus proved its great love and grief for Guiraut by “an awesome and wretched death,” a suicide effected “by dashing its neck against the wall.”

But Gervase also tells a few stories of nameless horses eaten by their human masters. In the first, a knight embarrassed by a bare larder on Mardi Gras has his steward slaughter his best horse and serve it to his guests under the guise of beef. God ensures that the knight does not suffer for his generosity or his piety, for, miraculously, the knight’s unsuspecting squire later finds the same horse alive and well in the barn when he goes to tend to it. Gervase describes two other knights caught unprepared for feasts, one again for Mardi Gras, the other for Easter. Both also solve their problems by secretly serving their guests horse: the former then receives a new horse from his lord; the latter does not. While Gervase’s narrative emphasizes miracles, Christian banqueting customs, and the expectations of hospitality and mutual support between knights, lords, and guests, it is also clear that he expects hippophagy—but not human carnivorousness in general—to be understood as peculiar, even distasteful. This is as far as he goes. Given the bonds between Guiraut and Bonus Amicus, Gervase might have presented hippophagy as a Thrystian feast. Instead, for Gervase, the consumption of horses is not a horror, but only an act of desperation, as at the sieges of Carham in Wark in 1138 and of Rochester in 1215, or at the siege of Acre in the romance *Richard Coer de Lyon*, or at the badly planned holidays in the *Otia Imperialia*. In all these cases, love for horses, like that for any animal, finally gives way to human self-love.

Nor were pets or other beloved animals released from their anthropocentric orbits. Notably, the animals I cited above are remembered not in themselves, nor for their relationships with other animals, but only for their relationships with humans. These relationships sometimes do attest to the nobility of the animals, as with Bonus Amicus, but this nobility in turn honors the humans, who are the stories’ true heroes. Certainly, to the degree that love for pets establishes a relationship between human and animal that is not strictly utilitarian, it suggests a model for humans to be with animals in which humans no longer consign animals to being objects available for manipulation by human subjects. Love has yet another lesson, however, if read in light of Žižek’s work on the uncrossable gap between the lover and the beloved, how “finding oneself in the position of the beloved

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is . . . violent, even traumatic: being loved makes me tangibly aware of the gap between what I am as a determinate being and the unfathomable X in me which stimulates love.”

Žižek writes from the perspective of the subject subjected to the love of the other, but his point should also remind lovers that the beloved possesses an inaccessible surplus of subjecthood, an “unfathomable X,” inaccessible to either beloved or lover. This is as true for the human love of animals as for the love of other humans: however much the owner loves the pet, there remains an unfathomable, inexhaustible selfhood in the pet exceeding the bounds of ownership. The very insatiability and constitutive incompleteness of love attests to the nonanthropocentric particularity of animal existence, and should attest to this incompleteness not as love’s frustration but as its possibility. There is always something more.

At least one medieval literary tradition engages directly with the inaccessible plenitude of animal subjecthood by acknowledging that neither human love nor need can fully comprehend animal existence. This tradition, the Fifteen Signs of the Last Judgment, was enormously popular; more than 180 Latin examples survive, as do versions in English, French, German, Armenian, Spanish, Hebrew, and Old Frisian, among other vernaculars. William Heist’s landmark study sorted the examples of the tradition into groups—the Damian, pseudo-Bede, Comestor, Anglo-Norman, and Voragine—according to the sequence of the events they narrate, among other criteria, and traced them to several wellsprings: Ezekiel 38:20, 2 Esdras, and the Irish Saltair na Rann, which expands on the eschatological list of the Apocalypse of Thomas. Whatever the differences between the groups, all describe the


15. My concentration on animals does not mean I am implicitly asserting the exhaustibility of other kinds of things, whether stones, stars, or even ideas; for a rich reading of such things, see Harman, *Prince of Networks*.


17. See 2 Esdras [4 Ezra] 4–7: “But if the most High grant thee to live, thou shalt see after the third trumpet that the sun shall suddenly shine again in the night, and the moon thrice in the day. And blood shall drop out of wood, and the stone shall give his voice, and the people shall be troubled. And even he shall rule, whom they look not for that dwell upon the earth, and the fowls shall take their flight away together. And the Sodomitish sea shall cast out fish, and make a noise in the night, which many have not known: but they shall all hear the voice thereof”; for a relevant section of the Saltair na Rann, see Heist, *Fifteen Signs*, 4, “beasts, sea monsters will roar; / they will raise harsh cries. / Ugly lamenting, weeping, / wailing without
woes occurring on each of the last fifteen days prior to God’s destruction of the world and his final sorting of humans into the saved and the damned. In these days, all of creation dreads the end: “Tote rien serra en tristesce” (everything will be in sadness; 1102), as the French Le Mystère d’Adam has it.\textsuperscript{18} Stars fall from the sky and “run about the earth like lightning,” stones do battle, humans panic, everyone dies, and then, on the last day, the humans resurrect. The tradition tends to pay particular attention to the reactions of fish and other animals, to how, in their frenzy, they fight each other, and especially to how they cry out to the heavens. In these representative passages from The Golden Legend, “the sea beasts will come out above the surface and will roar to the heavens,” birds will congregate silently, trembling with fear of God’s arrival, and eventually all beasts will gather in the fields, “growling and grunting, not feeding, nor drinking.”\textsuperscript{19}

The system of the human grants animals no reason, no responsibility, and therefore no capacity for either sin or virtue. Only humans will be judged in the last days, while animals, the detritus of a feeble world on the verge of destruction, mourn only because the world itself is dying. Understood in this way, the Fifteen Signs tradition, even in its attention to animals, is as typically anthropocentric as works such as Honorious of Autun’s Elucidarium, discussed in my third chapter, which argues that animal suffering serves no purpose but “to torment man in his soul” by reminding humans of their own sinfulness and how it debilitated the world. So too in several examples of the Fifteen Days: Ava, a twelfth-century German poet of sacred history, explains that “on the twelfth day, the beasts of the field help us lament”;\textsuperscript{20} the Middle

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music—harsh their shrieks— / without joy, without control, / at the four corners of the earth” (Heist trans.); note that the Apocalypse of Thomas has nothing about animals in it but does predict that the abyss “mugebit” (sic; will bellow); see editions in Charles D. Wright, “The Apocalypse of Thomas: Some New Latin Texts and their Significance for the Old English Versions,” in Apocryphal Texts and Traditions in Anglo-Saxon England, ed. Kathryn Powell and Donald G. Scragg (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), 27–64.
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\textsuperscript{18} Aebischer, Le Mystere d’Adam.

\textsuperscript{19} Jacobus de Voragine, Golden Legend, Vol. 1, 8. See also pseudo-Bede, “On the fourth day the fishes and all the sea monsters will both gather together upon the waters and give forth voices and groans, whose meaning no one knows but God” (trans. Heist, Fifteen Signs, 25; for this passage in a modern edition of pseudo-Bede, see Martha Bayless and Michael Lapidge, eds., Collectanea Pseudo-Bedae [Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1998], 178). Note that Aquinas, ST SS q. 73 art. 1, “Whether any signs will precede the Lord’s coming to judgment,” answers yes, lists the fifteen last signs, but then adds, “The signs mentioned by Jerome [a typical ascription] are not asserted by him; he merely says that he found them written in the annals of the Hebrews: and, indeed, they contain very little likelihood.”

English Saint Jeremie’s Fifteen Tokens before Doomsday likewise states, “Alle þe fissches þe þrid day; abouen þe water schull be, / & so reuly a cri ʒiuen; þat all men schullen have fere” (all the fishes on the third day shall be above the water and cry out so piteously that all men shall have fear); and another Middle English work, after first reasserting that animals exist only for human use (“The fyscheys that ther in brede, / That now men take in ther nede” [the fishes that therein breed that men now take for their needs]), explains that “Soche a forewarnyng my þt us teche, / Yf that we couth any skylle, / To take the goode and leve the ylle” (such a forewarning might teach us, if we knew any wisdom, to follow good and shun evil; 163–65). Such nods towards animal grief present animals as meriting only indirect concern, as in Aquinas—or Kant, for that matter: the merely hermeneutic animal inspires humans to ponder their own, rational, particularly human dread at the approach of their awesome Judge. Furthermore, as I observed in my third chapter, mainstream medieval Christian resurrection doctrine implicitly held that only animals could really die; humans would suffer the humiliations of putrefaction, but would pass through death to go on to experience hell or heaven. It is the very notion of “what follows death” that distinguishes human from animal death: humans leap over death’s chasm to experience eternal terror or eventual felicity on the other side; only animals fall in. Since the Fifteen Signs tradition shows both the world’s end and human resurrection, the animal terror in the last days witnesses to human supremacy, as only the animals’ terror is terror before an actual, final end. Animal mourning in the last days can therefore function as yet another theater for human self-knowledge and self-congratulation.

Despite all this co-opting of animal terror, a nonanthropocentric remainder, an “unfathomable X,” nonetheless persists, most evidently in the animals’ voices. The Middle Irish Airdena inna Cóic Lá nDéc ria mBráth states that “no one in the world, save the true, great, mighty God, knows what they say on that day”; the Middle English Castle of Love likewise explains that “wot no mon but God allone / What is the betokenyng / Of the loude cry and geiyng / Thet heo wolleth with loude stevyn / Gevyn and crye up to hevyn”

23. For Aquinas on indirect duties to animals, see my discussions in chapters 1 and 3; for Kant, see his Lectures on Ethics, excerpted in Linzey and Clarke, Animal Rights, 126–27, where Kant writes, for example, “so far as animals are concerned, we have no direct duties. Animals are not self-conscious and are there merely as a means to an end. That end is man.”
(no man but God alone knows what the loud crying and grieving means that they wail with loud voices and cry up to heaven); 25 and John Lydgate’s *Fiftene Toknys Afrom the Doom* says, “The thridde day hernd on mount and pleyn, / Foul, beeste and fyssh, shal tremble in certeyn, / Compleynyng in ther hydous moone / Vp the skyes; this noyse nat maad in veyn, / For what they mene, God shal knowe alloone” (the third day, herds on mountains and plains, fowls, beasts, and fish, shall tremble, complaining with a hideous moan up to the skies; this noise will not be made in vain, as what they mean, God alone shall know; 12–16). 26 Lydgate’s characterization of the “this noyse” as “nat maad in veyn” seems disingenuous or incorrect, even within the immediate context of the poem itself. In the final stanza, Lydgate declares that “all bodyes shal that day aryse” (all bodies shall rise up that day; 84); this is demonstrably untrue: only human bodies rise, and the rest God destroys. In what way could the animals have cried out “nat . . . in veyn,” if Lydgate has excluded animals from those creatures possessing, to recall Judith Butler, “grievable lives,” or if God hears animal cries and still destroys them? 27 But the animals will not have cried out in vain, if we attend


26. Lydgate, *Minor Poems*, 118. For further examples, see, among others, Peter Damian, The Last Days and Antichrist, “The sign of the fourth day: all the monsters and all things that live in the water of the sea will be gathered together upon the sea, roaring and bellowing back and forth as though in contest; and men will not know what they are singing or what they are thinking [quid cantent vel quid cogitent], but only God will know, by whom all live, that His purpose may be fulfilled” (trans. Heist, *Fifteen Signs*, 28); Morris, *Pricke of Conscience*, “þe fierth day, sal swilk a wonder be, / þe mast wondreful fisshes of þe se / Sal com to-gyder and mak swilk romyng / þat it sal be hydus til mans heryng. / Bot what þat romiyng sal signify, / Na man may whit, bot God almyghty (4770–75); and, notable for its Noah’s ark-like enumeration of kinds of animals, “Les Quinze Signes,” edited in Robert Fawtier and Ethel C. Fawtier-Jones, “Notice de Manuscrit French 6 de la John Rylands Library, Manchester,” *Romania* 49 (1923): 340–42, “De totes bestes qui sunt suz le firmament, / Urs, leuns, leparz, dragun et serpent, / Dromedarie, olifant erent a Deu present, / E tuit li oisel del secle i erent ensement, / Sur la mer frunt un grant assemblissement, / Crierunt et braerunt mult angoiissusement. / Qui adunc ert vif mult avera grant turment, / Lur langages ert tels nul n’entendra nent / Hom qui seit el secle fors Deu a qui tut apent.”

27. Note that a few examples refuse the animals the ability to speak: e.g., Aebischer, *Le Mystère d’Adam*, where “trestotes les mues bestes / Vers le ciel torneront lor testes. / A Deu voldront merci crier. / Mês eles ne porront parler” (all the mute beasts turn their heads to heaven. They want to cry out to God, but they cannot speak; 1099–1102); and a Middle English example in Cambridge Univ. Ff.2.38 (edited in Varnhagen, “*Singa ante Judicium*”), which, after emphasizing that fish exist only to be consumed by humans, observes that “The bestys, þat of speche be dombe, / Upward schall ther hedys tombe, / And calle to god on ther wyse, / So sore þen schall þen agrayse, / And wolden crye, yf they couthe, / Yf they myght speke with mouthe” (141–46). In a fifteenth-century preacher’s manual, all things, including animals, cry out in human language, and are therefore understandable to God and humans alike: “all þyngge schall speke þan, / And cry in erthe aftyr þe steuyn off man, / And be-mone
to the incomprehensibility of animal speech, not as a lacuna in the tradition’s explanatory capability, but rather as a gap deliberately left open, a space that has not been stuffed with human meaning. The noisy animals appear in texts written by humans, for humans, in a genre about the end of the world that is primarily a genre about the preliminaries to a specifically human future. Yet the genre represents animals while simultaneously representing the inability of any human representation or understanding to represent animals completely. The representation of the ultimate unfathomability of animals to human understanding breaks sharply with the anthropocentrism of so many medieval intellectual engagements with animals, in which animals often appear for humans as interpretable signs: paradigmatically, in the bestiaries, or in Hexameral commentaries, encyclopedias, or heraldry. In this case, animals appear while simultaneously thwarting the signifying utility humans might seek to derive from them. As I pointed out in chapter 1, medieval linguistic theory considered animal voices to be nonlinguistic: the human voice produces discrete sounds, but the animal produces only confused noise; while human language can be written down, animal noise cannot; the woofing and braying of brutes conveys no meaning except as a reminder to humans of their unique possession of language. The noise of animals in the Last Days contravenes these schema: it is incomprehensible to humans, unscriptable by any hand, but also, at the same time, linguistic, as God understands it as language. It is not mere noise, then, but rather, at least for humans, a foreign tongue. Just before the termination of animal existence, just before humans escape from the world and their reliance on animals for their human selfhood, the animals themselves exclude humans by asserting their possession of selves unavailable to human uses or understanding.

In part, the incomprehensibility of animals’ language to humans testifies to the fundamental incomprehensibility of another’s suffering. Elaine Scarry remarks that “pain enters into our midst as at once something that cannot be denied and that cannot be confirmed. . . . To have pain is to have certainty; to hear about pain is to have doubt.” The subjective core of one’s suffering can be observed or measured only incompletely by others; suffering can be felt and experienced in its fullest sense only by who—or what—feels it. Those outside the sufferer doubt it. This doubt may lead to one certainty, that of the


Cartesian vivisectionist who comes to believe that a dog’s cries are only the cries of a breaking machine, but it may lead to another, the realization that a subject’s suffering is accessible to others only through an act of imagination, and that therefore the subject possesses an ineluctable something unknowable to others. In the Fifteen Signs tradition, animals cry out, suffering, but no one can know fully what the animals feel but themselves and God: to quote Lydgate again, “what they mene, God shal knowe alloone” (16). By foregrounding the fundamental incompleteness of the human imaginative act of witnessing animal suffering, the Fifteen Signs tradition reserves something to the animal that is inaccessible to humans, namely an animal consciousness belonging exclusively to the animal itself. Precisely because of its incompleteness, the record of the woeful cries of animals in the Fifteen Signs tradition thus acknowledges, to recall Tom Regan’s animal rights formulation, that animals can be subjects of their own lives, while also exceeding the capacities of any rights-based formulation, by attesting that animals have a subjecthood inaccessible to comprehension.  

This is not, however, a subjecthood saved by being finally delivered to God. God hears them, understands them, and still destroys them. For better or worse, the animals are not bound to the economy of salvation. One Middle English example prays:

I þonke þe, lord, of þy good dede.
For y wot, þou art rythwyse,
Thow wolte not lese þy marchandyse,
But brynge me, lorde, unto þat stede,
The whych þou bowtest me wyth þy dede.  

I thank you, Lord, for your good deed. For I know that you are righteous.

29. Tom Regan, *Animal Rights, Human Wrongs: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 93, “subjects-of-a-life are the experiencing center of their lives, individuals who have lives that fare experientially better or worse for themselves, logically independently of whether they are valued by others.”

30. For critiques of the rights model as it pertains to animals, see, for example, Wolfe, *Animal Rites*, 53; Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism*, 73–78 (where he paraphrases work by Cora Diamond); and Deborah Slicer, “Your Daughter or Your Dog? A Feminist Assessment of the Animal Research Issue,” in Donovan and Adams, *Feminist Care Tradition*, 108–24, at 108–10; and several other essays in this collection, such as Thomas G. Keitch, “The Role of the Rational and the Emotive in a Theory of Animal Rights,” 259–300, which at 261–77 systematically considers various arguments for animal rights and for what constitutes a “right”; in this volume, see particularly Carol Adams, “Caring About Suffering,” 212, “Instead of saying, ‘animals’ suffering is like humans,’ relying on metaphors, why not say animal suffering in their body is theirs?”

You will not lose your merchandise, but you will bring me, Lord, into that place that you bought for me with your deed.

Here, humans are aware of themselves as commodities, purchased by divine suffering, inscribed in a celestial register: their actions and desires are elements in a transaction between the divine and the worldly. But animal lives and deeds are not calculable; nothing they do can increase or diminish divine punishment or reward in God’s economy, nor can they be the subject of “ryth” (mercy), the divine capacity that infinitely exceeds all calculation. The incomprehensibility of animal voices and the inability of animals to be saved or punished at once renders animals completely vulnerable to destruction and protects their particularity from being assimilated to either human or divine needs. In this sense, animals have their own existence more than humans do, for in the last days neither animals nor their deeds can be exchanged for anything. Nonsubstitutable, freed or fired from servitude, animals cry out for or from the excess of their being, for what is, in the best sense, useless.32 In the animals’ cries humans can perceive mere being demonstrating the presence of what anthropocentrism presumed it to lack: its own voice, its own sadness, rage, and death, when it can no longer be assimilated to either human need or divine justice. They cry out in voices that they should have been recognized as possessing all along.

They cry out for and with the world: their voice numbers among the voices of beings, not merely the voices of lives. The animals mourn along with the stars, the sea, the rocks, all that will be destroyed, all that will not be translated—or, to put it in modern language—uploaded into an eternity freed of the material limitations of worldly existence. In the example in the Mystère d’Adam, “E de toz les fluves parleront / E voiz d’ome parler ave- ront” (and all the rivers will speak and they will have the voices of men to speak; 1150), and in another, “Every watyr shall crye pan, / Speke and have steven of man” (every water shall cry then and speak and have a human voice; 182).33 In its systematic attention to what makes up a world—to the stones, rivers, waters, trees, birds, beasts, and fish, each of which cries out and trembles in the last days—the Fifteen Signs tradition can be understood as recalling a world in all its plenitude at the very moment humans hope to


realize, at long last, secure identities by sealing themselves off from their involvement in it. Against this hope, the tradition witnesses that what matters is not only human, and that humans should understand that existence is not existence unless intermeshed inseparably and precariously in a world. Understood this way, the voices of the Fifteen Signs tradition impart not scorn, but regret and longing for what humans, believing themselves separate and immutable, will abandon for the empyrean sterility of the resurrection fantasy.\textsuperscript{34}

\section*{II.}
\textbf{The Peasant’s Oxen and Other Worldly Animals}

To be taught well by the Fifteen Signs tradition means to be taught to abandon the violent, vain human system to which, in this book, I have almost exclusively devoted my attention. It requires moving toward a less “paranoid,” more “reparative” reading practice, one less committed to always, invariably revealing secret anxieties. For revelation may not be the best goal. After all, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick wonders, “What is the basis for assuming that it will surprise or disturb—never mind motivate—anyone to learn that a given social manifestation is artificial, self-contradictory, imitative, phantasmatic, or even violent?”\textsuperscript{35} The question might be, then, what comes after revelation? Cary Wolfe reminds us that a posthumanism worthy of the name will not mean “the triumphal surpassing or unmasking of something but an increase in the vigilance, responsibility, and humanity that accompany living in a world so newly, and differently inhabited.”\textsuperscript{36} A worthy posthumanism requires allying with a poem such as “De mortibus

\textsuperscript{34} “Fantasy” here alludes to Butler, \textit{Frames of War}, 25, “Lives are by definition precarious: they can be expunged at will or by accident; their persistence is in no sense guaranteed. In some sense, this is a feature of all life, and there is no thinking of life that is not precarious—except, of course, in fantasy, and in military fantasies in particular.” I also recall Jeffrey Cohen’s reading of \textit{Sir Gawain in the Green Knight} in “Inventing with Animals in the Middle Ages,” Hanawalt and Kiser, \textit{Engaging with Nature}, 57, “The romance creates a space where embodiment is multiple and interspecies. Sir Gawain glides through a world alive with flora and fauna, all with their own agency, a world where the knight can never be \textit{mon al hym one}.”


\textsuperscript{36} Wolfe, \textit{What is Posthumanism}, 47.
bovum” (On the Deaths of Cows), written by Paulinus of Nola’s friend Endelechius, whose attention to the animal grief can hardly be accounted for by appeal to the violence of the human:

Over there is a calf that just now
   Was leaping and frolicking around,
   Going to suckle his mother; but soon he sucks
The plague from the diseased udder.
   When his mother, wounded by this sorrowful pain,
   Saw her calf closing his eyes in death,
   She mooed repeatedly, groaning pitifully
   And collapsed, longing for death.
   Then as if she feared that thirst with parched throat
   Might choke the calf, while she lay there dying too,
   She moved her udder to her calf that was already dead.
   Love remains strong even after death.37 (69–80)

But increased vigilance before animal suffering may not be the best goal, either. My book’s hoped-for effects might not be, or not only be, solemnity, nor the recognition that any decision in favor of any given human or animal

   His source for this scene might be the scene of a cow’s mad grief for her sacrificed calf in Lucretius, De natura rerum, in Lucretius: On the Nature of the Universe, trans. Ronald Melville (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), “the mother wandering through the leafy glens / bereaved seeks on the ground the cloven footprints. / With questing eyes she seeks if anywhere / Her lost child may be seen; she stands, and fills with moaning the woodland glades” (II.355–58). Cf. Geoffrey of Burton, St. Modwenna, 21, where a wolf snatches a calf, “while the cow expressed her grief as best she could by mooing.” For Endelechius’s and Paulinus’s varying responses to late antique cultures of animal sacrifice, see Dennis E. Trout, “Christianizing the Nolan Countryside: Animal Sacrifice at the Tomb of St. Felix,” Journal of Early Christian Studies 3 (1995): 281–98. Another Christian work, nearly contemporary with Endelechius, likewise counters the legitimacy of animal sacrifice to the pagan gods, in this case, by giving the sacrifice a voice: Arnobius of Sicca, The Case Against the Pagans, trans. George Englert McCracken (Westminster: The Newman Press, 1949), VII.9, 487–89, begins by imagining an oxen protesting its guiltless death. Though Arnobius upholds human supremacy by tending to characterize the oxen as irrational and therefore irresponsible, he nonetheless gives the oxen this argument: humans “are possessed of reason and use articulate speech. But how do they know whether I, too, do not do what I do by a reasoning of my own and whether the sound which I utter is not my own method of language and one understood by us alone?” His source for this argument is likely The Skeptic Way: Sextus Empiricus’s Outlines of Pyrrhonism, trans. Benson Mates (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), I.14, 98–99, “Even if we do not understand the utterances of so-called ‘non-rational’ animals, it is not at all improbable that they are conversing although we do not understand. For when we hear the talk of barbarians we do not understand that either, and it seems to us undifferentiated sound.”
sacrifices and betrays all other obligations “to the others whom I know or don’t know, the billions of my fellows (without mentioning the animals that are even more other others than my fellows),” a recognition that at once results in increased vigilance and the off-kilter self-satisfaction of knowing the impossibility of a good conscience. This is indeed worth something, but it may not be sufficient: for a worthy posthumanism must recognize both pathos and play:

The question of suffering led Derrida to the virtue of pity, and that is not a small thing. But how much more promise is in the questions, Can animals play? Or work? And even, can I learn to play with this cat? Can I, the philosopher, respond to an invitation or recognize one when it is offered?

A story by Paulinus of Nola suggests the form such play might take. Paulinus’s sixth natalicum, a poem written for Saint Felix’s feast day in 400, tells of a peasant who made a living by renting out his two oxen, which were dearer to him than his own children: “Neque cura minor saturare juvencos, / Quam dulces natos educere; parcior immo / Natis, quam pecori caro” (he devoted no less care to giving his oxen their fill than to bringing up his sweet sons. In fact, he fed his children more sparingly than the dear cattle; PL 61: 495D). But the oxen were stolen. After a long and fruitless search, the peasant returned home to grieve; finally he prayed, first to God, and then at the shrine of Felix. He waited at Felix’s shrine until he was driven off, then went home in the dark to lay inconsolably in the filth of the oxen’s empty stall, caressing their hoofprints. Amused by the intensity of the peasant’s complaints, Felix returned the oxen, and when they pounded on the door, the peasant imagined the robbers had returned, until the oxen identified themselves by lowing. As soon as the peasant began to unbolt the door, “juncti simul irrupere juvenci, / Et reserantis adhuc molimina praevenrunt / Dimoto faciles cesserunt obice postes, / Oblatumque sibi mox ipso in limine regem ” (the oxen burst in together, anticipating his attempt to open the door, for once the bolts were released the door easily gave way; PL 61:499D–500A). The oxen and peasant embraced one another:

39. For this point, see Wolfe, What is Posthumanism, 96.
40. Haraway, When Species Meet, 22.
41. This and all subsequent translations of Paulinus are from Paulinus of Nola, Poems, 129.
they gently nuzzled their kindly lord and fawningly caressed his breast in
turn. The horns of his beloved cattle did him no injury; he drew their heads
as though they were soft to his proffered breast. To his hands the tongues
which by licking could scrape their food even from trees did not feel rough.

This story is one of Paulinus’s animal miracles, but, unusually for Paulinus,
the oxen do not end up sacrificed to Felix; they are saved for human love
rather than only for human use. To be sure, the oxen’s love of the peasant
may attest to perfect animal servility, as the peasant will presumably loan
them out again. But the peasant’s sacrifice of himself and his family to the
well-being of the oxen, as well as his shock and vulnerability at their loss
and return, perhaps overflow the confines of simple utility, eroding the bor-
ders of both human and animal.

The dissolution of these categories may be well considered via Der-
rida’s lecture notes for the session that opened his course on “Hostipitalité,”
or, as Gil Anidjar straightforwardly translates the word, “hostipitality.” As
elsewhere in his oeuvre, Derrida forms a neologism that expresses his argu-
ment in miniature. “Hostipitality” incorporates the double meaning of the
French “hôte,” which means both “guest” and “host.” As Derrida argues,
a host who welcomes a guest in a limited sense—for a limited time, with
a limited set of accommodations, and for a guest whose character, desires,
and needs are already known in advance—has not been truly hospitable,
because the host has measured the hospitality. A truly welcoming host must
offer hospitality without limits, which requires that the host be overcome by
an unexpected guest with unexpected wants. Thus the true host is unable to
welcome, because to welcome means to decide when and how far to open
the door. Nor can the true host know the character of the guest in advance,
because this, too, reserves to the host the option of denying hospitality. By
welcoming, the host risks being caught up entirely by the demands of the
guest, even becoming hostage to the guest: hence the ethical and logical
affinity of the opposing meanings of “hôte.” Hence too the presence of the
Latin root “hostis,” meaning both “stranger” and “enemy”: the arrival of the
guest “ruptures, bursts in or breaks in”\textsuperscript{42} upon the host, shattering the host’s sense of home, boundaries, and, ultimately, self, since the true host reserves nothing to itself. The oxen, too, burst in, “irrupere,” themselves determining when and how wide to open the door, stripping from the peasant, almost as soon as he makes the gesture, his capacity to welcome. Through a generosity that exceeds his ability to give, the peasant becomes hostage to his own guests. Furthermore, as Paulinus makes clear, the oxen are not entirely assimilated to the peasant’s bucolic domesticity: they caress the peasant, though they \textit{could} also have injured him with their bulk, horns, and rough tongues. Faced with creatures of such strength, however, the peasant does not hold himself back, but gives himself over to them entirely, without guarding himself from any injury they might do him. Now a perfect host, hostage to his guests, and beyond all capacity to give, and thus beyond all capacity to be a host, the peasant abandons himself to vulnerability before the oxen. To recall the \textit{Dialogue of St. Julien}, discussed in chapter 3, “Ou porreit l’en cest homme querre?” (where could one seek the man in here?). There is violence in this encounter: “complectentis” encompasses in its meanings not only “embrace,” but “entwine,” “encircle,” “seize,” “seize upon,” and “to take possession of.” But this is neither the violence of human domination, nor the violence of animal’s claim of lawmaking violence for itself, like that of the boar of the \textit{Avowyng}. This is the violence of the unexpected arrival that shatters all self-certainty, that destroys the objective conditions of the status quo, that evacuates the foundations where a human might stand or where a human might force an animal to stand before it.

So too in Folcuin of St. Bertin’s portion of the \textit{Deeds of the Abbots of Saint Bertin}, in the story of the horse of a ninth-century bishop of Thérouanne, also named Folcuin. The horse loved Folcuin so much that “\textit{ante eius feretrum preisse}”\textsuperscript{43} (it went before his bier) at its master’s funeral pro-


\textsuperscript{43} O. Holder-Egger, ed., “\textit{Gesta abbatum S. Bertini Sithiensium},” in Georg Waitz, ed., \textit{MGH SS} 13 (Hanover, 1881), 619, for this and subsequent quotations from the story. For directing me to it, I thank Rob Meens, “Eating Animals in the Early Middle Ages: Classifying the Animal World and Building Group Identities,” in Creager and Jordan, \textit{The Animal-Human Boundary}, 7.
cession, and “omnem deinceps hominem ferre recusasse, nec passus est post membra tanti pontificis voluptatibus deservire alicuius hominis” (afterwards it refused to carry all men, nor, because of its great delight in the bishop, would it suffer the limb of any other man). It would be simplistic to identify the relationship between horse and bishop as just another instance of animal subjugation, as the horse serves and loves only the bishop, not humans in general, and once the bishop dies, it refuses to be mastered. Despite its refusal, however, the horse escapes both the punishment due to any other recalcitrant beast and even the historian’s condemnation. In escaping this condemnation, as in escaping general human domination, the horse escapes the system of subjugation that differentially produces human and animal. After the horse’s death, the humans attempt to feed its body to the dogs. This was no doubt the usual method of disposing of dead horses. But disposing of—rather than memorializing—the carcass also reasserts that the horse was only an animal, that its remains, being a carcass rather than corpse, merit only instrumental, not reverential, treatment. The horse nonetheless escapes even this last effort at humiliation:

Et merito cadaver eius canes non poterant lacerare, super quem ymnidica cantica Christo decantata erant sepissime. Quod videntes cives, eum humano more sepelierunt, quem nec bestiae nec volucres tangere presumperunt.

Because of the merit of its corpse upon which hymns to Christ were so often chanted, the dogs could not mangle it. When the citizens saw this, they gave a human burial to what neither beasts nor birds [or “flying things,” viz., birds and insects] had presumed to touch.

The honor the horse receives may derive only from the sanctity of Folcuin and the hymns he sang while riding; it may derive only from the logic of the pet, which protects the horse while excluding all other animals, “bestiae et volucres,” which, implicitly, will never be buried “humano more.” The story may be understood even as a historical curiosity, since Thérouanne is in a region where horse burial was once not uncommon.  

relics of an equine cult. He leaves it open. If we too leave the story open, unsystematized, we might observe that Folcuin refrains from either humanizing or animalizing the horse. He does not speak of human love for the horse; he makes no claims for the horse’s rationality; nor does he claim that the horse will be resurrected into immortal life. Although the horse is buried “humano more,” it is not presented as if it were, in some fundamental sense, human, or as if it were privileged to be protected because of human love for it, but neither is it presented as an animal. Nor does the horse’s death affect it alone: all creatures about it have perhaps undergone—as Judith Butler characterizes the possibilities of mourning—“a transformation . . . the full result of which one cannot know in advance.”

It is the behavior of the dogs and birds that inspires the humans to bury and memorialize the horse, to welcome the body of the horse as a guest, as it were, letting themselves be taken over by hospitality for it. When humans allow themselves to be instructed by the cultural behavior of animals, when readers of Folcuin’s account allow its wonder to remain open, as it is in this burial ritual, they might witness the horse as a face, in the Lévinasian sense, “the visible of the invisible” witnessing to the inexhaustibility of a being that cannot be used up in any singular identity, or category, whose very inexhaustibility demands that we abandon ourselves in care of it.

I finish my examples with the Middle English romance *Sir Gowther*. It tells the story of a half-human, half-demon knight driven by his infernal heritage to rape and immolate nuns, force friars off crags, and hang parsons from hooks. When he discovers his demonic paternity, Gowther immediately seeks out the Pope, who prescribes a humiliating penance: Gowther must eat only food that he “revus of howndus mothe” (snatches from a hound’s mouth; 296). Nothing in this penance threatens the distinction between humans and animals, for it is because the Pope and Gowther alike think animals are degraded that the penance works as penance. As he suffers this humiliation, he learns not to reject but rather to properly reorient his violence: when he is not greedily tearing bones from dogs (355–56), he acts like a good Christian knight by spattering the blood and brains of a Saracen


46. For the “visible of the invisible,” see David Morris, “Faces and the Invisible of the Visible: Toward an Animal Ontology,” in Guenther and Taylor, *PhaenEx* 2, 124–69, at 137. For a recent clear discussion of the “face,” see Butler, *Precarious Life*, particularly 137–38, and, with the necessary corrections, 144, “the human is not identified with what is represented but neither is it identified with the unrepresentable; it is, rather, that which limits the success of any representational practice. The face is not ‘effaced’ in this failure of representation, but is constituted in that very possibility.” For Lévinas on the face, see, for example, Emmanuel Lévinas, *Humanism of the Other*, trans. Nidra Poller (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 30–33.
army (429–30). At the end of the romance, having learned to be a good and holy human, he dies as a saint. Yet after Gowther speaks with the Pope, on the way to his penance, a dog gives Gowther food as a gift:

He went owt of that ceté
Into anodur far cuntré,
Tho testamentys thus thei sey;
He seyt hym down undur a hyll,
A greyhownde broght hym meyt untyll
Or evon yche a dey.
Thre neythys ther he ley:
Tho grwhownd ylke a dey
A whyte lofe he hym broghht;
On tho fort day come hym non,
Up he start and forthe con gon,
And lovyd God in his thoght.47 (307–18)

He went out from that city and into another far country, as the records say; he sat down at the base of a hill, and a greyhound brought him food every day. Three nights he lay there: and the greyhound each day brought him a white loaf of bread, and on the fourth day did not come to him. Gowther got up and went forth and loved God.

In a romance of such shocking violence, this is a moment of astonishing tenderness. Below the hill, Gowther lives outdoors, outside all civilized organization of space; for three days, he receives a dog’s charity, not snatching it, but accepting what the dog offers. In this hillside idyll, between the violences of demonic and divine teloi, Gowther inhabits with the dog a space that interrupts economy, for, in the sense Derrida gave the word, this bread is a gift:

But is not the gift, if there is any, also that which interrupts economy? That which, in suspending economic calculation, no longer gives rise to exchange? That which opens the circle so as to defy reciprocity or symmetry, the common measure, and so as to turn aside the return in view of the no-return?48

47. Laskaya and Salisbury, *Middle English Breton Lays.*
Unlike Saint Roch, similarly fed by a dog, Gowther can offer nothing in return, nor do we see that the dog expects anything. There is no blessing, no approval, no protection, nothing he can give in return that would transform his reception of bread into a node in an exchange, equal or otherwise. Nor, indeed, because this is not the humiliating penance the Pope commanded, does Gowther get anything, apart from the bread itself, from giving himself over to the dog’s generosity. He does not begin his renewal until he turns to Christian penitential violence. Here, with the dog, Gowther inhabits a space conditioned neither by violence nor by a structure of superiority and abase-ment. The dog is never identified, never explained, and Gowther, encountering it, allows himself to receive without asking, without ever behaving as if he were quite human or the dog were quite canine. Wondering at this encounter between Gowther and the greyhound, taught by Folcuin’s horse, receiving the oxen, with Paulinus’s peasant, in a welcoming beyond all wel-coming, humans might abandon themselves to relationships unavailable to mere animals or, for that matter, to mere humans, whether medieval or modern.

Medieval literature preserves many other such encounters and creatures, unrecognizable as participants in narratives of human superiority and animal degradation: the hermaphroditic, accusatory stag of Marie de France’s “Guigemar”; the piscine knights and loving, jilted monkey of Perceforest; the complaining, polyglot raven messenger of the Munich Oswald; the animals of the second Biblical creation story, not slaves or objects, but helpers, and, in some commentaries, experimental sexual partners; or the very many stories of saintly sympathy for animals compiled by Helen Waddell and David Bell, not all of which can or should be explained as saints enjoying Edenic domination over an unresistant natural world.49 These narratives could be accommodated by a Procrustean framework of anxiety, violence, and death, but they are better recognized in their wonderful hybridity as refusing any closed human system or better as entirely indifferent to the human system. They might therefore be understood as intermixing elements to form something unrecognizable, even as a violation, to any human system. But we can go still further by not recognizing these forms as mixtures at all. We should recognize them as forces in motion, provisional bodies, whose effects can-

not be understood by reference to any “hybridized” and therefore “violated” pure form whose idealized existence is always, at any rate, secondary.\textsuperscript{50} We would require something, then, like Deleuze and Guattari’s antifoundationalist conception of “becoming-animal.” \textit{A Thousand Plateaus} engages with a world comprising not subjects but “events, in assemblages that are inseparable from an hour, a season, an atmosphere, an air, a life.”\textsuperscript{51} Its paradigmatic example is the “determinatorialization” of a wasp pollinating an orchid, in which the wasp “becomes a liberated piece of the orchid’s reproductive system” and the orchid “becomes the object of an orgasm in the wasp, also liberated from its own reproduction.”\textsuperscript{52} In this symbiosis, it is no longer possible to speak of the singular wasp or orchid; it is necessary to speak—to use Deleuze and Guattari’s terminology—of the becoming-orchid of the wasp and the becoming-wasp of the orchid, of the breakdown of singular and separate “molar” beings into the “molecular” becomings of an assemblage.

Like Elmer and Wolfe, Deleuze and Guattari are impatient with love for pets, since pets “invite us to regress, draw us into a narcissistic contemplation . . . any one who likes cats or dogs is a fool.”\textsuperscript{53} This is too much for Donna Haraway. While her characterization of humans and other animals interacting in a “flow of entangled meaningful bodies in time” in which “each partner [is] more than one but less than two” clearly affiliates with Deleuze and Guattari, Haraway excoriates Deleuze and Guattari for their misogynist disdain for the lapdogs of old women and for their contempt for the mundane.\textsuperscript{54} As Haraway argues, “caninophilic narcissism,”\textsuperscript{55} that is, considering dogs as sources of unconditional love for humans, is not the only way for humans and domestic animals to interact considerately; nor does escaping this narcissism necessitate the romantic, undomesticated frenzies to which Deleuze and Guattari abandon themselves;\textsuperscript{56} as Haraway asserts, or, it should be said, experiences, “co-habiting does not mean,” or

\begin{itemize}
\item[50.] I draw my critique of “hybridity” from Latour, \textit{We Have Never Been Modern}, 78–79.
\item[51.] Deleuze and Guattari, \textit{A Thousand Plateaus}, 262.
\item[52.] Ibid., 293.
\item[53.] Ibid., 240; original emphasis.
\item[54.] For “meaningful bodies in time” and “more than one,” see Haraway, \textit{When Species Meet}, 26 and 244; for her critique of Deleuze and Guattari, see ibid. 27–30 and 314–15 nn37–39.
\item[56.] For example, \textit{A Thousand Plateaus}, 250, where Deleuze and Guattari praise the alliance between man and Devil in Dumas’ wolfman story Meneur de Loups, whose “alogical consistencies” and “symbiosis” they contrast to the predictability of the human relationship with “the Oedipal family animal, a mere poodle.”
\end{itemize}
at least does not necessarily mean, “fuzzy and touchy-feely.” It can mean recognizing a “naturalcultural practice that red[oes] us molecule by molecule,” including, as in her paradigmatic example, a training with a dog that allows “something unexpected, something new and free, something outside the rules of function and calculation, something not ruled by the logic of the reproduction of the same” to come into being. If we sit under the hill with Gowther, to welcome and to be welcomed by the dog, in this mundane space, between the narratives of the demon tyrant and the pious crusader, we might realize that no welcoming is necessary; it is not necessary to dislodge ourselves from molar separateness; following the lesson of the Fifteen Signs, what is necessary is instead the acknowledgment that we are already symbiotically enmeshed with “animals, plants, microorganisms, mad particles, a whole galaxy,” that we all are already always being redone molecule by molecule. Ralph Acampora’s *Corporeal Compassion* describes the phenomenological notion of *symphysis*, in which we recall that we share a world with other beings by being bodied—notably, not embodied, not minds in bodies. As he writes, “cultivating a bodiment ethos of interanimality is not a matter of mentally working one’s way into other selves or worlds by quasi-telepathic imagination, but is rather about becoming sensitive to an already constituted ‘inter-zone’ of somaesthetic conviviality.” As he argues, it is not this being-with that needs justification; rather the rationalist “movement toward dissociation and nonaffiliation needs to be justified against a background of relatedness and interconnectivity.” Gowther is already with the dog, indeed, already with the hill and all that is there, and we must do is to refuse to close them all off from each other, or, if we do, we might find other limits and think them anew. In this space, we might witness something other than subjugation, something other than just the love of pets.

We must also remember that there can be no relatedness, no wonder, no cherishing of another without some difference; therefore, this is not an extension of “human rights” to animals, nor is it a flattening out of all difference into a kind of cosmic sludge. Susan Crane provides one model for a nonanthropocentric being with other life in her consideration of the interspecies kindness between Canacee and the falcon in Chaucer’s *Squire’s Tale*. As she reads the scene, this moment is one in which love at once transcends and

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58. Ibid., 228 and 223.
61. Ibid., 5.
sustains difference, for Canacee treats the falcon as an ethically significant subject without humanizing it; this is a sympathy that does not collapse into anthropocentric self-love. It is a sympathy, as well, that remembers that Canacee can act for the falcon. This interaction might be understood through Leonard Lawlor’s argument for the necessity of at once “welcom[ing] and yet guard[ing] the alterity of others,” an argument that could recognize that Canacee, because she is human, has certain responsibilities apart from simply nonassimilative kindness to a falcon, and apart from recognizing the co-constitutive presence of herself and falcon in the constantly shifting world. Humans must be hosts and guests to other animals, for they always already are; at the same time, human strength cannot be denied: because of the extraordinary destructive capacity of humans, they must protect others.

To echo the title of Lawlor’s recent book, it is therefore not sufficient for humans simply to allow themselves to be with other animals, intermingled in the world; it is not sufficient to “train” with them, nor to recall their radical alterity. Lawlor proposes a philosophical orientation for protecting other animals, one that gives them proper, “nonuniversal name[s],” without definite articles. Such names, being nonuniversal, would not mark them as just another instance of a universal category such as “the animal” or even “the dog.” A proper name, so used, protects an animal—or, it might be said, a habitat—by distinguishing it individually from the world as a whole. But although “a name is a kind of shield that allows animals to be left alone,” to the extent that it packages the life it marks for human understanding, it commits a kind of violence to the inexhaustibility and unknowability of animals, whether this be understood as a denial of their own “unfathomable X” or an “effacement” by thematization. Because this symbolic violence is unavoidable, to achieve a response to alterity “that is the least violent, the least evil, the least powerful,” Lawlor proposes that such protecting names be given as though they were dates: humans can recognize a date without completely assimilating it to their limited knowledge, since a date has “unforeseeable

64. See Cary Wolfe, What is Posthumanism, 95, “humans and animals may share a fundamental ‘non-power at the heart of power’ . . . but what they do not share equally is the power to materialize their misrecognition of their situation and to reproduce that materialization in institutions of exploitation and oppression whose effects are far from symmetrical in species terms.”
65. Lawlor, This Is Not Sufficient, 105.
66. Ibid., 110.
67. Ibid., 72.
events” and past events that will never be known, which means “that a date never appears as such.”

To dislodge the arrogance of being human, where “human” means both an opposition to a homogeneously conceived “animal” and the automatic valuing of human over animal life, I seek a way of being with each other that could be enacted with an awareness of our shared vulnerability, the shared significance of all our deaths, our shared and mobile being together, and even our shared deliciousness. I seek a model that remembers that humans can never fully know what they are protecting when they protect other animals, or who they are when acting, or to what they are becoming vulnerable when they suspend the system of the human. A “postdisenchanted” approach to the human and animal thus should recall the insights of Deleuze and Guattari, while still remembering “the very real torment of suffering individuals.” Humans must also remember, with Haraway, that animals are not only passive victims that need to be rescued or let alone. They must remember that humans and other animals are at once vulnerable and world-shaping, passive and active, that humans are worldly creatures, shaping and shaped by other beings in the world, organic and nonorganic, living and nonliving—all categories that should be mobilized only strategically—all of which has transformative effects within co-constitutive, ever-shifting systems, but that none of this can be remembered properly without an unwavering critique of violence inherent in the system of the human.

I would like to think that this book has met the qualifications of what Foucault described the best modes of critique, which should be:

[G]enealogical in its design and archaeological in its method. Archaeological...in the sense that it will not seek to identify the universal structures of all knowledge or of all possible moral action, but will seek to treat the instances of discourse that articulate what we think, say, and do [and, I might say, claim to be] as so many historical events. And this critique will be genealogical in the sense that it will not deduce from the form of what we are what is impossible for us to do and to know; but it will separate out,

68. Ibid., 103.
70. I quote from the appraisal of Deleuze and Guattari in Elizabeth A. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 163, whose work in imagining a “psychical corporeality” (and whose cautious use of Deleuze and Guattari) I have found inspiring.
from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think.\textsuperscript{71}

What else might the human be? To begin to answer this question, and because I owe so much to Derrida’s work on animals and ethics, I allow myself to leave off with his cat, which he insists is “a real cat, truly, believe me, a little cat. It isn’t the figure of a cat. It doesn’t silently enter the room as an allegory for all the cats on the earth.”\textsuperscript{72} Derrida’s insistence that his cat is this particular being removes or preserves it—her, rather, since she \textit{is une chatte}—from the undifferentiated, humiliated mass of creatures shunted into animality. But doing so does not merely embrace the cat within Derrida’s humanity. A cat, as Erica Fudge reminds us, is an unhomely creature; it is not caught up so easily.\textsuperscript{73} This cat may be the very cat who captures our attention eighteen minutes into the film \textit{Derrida} by staring out at us and meowing, while Derrida, at home, faxes someone his signature.\textsuperscript{74} The cat is an animal making noise that should be heard as something more than noise, even if we cannot know precisely what she intends. We can simply be summoned by the meow to remember Derrida’s love for and indeed his vulnerability and embarrassment, his openness, his being “seen seen” before her. Remembering symphysis, worlded and woundable with this cat, reshaped by it, we cease to imagine that the animal is our other, without, however, losing our wonder at her—or our—singularities, without losing our responsibility for her either. In this moment of hearing her, and of knowing that she, like us, cannot communicate all she thinks, in this moment when we acknowledge that we share a space, that we make a space by sharing it, that we are with each other without quite knowing what or where we are, perhaps we will have ceased to be only human, and will have ceased to wish for, and to defend, our human selves.


\textsuperscript{72} Derrida, \textit{The Animal that Therefore}, 6.


\textsuperscript{74} Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering Kofman, \textit{Derrida} (Eurozoom, 2002).
(All Biblical quotations are from the Douay Rheims translation of the Latin Vulgate, unless otherwise noted.)


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