Leonardo Caffo

Animality as a new space paradigm

Introduction

"It is only for the sake of those without hope, that hope is given to us." - Walter Benjamin

The main purpose of this chapter, written in a simple and literary style, is to discuss a problem of enormous philosophical relevance: the "animal issue". There are several ways to do this and, while not claiming that this is the best one, I have chosen to analyze the matter starting from the tradition inaugurated by Jacques Derrida, who focused on animality as both a theoretical and a material entity. What is animality? What does it mean to be animals rather than humans? And what have we done to animals to be able to think of ourselves as different from them?

These are the questions I will try to answer in the pages you are about to read. But there is more: what you are about to discover is what I have found out after learning to see things I could not see before. Meeting the gaze of the other, I have discovered the caress of "antispeciesism".

And this awareness led them to lean out and look at what we left behind the barricade in which they told us, poetically, that it is "love that moves the sun and other stars". Beyond the barricade was hell, because hell is the only way we can describe what we have done through the use of violence. Beyond the polished borders of the human, some individuals of the monstrous species have observed the other, or at least what was left after the classification that we often hear called "evolutionary ladder". That terrible moment - that disarming awareness - was like a violent shock that prompted a caress. The name of that caress is "antispeciesism".

Zen

Now we only see buildings and streets, the windows of the offices where we daily store our lives, wrapped in a cling film that envelops time and emotions, we rarely see our reflected image: we see ourselves grow old day after day, in a total alienation from the world that has welcomed us. The gesture of rupture that led Thoreau to solitude allowed him to understand the limits of life as we have conceived it: shaped by a paradigm of production that has now taken the form of post-capitalism, life is the pursuit of a job that, at most, will only produce the chimera of a pension for us to look after our mortal remains and postpone the inevitable end.

In rural landscapes - which still made up Walden's background in Thoreau's time - other forms of life peep out, as transition stages of a successful transformation. These other forms are non-human animals, who exist in endless symbiosis with Nature. The caesura that keeps us on this side of the world, isolated from all other forms of life, is evident for Thoreau. One might think that there is a certain naivete in opposing the "citizen" (the human in society) and the "animal" (the human in nature): this naivete, indeed, has partly guided anarcho-primitivism, which hopes for something absurd, and is satisfied with it. However, as should be evident from the philosopher's words, there is an important point that has been completely ignored: while it is necessary, indispensable, and real that man be an inhabitant of Nature, because he is part of it and exists thanks to it, it is...
All these attempts implicitly show that we do not want to understand non-human animals: we only want to prove that some of them are like us. We establish the categories that we have and see if the Other has them too. This kind of reasoning, rightly called “identity thinking,” helps strengthen the abovementioned philosophical limit: we keep looking at reality as if everything, including animals, were a term of comparison aimed at reinforcing the idea that humans are perfect. Neither Copernicus nor Kant have achieved a true Copernican revolution, by which man would no longer be the centre of the universe: things only seemed to change, but they have actually stayed the same. Animal studies have only partly managed to call anthropocentrism into question, by stating that other animal lifeforms must be studied as such, without trying to force them to enter a competition that they are bound to lose.

The Zen issue calls for some considerations in relation to the animal. The first is about rationality. Animal ethics, an expression of the analytic philosophy of the 1970s, was considered a practice of rational philosophy: a long and winding road between arguments, corollaries and thought experiments. In the English-speaking analytic tradition - which, as often happens, detached itself from the real world to describe, and then prescribe, Neverland - the animal is always thought of as something other than us, only finding space in philosophical thinking as an exception. However, in order to shift towards animality as a more complex matter, reason is not the right tool at all, precisely because it is a typically human practice used to draw lines and borders between humanity and other lifeforms.

For this reason, in analogy with Zen philosophy - as described in Bodhidharma’s four verses - animality can only be truly understood through seemingly empty precepts. And yet the power of immedesimation lies precisely in this emptiness.

Thinking about animality means thinking about the humanity we want to become: what we have been, what we are and, of course, what we could be. A humanity that lives by crushing the corpses of history, like Paul Klee’s Angelus Novus, is a false humanity: it is bestiality.

A humanity that lives by thinking about the ultimate horror - the physical object, namely the human. The ultimate meaning of this, also in light of the shift of contemporary philosophical thought towards realism, is that this artifice should be seen as such.

Thoreau mainly deconstructed social reality in favor of a metaphysical reality: his goal was to highlight the foundations of our existence, unmasking its deceptions. Indeed, there is a thin red line that connects (later) Derrida’s philosophical work to Thoreau’s: the cat who saw the naked philosopher (as mentioned), and the animals at the lake who le Thoreau to a reconsider our social role, are material metaphors of the fact that the citizen can be human again thanks to the animality of the other. But why should one want this to happen? Why claim animality now, right now?

"I am leaving you a place in my home, but do not forget that this is my home" Jacques Derrida, Deconstructing Terrorism

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Perspectives

Animality is what we are: it is what is left after deconstruction. That is, after the deconstruction of a social concept: that of “human” understood not as an animal body, but as a specialized life, which is the recent invention mentioned by Michel Foucault. It does not matter whether Foucault was right, as I believe, to argue that the human being coincides with self-thinking. Rather, what we should reflect on, resuming the tradition inaugurated by Derrida’s The Animal That Therefore I Am, is what it means to be an animal.

First of all, being an animal means being mortal, but above all being one of the infinite mortals of this world. What I will claim in these pages is that our essence, first of quodlibet—that is, of whatever singularity as understood by Giorgio Agamben - and secondly of human community, makes our gaze on the world one of the possible perspectives, not the only one. The question of the point of view, despite seeming trivial, is central to Western philosophy (and, albeit to a lesser extent, Eastern philosophy), running through it as an impassable limit: the world we look at, which we claim to understand and analyze partitioning it through our ontology, is the world as seen by a featherless biped.

I am a realist - or, as we say today, a “new realist” - and I firmly believe that reality resists our hermeneutical processes, transcending them by preceding them, acting as an immovable substrate by which to verify our statements. But it is in

Limits

But let’s start from the limit. This investigation of animality is, first of all, an analysis of how we have denied one of our necessary properties (therefore not one we may or may not have): namely, “animal being”. This denial has been described, first by Ryder and then by Peter Singer, as the prejudicial and ideological attitude that falls under the name of “speciesism”. Therefore, I will now make a few considerations on the philosophy of speciesism. As Levinas showed in relation to Nazism, thinking about brutal and violent rejections means thinking about being, or rather about the experience of being at its purest, which manifests itself in a “desertic, obsessive, horrendous way”. Like Hitlers’s philosophy, speciesism is elementary, but its power has shaped humanity as we know it, reinforcing the bias of the human outlook on reality and awakening the primitive feelings of specialized life. This rather coarse perspective, which appears to be but a violent drive that should be combated with antispeciesism, is actually philosophically interesting. Indeed, speciesist philosophy goes well beyond speciesism itself, because it lays the foundations of society. When Horkheimer describes the social skyscraper in his notes, he identifies the mass slaughter of animals as the ground on which rests the building of human “civilization”, based on different kinds of suffering which we tolerate so far as we are not the ones undergoing it. However, to overcome the man/animal dichotomy, we mustn’t make the mistake that

Possibilities

Animality is necessary because of the proportions of institutionalized violence. Nobody can define with certainty what violence is, as the term is as vague as “baldness” and implies many intermediate concepts - such as self-defense, in which it is difficult to decide what is violence and what is not. But there is an extreme, and it is unequivocal: the immense sacrifice of the many, wanted by a few who choose to trample on countless corpses to ensure progress at the expense of the murdered victims left behind by Benjamin’s Angelus Novus. All this pain, this cowardice that we call “Western welfare”, becomes unsustainable in front of its alternative: the symbiosis with the world that animals teach us, the ability to experience the openness that Rilke talks about, the overturning of Heidegger’s worldless animal showing how there is actually no gap between animal and world because the animal is the world, while we are its ruin as well as our own.

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4. It lets one see into [one’s own true] nature and [thus] attain Buddhahood (- 性 成 iJl) [Buddhahood, in our case, is animality].

Each of these verses clashes with the dogma of Western philosophy: prove without proof, and you will be disproven without proof (Euclid). But in this sense, as will be clear later on, the point is not to prove that animality is Zen. Rather, it is the principle of all things that must be rejected: herein lies the deconstructive essence of antispeciesism in its investigation of Western metaphysics. As the bow and arrow become the archer’s limbs, so the animal other becomes the heart of man. Eating hearts in the boat of Siddharta’s ferryman is no longer possible.
Life

The second consideration called for by the issue of Zen is the more general one of "life". This line of thought, in my view, corresponds to the Western tension between bios and zoé. In fact, in a cultural species like Homo sapiens, there are two "institutional forms of life". On the one hand, the human life in question is related to the creation, while the human lived life is that of the entity. According to the legend, Buddha, only anchored to the world by his body, was able to spend his days fasting in the shade of a cherry tree. These descriptions, certainly metaphorical, depict the elimination of bios in favor of zoé: an attempt, in my opinion, to come to terms with one's animality, often violently hidden by the universe of social facts. Reasoning on the primary essence of the human means questioning the very foundations of existence: something that is far from idle and has an effective political impact, as it means to understand that the way we have interpreted our lifeform on this planet, as Ludwig Wittgenstein would say, is radically incorrect. In all likelihood (regardless of the data provided by animal cognition), we are the only species that thinks about its own life, makes long-term plans and, if necessary, radically modifies the ways of existence that characterize a certain epoch and a given portion of the world.

This "possibility of change", which is intertwined with free will, is what allows for a discussion on ethics and, in our specific case, on the

Dichotomies

The history of the "man / animal" dichotomy is long and unfortunate. Thinking about Descartes or Heidegger, it is hard not to smile at their convictions: animals are automatons, animals do not die, animals do not speak, they do not suffer, they do not think or self-think... What these beliefs arouse is a sad smile, of course, but a smile nonetheless. For a long time, it was believed that the human being was able to observe reality, of which he is part, as if it were his creation. In this light, in which we often played the role of demiurge, we have understood animals as a single homogeneous category: this was the first of many discriminations against animals, one that is not only linguistic but even Jacques Derrida committed, namely to remain stuck within a completely human perspective. Let me explain.

So what if the ability to become other than the world, to break away from it, was anything but an advantage for Homo Sapiens? What if the complexity of our brain could not cope with the complexity of the world we live in? Well, there is no need to turn a possibility into a catastrophe: there is no point in changing course when the ship is about to sink. This feeling of end of the world - often hoped for and falsely predicted, due to cyclical economic, ecological and obvious moral crises in a world where the "most civilized country" is one that still implements death penalty in many of its states, - is a false sensation. The end of the world, as we conceive it, is the end of one world, and the beginning of another.

There have always been various patterns of existence, ignored by the conveniences of contingency. From that lake, so calm and pure, Thoreau found a first space of action in civil disobedience: if this is to be more than abstract talk, civil disobedience is a necessary practice to demonstrate disagreement with a governmental system by which we do not feel represented, but also with a state of affairs that traps our lives and from which we want to escape. The metamorphosis lies not so much in wanting to save the animal because it resembles us or because we share the same destiny, but in becoming animals ourselves: in understanding that only by deconstructing the citizen's false needs can we finally prevent violence from perpetuating itself. The various crises will thus no longer appear negative but reveal themselves as opportunities for a necessary change.
The famous encounter between Derrida and his cat\(^2\), described in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, marks the moment when philosophy recognized the animal as a unique, unrepeatable individual that not only can be seen, but can see you as such. This might seem like a simple pun, but it signals an important passage: the animal is no longer simply the object, but also the subject of thought. The completely anthropocentric point of view, the one that characterizes philosophy as biased and limiting, is slowly eroded by this unique and unrepeatable cat, who observes the philosopher in his nakedness. The animal, now, can cause shame - namely the principle of every philosophy which, as Socrates says in the Platonic dialogue "Gorgias", is the true beginning of the journey towards thought. However, as Žižek points out, Derrida remains profoundly human in this way of being watched, thereby preserving the anthropocentric limit. This human barrier in Derrida's discourse on animals provided a starting point for another philosopher, Matthew Calarco, who sought to understand how to change our thinking taking cue from that unique and unrepeatable gaze.

And yet, this would not suffice. The human-animal dichotomy, in addition to being the sword of Damocles for a violated, massacred and humiliated animality, originated an arrogant and deceitful philosophy: the belief that everything is given to and for the gaze of man. Jakob von Uexküll, investigating the concept of environment and animal gaze, showed how the same space - imagine a room in a university - is completely different in the eyes of a bee, a human and a dog (which are only a few among the infinite possible examples). If the three individuals were to talk to each other, describing what they were seeing, they would agree on nothing: the room would have different colors for each of them, different shapes, uneven proportions and opposite architectural forms. Even the question who is right would have no meaning. The fact that the room can be seen in different ways, in fact, means that the room has fixed and real characteristics, but that every conceptual and visual apparatus, belonging to the given subject and species, locates different visual information and in a different way: it is the natural specialization of every life form.

ontological. For this reason, Derrida and many other thinkers like Carol Adams have suggested we stop using the word "animal", which is way too narrow to describe all animal living beings that are not human.

in our specific case, on the architecture of animality. The feeling that leads to the inadequacy of living derives from this possibility, and is profoundly linked to the concept of metamorphosis. Being born in one of the many existing human societies, which are now all rather similar because of the complex effects of globalization, one has the sensation that artifice has crossed the thin borderline that indissolubly binds the natural to the cultural. The imaginative and naive interpretations of Heidegger's discourses against technology have often led to a general rejection of something that lies at the basis of our societies: all this, though, is falsified by human nature itself which, deprived of any animal characteristic, has found its complete realization in the ability to "light a fire" (a famous metaphor of the myth of Prometheus). Heidegger's discourse, rather, aims to analyze the consequences of technology: what happens when the cultural artifice becomes a caricature and leads to the structural alteration of what humanity needs to survive. To understand how, and to what extent, this line has been crossed, it is not enough to sit and observe the roots of the problem from the inside: one must find the best possible position so as to begin to understand. For example, *one might go stand by a frozen lake...*
As I have tried to say in *Flatus Vocis. Breve invito all’agire animale* (Novalogos 2012), it is necessary to abandon - even only for a moment - everything that makes us human to really fall into the category of animality. How can this be done? This is the question: the caesura that separates us from everything else has deep cultural roots. So, there is a phenomenological problem in animality: to put it with Husserl, in fact, the latter manifests itself not as “thing in itself”, but as something that manifests itself to me. My cognitive structures and my experience shape what I see as something other: a monadic otherness with which “I” - the observing self - have nothing to do. Here it is worth mentioning the analogy between animal action and the question, often stigmatized as “exoteric”, of Japanese Zen philosophy.

[2] Derrida talks about an encounter with his cat when the latter saw him naked, making him feel ashamed (which is no coincidence: shame, ever since Plato, has been the principal sentiment of early philosophy). In that encounter, Derrida looked at the cat and the cat looked back at Derrida, in an emblematic passage from object of the gaze to subject of the gaze. Moreover, in this encounter, we shift from the idea of “a cat” to the disarming awareness that the animal is a singular unrepeatable uniqueness, which cannot be reduced to the aberrant “nameless” term “a cat”. It is in front of the animal, of that single animal, - in an apparently Sartrean, but actually Heideggerian anecdote - that Derrida discovered the discomfort, the shame, the embarrassment of feeling naked and being mirrored and observed by the nakedness of the other, in a nakedness that we mistakenly believe to only belong to animals.

Lakes

When transcendentalist philosopher Henry David Thoreau stayed from July 4, 1845 to September 6, 1847 alone on the shores of Lake Walden, near Concord, Massachusetts, he had exactly this intention: to reckon with (his) animality. The reason for this is explained by Thoreau himself in his travel diary: “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.” Therefore, what drove the philosopher to live in his house by the lake was this idea: the essential facts, the traces left once social reality is completely deconstructed, are what allow us to truly see the human - that is, the human being as an animal, as *bare life*. And this point of no return is what triggers a *primal metamorphosis*, which is far from metaphorical.
Despite being hard to define, Zen certainly has one essential tenet: *one must become the thing one does*, so as not to no longer do it but be it. Think of the famous archery example made by Eugen Herrigel: as long as you try to shoot the arrow while thinking about the target outside of you, you will make mistakes. But if the arrow is perceived as an extension of your arm, you will hit the target almost automatically: your hand will do the job. In this sense, I argue, the question of becoming, or as I prefer to say, of animal action, is a matter of Zen; we must stop thinking of the animal as something else, be it monstrous (Derrida) or indistinct (Calarco), and understand that every singular animality is an extension of us, as we are an extension of it. Man fills the world with distinctions with his natural propensity for ontological taxonomy, but it is only a survival technique that must be restrained.
There is an almost magical passage in Walden where Thoreau, even just for a moment, succeeds in becoming other than the city by which he was shaped, seeing himself as completely animal: “This is a delicious evening, when the whole body is one sense, and imbibes delight through every pore. I go and come with a strange liberty in Nature, a part of herself. As I walk along the stony shore of the pond in my shirt-sleeves, though it is cool as well as cloudy and windy, and I see nothing special to attract me, all the elements are unusually congenial to me...Sympathy with the fluttering alder and poplar leaves almost takes away my breath; yet, like the lake, my serenity is rippled but not ruffled.”

“Everyone hates the power of their time”, said Pierpaolo Pasolini and, in our time, the power that we must strongly hate is the “biopower”: the kind that expresses itself in controlling the bodies and forgetting animality and nature. To really hate the power, to subvert every form of hierarchy of life and death, today we must be antispeciesists. In Salò, through the emblematic act of "eating shit", Pasolini described the vital path of the citizen suspended in the limbo of a power that homogenizes diversity, stimulates false needs, raises consumerism to a new value and, last but not least, massacres anyone who is foreign to this system: whoever does not bend is broken. We still exist, but only "biologically". Culturally, we are "corpses".

This malaise, which is called anguish, oppresses thought, but also makes it powerful - capable of going beyond the boundaries of this reality: exploring, one by one, the territores of the possible worlds in which history has not taken this terrible shape. Some individuals, among what remains beyond the edge, accompany us on these journeys with their mute gaze, which answers every question in silence. These individuals - subject to the relative and absolute evil that is domestication - make possible the otherwise impossible encounter with the creatures that sleep latent and nameless in the lagers of suspended time.

Hell appeared to be indescribable. The bare suffering of non-human animals was a shapeless mixture of screams, blood and sweat symbolically compressed in the generic and aberrant word "animal". And so, first, those individuals left on the edges had to break down the word "animal" and, unmasking it as a horrible way to signify an absent referent - beasts and monsters - they found the infinite variety of what is different from us: the Animot. In this discovery lies the beginning of what we can define the end of history. The very moment when man, albeit minimally and through a few representatives, realizes on what - at the expense of whom - he has built his path as an entity becoming in history, he chooses to stop the flow of events. Nothing can really continue in the midst of the suffering that has made the world cry. The history of these conscious humans ends because they become animals again and, as Kojève notes, love, art and games can also become natural and therefore lose the anguish of a story, the anxiety of narrating to improve, building nests like sparrows, and being satisfied with this.
For a moment, in these beautiful words, the desire for animality becomes concrete, transcending itself, becoming a desire for the world: Thoreau becomes a lake, becomes an older and poplar... and walks serenely. Consider the American transcendentalist's attempt to become an animal: what would such an attempt look like today? Could we understand it? Would we endorse it? There once was another Thoreau, living in our time, in a different hut: Theodore John Kaczynski, a solitary mathematician who retired to Lincoln, Montana, where he led a simple life, with little money, no electricity or running water. For everyone, today, Kaczynski is a terrorist: he is known for killing some subjects that he deemed dangerous for the life of our species - a strong invitation to become animals, weak only in the ways that a young man, after his doctorate in mathematics, adopted to implement it.

Or something more that, to quote Manlio Sgalabro, hides "in the beautiful toilets, between feather boas, muslims, aigrette, corsets and trains". It takes luck to be able to see the mortification of existence, from the fancy salons of life. Showing solidarity with animals, sharing their fate of marginalization and humiliation, is certainly not difficult: it is almost obvious that slaves, transsexuals and women - among others - should be, by nature, more sensitive to the animal issue. On the other hand, the disinterestedness of the rich and healthy white man, gloating in the Freudian logocentrism of well-cooked meat, of the female object and of the world that magically opens up at his mocassins, is depressing. Considering animality, the ultimate foundation of human life, means using a cultural "level".

However, for those humans - who are now only **individuals** who return to **bare life** - this awareness is the beginning of a battle aimed at bringing everyone closer to the edge where they built their nests. This way by which man gets closer to the other is a paradoxical dance. It forces one to stick within the edges in order to unfold them; it makes one delete the boundaries by closing one's eyes in front of the other, whispering softly and with shame: "wait, I'll come back here for you, and there will be more of us".

But in that relentless homecoming, the face of the one awaiting has already changed, leaving the place to a **nameless other**, in that timeless hell that is the slaughterhouse. And the question becomes inevitable: what is a homecoming? What if there is no place for me to go back to? Yet we must return, if only to make history really stop, beyond the edges where those individuals live. And in this continuous coming and going the anguish unfolds inexorably inside our mortal bodies. The system we are fighting against is not part of history: it is history itself. We are in it, like everyone. We are in it even if it has stopped at the edges where we live. And so we do not try to understand this choice, but we challenge it to safeguard the fictitious spirit of this world.

Why animals? Why animals and not plants? Plants are also living beings, aren't they? And the anguish becomes even heavier, like a burden that conditions every breath of this windowless existence. Of course plants, as Aristotle observed, hold in themselves such a power...
Ted’s lake was not Walden, but it is clear that he shared the same outlook as Thoreau’s: that of a desperate Nature bent by the weight of development disguised as progress. In this solitary journey towards his metamorphosis, Ted understood the essence of our time and summed it up in a few lines: “The moral code of our society is so demanding that no one can think, feel and act in a completely moral way. [...] Some people are so highly socialized that the attempt to think, feel and act morally imposes a severe burden on them. In order to avoid feelings of guilt, they continually have to deceive themselves about their own motives and find moral explanations for their own actions and motives that in reality have a nonmoral origin. We use the term ‘oversocialized’ to describe such people.”

Hence the decisively democratic value of animal philosophy: it is regulated by the obvious and yet questioned principle that every animal life has the same moral value, namely none. Indeed, the attribution of values and ethical judgment is also a product of homo’s uprisen position - a position that has become a throne from which to command all that is other. Animality is circular, however, in an oddly selective way: it establishes a relationship between being and imagining whereby being a beast establishes bestiality and this, in turn, defines the being of the beast. The history of a term, says Agamben, often coincides with the history of its translations or its use in translation, and it is perhaps no coincidence that the term “animal” is used, in all languages, in a way that ontologically compresses the infinite variability of life into a single and mortifying Aristotelian word.

Inferno

But as much as one can compress the infinite, that they appear to us as living. But certainly their living is different from animal living. The same Aristotle, in fact, highlighted that they have no power of the soul other than the nourishing one. In their being lacking and repetitive lies the inexorable fortune of immortality, of not being able to know what dying is. And if it is therefore true that we share death with plants, it is equally true that we do not share dying with them.

But the same unchanging answer to these provocations of history pushes us further from the edges. So we look for different strategies, for different communications. And in the meantime the edge shrinks, increasing our anguish. Now that the empathy with the other has become complete we die with them while remaining alive, we die for them. Because dying, for us who are on the edges, has already begun, even if death is still far away. And so our coming and going has become spasmodic, continuous. We must act in compromise while aiming for the lucid clarity of the goal. We must do it because otherwise history will continue, and suffering will accompany every step of its path.

The end

We who live on the edges will never see this end, because even in the face of history we are unnamed. And then in those homecomings we will no longer find those for whom we have gone, and they will no longer find those for whom they have remained. But this alternation brings out an authentic feeling called education. If our living on the edges is not to be in vain, we have to leave traces. And those who read these traces will get closer the end of history. They will experience the end and climb over these miserable edges. They will walk together, with the other, on the infinite paths of existence: in a word, they will live again. This is not a utopian path, nor is it the highway to goodness. In this hell we cannot know what the good is, because evil has covered every manifestation of it. Trying to describe goodness with logic is a vain and useless attempt. Goodness is connected to history, because history has made it other than itself. Then it is against evil that we must fight; against the history that has brought this evil to light. You ask me what goodness is and I tell you that you will have to eliminate evil to find an answer. Antispeciesism is a
According to Ted, therefore, morality has become so demanding that it has collapsed, turning into moralism: a pure act of self-deception by which even what is immoral is to be understood as ethically correct - for our society, falsification is a point of strength. Ted is now rotting in jail, while US soldiers slaughtering the Fertile Crescent are glorified as heroes. A project of deconstruction such as the one proposed here must take this falsification into account.

Reality exists, resists us and is independent: unreality, or rather social reality, the product of conventions, written acts and functions, must be changed.

Gilles Deleuze’s animal gaze has to question this threshold of falsehood, this myth of a one-dimensional man: the animal gaze modifies by observing. There is little use for a construct that idolizes the white, monogamous working male against all the infinite diversity of life.

believe that the antinorm, or our fate, is similar to that of animals, who actually live in hell, reality will always prove one wrong. Looking into the eyes of the other is not the first way to reunite with it. The first way is to look at the other in its entirety, to understand what we have done to it - and to recognize what we have done to ourselves with that human violence. Because violence as such is human, and the syntagmatic expression “inhumane violence” is actually an oxymoron. What is inhumane, namely improper of the human, cannot be violence. Because violence itself, as a brutal concept, develops within the confines of our theories. By exercising violence, by exercising this theoretical concept on the territory of intentional actions, we have transformed the concept itself into a goal. Violence for violence. This intentional action has produced the tragic event of the ontological fracture between us and nature, between us and the different, between us and the animal - between us and the other. The very act of classifying is violent. Because the one who classifies is always someone, and this someone is always human, who sets himself as the best on the list, the archetype of the indestructible subject, the most evolved of the living, the most intelligent of animals, the most worthy of entities. And why? Because he is the one who classifies: an abyssal tautology by which only those who define themselves as such are worthy. But in these continuous violent acts, some of the “worthy” individuals have stayed on the edges of the classifications - an error of movement that stands suspended on the flow of events. By delivering these events - these already done deeds - from evil we will be able to look the other in the eye, and only in their eyes will we be able to see goodness again. And this goodness is called end. Rationality, as we have already said, is the border of this discourse. Without it we would never have lived, killed by the brutal horror of the manifestation of nature. And yet, having survived this horror, we have decided, by the hand of rationality, to smash everything that might have frightened us, but which had not yet done so.

This precautionary mechanism called reason limits us while making us magnificent. We can certainly describe, with reason, the way to reach the other. Peter Singer and Tom Regan have inhabited this edge with us, and tried to describe how to change through reason. But this description seeks to integrate what is other only because perhaps it is not completely such. However, in this mechanism for safeguarding animal rights, some gear jammed. Welcoming the other because the other is like you means once again perpetrating the fracture. But a new generation can be seen on the horizon. A generation whose voice will now be animal, and with which the place of negativity will finally become a memory of a distant, lost philosophy. And with the definitive death of the human voice, even philosophy, which is Oedipus’s soliloquy, must come to an end.
Because this is the natural consequence of this pain - the privatization of the public, the appropriation of the lives of others, the end of fundamental freedoms. Even from an architectural standpoint, in fact, power shows itself in the continuous gesture of fencing, of discriminating between outside and inside, privileging what pleases us and resembles us. The same goes for the fence we called the Berlin Wall, and all the barriers standing between Israel and the West Bank, those around the European Union or on the border between Mexico and the United States. That day that seemed so far away to Thoreau has now arrived: now only a few have heard of the sun shining through the fence. For this reason the enclosures, which are the material practice of falsification, must be deconstructed: because their forms have nothing in common with ours.

The animal world is made up of silences and leaps. I like to see them lying down to rest, when they regain contact with Nature, receiving nourishing lifeblood in return for their abandonment. Their rest is as accurate as our work. Their sleep is as trusting as our first love.

JEAN GRENIER, Islands

[4] In this regard, see Jacques Derrida’s analysis in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*.