

## Female Nudity, Interspecies Sexuality and ‘Horseness’ in Laetitia Dosch’s *Hate* (2018)

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*The aim of this paper is to analyse Laetitia Dosch’s play Hate, first performed in Lausanne in 2018, in light of recent theories on female nudity, interspecies sexuality and non-human animal subjectivity. Featuring a completely naked woman and a white stallion, the show revolves around the possibility of interspecies communication and the need to re-evaluate the meaning of humankind and animality through theatrical performance. I begin by drawing on Derrida’s writings on the subject of shame and nakedness as a means to explore interspecies identification. I then turn to recent ecofeminist theories in order to discuss Dosch’s performative criticism of industrial exploitation of non-androcentric ‘others’, as well as the implications behind her dramatization of interspecies sexual intercourse. Finally, I examine how her ‘ventriloquist’ techniques to provide the horse with a voice invite considerations regarding Levinas’s concept of ‘the face’ and how that affects animal subjecthood and subjectivity.*

In 2001, Croatian artist Vlasta Delimar took to the streets of Zagreb riding naked upon a white horse that gently paced before the calm stare of onlookers. Far from shocked, passers-by gazed at her familiar image, recalling how, twenty years earlier, Delimar’s mentor, Tomislav Gotovac, exposed and contextualized his body in his performance titled *Lying Naked on the Asphalt, Kissing the Asphalt (Zagreb, I Love You!)*.<sup>1</sup> Recently, American artist Ruth K. Burke fleshed out her idiosyncratic vision of interspecies kinship with a short multimedia piece titled *Epona* (2018). Performed in Cleveland, Ohio, *Epona* re-created the myth of the Celtic goddess of horses, fertility and nature, and her equine companion was purposely credited as ‘shared author’.<sup>2</sup> That same year, talented French actress, playwright and *metteur en scène* Laetitia Dosch debuted her show *Hate* on 5 June 2018 in the Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne. As the sole human actor in the performance, Dosch appeared completely naked on the stage, with only a white horse by the name of Corazon to share it with. Defying cultural taboos much in the line of Burke and Delimar’s work, Dosch carved a significant performative space out of the interspecies encounter between the naked or semi-naked body of a woman and a live animal of great proportions – the horse. For an hour and fifteen minutes, the audience’s gaze of the juxtaposed bodies was meant to explore its own doubly active and passive contribution to the sense of estrangement, eroticism and scopophilia that vectorizes the visual consumption of the subjects upon the stage. Significantly, within this triple encounter in which spectators

inadvertently assimilate their voyeuristic role, Dosch seeks to construct a discourse of female empowerment through the naked woman as situated before, and in intimacy with, a non-human animal other, thus nourishing the performative, cultural, historical and mythical legacy of what Kim Marra identifies as 'women's apparently extraordinary communion with the horse'.<sup>3</sup>

### Mythical precedents and a continuing legacy

Naked women alongside wild or exotic animals abound in countless myths, images and legends of Western culture. A glimpse of the remains of the arts and crafts (engravings, amphoras, vessels, sculptures, figurines, amulets, tools, monuments, ornamental objects and so on) of foundational civilizations such as the Babylonians, Phoenicians or ancient Egyptians and Greeks attest to the universality of this motif within Mediterranean cultures.<sup>4</sup> The coupling of a revealing female body with equines, in particular, became an enduring motif in great part due to the myths of the Amazons, collected in the works of Homer, Aeschylus, Herodotus, Plutarch and Virgil. The Amazon warriors, to whom such myths attribute the domestication of horses, evinced the strong connections between both species, and incorporated equine-based Greek references to their names – the etymology of Hyppolita, their most famous queen, refers to 'she who liberates horses' (*hippos-lytos*), just as much as the rest of the Amazon queens Melanippe (Black Horse), Alkippe (Powerful Horse), Hippomache (Horse Warrior) or Anippe (Swift Horse).<sup>5</sup> The Amazon myths were suggestive of a female sexual empowerment conferred by the nude – an empowerment reinstated through their emancipation and independence from men and through their subjection of wild animals through the art of riding. Centuries later, medieval folklore would preserve this fascination with the naked woman and her companion horse through the figure of Lady Godiva.<sup>6</sup> Pictorial representations of the legend would culminate in the Victorian era with works by Marshall Claxton (1850) and John Collier (1898), and by the French artist Jules Lefebvre (1890) and the Belgian painter Joseph von Leirus (1870). Unsurprisingly, the motif would also influence popular perceptions of famous nineteenth-century professional amazons or *écuyères*, such as Caroline Loyo, Emilie Loisset, Pauline Cuzent, Suzanne Valdon and Antoinette Lejars (the last of these was commemorated with a statue by Pradier in 1852), whose similarity with the courtesan or the harlot has been described by critics.<sup>7</sup>

The sensuality behind the act of beholding a stripped or scantily clad woman whose body (and genitalia) came in contact with and rubbed against the equine flesh played well with the period's aesthetic fascination with voyeurism and transgression. Kari Weil argues that even before Freud, 'it was the fear of alternative eroticism and genital stimulation that made riding ... a transgressive act for women'.<sup>8</sup> Nichola A. Haxell refers to this as the conjunction between the male gaze and the female 'to-be-looked-at-ness'.<sup>9</sup> The male gaze became the means through which to exalt the eroticism of the exhibited and exposed woman, who was uncontained in the domestic sphere and who found in her 'nudity' an expression of independence. Such 'nudity', therefore, is not so much the absence of clothing as it is a construct that is shaped by

the male spectatorial gaze. As Weil notes in her analysis of Adah Menken's male role in *Mazeppa* in Paris in the second half of the nineteenth century, the actress's 'revealing body suit' led to the inference of 'a certain nakedness she was said to share with her mount'.<sup>10</sup> Her nakedness, in other words, was begotten through the gaze of the onlookers, who consumed and subjected her corporeality to a collective act of exegesis. As Albert Brussee argues,<sup>11</sup> it would become rather frequent for female actors to take on the lead role in stage adaptations of *Mazeppa*, and the audiences' engrossment and raptness with the transvestite body was certainly not lost on producers who capitalized on the enablement of 'erotic attraction' conveyed by the equestrian metaphor.<sup>12</sup> Adah Menken was one among the several actresses who brought her erotic appeal to the stage in such guise. Savvy and well aware of the visual semiotics stimulated within the frame of the spectacle, she enticed 'thousands of hungry eyes'.<sup>13</sup> More than her nakedness *per se*, it was the representation of nakedness which actively stimulated audiences' imaginations. The contextualization of her body as one in physical contact with the 'wild' and 'naked' (that is, de-saddled and de-bridled) horse and the privacy of her genitalia rubbing as she rode astride 'inspired stories regarding passions of women and horses, raising the specter of bestial miscegenation'.<sup>14</sup>

Laetitia Dosch's *Hate* must be regarded as an intertextual response to all these cultural exegeses of female nudity alongside (or on) a horse. Dosch holds a degree in translation and English literature, and was trained as an actress at Florent's Classe libre and at the Manufacture – Conservatoire national de Suisse romande. A well-known performer in current French film who starred in box-office successes such as *Jeune femme* (2017) and *Ennui, ennui* (2013), Dosch combines her cinema work with playwriting, performing and stage directing, and has collaborated with dramatist and stage director Philippe Quesne. Her latest productions – *Les corvidés* (2016), *Hate* (2018) – evince her taste for non-human animal companions, as well as her interest, in Fabienne Darge's words, in the relationship both with nature and with 'ce qui est "contre nature". Ou pas' ('what goes "against nature". Or not').<sup>15</sup> The play is conceived in its subtitle as a 'tentative de duo' between a woman and a horse who, for seventy-five minutes, interact upon the round stage. Dosch bares her body before the audience: equipped with nothing but a small pocket and a sword hanging from a belt, she simulates a dialogue with Corazon, the white stallion. The interaction is maintained at different levels: Dosch's provision of the powers of speech sustains the illusion of verbal communication, but beyond the interspecies language boundary that the very theatre eases into subversion, the synergy between both subjects is manifested through caressing, patting and mounting. Dosch also feeds him, creating a sort of tableau of the nurturing female figure that transcends species boundaries. These gestures reveal an understanding of the hypersensitiveness of horses' sense of touch, a form of experiencing the world which is essential to understand the nature of horseness, as argued by equine specialists and behaviourists.<sup>16</sup> Anthropocentric privileging of the sense of sight has led to the undermining of other senses which might prove much more fundamental for other animals' experience of the world. According to culture historians, the sense of touch is 'most disparaged by humanist

prejudice', given that touching and feeling 'challenge the grounds of the human–animal hierarchy and reveal our shortcomings, both physical and intellectual'.<sup>17</sup>

Following the historically grounded connotations of the naked woman–horse coupling described above, I argue that the performance can replay the relationship of horse and human female in liberating ways that bridge concepts of the species divide through the ideas of sexuality, femininity, emancipation, fertility, power and interspecies communion. In this space where the semiotics of painting, performativity, voyeurism and museum-like exhibiting intersect, *Hate* becomes a fable that levels woman and horse before spectators. Putting both word and performance to pragmatic use, Dosch thus signifies upon the human/live animal juxtaposition and what Derrida calls the *porosité des frontières* (porosity of boundaries) between species.<sup>18</sup> In line with these previous representations, Dosch instrumentalizes the theatre as a space for the blurring of interspecies boundaries as she actively seeks the inexorable union of beings and species through mutual affection and cooperation, or, in Donna Haraway's terms, 'companionship'.<sup>19</sup> This subversion of hierarchical understandings of species difference leads Dosch to a form of vindication of female nudity that renounces its inscription within androcentric cultures – her nakedness, instead, constitutes a metamorphic effort to integrate herself within the animal domain.

### Gazing upon nudity

Entrances are strategic in *Hate*. It is the stallion who first occupies the round stage, already absorbing the spectators' gaze as they walk in and locate their seats. The actress then slowly approaches the ring, covered with red volcanic sand, removes her sheer white robe, and thus penetrates the space of theatrical illusion. In nakedness is where the identification with the 'other' begins, as the very act of undressing serves as a simple gesture of interspecies approximation and assimilation whereupon the subject repels a uniquely human product: clothing. The encounter necessitates unmasked corporeality – Dosch's nakedness is symmetrically matched by the bare equine body, unequipped of saddle, bridle or halter. Like Dosch's thin belt around her waist, the stallion's neck is accoutred with a string, and as the shared pale whiteness of their bodies chromatically homogenizes their presence as matter, so does it reinforce their similarity as subjectivities.

From the very start of the performance, the spectator's gaze functions as a theatrical layer over the act of looking that is carried out and exchanged between Dosch and Corazon on the stage. Indeed, they are also agents of the act of looking and beholding each other, an experiential encounter that certainly echoes Jacques Derrida's reflections on how the animal gaze upon the naked human body gives us pause. In his well-known 'zoo-auto-bio-biblio-biographic' digression in *L'Animal que donc je suis* (2006), which collects his talks presented at Cerisy on the 'autobiographical animal', the French philosopher interrogates the feeling of 'otherness' awakened by the shame he felt upon being stared at, naked, by his cat. 'Souvent je me demande, moi, pour voir *qui je suis* – et qui je suis au moment où, surpris, nu, en silence, par le regard d'un animal, par exemple les yeux d'un chat, j'ai du mal, oui, du mal à

surmonter une gêne' ('I often ask myself, just to see, *who I am* – and who I am (following) at the moment when, caught naked, in silence, by the gaze of an animal, for example, the eyes of a cat, I have trouble, yes, a bad time overcoming my embarrassment').<sup>20</sup> The shame he experiences as a result of the feline gaze multiplies itself: there is the shame of being looked at by a non-human animal, and there is the shame of feeling ashamed by this situation. 'C'est comme si j'avais honte, alors', Derrida confesses, 'nu, devant le chat, mais aussi honte d'avoir honte' ('It is as if I were ashamed, therefore, naked in front of this cat, but also ashamed for being ashamed').<sup>21</sup> Derrida's playful observations lead to the categorization of clothing within the long-established list devised by philosophers of all the faculties that are proper to man (speech, laughter, reason, mourning, art and so on). Furthermore, the sense of modesty and inhibition that finds its cause in our awareness of our nakedness emerges as an unequivocal mark of our humanness with respects to other species. The object of clothing is 'cacher son sexe' ('to cover his sex').<sup>22</sup> Because of animals' lack of the ability to dress themselves and their unperceptiveness of their own state of nakedness, they are incapable of recognizing human nudity. Hence the utter senselessness and absurdity of feeling ashamed of being the object of gaze of a cat – a species that uncategorizably swings between the domestic, the feral and the wild. And yet this shame is irrefutable proof of the fact that, for all of mankind's efforts to distance himself from all other animals, we cannot preclude our sense of interspecies similarity. In other words, if the animal gaze upon our nudity instills in us a sense of shame, it is because we acknowledge, encoded within its 'otherness', our own homologous self. In such ways does our exclusiveness and isolation as a species dissolve. The human 'I', as subjectivity and as biological matter, thus becomes decentralized and subverted by the animal 'eye'.

In *Hate*, however, kinship as mediated through the gaze upon nudity is not determined by a sense of shame. In the performance, the absence of shame must not be read as a sign of the anthropocentric rationalism that refutes animals' awareness of nakedness, but as indicative of the haven and comfort zone that the acceptance of interspecies similarity creates. 'Nus sans le savoir', Derrida contends, 'les animaux ne seraient pas, en vérité, nus. Ils ne seraient pas nus parce qu'ils sont nus' ('naked without knowing it, animals would not be, in truth, naked. They wouldn't be naked because they are naked').<sup>23</sup> In this mirroring of alterities, as mentioned above, the animal's congenital nakedness hinders his/her ability to perceive it in others. Nakedness can only exist if the subject knows and perceives its own nudity – 'le savoir de leur nudité' ('knowledge of their nudity')<sup>24</sup> – an awareness that, according to Derrida, leads to the dichotomized conception of good and evil.<sup>25</sup> Within the theatrical space and boundaries, the actress presents nudity as a voluntary, metaphoric animalization of the self, as she reincorporates the human condition within the animal kingdom, and not as heterogeneous to it. Her unapologetic unashamedness, furthermore, is not only with regard to the horse, but also with respect to the audience, who are equipped with the ability to recognize the nakedness of her body. Dosch uses the performative act to suggest that, like the animals, she does not recognize her own nakedness through the gaze of the human other – her nakedness, in other words, does not exist as such. The

absence of clothing becomes a motif of interspecies commonness, as nakedness is vindicated as the 'garment' that is proper to the non-human animal. 'Parce qu'il est nu, sans *exister* dans la nudité, l'animal ne se sent ni se voit nu. Et donc il n'est pas nu' ('Because it is naked, without existing in nakedness, the animal neither feels nor sees itself naked. And therefore it isn't naked'), Derrida states.<sup>26</sup> Paradoxically, Dosch's bare body throughout the performance thus emerges as a symptom of the inexistence of nakedness. The exercise of rendering nakedness invisible and imperceptible reinforces the irrefutable presence of the original condition of the animal body. Spectators are hence forced to consider their own role in the creation of the artifice of nakedness through their gaze, as they contrast their imperceptiveness of the horse's nudity with the nature of their visual consumption of the woman's body.

### **Animals and the female body**

The performative equalization between different species is also gender-specific. The exposure of the female body emphasizes the interconnectedness between women and non-human animals within a heteropatriarchal system. Even though the play restrains itself from making radical feminism and animal liberation the discursive centre of the performance, Dosch manages to verbalize these links in her soliloquy, as she denounces current society's exploitation and objectification of women. In this speech, which structures the first part of the play, animal exploitation is juxtaposed with the socially and historically grounded practices that have institutionally subsumed women to biology. Dosch addresses the pressure women face to bear children, her resolution to freeze her eggs in Spain to salvage her future maternity, and the disruptive feeling of an obligation to settle down with a (male) partner. All such impressions are conjoined with the also institutionalized practices of animal exploitation, as rendered explicit by the actress's message to the horse:

Cher cheval  
 Parce qu'il n'y a pas  
 de méchanceté chez toi ...  
 Parce que pour être ensemble  
 il faut surmonter nos différences.  
 Parce qu'il est temps de traiter  
 l'animal comme un égal'

(Dear horse  
 Since there is  
 no meanness in you ...  
 Because in order to be together  
 We must overcome our differences.  
 Because it's about time  
 animals are treated equally.)<sup>27</sup>

These sorts of connections, of course, have been a long time in the making in ecofeminist theories. We may recall here the pioneering work by Carol Adams, *The Sexual Politics of*

*Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (1990), which argues that the heteropatriarchal sexist systems of domination are symmetrically reproduced in speciesist patterns of sociocultural practices. The 'othering' that is implicit to androcentric structures affects women and non-human animals in numerous, related ways. As 'absent referents', Adams contends, women and non-human animals are deprived of their subjectivity and reduced and objectified to fit a cultural system that only requires them insofar as their contribution to such system is productive – hence their prime instrumentalization as breeders and as objects of consumption.<sup>28</sup>

Ecofeminist principles arise at different levels throughout the play, such as when the actress directs her rage towards the audience:

Ça va finir avec toutes ces conneries  
 PARCE QUE J'AI 37 ANS  
 BORDEL DE DIEU!  
 Je n'ai plus du tout de temps ...  
 Que je puisse enfin avoir un mec et faire des  
 gosses, parce que c'est quand même pour  
 ça que je suis faite pour de vrai, non?'

(Let's cut the crap  
 BECAUSE I'M 37  
 FOR FUCK'S SAKE  
 I'm running out of time ...  
 So that I can find a guy and have  
 children, because after all that's  
 what I'm actually supposed to do, right?)<sup>29</sup>

she screams, infuriated by her cultural subjection to her reproductive organs. Suffocated and exasperated, her words culminate in an outburst that brings together injustices stemming from social, environmental and gender politics:

Y'a des gens qui dorment à tous les coins de  
 rue dont certains ont quand même traversé  
 le chaos de la guerre et on leur crache dessus,  
 tout le monde perd son travail, le climat  
 on est en train de le mettre à l'envers et ça  
 change RIEN ...

ET MOI J'EN SUIS QUAND MÊME  
 À ALLER FAIRE CONGELER MES  
 OVULES EN ESPAGNE ET ÇA COÛTE  
 2500 EUROS ET C'EST INTERDIT  
 PAR LA LOI JE PEUX TE DIRE ILS ONT  
 INTÉRÊT DE NOUS TROUVER UN PEU  
 DE PERSPECTIVE QUELQUE PART  
 D'ICI MES 42 ANS ILS ONT INTÉRÊT!

(There are people who sleep on street corners  
and some of them have been through  
the chaos of war and we spit on them,  
everybody is losing their job, we are  
altering the climate and  
NOTHING changes ...

AND YET I  
WENT TO HAVE MY EGGS FROZEN  
IN SPAIN AND IT COSTS  
2500 EUROS AND IT'S  
FORBIDDEN BY LAW MARK MY WORDS  
THEY'D BETTER START FIXING  
THE SITUATION  
BY THE TIME I'M 42 THEY'D BLOODY BETTER)<sup>30</sup>

The sheer speed and volume that Dosch empowers her words with (reflected in the text through the use of capital letters) signify the frustration and exhaustion of the self, and convincingly recontextualize the 'woman' question within the wider frames pertaining to class, the environmental crisis, and animal exploitation and abuse. The act of having one's eggs frozen is reminiscent of the agricultural breeding practices of (factory) farming, whereupon natality and reproduction occur in fragmented, mechanized procedures that alienate subjectivity from body. Identity becomes nothing beyond reproductive capability and productivity.

These parallelisms endow Dosch's nakedness with yet another purpose: that of protesting against the systematized normalization and institutionalization of the sexual exploitation of women. Corazon and Dosch's symmetrical nudity channel the gaze of the audience, evincing the extent to which voyeurism is an act through which to consume the other. In his published conversation with Jean-Luc Nancy in which he also discusses what qualifies as 'properly' human, Derrida employs the term 'carnophallogocentrism' to refer to the real and symbolic ingestion of the 'other' as a ritualized means through which to assimilate and empower the phallus.<sup>31</sup> The ingestion of the animal 'other' is accredited by the rationalism that is characteristic of a phallogocentric structure, which greatly relies on language to proclaim what makes an acceptable, consumable body and which ultimately decriminalizes the systematic killing of millions of animals.<sup>32</sup> At the centre of the schema is the mouth – whether through words or through mastication, phallogocentrism and logocentrism are reinvigorated through the passage of the mouth. It is there where the animal other's flesh is crushed and gnashed, and it is there where orality is produced. Derrida regards such forms of consumption in gendered terms. 'Le mal de l'animal, c'est le mâle. Le mal vient à l'animal par le mâle' ('the animal's problem [*mal*] is the male. Evil comes to the animal through the male') he states in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*.<sup>33</sup> 'It would be relatively simple to show that this violence done to the animal is, if not in essence, then at least predominantly male, and, like the very dominance of that



predominance, warlike, strategic, stalking, *viriloid*.<sup>34</sup> The linguistic violence unleashed unto the animal other begins with the word 'animal', a term that agglutinates millions of species artificially and conveniently excludes the category of 'man'. As species are pushed into invisibility through human *logos*, so is plurality dissolved within the signifier, and there begins the cultural consumption of the animals that will enable further objectifications (such as their categorization as edible or exterminable matter). Derrida's observations that 'animal' is not a 'singulier général' ('general singular') term, but 'une multiplicité hétérogène de vivants' ('heterogeneous multiplicity of the living'), constitute the basis of his criticism against Western logocentrism and its legitimation of the masculine.<sup>35</sup> Such are the mechanisms of cultural constructions of otherness that reveal the sacrificial nature of discourse – mechanisms which affect not only non-human animals, but women as well.

Further correlations are established between woman and animal through the enactment of other mechanisms of subordination and control imposed by androcentrism. The grooming and aestheticization of women are transposed by the actress onto the animal body when she suggests decorating the horse with 'petites nattes' ('small braids'), dying his mane red, or ornamenting him with flowers – 'et même on pourrait te dessiner plein de fleurs, ce serait trop joli' ('and I could even draw you some flowers, it'd be so beautiful').<sup>36</sup> To this, the horse, mouthed by Dosch, responds with utter disgust – all attempts to 'embellish' his body are regarded as forms of appropriation and subdual:

On a nos tatouages  
à nous que vous nous faites.  
Pourquoi vous faites ça? ...  
Je crois que c'est parce que vous  
avez besoin de nous posséder,  
comme des objets

(We have our own tattoos  
made by you.  
Why do you do that? ...  
I think it is because  
you need to possess us,  
as if we were objects).<sup>37</sup>

The words snap the woman out of her behaviour, as she comes to the realization that, unknowingly, she too imposes the same types of practices on the animal body. In this manner, victims become themselves perpetrators, a cycle that Dosch begins to break by removing the small purse she has hung from his neck as a sign of her repentance – 'Je vais t'enlever ça tout de suite' ('I'm going to take all this off immediately').<sup>38</sup>

In a more overt manner, the schema is again reproduced by the allusion and illusion of violence that Dosch unleashes on Corazon. Once more, the horse's response exposes the nature of her behaviour before the audience:

t'es comme les hommes.

Ce qu'on te fait à toi de mal,  
tu le fais aux animaux'

(You are just like humans.  
When you get hurt,  
You hurt animals).<sup>39</sup>

Dosch retorts by whipping him slightly on the stomach, an ameliorated metonymy of the physical and discursive violence and abuse that are routinely exercised upon the animal other, as the weaker one: '*Laetitia se met à le frapper, / le cheval court en rond. Je te hais! Je te hais! ... Décède ... C'est à cause de gens comme toi que l'Europe est dans la merde, retourne crever dans ton pays*' (*Laetitia starts whipping him, / the horse runs in circles. I hate you! I hate you! ... Die ... It's because of people like you that Europe is in deep shit, go back to your country and die already*).<sup>40</sup> Those violent fits on the part of the female character mirror Donna Haraway's claims in her *Companion Species Manifesto* (2003) that the 'co-history' between human and animal companion is not necessarily forged by 'especially nice' feelings and acts. Haraway clarifies that 'co-habiting does not mean fuzzy and touchy-feely'.<sup>41</sup> The sentimentality that traditionally saturates discourses and practices surrounding domestic animals (or, more precisely, pets) is discarded in Haraway's work as much as in Dosch's play. Far from succumbing to sentimental excesses, the female character treads the paths that both separate and unite positive and negative feelings toward Corazon, thus articulating the singular syntax that binds interspecies interaction. The resistance to a fixed sentimentality relieves the characters from the threat of flatness, reinforcing instead a sense of movement and of organic variables. In this manner, Dosch theatricalizes the 'contingent mutability' that according to more feminist-oriented criticism renders the interspecies encounter one of transformation (of both human and animal) through contact.<sup>42</sup> The narrative structuring the performance is an exploration of otherness that ultimately leads to the woman's anagnorisis, to the realization of how heteropatriarchal systems of domination have been ingrained in her own psyche. The symmetry that begins with the state of nakedness (or, more accurately, with the gaze that creates the state of nakedness) comes full circle when the woman acknowledges the selfness of the horse as a mirror of her own. Their weakness, as animal and as woman, has made them both the target of violence, and through the dialogue, the extent to which the woman has wrongfully attempted to recover some semblance of agency through the abuse of the animal is revealed.

Coming to terms with the dynamics that motor patriarchal structures reinscribes Dosch's nakedness as a statement against the materialism that defines current society and as a gesture to return to a purer, mythical, primitive state – one perhaps in which different species encountered one another without the corrupting mediation of man. The biblical connotations are obviated by the *mise en scène*: the background curtain evokes a natural scenery, and the countless silences upon which Dosch rests her fictitious dialogue are significantly texturized by the soundscapes of chirping birds, thus re-creating a bucolic setting. At the end of the performances that I attended, on

20 and 21 January 2020 in Châteauroux, France, when Dosch and Corazon's trainer, Yudith Zagury, engaged the audience in conversation, the former confirmed that indeed it was her intention to emulate a pictorial scene and thus to question the reconstruction of the natural through the artificial. The text itself specifies that the landscape at the background simulates 'une peinture romantique du XIXe, représentant un paysage montagneux, avec un lac, des îles, une forêt' ('a nineteenth-century romantic painting of a mountain landscape with a lake, some islands, and a forest').<sup>43</sup> This return to an original, mythical moment of peace, harmony and respect amongst species is evocative of several biblical passages to which some exegetes still resort today to illustrate how species equality was once discursively conceived.<sup>44</sup>

But more significantly, the in-your-face physical presence of horse-plus-naked-female-body evokes a primal, pre-tragic state that is at the heart of the origin of theatre as an art form. In his work *Stage Fright, Animals and Other Theatrical Problems* (2006), Nicholas Ridout draws on comments made by Italian theatre director Romeo Castellucci in a special issue of *Performance Research* on live animals on the stage. Ridout brings up an expression used by Castellucci to symbolically refer to the historical and evolutionary point in time in which the abyss between humans and animals would consolidate their antinomic nature: the 'verticalità sessuata' ('sexualized verticality'). This verticality, as Ridout contends, signifies both on the upright position that separates humans from four-legged creatures and the rest of the animal kingdom, and on the maturation of toddlers as they learn to stand on their feet, a reflection itself of the transition from the prelinguistic phase of infancy to the linguistically equipped adult stage. These shifts, Ridout notes, must be approached from a gender-based perspective, given that physical erection and the appropriation of the word to name all other animals are conceived as masculine deeds:

The acts of incredible pretension are therefore those in which the (male) human animal takes the historic step of distinguishing itself from other animals by standing up and giving them names; establishing dominion over them by means of dividing them one from another, in language. In the process he seeks ... to mark that verticality as male, leaving the female behind.<sup>45</sup>

In the same way, the transition from a theatre populated by animals to one defined by their absence and the surrogacy of the spoken word must be regarded as a symbolic act of sexualized verticalization. 'The pre-tragic theatre, material, feminine, infant and populated by the animal gives way to the tragic theatre that is ideal, male, political and only human.'<sup>46</sup>

The implication here is that non-verbal language, the one that antecedes the goat-song upon which tragedy etymologically originates, is closer to female nature, a nature which is inaccessible to *logos*. What Dosch supplies in this system of genderized conceptions of the constructs of language is a glimpse into alternative forms of interspecies communication that are based on physical gestures, on touching and contacting, and on movement. Together, the female character and Corazon emasculate the word by subordinating it to the sensorial and the kinaesthetic, hence

'returning' the theatre to the primal and the feminine. Particularly significant in this sense is the actress's hunched posture throughout the play, as if refusing to straighten her back and verticalize herself into an upright position. Perhaps this gesture may be interpreted as an act of humility, a symbolic nod to stay close to Corazon's animality and resist giving in to the masculine humanity connoted by erectness. Through this form of representing the woman's body, Dosch suggests that interaction and interspecies communication must visibly overcome the anthropo- and androcentric forms of encountering the 'other', and instead yield to the animal's physical, visual, tactile and olfactory forms of experiencing.

### Sexuality and interspecies kinship

Of primitive essence is also the depiction of sexuality and its animalizing potential. Since the Enlightenment, species have been defined as groups of animals that are able to mate amongst themselves.<sup>47</sup> The sex games that Dosch insinuates in her performance represent a regression to a pre-taboo era whereupon the desire to be fertilized by Corazon must be read as an affectionate gesture and as a step to remove herself from her humanness. The sensuous intercourse between Dosch and Corazon is constant throughout the performance. The caressing and kissing of one another (the horse licks her mouth as he searches for the piece of carrot she is holding between her teeth, echoing what Donna Haraway describes, in the opening pages of *When Species Meet*, as a 'transfection' of DNA between her dog, Cayenne Pepper, and herself by way of 'viral vectors' channelled through saliva and transmitted by the 'darter-tongue kisses' with her pet<sup>48</sup>), and Dosch's bareback riding completely naked, function as displays of non-normative eroticism. Such erotic experience is invigorated through different senses, and intimacy is intensified the moment Dosch proceeds to smell the horse's hindquarters, emulating the courting behaviour of many mammals. The invitations to engage in sexual intercourse are no innuendos: 'viens me bouffer la chatte' ('come lick my pussy'), Dosch orders.<sup>49</sup> 'Tu veux faire l'amour?' ('You wanna make love'), Corazon asks; 'Ça va te faire mal avec ma bite / ça peut être dangereux' ('My dick is gonna hurt you / It might be dangerous').<sup>50</sup> Hiding behind a tent, as if they were two inexperienced adolescents, Dosch simulates the sounds of oral sex, as if Corazon were performing cunnilingus on her. Frustrated attempts at penetration are also described:

Je pourrais m'entraîner tous les  
jours avec des spéculums, peut-être  
que si je fais ça, après ça va s'ouvrir  
un peu, comme un jean

(I could train myself  
everyday using speculums, maybe  
that way  
it'll open a bit  
like a pair of jeans).<sup>51</sup>

Indeed, the intimate sexual encounter is a theatricalized illusion. The tent may be used as a subterfuge for Corazon to overcome his anthropomorphizing shyness, but more importantly, it is a prop to insinuate the intercourse. To push such insinuations to the next level, the play resorts to very explicit imagery in the dialogue, bordering on the raunchy: 'Ça sent bon, ça me rappelle / mon excopine' ('It smells nice, it reminds me of / my ex-girlfriend'), Corazon says; 'Aïe, mets pas les dents, / c'est pas une botte de foin!' ('Ouch, mind your teeth / it's not hay!'),<sup>52</sup> exclaims Dosch. The stage directions also display a likeness for bluntness and for graphic sounds that leave little to the imagination:

*Le cheval s'est approché,  
on entend des bruits de déglutition  
qui viennent de l'intérieur de la tente*

*(The horse has got closer,  
we can hear licking sounds  
coming from inside the tent).<sup>53</sup>*

Despite these brusque and forthright depictions of sexual acts, the hypothetical consummation must not be merely dismissed as a gross act of bestiality, for what Dosch seems more interested in exploring is the affectionate relationship between the two species. Sexuality, in other terms, is meant to signify kinship, and to emphasize those connections that bring us together rather than those arguments that have traditionally pulled us apart. In a way, Dosch brings us to the consideration of individuals (whatever their species may be) as moral (rather than merely biological) subjects in a manner that echoes some of the precepts established by renowned utilitarian Peter Singer. Significantly (and rather controversially), in a 2001 article titled 'Heavy Petting', Singer argues against the absolute tabooing and censoring of human sexual intercourse with other species. As long as the animal is not being coerced, forced or harmed, Singer contended, no ethical principles are necessarily being breached.<sup>54</sup> To build his case, he suggests that interspecies sexual practices involving humans have been (and are) far more common than we would care, out of shame, to admit. To do this, he resorts to interviews conducted by another source that reveal how shockingly widespread sexual encounters of this nature are – a fact that reinstates the timelessness of artistic pieces that have, since antiquity, depicted bestiality. It is the Judaeo-Christian tradition, Singer claims, that makes a taboo out of such practices. His conclusions are certainly consistent with the logic of consequentialism that predominates in his seminal work *Animal Liberation* (1975). As just another animal among many, it is natural for humans to feel attracted to other animals, regardless of the species. The taboo of zoophilia and the resulting stigmatization of those who practise it has a well-known biblical origin and is built around the repulsion of any semblance of a link between humans and the other species.<sup>55</sup> Deemed an abhorrence, all and any instinctual drive towards other animals must be fulminated and quelled. Guided by utilitarian principles, Singer defends that

as long as the sexual relationship is consensual on the part of the parties involved (perhaps the animal may even seek such intercourse), the only moral accountability at stake is of a cultural or religious nature, and it stems in 'our desire to differentiate ourselves, erotically and in every other way, from animals'.<sup>56</sup>

Dosch's advocacy of freedom at a sexual, performative and verbal level assimilates the principle of consensus and remains unapologetic about its shock tactics. Her objective, as the lyrics in a tune she raps state, is to express 'des choses interdites' ('that which is forbidden').<sup>57</sup> This insistence upon art as a communicative medium does, however, suggest that the sex scenes in the performance are not so much a blunt defence of zoophilia as they are a mode through which to legitimate aesthetic freedom. It is what bestiality can symbolically reveal to us when in the context of a performance that is of interest to her. The woman character's shedding of her species constraints and her willing transition as a dehumanized animal bring her closer to the horse, thus minimizing their interspecies distance and therefore symbolically averting cultural and religious recriminations. Beginning with her nakedness, Dosch declares her relinquishment of the codes and constructs upon which the identity of the human species rests. Admittedly, this transformation is arbitrary and incomplete, for she does retain her powers of speech and her capacity to control the horse's movements (ultimately, she preserves her ability to *act*), hence invigorating performativity as a human trait. But the tension with the allegory that she otherwise conveys continues to explore and expand the limits of animality within art, making metamorphosis central for the approach to the animal question. The scene in which Dosch gets into a barrel and drinks from the same water as Corazon may be regarded as a baptismal rite of initiation into a much-sought and welcoming otherness. The woman's desire for sexual consummation, stimulated by her condition as an equestrienne, must be read as a desire to ascend and to transcend into her 'horseness' or *équité* (equity) – this latter term being Corazon's preferable title for the play.<sup>58</sup>

### **From the horse's mouth and face**

This sense of justice and equality suggested by the notion of 'equity' is not only a reflection of the transformation of the female character, but is also indicative of the individualization of the horse. Despite society's denial of his personhood, Corazon becomes an individual subject, a self that through the performance is able to locate its singleness within the carnophallogocentric devourment of all non-human species that the term 'animal' denotes. Granted, such individualization is invested through his acquisition of speech, through which he expresses his own thoughts and emotions. With Dosch as his ventriloquist, Corazon's voice reveals a low, masculine timbre that resonates within his genderized identity as a stallion. His ironic demeanour is frequently draped with a natural innocence and benevolence that are a rarity in humans and that seem to inevitably drag him back to a state of submission: 'Je sais pas / Je sais pas décider' ('I don't know / I can't decide'),<sup>59</sup> Corazon tells Dosch when she asks him whether he likes a poem. His responses, as a flexible illustration of what Josephine Donovan terms 'the animal standpoint' (i.e. the representation of the

subjective experience of a particular individual within a particular species),<sup>60</sup> thus constitute verbalized manifestations of his vulnerability and his sentience, with which spectators sympathize.

Dosch's creative contradiction at this level seems too blatant to ignore, for how can one attempt to disrupt the type of traditional androcentric rationalism that has most frequently separated man from animals on the grounds of speech by reclaiming the horse's individuality through, of all things, human language? Does that not fall within the practice of anthropomorphism that ultimately distorts animal subjectivity and pulls the animal down deeper and harder into the dark well of otherness? The performance deals with the paradox by resorting once again to the overpowering symbolic potential of the stage – the tacit pact between fable and suspension of disbelief naturalizes the horse's responses in the form of speech, diluting the contradiction by virtue of aesthetic possibility. It is the theatre just being theatre – transforming, creating an illusion, a diversion. In accepting the speaking horse as natural to the performative space it inhabits, the spectators can shift their attention from *how* the animal responds to *what* the animal responds. The audience no longer gazes upon the animal body as a displaced object that has been relocated within an environment which is unnatural to him – he/she looks upon the horse as an agent of dialectics that is able to name and to furnish his thoughts in verbal signifiers. The question *whether* the animal can respond, so central to Derrida's estrangement of animals from humans,<sup>61</sup> is tricked by the inertia of the performance. Dosch invites us to naturalize theatrical illusion in order to engage in communicative possibility. What Corazon would say if we were able to understand his language is what Dosch offers, and so the theatre transcends not only the horse's verbal limitations, but also those of humans, for we are implicitly asked to go beyond our very fixation on language that precludes deciphering the animal response elsewhere in the animal body.

The process of individualization, so dependent in the play upon verbal language, leads to the horse's gradual attainment (if not earning) of a face. As he is pulled farther away from his original state as 'other', the spectator's gaze becomes a purifying catalyst that cleans the smudginess of a face that was only moments ago besmirched by the term 'animal'. The face becomes the expressive mirror of the words that Dosch delivers in his name, meaningfully filling the absence of responsiveness that the audience had originally attributed to the stallion. Even Corazon's naivety, so prominent in his speech, becomes patterned upon his face. Within contemporary philosophy, the issue of animal facelessness is addressed by Emmanuel Levinas in an interview in which the philosopher was asked whether animals had a face. Levinas does not deny the animal a face in absolute terms, but he does deem it secondary – or 'afterwards'<sup>62</sup> – to that of man, which would justify the subordination of non-human others. Derrida situates Levinas with the likes of Descartes, Kant and Lacan – philosophers who never felt the look of the animal upon them – 'ceux qui ne se sont jamais vus par un animal' ('those who have never been seen by an animal'), says Derrida.<sup>63</sup> Such perceived emptiness in the animal gaze, symptomatic of their unresponse-ability, ultimately leads to their invisibility, for there is nothing there for man to recognize or acknowledge. Levinas's midway concession of a face for

the animal is insufficient: whatever semblance of a face the animal may have, it cannot be said to be its own. The animal face derives from our own search, as humans, for response, of which the face is a map. In seeking the human face – that is, in seeking to recognize ourselves – we bestow a face upon the animal other. To deny a face (which Levinas ultimately does) is to deny an identity, to sink the ‘other’ in the darkness of non-existence, in the embodiment of an organic carcass. In the words of Chaudhuri, ‘to give animals a face ... would seem to give them what Descartes denied them, a soul, a place in our moral universe, and the opportunity to be seen and known as our fellows’.<sup>64</sup>

In *Hate*, the progressive individualization of Corazon demands that the audience distinguish and acknowledge his face. It may be, as Levinas says, that we do so because we search for ourselves upon the animal ‘other’ (and indeed Dosch’s equipping of Corazon with verbal language would initially seem to support such a theory). However, the play’s insistence on endowing the horse with a subjectivity (even if through quixotic illusion and through the instruments proper to the human) refutes the notion that the animal face is of a secondary nature. Rather, Dosch urges us to understand and accept that only through codes familiar to our experience and consciousness as humans can we get a glimpse of the perhaps otherwise unfathomable animal. This does not retain the animal within a secondary status – it simply and impartially offers a solution to the problem (regardless of whether the problem is the unresponse-ability of the animal or the human inability to recognize the animal response). There are, indeed, ethological and animal behavioural findings that give us some insight into the sensorial and experiential world of certain species. We may, in this way, come to know that horses greatly depend on their sense of touch to make sense of their surroundings, and that their evolution as herd and prey animals has gifted them with a peripheral vision that makes them extremely perceptive of movement.<sup>65</sup> However, this knowledge may provide details to which we can only relate by thinking how it would be for a human to be a horse (as Thomas Nagel famously argued in his essay ‘What Is It Like to Be a Bat’ in the 1970s), but it tells us little about what it is like for the horse to be a horse. These epistemological barriers run parallel to Haraway’s criticism of Derrida, whom she accuses of neglecting the opportunity of (or even of displaying a ‘curiosity’ for) deepening into the cat’s mind<sup>66</sup> – the same cat that contemplates his nakedness. In this way, she contends, the discussion remains within the periphery of anthropocentrism. Given the theory that phenomenological qualities of a given species are what determine their consciousness, our unrelatability to the horse’s ways of experiencing the world hinder our true understanding of his consciousness. In substituting that sensorial uniqueness with language and a face, Dosch, through the aesthetic medium, may be suggesting that within this heteropatriarchy, the ethical urgency with regard to animals is not so much to unearth their phenomenological relation to the world, but altogether to raise awareness about their having a consciousness and subjectivity. And perhaps the best way to go about this is by resorting to the anthropomorphic gesture of empowering the horse with a verbal language – however unscientific and helplessly flawed the technique may be.



Ultimately, in spite of the fact that verbal intercourse remains reminiscent of what Ridout and Castellucci identify as a clear act of masculinization of the theatrical space, Dosch is able to explore alternative and more subtle ways of communication throughout the performance. Defying anthropocentrism, the play elicits a series of 'language games' in the Wittgensteinian sense – that is, forms of interaction that are not founded upon the word but, as Eva Meijer argues, on 'gestures, posture, movement and sound'.<sup>67</sup> In *Adam's Task* (1986), philosopher and animal trainer Vicki Hearne regards the cooperative context of training (for instance, for show jumping) as a dynamic between horse and trainer in which communication is constructed in the former's terms, and emphasizes the importance of the handler 'to be open to understanding', much more than 'to have shared mental phenomena'.<sup>68</sup> Meijer also insists on the need for the human to overcome his/her own linguistic impetus and try to communicate, as well as possible, through the other species' codes for interaction. Beyond Dosch's instrumentalization of the word for certain effects, she surrenders her naked body to a choreography of gestures, corporeal movements back and forth, stretching limbs, facial expressions and caresses, occasionally texturized by the soundscapes of pitch and intonation. These communicative displays seek and demand a response from the horse, who interacts back through movement. The word is never lost, for the conversation between the characters continues on; but it is at the sublevel of corporeal responses that the subjects truly read and interpret one another. A space in which the word is meaningless is thus devised, and responses need not always be the same – herein lies the success of the interspecies communicative enterprise. The horse, as a subject and as an individual, reveals his response-ability (versus mere reaction) by acceding to Dosch's gestural invitations as much as by ignoring them. Should the latter be the case, Dosch must respond back by improvising – for instance, should Corazon refuse to walk over to the rock that will allow Dosch to climb onto his back, the actress must, in the immediacy of the performance, create a scene in which she chases him around. The free will and improvisation that define the interspecies communion in *Hate* secure the position of the animal and female subjects as unmechanical presences upon the stage, and their organic cohabitation marks a stark contrast with the more sterile, anthropocentric dialogue that layers their movements and cannot grow beyond the mechanics of illusion.

The attribution of verbal language to the animal, alongside the fluency with which actress and horse interact in non-anthropocentric terms, carves out a new imaginary societal space for different species. If, as Meijer claims, the mutism that is attributed to non-human animal others (as well as to women and to the enslaved racial other) has, since antiquity, perpetuated their status as secondary citizens, then subjecthood and moral status must necessarily involve the appropriation of language. Following Donaldson and Kymlicka's groundbreaking work on animals and political theory,<sup>69</sup> Meijer contends that our acknowledgement of animal languages and of their capacity to communicate and engage as social subjects – what Derrida favours calling *response* – informs the mapping of an 'interspecies democracy' not unlike Dosch's proposed *équité*.<sup>70</sup>

### Conclusion: animal ethics and performance

*Hate* delivers upon the stage a sense of horseness that levels equine subjectivity with the human one. Essential to the crafting of the play was Judith Zagury, who defines her contribution as that of a *coach équestre* (equestrian coach) or *éthologue animale* (animal ethologist) rather than a *dresseuse* (animal trainer), precisely to avoid historically grounded perceptions and connotations that suggest oppressive and abusive systems of domination.<sup>71</sup> Zagury's aim is to render an interspecies relationship that is 'le plus équitable possible' ('as equitable as possible').<sup>72</sup> Preparations and rehearsals were carried out in ShanJu, an equestrian *école-atelier* near Lausanne, where workshops and schooling operate following the needs and interests of horses as individual and social beings. Corazon is not confined to an isolated stall. In ShanJu he is integrated as part of a herd, in an attempt to satisfy his social and emotional needs and to guarantee that he gets exercise. Concern for both mental and physical health and well-being permeates Dosch's play, in which equestrian apparel, such as saddles, bridles and bits, is discarded. Replacing such gear is clicker training – that is, a form of positive reinforcement that rewards the horse every time he spontaneously behaves in a way that Zagury finds of interest. Such form of interspecies socializing is dependent upon play, direct physical contact and the development of an affective relationship between the subjects – what Zagury terms 'qualité de la presence' ('quality of presence').<sup>73</sup> The result is a performative space in which guiding, suggesting and inviting are the channelling etiquette, and in which the sense of touch reveals itself – as suggested by Monsó and Wragger – essential for the success of intra- and interspecies communication.<sup>74</sup>

Of primary relevance is the assumption of the creative role that Zagury, as an ethologist, Dosch and Corazon share in the production and staging of *Hate*. 'La mise en scène est systématiquement imaginée en fonction du potentiel de chaque cheval. Ce sont eux autant que les humains qui l'imaginent et la dirigent' ('The performance is systematically designed depending on each of the horses' potential. It is them, as much as humans, who conceive and direct it'), Zagury notes.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, this ethical stance rests on the premise that the animal's behaviour and movement should not be fixed. By refusing to impose on Corazon calculated movements, the horse is freed of instrumentality and fixation through domination, and his agency is acknowledged and reinstated, thus rendering possible symbiotic forms of communication. And it is important for Zagury and Dosch to make audiences aware of the dialogue between species that has structured both rehearsals and performances. Their interspecies work ethic resonates deeply within the type of complicity and horse–human cooperation described by Vicki Hearne, who wrote about the 'happiness' that comes from bringing out 'something within the animal' and that 'cannot be imposed on the animal'.<sup>76</sup> 'Ce qui nous intéresse c'est d'établir des codes de compréhension avec l'animal pour aller plus loin dans la communication' ('We are interested in finding codes of understanding so as to communicate better with the animal'), states Zagury.<sup>77</sup> The onstage improvisation is a reflection of the organically shared creativity in this triad of agents, whereupon the horse's state of mind in that very moment

points to a new direction, rendering no two performances alike. I attended the play on two consecutive nights in Châteauroux and watched a third, recorded performance.<sup>78</sup> In all three cases, which only constitute a humble sample of the total number of performances, Corazon's ease and relaxed demeanour upon the stage not only were indicative of his well-being, but also led to different types of behaviour in different moments. Leading his human companion into modulations, reformulations and other types of variation at a textual, visual and performative level, the interspecies communion strengthens its significance as an organic practice – as they rewrite the performance together, so do they rewrite each other and 'become' in their communion. Undeniably far and safe from traditional objectification of the performing animal, Dosch and Corazon illustrate that 'reciprocal possession' addressed by Hearne.<sup>79</sup> Similarly, theirs is a willing type of collaboration that echoes Vinciane Despret's affirmation that, upon the stage, 'bêtes et hommes oeuvrent ensemble' ('animals and humans work together').<sup>80</sup> In this manner, Dosch and Zagury prioritize the sensorial co-experiencing of the different agents upon the stage over colonial and anthropocentric strategizing, making stage directions regarding Corazon's movements merely residual. The encounter is one of 'interspecies inter-subjectivity', a description used by David Williams in reference to yet another equestrian artist, Bartabas.<sup>81</sup>

The end of the play is structured around the demolition of theatrical illusion, as Dosch straightforwardly refers to the deceitful nature of her act. With these closing remarks of hers, Corazon is stripped from his linguistic powers and retrieved back into the muted existence of animality that is conspicuous of anthropocentric cultures. He reverts into his state as a domestic creature, tied to a pole and subdued to the dregs of androcentric hierarchies. As the fable dissipates and the stage's artificiality vanquishes the suspension of disbelief, dialogue regresses back to monologue as the actress expresses her loneliness and despair. *Hate's* transition is one from the primitiveness evoked by the striking nakedness at the beginning of the play to a final wasteland of the psyche where the female/equine subjectivity is dissolved into hopelessness. The nudity that originally symbolized a purity of femaleness and animality characteristic of the pastoral at the end of the performance resignifies itself as a metaphor for loss (of clothing, humanness, companionship, affection and so on). Such dystopic undertones, emblemized through a complete rupture between the human and the non-human animal, plague the broken spirit of the woman, who bids farewell and grudgingly surrenders to the isolation, thus coming full circle with the feeling of hatred that lends its title to the play.

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