The Animal: Other Civility and Animality in and Beyond Heidegger, Levinas, and Derrida

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Much contemporary ethical and political discourse involves notions of the self, its community, and the "other" individuals and communities from whom it distinguishes itself and its own. The notions of civility and incivility often play a crucial role here, since one prevalent human approach to difference has aimed either to include others ethically through their assimilation into a community or "civilization" of sameness, or to exclude others by designating them as beastly, savage, or "uncivilized." This dynamic has operated in abundant well-documented inter-human relationships. This paper argues that the same dynamic structures much Western human-non-human animal theoretical discourse, and that much of what has been said about inter-human collective political activity and its ethical implications can and should be applied to questions regarding the ethical relationships between the community of human beings and its non-human animal others, especially in light of certain postmodern conditions. Indeed, in some ways, much contemporary political and ethical theory that explicitly addresses only inter-human relationships is even more applicatory to the encounter between humans and non-human animals than it is to the relationship regarding which it was originally conceived.

Paradox pervades the relationship between civility and animality. Often, purportedly civilized human beings contrast themselves from "beastly" or "savage" non-human animals, then justify treating these "uncivilized" animals with barbaric brutality on grounds that only the civilized deserve to be treated with civility. Such thinking obviously violates the spirit of the moral demands implied in the connotations of "civility" that involve humaneness, gentleness, and kindness.[1] I will attempt to un-

dermine this dynamic by building upon the current discourse on human collective political activity, human-non-human animal social relations, and thoughts of "postmodern" or "post-structuralist" thinkers Martin Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jacques Derrida.

Before launching into a discussion of the interspecies relationship, it may be helpful to examine relevant concepts as they appear in current discourse on inter-human political encounters, for a recent trend here reconceptualizes the relationship between the community and its others in ways eminently applicable to the interspecies encounter. The two thinkers examined in this section describe a dichotomizing move in traditional political discourse that they consider problematic and for which they seek an alternative middle ground. Though the authors' two projects do not precisely mirror each other, this paper indicates that the same general structure that they see at work in the inter-human political realm also functions in the human-non-human animal encounter. After examining the middle-ground position these authors advocate and incorporating ideas from Heidegger, Levinas, and Derrida, this study will endorse a similar middle-ground conclusion about the relationship between the human community and other animals.

Civility, Ethics, and Animality in Contemporary Political Discourse

Regarding human collective political activity, Martin E. Marty portrays a destructive dichotomy between "totalism" and "tribalism" that he sees operating in the political milieu of the United States. As Marty describes the situation, the totalists, usually linked with nationalists, strive to suppress difference by enforcing a single ideology on each individual in the community. Totalists acknowledge the existence of dissenters from the communitarian creed, but they seek to nullify the difference that these marginalized voices embody by assimilating them within the pre-existing communal narrative. On the other hand, Marty describes tribalism as the view that the community at large cannot provide a coherent ideology—that only the smaller, particularized social groups to which one belongs can accomplish this (10-14). Marty sees a type of tribalist orientation operating in, among others, the work of Alasdair McIntyre, who proclaims the existence of "incommensurable universes of discourse," in which the subjective contexts within which any individual or group is inscribed preclude meaningful contact or mutual understanding (71-2). Regarding such an orientation (and demonstrating a humanistic limitation that this paper aims to address) Marty quotes Reinhold Niehbur's statement, "[T]he chief source of man's [sic] inhumanity to man seems to be the tribal limits of his sense of obligation to the other man" (12).

According to Marty, the totalist and tribalist tendencies have wrought trauma in American life, and he avoids what he sees as an unnecessary dichotomy between assimilation and incommensurability with the concept of "symbiosis," which indicates for Marty "social life" or "living together." The idea is that while particular contextualized group differences can and should exist, the possibility also exists for the mutual enrichment of each group through their contact (147-149). To resolve the tensions between those who seek to preserve or extend sameness and those who would protect their own group-based identity from con-

tact with otherness, Marty emphasizes the importance of the concept of story in political life. The working "symbiote" he envisions can be achieved—and incommensurability transcended—only when marginalized groups are able to assemble and give voice to their plight and when the dominant group truly listens to this voice. He writes that Native Americans, Jews, and descendants of slaves must speak up and tell their own story in order to, among other things, preserve their important cultural uniqueness (146).

Iris Young likewise sees a debilitating dichotomy framing much of traditional political theory. The dichotomy Marty describes between tribalism and totalism mirrors the contrast Young describes in traditional political theory between individual liberalism and communitarianism. For Young, individual liberalism fails to accommodate the political significance of differentiated cultural group identification, and thus burkes an important form of group sameness, while communitarianism suppresses difference, by imposing one view on the many (*Justice* 226-236). Like Marty, Young intends to chart a course that avoids the dilemma she describes, encouraging the emphasis on group differences and refusing the assumption that a theorist might obtain a comprehensive and detemporalized point of view independent of the social context in which issues of justice arise (*Justice* 3-4). Like Marty, who declares the totalist efforts to achieve a practically homogenous state to be dangerous if unchecked (11-12), Young argues that we must not be deluded by a notion of an ideal homogenous community of shared subjectivity, for such an ideal assumes a problematic logic of identity, squelching difference, and she declares that political relations must affirm the group differences that they currently seek to exclude or assimilate (*Justice* 232-236).

Notwithstanding work attempting to teach apes to use human-derived symbolic languages (these will be discussed below), non-human animals are ontologically unable to tell us their story in a way that any marginalized human group could. Thus the ethical imperative of extending to them considerations of "civility" as "kindness" and "humaneness" goes unrecognized by so many. This includes Marty, whose discussion is limited to the extension of civility without assimilation only to affiliations based on uniquely human identity descriptors, e.g., race, sex, class, ethnicity, nationality, and language (20). Non-human animals as a marginalized group are conspicuously absent from the list of those whose stories he wishes to include in the general discourse. The same is true of Young's analysis, whose valuable attention to approaching the question by listening to the oppressed (*Justice* 3-14 and *Inclusion* ch. 5), unfortunately, is limited to consideration of oppression with inter-human origins, e.g., "racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, and ableism" (*Justice* 11). The humanistic limitation in Young's work is further evidenced in her exaltation of city life as the ideal (and inevitable) mode of human existence (*Justice* 237). Cities are generally thought of as places where large numbers of people live, not as homes for non-human animals.[2] One might regard Young's idealization here as an example of the pathological positivism—the accepting as given of that which requires supplementation—that she elsewhere decries (*Justice* 3). Young's ideal of the city as the place where (human) strangers are brought together can be fruitfully supplemented with the valorizations of wilderness exhibited by thinkers such as Max Oelschlaeger, Akira Lippit, William

Cronon, and Ted Benton. In the city, admittedly different, contextualized groups do come together as strangers, but they do so in light of at least the possibility of some linguistic connection that is structurally impossible with other species, who remain in this sense ever stranger to us than any linguistically capable human.

Some of these authors' ideas, however, are more useful for understanding interspecies relations than is Young's rosy vision of the city. For example, Marty's discussion of story, when recontextualized, seems eminently apposite to the human-non-human animal encounter. He endorses an openness that preserves difference rather than assimilating or excluding it; this openness must acknowledge that another being's story may be uttered in an unfamiliar language—or may be undetectable at all. Such a perspective may be required in the encounter between different humans, most of whom have the communicative power of speech and writing—it is even more crucial for an appropriate understanding of the relationship between humans and other animals, whose different subjectivity entails different modes of communication.

Young's political analysis echoes themes from Marty's discourse on stories, especially those issuing from marginalized groups, when she heralds the importance of the "self-organization of marginalized people into affinity groupings [that] enable people to develop a language in which to voice experiences" (*Inclusion* 155). This is exactly the type of complex self-organization and linguistic development and expression that are impossible for other species; thus it is inappropriate to apply the linguistic standard to questions regarding the ethical status of non-human animals. Among humans, some admittedly unstable but still significant political and ethical discourse is possible, because humans can give linguistic expression to their subjectivity and are able to comprehend similar expressions by other humans. Between human and other animal species, on the other hand, this link is absent, and this relationship requires an ethics grounded in a notion of civility as the gentle treatment of a partially inaccessible other. For this reason, Young's formulation of "a relationship of strangers who do not understand one another," when recontextualized along the same lines as indicated above regarding Marty's discussion of story, facilitates the deployment of a more fitting ethical model for the interspecies relationship (*Justice* 234). If a non-human animal's story is to be told or heard, this will require both a different type of listening than that to which humans are accustomed, as well as an attempt (the success of which is assumed from the start to be circumscribed) to tell the story of non-humans' ethical importance in our own language.

Marty and Young both inquire about the general question of the civil relationship between the community and its others. Both authors seek a middle course that affirms group difference and that promotes contact without assimilation and meaningful exchange without complete subjective harmony, in contrast to traditional ethical theory, which has assumed that what is essential is to break down the barrier between beings for direct ethical exchange to occur—that the other must prove to be somehow like me. But both depend on some level of commensurability in language, which is structurally impossible within the human-non-human animal relationship, so I now turn to recent work, performed across a range of disciplines, which explicitly investigates the nature of this encounter.

Humanity and Animality in Other Disciplines

Within the current interdisciplinary discourse on the human-non-human animal relationship, a dichotomy of approaches seems to have emerged. One approach exclusively emphasizes (at least some species of) non-human animals' sameness, in some important regard, vis-à-vis humanity; the other focuses exclusively on non-human animals' otherness or difference from humanity in one or more crucial respects. The central questions in the two main works this paper will contrast to illustrate this dichotomy are those that ground the rest of this paper—questions about human and non-human animal ontology and about the ethical relationship between the civilized human community and the beastly animal others.

The Great Ape Project, edited by Paola Cavalieri and Peter Singer, typifies the first half of the dichotomy. Fundamental to this project is the assumption that for any other person or animal to demand direct ethical consideration, some aspect of similarity among the individuals involved is required, and its proponents go to great lengths to highlight ways in which animals are similar to humans—genetically, physiologically, psychologically, emotionally, and socially. Since, the thesis claims, our "fellow great apes" (chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans) exhibit such similarities, they should be included in the sphere of moral equality. As a representative of the approach that overemphasizes sameness while neglecting the fruitful possibilities that difference can generate, the "Declaration on Great Apes" explicitly inculpates "[t]he notion of 'us' as opposed to 'the other,' in the enabling of centuries of tribalism, nationalism, racism, and 'speciesism'" (5).

The second half of the work explores successes in communicating with apes via various means of symbolic systems derived by humans, in which animals do seem to exhibit similarity with human beings in their admittedly limited but meaningful attachment of such symbols to physical objects, feelings, and people. Dawkins presents an arresting image of a computer-generated hypothetical "intermediate" human/chimpanzee face, evoking the theme of the continuity of species boundaries that runs throughout the book (86). Corbey's contribution, "The Philosopher's Ape," argues for the existence of relative and gradual differences between humans and other great apes as opposed to purported essential and absolute differences highlighted "among philosophers" (133). In the appropriately titled contribution, "Who's Like Us?" Hayre and Hayre propose the extension of the "community of equals"— a concept already criticized by Marty and Young for its failure to note significant differences between members of the human community—and which this paper examines through a different philosophical lens than the one Corbey challenges (175).

In a work as vast as this collection, there are exceptions to the near-exclusive emphasis on sameness. For example, Mitchell (244) and Francione (256) admit the existence of the ontological difference between humans and other animals, to avoid the absurdity (often employed as a critique of "animal rights" positions) of requiring human interference with wildlife by policing the animal world to prevent violence. Particularly germane to this paper is Corbey's contribution, which portrays civility as the restraint of "animal" impulses and observes, "[A]nimals by their very nature act in uncivilized ways" (128). Here Corbey touches upon the major point that must be faced by anyone who wants to extend to non-human ani-

mals the kind of direct ethical consideration that is normally reserved for humans alone: this entails an asymmetrical and non-reciprocity based ethical structure, the deployment of which is facilitated by incorporating ideas from the writings of Heidegger, Levinas, and Derrida, as I will elaborate below.

Jamieson also stumbles into this realm of transition from traditional philosophical conceptualizations of animal being and its relationship to human being to the transformed conceptualization that I advocate when he writes, "Perhaps some day we will reach a stage in which the similarities among the great apes will be salient for us, and the differences among them will be dismissed as trivial and unimportant, *or perhaps even enriching* [emphasis mine]" (225). The goal that dominates *The Great Ape Project* is summarized by the first two possibilities—that humans will recognize ethically significant similarities and that the differences between human and other ape species will be dismissed as trivial. I would like to emphasize the third possibility—that these differences may be psychologically, sociologically, philosophically, and ethically enriching—and to argue that both traditional "modern" and much "postmodern" philosophical discourse has failed adequately to view through such a lens the region where the concepts of civility and animality intersect.

In contrast with the sameness oriented *Great Ape Project,* Paul Shepard's engaging and lyrical *The Others: How Animals Made Us Human* emphasizes (or over-emphasizes) the difference between human and non-human animal species, and thus his work serves as an effective foil to the predominant tack that exclusively accentuate sameness and community. For Shepard, the primary relationship between human beings and the non-human animal Other is established through human predation; indeed, for Shepard, omnivory is essential to what it means to be human; he declares that the human mind is "child of the hunt"—that the hunt "made us human" (17, 9). He couples this evolutionary story with a spiritual one in which humans' killing and eating of non-human animals effects a simultaneously physical and metaphysical transformation, which Shepard describes as "the ultimate act of respect," for it is "consummation as an act of unity with the Other [which] was the inspired legacy of omnivory" (12, 27). He explicitly rejects the importance of civility as kindness when, describing his encounter with the "great naturalists," he states that it was *not* their "civilized kindness" that he valued but their "curiosity, receptive courtesy, gratitude and respect for the power of animals" (5). Shepard avoids anthropocentrism by speculating that for the non-human animal, death in the hunt may be painless or euphoric (29), and that for humans the killing and consumption of the non-human animal, infused by the power of our thankfulness (35), bestows upon us the radical and sacred gift of the animal of itself as meat (333). This paper advocates reversing the structure—offering non-human animals the radical gift (see the discussion of Derrida below) of direct ethical consideration, which assumes no symmetry or reciprocity.

Like thinkers such as Peter Singer, Shepard exhibits revulsion for factory farms, but, unlike Singer, he grounds this sentiment in an explicitly personal and spiritual communion with the other animals one rightfully consumes. Furthermore, Shepard consistently valorizes the flipside of this personal relationship— the "gut-wrenching" possibility of being eaten—though it is difficult to envision

this as the same type of possibility for (post)modern humanity as it was for our distant ancestors, whose existence Shepard desires to emulate. With the technological capacity to feed humans on a meat-free diet, it is far from clear that human predation upon other animals is either necessary or desirable. Shepard's work is inspiring for its insight into the mystery of non-human animal being and the fascination it evokes, but it is too fascinated with the institution of omnivory itself. This can be partially remedied by an ethics of civility as kindness and as contact without assimilation.

Where the project of this paper is concerned, Shepard's exaltation of omnivory is guilty of what Young termed bad "positivism," which assumes as given what should be critiqued—here the assimilatory structure of the human-non-human animal relationship: of omnivory. Shepard over-emphasizes non-human animals' otherness and substitutes a particular humanistic vision of human versus animal ontology, without acknowledging the other types of meaningful connections that are possible between human and non-human animal species, beyond that of predator and prey, which he so eloquently describes. Shepard views the animal world as a text to be read, approaching Marty's and Young's emphasis on story, but encloses his analysis in one omnivorous rendering of the text, rarely considering possible non-human animal productions or "readings" of their own "texts." Regarding Shepard's analysis of the human story about non-human animality, though he attempts to subvert the oft-cited Western tendency to disguise the animal's living form behind its presentation as food, via semantic shifts—e.g., from "flesh" to "meat" or from "tortured calf" to "veal"—his emphasis on non-human animals' "otherness" enables the unreasonable glorification of the spiritual experience of human predation. Such thinking must be supplanted; where Shepard advocates that humans speak thanks for the generative kill, I promote an ethics of listening for the perhaps ungrateful but still compelling call of the animal via unfamiliar idioms.

Some authors are already taking tentative steps in this direction. For example, recently published collections in the field of geography also recognize in broad terms the types of dichotomies this paper analyzes and thus deserve mention here. Philo advocates the explicit political project that takes animals seriously as another social group and focuses on their transgressive symbolic power (52-3). Emel writes of animals as "symbols of resistance" (112-113). Michel writes of the care for wildlife as a political act of resistance (176), and Lynn describes speaking for the moral value of animals as "transgressing the boundaries of our human-centered morality" (286). Philo and Wilbert most closely approach this paper's focus on the nexus of civility and animality in another collection of geographical writings when they speak of constructing a "new animal geography" in which animals receive our extended "courtesies" (25). In the same volume, Jones emphasizes the uneven ethical relationships between humans and other animal species, even hesitantly advocating the "adaptation" of Levinasian themes, again approaching the discussion that will dominate some of the remaining sections of this paper, which plumb Levinasian themes more deeply than does Jones's brief treatment, while supplementing these themes with the thoughts of Heidegger and Derrida.

All these thinkers have already stepped into postmodern philosophical territory by seeking alternative possibilities to present themselves where other animals are concerned and by encouraging the construction of "new geographies" like Haraway's "cyborg world," in which humans avoid relationships of hierarchical domination or "hyperpolarization," reflected in the dichotomies discussed throughout this paper, and instead affirm their joint kinship with beings from contradictory standpoints (154). These authors already recognize the implications of the postmodern condition vis-à-vis the human-non-human animal relationship, and their analyses of the dichotomies between modernity and postmodernity provide the transition to a reoriented view of the philosophical history of the human-animal dichotomy and of the implications for this dichotomy of the new environment these writers describe. Deploying transformed ideas from the writings of Heidegger, Levinas, and Derrida into this debate will add to these conceptual anabases, helping to chart a middle course between the sameness oriented *Great Ape Project* and the otherness rooted analysis Shepard provides—a course in which civility and animality supplement each other through meaningful contact without assimilation.

Modernist Approaches to Philosophical Ethics

A discussion of postmodern thinkers does well to begin by examining the views of the modern thinkers whose views they undermine or transcend. In the history of human treatment of non-human animals, two trends have dominated, each with a source in one of two main Western ethical theories, deontological and utilitarian. Paradigmatic exemplars of each camp, Immanuel Kant and Jeremy Bentham, explicitly addressed the subject in a way that reflects the dichotomous thinking discussed throughout this paper.

Kant clearly states that non-human animals, as "non-rational," have mere "indirect" ethical relevance. Only "rational" human beings can legislate or embody the pure moral law and thus qualify as ends-in-themselves, while non-self-conscious, non-rational animals can exist only as means to human ends. Of course, Kant's banishment of animals from the realm of directly relevant beings does not necessarily imply the acceptability of, nor does Kant condone, human cruelty toward animals. However, Kant bases his condemnation of animal cruelty on the grounds that a human who indulges in animal cruelty will be more likely also to cause gratuitous harm to other human beings. Thus, according to Kant, humans have an "indirect" duty "regarding" animals that prohibits wanton cruelty toward them, but this is so only because humans have other "direct" duties towards each other as fellow rational ends-in-themselves (*Lectures* 239-40).

This structure has determined the lives of billions of animals, and though Kant did not condone human cruelty toward animals, his intellectual legacy includes the notorious Cartesian vivisectionists, who argued that non-human animals were incapable of suffering pain, and thinkers such as Jan Narveson, who while not denying the existence of non-human animal pain, argues that the quality and therefore the ethical relevance of the suffering of beings with sophisticated mental capacities is different from the suffering of lower animals with less complicated inner lives. While this might seem to bolster a position according to which

mammals should be treated humanely while insects may be killed, Narveson draws the dividing line higher up the phylogenic scale, and rather than attempt to deny animal pain as Shepard does, he rejects its relevance to human beings (37). Such a basically Kantian perspective characterizes prevalent Western attitudes regarding human treatment of non-human animals. Laws exist, too, that proscribe non-institutionalized animal cruelty, but institutionalized animal cruelty for human benefit is countenanced—even for minor benefits such as the satisfaction of culinary tastes. While people might argue about which animals are ethically edible and which experiments are morally permissible, most people affirm that to satisfy hunger or to expand scientific knowledge, considerable animal suffering is allowed, even if regretted.

Kant's contemporary and paradigmatic utilitarian Jeremy Bentham advanced a view regarding non-human animals that has persistently dogged the Kantian perspective. Bentham's utilitarian approach is theoretically simple: ethical decisions require that one calculate the interests of all involved and choose the course of action that will maximize the benefit among this group. Some standard problems with utilitarian thinking are well known, e.g., the tenuous nature of inter-subjective value calculations and the ways that strict utilitarianism allows intolerable harms to individuals or minorities provided sufficient benefit to the majority (Harwood 179-192, McIntyre 236-243). Another major source of criticism is Bentham's unitary notion of pleasure as the sole good. According to Bentham's formulation, opponents claimed, one must conclude that given the choice between "satisfied fool" and "unsatisfied Socrates," or between "satisfied pig" and "unsatisfied human," the former states would be preferable. Indeed, Bentham is famous for the following statement regarding non-human animals: "The question is not, 'Can they *reason*?' nor, 'Can they *talk*?' but 'Can they *suffer*?'" (307). This valuation of non-human animal being fueled critique of Bentham's emphasis on pleasure and earned his Hedonistic Calculus the moniker of "swine-philosophy." It also highlights the major weakness of the last two hundred years of utilitarian thought on this topic, from Bentham to Peter Singer: inadequate treatment of the difference(s) between humans and other animals.

For example, inadequate consideration of this difference prompts some to proclaim the existence of "animal rights." While I support the motivating position that people should respect the lives of other animals more than many people currently do, I believe that the compulsion to advocate animal rights results from a failure to consider fully the ontological difference(s) between human and animal being—from an ethics of the same, which assumes that ethical relationships are necessarily and essentially contractual and/or symmetrical. Do dogs have the right to vote? As Heidegger writes in a different context, "Such judgment may be compared to the procedure of trying to evaluate the essence and powers of a fish by seeing how long it can live on dry land" ("Humanism" 265).

Kant and Bentham both contribute to the ethical approach this paper will chart, but where Bentham underemphasizes the difference between human and animal being, Kant overemphasizes it. In a sense, Kant has the form right and the content wrong, while Bentham has the form wrong and the content right. Bentham is right to extend direct ethical consideration to non-human animals; he

is wrong to believe that the detached, mathematical calculation of interests and consequences is equal to the task of ethical thinking or that a concept of non-human animals' sameness vis-à-vis humanity provides the only necessary buttress for an argument that encourages the direct consideration of their interests. Kant is wrong to deny non-human animals such direct consideration, but he is right to recognize that human rationality and the difference between human and non-human animal beings are crucial factors in this particular ethical relationship, and he is right to seek a transcendent, radical ground for ethics rather than relying solely on empirical calculation, which is always tenuous and provisional. The postmodern break with the modern ethics of utility or deontology, fueled in part by the thoughts of Heidegger, Levinas, and Derrida, provides the basis for a new approach to questions regarding the ethical status of non-human animals—one that transcends the difficulties involved with both traditional formulations of the issue.

The Post-Modern Alternative

This paper presents a possible middle ground between, on one hand, the ascendant humanist view, which recognizes only non-human animals' otherness and defines them essentially as mere raw material for the satisfaction of human needs or desires and, on the other hand, the extreme sort of naturalism that can grow from a myopic focus on non-human animals' (or "nature's") sameness, vis-à-vis humanity. It attempts to accomplish this by recognizing the proper contributions and limitations of each of these formulations of non-human animal beings and by supplementing them with ideas from an ethics of deconstruction, inspired by the writings of Martin Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jacques Derrida.

Each member of this trio challenges aspects of the Cartesian foundationalism that grounds modernist approaches to ethics such as Kant's Categorical Imperative and Bentham's Hedonistic Calculus. The approaches of Kant and Bentham assume that rational deliberations by an objective, isolated, and de-historicized subject produce unquestionable ethical guidelines. Poststructuralist thinkers, on the other hand, have challenged the unquestionable validity of the rules thus produced, the discrete and objective self that produced them, and the assumed knowledge regarding those to whom the rules apply. I suggest an alternative formulation that offers the possibility of allowing the non-human animal to present its ethical demands before its submission to the rules or methods of calculation to which humans normally submit the other and its interests. The traditional approach assumes that before one can address questions regarding non-human animals' ethical status, one must first define the essence of animals' beings. Kant and Bentham both begin their ethical deliberations regarding animals in this way, and their definitions of an animal's essence as either sentient or non-rational risk committing the sort of ontological imperialism that produces an "ethics of the same" (see the discussion of Levinas's critique below). What I am calling for here is an acknowledgement from the beginning of ethical deliberation that the other animal always outstrips my knowledge, and that the true ethical relationship between "civilized" humans and "uncivilized" non-human animals is indeed founded in this radical difference and lack of comprehension.

While one of my goals is to promote an evolution in consciousness regarding the ethical status of non-human animals and the prevention of needless suffering, working through these issues surrounding non-human animals' ethical status can serve humanity as well, advancing understanding of the nature of inter-human ethics. For example, one who attempts inter-human application of notions from the ethics of deconstruction, such as "absolute alterity" or "radical hospitality," faces difficulties that do not plague one who applies these concepts to the encounter between humans and other animals, where structural asymmetry and non-reciprocity are obvious and inescapable. Contracts are impossible in this latter encounter, but they are often indispensable in human interaction. The economy of radical giving can inspire our good will toward fellow humans, but, for reasons that Hobbes expatiated in the seventeenth century, before full elaboration of either the traditional deontological/utilitarian polarity or the postmodern alternative, it would be impractical to expect the economy of radical giving to dominate our courts, marketplace, international relations, etc. This paper advances ethical dialogue by shedding new light on the possible contributions and limitations of an inter-human ethics grounded in ideas of asymmetry or radical alterity, by recognizing the asymmetrical "ethics of deconstruction" (see the work of Simon Critchley for a full exposition of the meaning of this phrase) at work in the human-animal encounter and by analyzing the relationship between the inter-human encounter and that between humans and other animals.

This work will also hold important significance for the specialized field of environmental ethics, where the question of non-human animals' ethical status is usually treated. Much work in this area has roots in the "land ethic" of thinkers such as Aldo Leopold or, more recently, by the "deep ecology" of thinkers such as Arne Naess. While these approaches do represent a conceptual evolvement vis-à-vis the delimitations of the human-animal relationship that Kant and Bentham inspire, their relationship with these latter thinkers is "eschatological" in the same sense as are the thoughts of Heidegger and Levinas vis-à-vis the deontological and utilitarian ethical approaches generally, in that they sometimes seem to advocate escaping human subjectivity or denying ontological difference between species, or between humanity and "nature" in general. This maneuver degrades humanity and fails to recognize important responsibilities entailed by humanity's unique position in the ecosphere; it also degrades animality by not recognizing something noted by thinkers from Buddha to Bentham to Peter Singer and Tom Regan: that sentience matters—that, generally speaking, biological creatures capable of suffering deserve more direct ethical consideration than do inanimate and insentient things. This is not to deny the huge indirect or instrumental ethical relevance of entities such as plants, soils, bodies of water, or ecosystems, but to recognize the bounds of both human and non-human subjectivity, as well as the responsibilities entailed by the special powers humans exercise as they relate to other animals and to nature at large.

Heidegger and Animal Being

Of the several places in which Heidegger analyzes the being of non-human animals, the most extensive is a section of *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics:*

World, Finitude Solitude, where he describes non-human animal being as "poor-in-world." While non-human animal being is subjective and not "worldless" like the being of the stone, the non-human animal is capable of only a limited range and depth of experiential relationships—unlike human Dasein, who is the only being constitutionally able to relate to anything "as such." According to Heidegger's description, non-human animals "have" a world, but they are "benumbed" or "bedazzled" by it and are unable to recognize this or anything else "as such." He contrasts this relative shallowness of non-human animal experience with the richness of "world-forming" human Dasein. Elsewhere, along similar lines, Heidegger discusses the "abyss of essence" that separates the human who can think, speak, and "have hands" (as opposed to mere grasping organs) from the ape that cannot ("Thinking"). While Heidegger denies that his ontological discourse regarding non-human animality implies any corresponding ethical determination, his consideration of the ontological difference between the being of humans and that of other animals, like Kant's less extensive reflections, facilitates responding to thinkers who inappropriately apply conventional inter-human systems of contractual, symmetrical, "ethics of the same" to the relationship between humans and other animals, which is structurally non-contractual, asymmetrical, and rooted in ontological difference.

This emphasis on the ontological difference between humans and other animals is one part of Heidegger's contribution to my project; a second is his call to an essentially phenomenological mode of thinking that does not immediately assault being with the demands of the *ratio* but attempts to open a clearing for being to emerge "without reason," as he discusses at length in *The Principle of Reason.* Heidegger also discusses different modes of human being—of Being coming to presence through humans in different ways—by writing of thinking as *poiesis,* prior to its co-optation in the service of *theoria* and *techne* ("Humanism" 218-221). Such a position suggests that humans (and "humanism") fail to recognize such possible modes of *aletheia* when they assume that *ratio* marks the essence of humanity and depend exclusively on this mode of encountering the world.[3] Heidegger refutes the idea, central to the metanarrative of Kant and Bentham, that humanity is exhaustively or essentially defined as the *animal rationale,* linking such a notion with that of humanity as *animal metaphysicum,* and arguing that metaphysics is overcome in the mode of thinking he valorizes. This has ramifications for Kantian and utilitarian formulations of ethics in general and for the dominant approaches to the question of non-human animals' ethical status in particular that Kant and Bentham inspire, for these orientations are products of the *animale rationale*—Kant and Bentham both legislate moral law according to laws set by the *ratio* of the "*animal metaphysicum*" that Heidegger undermines.

The *animal rationale* might be "the lord of beings," but Heidegger prefers a conception of humanity as "the shepherd of Being [. . . who] gains the essential poverty of the shepherd, whose dignity consists in being called by Being itself into the preservation of Being's truth" ("Humanism" 245). Where elsewhere Heidegger had defined non-human animals being with the image of "poverty," here he speaks of the poverty of human Dasein, who is powerless in the face of the call of responsibility entailed by humanity's being thrown into its role as "pre-

server of Being's truth"—even though it is humans' particular "powers" that allow them to hear this call in the first place. According to Heidegger, fundamental "Ek-sistence, [. . .] ecstatic dwelling in the nearness of Being [. . .] is the guardianship, that is, the care for Being" (246). Heidegger's contribution to my project includes the exploration of possible modes of existence other than those that "assault" or "enframe" being ("Technology" 311-341)—particularly non-human animal modes of being—and the introduction of a concept of stewardship that, when applied to the relationship between humans and other animals, acknowledges the importance of ontological differences between humans and other animals and recognizes the responsibility that this difference entails for those of us who *can* relate to things "as such" and who *do* have hands that "form worlds"—including those worlds of which other animal species are either inhabitants or prisoners.

The implications of all this for questions of animal ethics should be obvious by this point, though Heidegger does not explicitly thematize them. First, Heidegger's approach stands in direct contrast with the "modern" approaches represented by and issuing from Kant and Bentham, who assume as given the existence of the discrete subject as calculator of value and legislator of moral law. Instead, Heidegger discusses a more "originary ethics" than any "humanistic" or "metaphysical" version, with roots in what he calls a primordial *ethos.* Heidegger describes a structure in which ethical demands issue not from the reasoning and calculative metaphysical subject but from Being itself, and humanity's task is to respond appropriately. When over-reaching metaphysical tendencies are sufficiently checked, the possibility for a new "path of thinking" emerges—a path that presents itself in stark contrast to the style of calculative thought that demands and renders reasons (*Principle* 26-7) or that "enframes" everything as "standing reserve" for technological utilization ("Technology" 311-341). This new path is marked by *gelassenheit*—a "releasement" toward things that lets beings be, without assaulting them with the subjective assertions of a humanistic metaphysics.

While humanity's uniquely "ontological" nature gives it partial power to form its own world, the products of human reason also largely determine the content of any world that non-human animals have. The "guardianship" of which Heidegger speaks resonates with an ethics founded in an asymmetrical power structure. As the only animal which, according to Heidegger, can have hands and form worlds, humanity has the power on one hand to force the animal being to render itself as standing reserve in a factory farm (not to mention the power to eliminate other animal species altogether), or, on the other hand, to structure the world in a manner that includes areas where other animals have freedom to *be* more "authentically."[4] Humans can force calves into being the ethically irrelevant source of veal, or they can allow them the freedom to move, to nurse, to play, etc. The call of responsibility referred to above can be seen as the natural result of humanity's unique nature as guardian of Being, and it implies a concept of stewardship regarding non-human animal life which strives to allow certain modes of animal being to flourish while not forcing into presence torturous and distorted forms of animal being, such as those that exist on veal farms and in laboratories for the development of cosmetics.

To borrow another expression, this one from the essay on technology: for animals, indeed, from whence the danger comes, also comes the saving power. Humans have perpetually employed their cognitive powers in strategies of oppression and violence against other animal species. Some might seek to jettison rationality completely, but the strategy outlined here involves employing our cognitive powers to realize that rationality is not the *ne plus ultra* of creation, but, to speak as Heidegger, is but one mode among others of the presencing of Being—though a particularly dangerous mode in its tendency to shut out other forms. It is not a matter of renouncing rationality or technology but of not allowing these modes of *aletheia* to obliterate other valuable modes of being, human and animal. Similarly, it is not a mater of escaping or relinquishing our role as shepherd, but of embodying it with humane respect for other animals over whom we have power—of reaffirming the archaic sense of "civility" as gentle, kind, and *humane*.

The major deficit in Heidegger's thought where this project is concerned is the absence of any explicit ethical conclusions about the human-animal relationship that his extensive ontological reflections regarding human and animal being might be expected to yield, and this study will benefit by supplementing Heidegger's contributions with the discourse of Immanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida.

Levinas's Other and the 'Unreasonable' Uniqueness of Humanity

Like Heidegger, Immanuel Levinas sees his own work as breaking with the dominant Western orientation, but where Heidegger marks that tradition as bound by Plato and Nietzsche, Levinas's landmarks are Parmenides and Heidegger. In fact, Levinas sees Heidegger as the paramount representative of an approach that squelches the Other. It does this, Levinas argues, by shutting the thinking self off from access to the Other's alterity and thinking of it in such a way as to force it into categories of the Same. Levinas comments on his relationship with Heidegger in numerous places. In one representative example, he states, "Heidegger's Dasein? Dasein never wonders whether, by being da, 'there', it's taking somebody else's place!" (*French Philosophers* 19).

Levinas calls his own project "ethics as first philosophy," in contrast with the "ontological" approach that has hitherto dominated Western thought, rejecting the self-initiated categorization of the Other (*Totality* 69) and condemning Western philosophy as a process of "ontology [. . . involving] a reduction of the other to the same" (*Totality* 43). Like Heidegger, Levinas avoids issuing moral guidelines in the traditional sense, because, for Levinas, the encounter with alterity is primary, and this alterity is radically unknowable. This renders unjustifiable attempts to subject the Other to any ultimate, rationally derived moral principle such as the Categorical Imperative or the Principle of Benefit Maximization. Commentators note this aspect of Levinasian ethics as well, e.g., Llewelyn reviews of Levinas's idea of the ethical as prior to the ideas of justice that guide deontological and teleological moralities (137), and Davis distinguishes Levinas's project from those that employ codes of rules or study reasoning about how we should behave (35).

The fundamental problem plaguing both dominant approaches to non-human animal ethics is that they assume that their first step in deciding what obligations humans have toward other animals must be to provide some positive answer to the question: "What are non-human animals?" Kant and Bentham both proceed this way, and both make hasty and one-sided presumptions of knowledge about other animals' being in order to submit these beings to rules established by ratiocination. In contrast, Levinas eschews the questions "Who is the other?" and "What is the other?" and declares that such questions reduce the other to a "character within a context," robbing it of its inherent elusiveness (Nemo 86). If the concept of the Other is enlarged to include members of other animal species, then it becomes clear that Bentham's assimilation of non-human animals within the sphere of the sentient and Kant's conscription of the "non-rational" animal to the lower tier of mere indirect ethical relevance could both be considered guilty of the "ontological imperialism" and suppression of alterity that Levinas means to counter. Non-human animality's relative powerlessness—even its "poverty in world"—can, when viewed through this Levinasian lens, reinforce the call to stewardship developed from Heidegger's writings.

Levinas also dwells extensively on the structural asymmetry of the ethical relationship; this comes to the fore in his symbolism of the Other as "orphan, widow, stranger"—symbols that emphasize the relative powerlessness of the Other (*Totality* 76-77, among other places). Levinas illuminates a structure in which the forcefulness of the Other's demand for respect varies in inverse proportion with the Other's level of "power" in the usual sense of the word. The marginal figures of the widow, orphan, and stranger are all somehow *deprived* (of a husband, of parents, or of friendly fellows); they lack the power to command ethical respect by physical force or via a symmetrical contract, but they command it nonetheless—and for this reason (*Otherwise* 11, de Greef 507-520). Levinas's Other, paradoxically, occupies a position of power relative to the self and calls the freedom of the self into question (*Totality* 84). Once this necessary structural asymmetry of the ethical relationship that Levinas illustrates is acknowledged, it becomes clear that the distinctions between humanity and animality, upon which both Kant and Heidegger insist, need not be denied or transcended—but neither need they entail excluding non-human animals from the realm of direct ethical relevance. Instead, these distinctions can become the source for the explicit and radical inclusion of non-human animals in the ethical inner circle, as humans are led to extend human "civility" to the non-human animal world.

One other Levinasian theme deserving attention is that of "the face," which proves extraordinarily fruitful in explaining both the connections between humans and other animals and the difference between all animals (humans included) and "things." This image, crucial for Levinas, is perhaps even more important for the project of this paper. Like language between humans—the privileged medium for ethical discourse, strongly venerated by Levinas—the biological face is not necessarily a requirement for ethical obligation, but it is usually a sufficient mark of it, possessed by humanity and by most non-human animals, though absent in plants or most "mere things." The face is a window through which contact and exchange of meaning (though perhaps never stable and controllable exchange) can occur; it indicates the possibility of relationship with another subjective being. Illustrative of this, humans inscribe faces on inanimate objects to facilitate meta-

phorical or pseudo-subjective relationships with them. The protagonist in a recent major Hollywood film paints a bloody face on a volleyball, thereby transforming it from lifeless "object" into beloved companion, whose loss the castaway earnestly grieves. The application of the pseudo-face enables this metaphorical subjective relationship, facilitating one's "suspension of disbelief," because the natural face usually marks a site of subjective expression and meaningful exchange.

While Levinas's ethical philosophy supplements the dearth of direct ethical statements in Heidegger, it is itself limited and in need of supplementation. Abundant critics declare that Levinas's characterizations pretermit direct, "first-tier" relationships with potential Others—the feminine Other is the most widely cited example (see, e.g., the work of Critchley, Chanter , Gottlieb, Gould, Katz, Manning, and McDonald). More relevant to the project of this paper, Derrida ("Violence"), Benso, and others have leveled the specific charge of humanism against Levinas, and indeed, mimicking Kant's explicit exclusionary gesture, Levinas clearly denies that it is appropriate to apply his "ethics of alterity" directly to non-human animals. When questioned pointedly about the ethical status of non-human animals in an interview, included in the compilation *Re-Reading Levinas* under the title, "The Paradox of Morality," Levinas resists the idea that animals have an "ethical face," arguing that in contrast to his conceptualization of the ethical phenomenon of the human face, the animal face is merely "biological"—it does not invite or command a direct ethical response as the face of the other human does. In *Totality and Infinity,* Levinas describes the primary ethical relationship as that of "man-to-man" (79), and elsewhere he locates the genesis of his thought in the "strange relation to other *humans*" (*Conversations* 57-58). Like Kant, Levinas condemns animal cruelty, but the firm line between other humans as directly ethically relevant and other animals as not directly ethically relevant remains. Also like Kant, Levinas grounds this distinction in the concept of reason, though he switches the terms, arguing that primary ethics entails solely inter-human relations, because humans are the uniquely "*un*reasonable" creatures capable of ethical thought, which is eminently "irrational," according to Levinas, because of the paradoxical power structure described above. Levinas's exclusion of the eminently "reasonable" non-human animal who lives according to natural law from the first tier of ethical relevance, occupied exclusively by "unreasonable" humanity, defies his more fundamental reverence for otherness and his affirmation of an asymmetrical ethical relationship. Challenging the sufficiency and/or necessity of similarity and symmetry in the ethical relationship, as Levinas vehemently urges, requires re-thinking the uncivil exclusion of non-human animals from the sphere of the directly ethically relevant, irrespective of quality or quantity of reason. Levinas' laudable insistence on the ethical importance of other humans leads to his unfortunate assertion that it is *only* humanity to which his admonitions fully pertain. This "humanism" requires supplementation by the anti-humanistic ideas of Heidegger, discussed above, while Levinas's tendency to privilege human language as the ultimate medium of direct ethical discourse will benefit from ideas bound up with Derrida's concept of "deconstruction," discussed below.[5]

Bentham's assimilation of animals within the sphere of the [merely] sentient, Kant's conscription of the animal to the non-rational and only indirectly ethically

relevant realm, Heidegger's approbation of human Dasein's language as the ultimate house of being, and Levinas's privileging of the human face, could all be considered guilty of an ontological imperialism that suppresses non-human animal alterity. A goal of this paper is to challenge the prevailing dichotomies regarding the relationship between "civil" humanity and the "animal" world, and a great deal of what Levinas writes is clearly useful in such a project. Prior to certain general determinations about animals as sentient like humans or, unlike humans, as non-rational, non-linguistic, or non-handed, there is the presence of the animal's individual subjectivity, which is forever essentially unknowable, yet still accessible to some degree through non-linguistic phenomenological channels. With many forms of animal being we are presented with precisely the type of radical alterity Levinas describes: manifestly present, yet at least partially inherently inaccessible to any rational operation one might take. The asymmetrical structure of the relationship Levinas stresses is obviously in place in the human-nonhuman animal encounter. Though Levinas does not acknowledge such direct connections, potent seeds for a rethinking of animal ethics (and animal ontology) lie scattered throughout his writings. Once the necessary structural asymmetry of the ethical relationship that Levinas illustrates is recognized, it becomes clear that the distinctions between humanity and animality upon which Kant, Heidegger, and Levinas insist, while not denied, no longer serve as reason to exclude non-human animals from the realm of direct ethical relevance. Rather, they become the source for their explicit and radical inclusion. This approach allows the immediate recognition of ethical demands placed on us by the paradigmatic manifestations of the alterity that Levinas's admittedly "humanistic" project helps one to recognize—manifestations that are embodied in non-human animal forms, which are powerless in their subjection to the worlds, if any, that human civilization forms for them and allows them to have.

Civility and Animality in Derrida and Beyond

To this point, we have Heidegger contributing a phenomenological way of thinking beyond the limitations of modern metaphysical humanism and laying the groundwork for a concept of stewardship that Heidegger does not elaborate but that is crucial to the project of this paper, while Levinas provides the insistence on the primacy of ethics and the relationship with the other person, though his contribution is limited because for Levinas it is *only* other human beings who qualify for first-tier consideration. Benso sketches a chiasmus of Heidegger and Levinas in this way, describing an "ethics of things" that extends to inanimate objects the same direct consideration usually reserved for other humans. Here I introduce the work of Derrida to endorse, contrary to Benso (and some "deep ecologists"), retaining the distinction between direct and indirect duties but shifting it from the boundary between human and non-human to the boundary between the animal and the inanimate. Toward this end, Derrida's work helps to establish a link between the anti-humanistic tendencies of Heidegger and the insistence on the primacy of ethics as the asymmetrical encounter with alterity that Levinas provides, while avoiding both Heidegger's alleged ethical obscurity and Levinas's explicit humanism. Derrida's ideas supplement those of Heidegger and Levinas, support-

ing or extending root assumptions of both thinkers' projects while indicating places where their discourses are vulnerable to their own critiques.

For Derrida, the ideas of Heidegger and Levinas are eschatological in their attempts to make contact with absolute alterity or to transcend, via language, a humanistic horizon. Derrida questions any claim to transcend a humanistic or anthropocentric frame of mind, arguing that reliance on language "ceaselessly reinstates the new terrain on the oldest ground," re-establishing one "more naively and more strictly than ever" inside the realm one purports to transcend (*Margins* 135). Derrida insists that a critique of "humanism" and "metaphysics" such as that issued by Heidegger can only come from within that very tradition and using tools it provides (Bennington 303-309).

Derrida treats Levinas's approach similarly in "Violence and Metaphysics," which is both a defense of Heidegger in the face of Levinas's attacks and a critique of Levinas's formulation of absolute alterity. For Derrida, description of an encounter with truly absolute alterity is a practical impossibility, for one cannot describe that which one can by definition have no comprehension—there must be some similarity for a self to recognize an other as existing at all (Bernasconi 128-131). As with his critique of Heidegger, Derrida's point is that Levinas's description of absolute alterity requires that he employ the ontological language that he seeks to transcend, and thus that any contact with the other must involve some mutual affectedness (*Writing* 151). This points toward the middle ground between the various dichotomies discussed in this paper.

Derrida's writings on ethics display both his distance from the strands of thought Kant and Bentham represent and his proximity to Heidegger and Levinas. But unlike his postmodern peers, Derrida speaks more directly to questions regarding the ethical relationship between humans and other animals, finding problematically "humanistic" elements within both Heidegger, who eschewed humanism, and Levinas, who built a philosophy around the concept. Derrida questions the metaphysical presuppositions behind Heidegger's treatment of the ape in *What is Called Thinking?*, applying his deconstructive method to Heidegger's absolute opposition between human and non-human animals, which, like every opposition (according to Derrida), "effaces [. . .] differences and leads back [. . .] to the homogenous" ("Geschlecht II" 174).

Derrida issues the same sort of critique against Levinas, arguing that Levinas founds his ethics upon a notion of discourse as human language such that only the one species capable of speech is considered directly ethically relevant (Critchley 177-182). Derrida also discusses the tendency of the community to band together while excluding the other (Caputo 64), and this critique is easily applied to Levinas's humanism, which was perhaps necessary in the post-Auschwitz context and is admirable for its attention to and respect for human alterity, but which nonetheless falls short of a respect for the full range of alterity's possible embodiments by excluding non-human animals from the ethical inner circle and failing to acknowledge animality's non-reciprocal appeal for human civility.

To round out Derrida's contribution, three themes in his later writings provide the final key to the vision of the human-non-human animal relationship that this paper promotes: friendship, justice, and the gift. Derrida writes of "a friend-

ship without presence, without resemblance, without affinity, without analogy" (*Politics* 154-155). This idea of friendship that he describes is in some ways more appropriately applicable to the relationship between humans and non-human animals than it is to the inter-human encounter, for the non-human animal friend lacks the resemblances, affinities, and analogies (shared verbal/linguistic capacities, rationality, etc.) that are at least latent in inter-human discourse. This is linked with Derrida's supplementation of the traditional contractual notion of justice—deontological or utilitarian—with an "infinite idea of justice, infinite because irreducible, [. . . .] before any contract [. . . .]" ("Force" 965). As Kearney writes, this means "justice is the idea of a gift without exchange, of a relation to the other that is utterly irreducible to the normal rules of circulation, gratitude, recognition, or symmetry" (18-50).

While Derrida's work is important for inter-human ethics as a supplement to different versions of contractual ethics such as those elaborated in works from Kant's *Groundwork to the Metaphysic of Morals* to John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, the non-contractual ethical encounter he describes is even more obviously apparent in the human-animal relationship, in which the Other is *incapable* of ever reciprocating in the usual sense. Similarly, in "At this very moment in this work here I am," Derrida explores an idea of "radical ingratitude," arguing that the perseverance of the true ethical relationship requires that the recipient of the "gift" *not* show gratitude, for to do so would nullify the Other's transcendence and return the gift to the mundane economy of the same. Even more than most human others, with whom *some* kind of contract is usually possible—even if it is only the simple exchange of help for thanks—non-human animals lack the power of language as we know it and are therefore incapable of expressing gratitude in familiar ways. To extend the courtesies of civility to them requires acknowledgement of the asymmetrical structure connecting the community of human civilization with its non-human animal others.

The Future Engagement of Civility and Animality in The Postmodern Condition

The implications of all this for our relationship with non-human animals and for ethical humanism, from Kant to Levinas, seem obvious. It is not necessary to escape human subjectivity in order to recognize direct ethical relationships between humans and other animals. Also, one can acknowledge the vast powers that only human animals enjoy without thereby establishing a two-tiered ethical view in which beings capable of rational reflection or verbal/linguistic signification are valued directly, while beings that inhabit different *Umwelts* and are immersed in biosemiotics are bestowed only instrumental ethical relevance. Rather, the ontological difference, including the fact that we posses cognitive abilities far beyond animal capacity (and therefore powers for good or evil beyond any animal's capacity)—employed by Kant as the grounds for excluding animals from the realm of the directly ethically relevant, noted but discarded as ethically irrelevant by Bentham, painstakingly elucidated by Heidegger, and maintained in Kantian fashion by Levinas—becomes the basis for the most direct ethical consideration of these animal others. The asymmetry of the relationship can be recognized as the wellspring of our obligation toward them.

However, even in Derrida's writings, the relationship between humans and other animals is usually employed as an example to illustrate a general principle but is not investigated thoroughly as a subject replete with its own unique questions. While in numerous places Derrida uses the conceptual division between human and animal to exemplify precisely the type of ontological distinction that deconstruction deconstructs, discourse regarding the practical treatment of non-human animals is rare in Derrida's corpus. When it comes to specific and concrete questions about the ethical status of non-human animals, even Derrida's thought risks falling into "anthropologocentrism." During a conference during the summer of 1993, Derrida is said to have remarked, "I am a vegetarian in my soul" (Steeves 32). One wonders, given this formulation, whether Derrida intends to distinguish between "vegetarian in soul" (i.e., thinking deconstruction) and "vegetarian in body" (specifically "applying" deconstruction), and whether one can be the former but not the latter without falling short of the ethical demands that deconstruction makes. If Derrida does intend such a distinction, it is unclear how this harmonizes with his usual method of deconstructing such dichotomies.

Regardless of whether or not Derrida eats factory-farmed chicken, one can, by transforming and extending lines of thought that he, Heidegger, and Levinas establish, advance a radical approach to questions regarding animals' ethical status along the lines of the "radical hermeneutics" advocated by Caputo, which "consists not in finding meaning but in dealing with the breakdown of meaning, the shattering and foundering of meaning" (279). The human-animal relationship well exemplifies the ethical structure that postmodernism identifies, but the practical demands that this relationship entails have yet to be fully recognized, and further analysis of postmodern ethical themes and their application to the human-animal relationship is eminently timely. Such re-thinking can facilitate expanding the community of beings deserving civility to include even those non-human animal beings among whom, one might argue, incivility reigns. This paper is but one tiny part of the vast effort to help "civilization" evolve by reaching back towards a near-obsolete sense of "civility" that involves connotations of kindness, gentleness, and *humaneness*. It looks forward to days when humans will more pervasively apply the values wrapped up in this archaic sense of civility in their interaction with the other animals whose worlds they shape.

Notes

1. The *Oxford English Dictionary* lists twenty senses, many with subdivisions, of the word "civil." Most indicate relations between members of the citizenry, or community, and deal exclusively with human discourses on society, politics, and "civil" ethics, with connotations of citizenship and urbaneness. This paper looks to the eleventh definition on the list—a definition marked as obsolete by the dictionary's editors—as the key to appropriately understanding the ethical relationship between humans and other animals: the sense of "civil" as "humane, gentle, kind" (255).

2. For a contrary view, in which non-human but non-domesticated animal life in urban centers is the focus, see the work of Huw Griffiths, Ingrid Poulter, and David Sibley (56-71) and Jennifer Wolch, Alec Brownlow, and Unna Lassiter (71-98).

3. *Aletheia* is a Greek term, which Heidegger renders into German as "Entbergen," and which English translators have rendered as "revealing" or "unconcealment."

4. I borrow a notion from *Being and Time* here, which is, admittedly, an exposition of specifically human being. As with my treatment of Levinas, I would argue that this notion of Heidegger's has applicability beyond the realm in which the author originally inscribed it.

5. This assumption of the ethical primacy of human verbal language as the first and best link between the self and the other, without acknowledgement that different links might exist between other beings, pervades two of his major works, *Totality and Infinity* and *Otherwise then Being*. Bringing ideas from the field of "biosemiotics" into the discussion would facilitate the notion of communication beyond the human verbal and linguistic forms—see e.g., Jacob von Uexkull's notion of the *Umwelt*, which helps one understand animal being in ways commensurate with but not identical to human being.

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