LIVING WITH THE ANIMALS...

In the fullness of our nonidentities...

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I come to speak ~~not~~ of the animals.
Whence do I come, and toward what?
To whom do I speak, and in what voice?
If not the animals, then of which?
If the animals do not speak, what do they say?
In what gathering do we come together?

I come to speak with you from two well known places. Let me remind you of them.

First:

> We no longer derive man from "the spirit" or "the deity"; we have placed him back among the animals.... Man is by no means the crown of creation: every living being stands beside him on the same level of perfection. And even this is saying too much: relatively speaking, man is the most bungled of all the animals, the sickliest, and not one has strayed more dangerously from its instincts. But for all that, he is of course the most *interesting*. (Nietzsche, *A*, 580)

To which I might ask, why *of course*, why not *perhaps*?

Second:

> The moral question is thus not, nor has it ever been: should one eat or not eat, eat this and not that, the living or the nonliving, man or animal, but since one must eat in any case ... how for goodness' sake should one eat well? ... "One must eat well *[il faut bien manger]*" does not mean above all taking in and grasping in itself, but *learning* and *giving* to eat, learning-to-give-the-other-to-eat. ... It is a rule offering infinite hospitality. ...[1] (Derrida, *EW*, 282-3)

To which I might ask, what hospitality for chick or calf, what do we give, what do they learn? And what makes it infinite except our pre-

sumption? What could make it infinite but our forbearance? And if we withdrew from sacrificing animals so readily to our digestion, might the next step be to withdraw from sacrificing each other to our goodness?

More of this later.

We who believe in evolution—and which of us animals today does not, perhaps even those who would deny it?—have returned humanity to the animals, to nature. Human beings together with animals and plants compose living nature, where every species has achieved the same degree of perfection from the standpoint of evolutionary fitness. We may be capable of killing other animals, and of inventing new species of plants, but that capacity might be a defect in being—if such a thing could be said to be.

As for eating—I am a committed vegetarian—we cannot choose not to eat, that would be to choose not to live or be, and we cannot limit eating to grasping and chewing, but may include all the ways in which we give and receive, in the proximities of our shared being in the world together—I mean, beings, worlds, singularities, and participations. Let us think of these as defining what we mean by proximities. And let us note that when we are together with animals, when we approach the animals and the others with the task of learning-to-give-to-them through the mouth (not to mention other orifices, not to forget infinite hospitality), we are speaking of the endless ways of expressing and responding that constitute hospitality.

Let me begin again with some hypothetical yet tangible examples:

You are sitting on the sofa in your living room, your three-year-old son in your lap, together with your 12-year-old cat, your dog beside you. You feel the warmth of each of their bodies touching yours and touching each other, and you are aware of your humanity in the bodies touching. You are watching Animal Planet, an episode about jaguars living and hunting. It seems to you that the animals are present in your room, though you know that that is possible only in virtue of exceptional camera technology. You know you are safe, and you feel that you are closer to such animals than you have ever been before. While you are watching you become aware that your cat has pounced on moths drifting into the room.

You take your five-year-old daughter to the zoo and stop at the jaguar exhibit. The jaguar is pacing like a crazy person, back and forth, round and round. You are about 60 feet away, and cannot get closer. You wonder what it would be like to be the jaguar in such a cage. And you think you know.

You are walking through the forest, aware of the singing of the birds, the movements of small animals, your family at your side. An outing together, you say to each other, let's go for a walk in the woods. You are lucky to live near a forest that is kept as wild as possible except for a few dirt paths. The coyotes have come back and deer are visible at certain hours of the day.

You are standing on a precipice looking out over rice fields below in Bali. In the darkness you can see the stars before you and up into the sky. In the darkness you can see the stars before you and below, all the way down. The stars below are moving. The entire world is full of moving stars. You realize that the lights below are fireflies.

Many of these are familiar experiences, though the last may no longer be familiar to city dwellers. I offer them to call attention to what might be strange about them. Let me begin with the second.

In his novel, *Elizabeth Costello*, J.M. Coetzee presents a famous older woman author who has written a novel on Molly Bloom regarded as comparable if not superior to James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Already a remarkable suggestion. She is invited to speak throughout the world on any topic she chooses. Although her hosts would like her to speak on literature, she chooses to speak on the treatment of animals on factory farms, comparing it with the treatment of Jews in German concentration camps. The dinners that celebrate her present a difficult social relation. What shall they eat? What shall they discuss? Who will be offended?

Lest we pass by too easily, let me note the bodily elements of this picture: animals in cages, in their odiferous presence; animals screaming at slaughter; blood, skin, intestines, and bone; human beings confined to barracks, fed sickening rations, sickened by work, cold, unfitting clothes and shoes, suffused with indifferent hatreds and brutalities. One might speculate that the corporealities and the brutalities here have much in common, in contrast to my first and second examples, in which the warmth and love that define the best that human life can experience are profoundly corporeal. This is to say that despite a world of traditions in which the highest joys that humans can know involve diminishing the tangible weight of physical experiences, those same traditions and lives know that the fullness of being for humans and animals, if not plants and other wonderful things, is unmistakably corporeal. I would say that this is a lesson we may learn from Darwin and evolutionary biology. We may learn it, but many would refuse it.

One of Elizabeth Costello's themes—offensive to some—is that rational discourses such as science and philosophy are incapable of addressing issues of extreme suffering and evil. Concentration camps and factory farming are too intense for abstract reason to address. Reason has no monopoly on ethical compassion, and indeed is a human invention for human purposes.

> Might it not be that the phenomenon we are examining here is, rather than the flowering of a faculty that allows access to the secrets of the universe, the specialism of a rather narrow self-regenerating intellectual tradition whose forte is reasoning, in the same way that the forte of chess players is playing chess, which for its own motives it tries to install at the centre of the universe? (Coetzee, *EC*, 69)

A second theme, in close proximity to the first, is that literature, especially poetry, can express the inner being of strange and unfamiliar things, for example, wild animals and dead people.

Here is that jaguar again, twice, in the eyes and voice of a poet:

The jaguar

[skipping the beginning]

By the bang of blood in the brain deaf the ear—He spins from the bars, but there's no cage to him
More than to the visionary his cell:
His stride is wildernesses of freedom:
The world rolls under the long thrust of his heel. Over the cage floor the horizons come.
–Ted Hughes

Second glance at a jaguar

Skinful of bowls he bowls them,
The hip going in and out of joint, dropping the spine with the urgency of his hurry
Like a cat going along under thrown stones, under cover,
Glancing sideways, running
Under his spine….

At every stride he has to turn a corner
In himself and correct it. His head
Is like the worn down stump of another whole jaguar, His body is just the engine shoving it forward,
Lifting the air up and shoving on under,
The weight of his fangs hanging the mouth open,
Bottom jaw combing the ground.
–Ted Hughes (quoted from Mulhall, *WA*, 111-2)

Here is a magician-philosopher's poetic expression of our third experience:

Caught up in a mass of abstractions, our attention hypnotized by a host of human-made technologies that only reflect us back to ourselves, it is all too easy for us to forget our carnal inherence in a more-than-human matrix of sensations and sensibilities. Our bodies have formed themselves in delicate reciprocity with the manifold textures, sounds, and shapes of an animate earth—our eyes have evolved in subtle interaction with other eyes, as our ears are attuned by their very structure to the howling of wolves and the honking of geese. To shut ourselves off from these other voices, to continue by our lifestyles to condemn these other sensibilities to the oblivion of extinction, is to rob our own senses of their integrity, and to rob our minds of their coherence. We are human only in contact, and conviviality, with what is not human. (Abram, *SS*, 22)

Ultimately, to acknowledge the life of the body, and to affirm our solidarity with this physical form, is to acknowledge our existence as one of the earth's animals, and so to remember and rejuvenate the organic basis of our thoughts and our intelligence. (47)

Ultimately, then, it is not the human body alone but rather the whole of the sensuous world that provides the deep structure of language. As we ourselves dwell and move within language, so, ultimately, do the other animals and animate things of the world; if we do not notice them there, it is only because language has forgotten its expressive depths. "Language is a life, is our life and the life of the things… ." It is no more true that we speak than that the things, and the animate world itself, *speak within us*. (87)

And the fourth:

Between the constellations below and the constellations above drifted countless fireflies, their lights flickering like the stars, some drifting up to join

the clusters of stars overhead, others, like graceful meteors, slipping down from above to join the constellations underfoot, and all these paths of light upward and downward were mirrored, as well, in the still surface of the paddies. I felt myself at times falling through space, at other moments floating and drifting. I simply could not dispel the profound vertigo and giddiness; the paths of the fireflies, and their reflections in the water's surface, held me in a sustained trance. Even after I crawled back to my hut and shut the door on this whirling world, I felt that now the little room in which I lay was itself floating free of the earth. (4)

Elizabeth Costello's description of this *being-in-our-body* is presented in relation to a bat—the bat made famous in Thomas Nagel's suggestion that we cannot imagine ourselves as a bat. Our finite beings in our finite bodies make it impossible for us to imagine being so other: sensing, hearing, living like a bat; sensing, smelling, being a dog; perhaps unable to imagine being my lover whose body is so intimately close to me. All bodies, perhaps, are intimate and other. The other who I love, whose otherness I may or may not imagine, is other in the proximity of our bodies, same and other bodies. *Tout autre est tout autre.* (Derrida, *GD*, 68)

Elizabeth Costello confronts us with two different suggestions, if you will, concerning being in a body, always in different bodies, human and bat: that poets can so imagine, and that what they imagine is bat being, bats and jaguars full of being in their bodies, a notion she expands on without attribution, drawing from Spinoza's *beatitudo: unbounded joy*.

To be a living bat is to be full of being; being fully a bat is like being fully human, which is also to be full of being. Bat being in the first case; human being in the second, maybe; but those are secondary considerations. To be full of being is to live as a body-soul. One name for the experience of full being is *joy*. (*EC*, 77)

By bodying forth the jaguar, Hughes shows us that we too can embody animals—by the process called poetic invention that mingles breath and sense in a way that no one has explained and no one ever will. He shows us how to bring the living body into being within ourselves. When we read the jaguar poem, when we recollect it afterwards in tranquillity, we are for a brief while the jaguar. He ripples within us, he takes over our body, he is us. (97-8)

The particular horror of the camps, the horror that convinces us that what went on there was a crime against humanity, is not that despite a humanity shared with their victims, the killers treated them like lice. That is too abstract. The horror is that the killers refused to think themselves into the place of their victims, as did everyone else. They said, "It is they in those cattle cars rattling past." They did not say, "How would it be if it were I in that cattle car?" They did not say, "It is I who am in that cattle car." They said, "It must be the dead who are being burned today, making the air stink and falling in ash on my cabbages." They did not say, "How would it be if I were burning?" They did not say, "I am burning, I am falling in ash." (79)

I share some of Nagel's misgivings as to whether our imagination is capable of identifying with the auditory world of a bat or any other creature that lives by echolocation; I am struck by how different is the world of a dog who lives primarily by smell. This awe—yes awe—I feel is not to denigrate the bat or dog but to the contrary, to celebrate their otherness, the otherness of their worlds. We share worlds together, in some sense we share the same worlds together, and yet here are two beings whose worlds are wonderfully different. One of these animals is capable of sharing our human worlds more fully than many other people. Dogs are famous for reading the minds and souls of humans by reading their bodies, however they do that.

All this might be to say that I do not accept Heidegger's insistence that animals are poor in world.[2] Poor perhaps in ways that certain humans are poor in human worlds, but astonishingly rich in animal worlds, in ways that human beings can only dimly imagine.

I have misgivings about the reach of our imaginations in certain endeavors, yet I wish to celebrate our imaginations as Elizabeth Costello asks us to. Imagination—not only human, perhaps—is limited yet unbounded. We cannot imagine just anything, yet we cannot suppose that anything is beyond imagining. That peculiar paradox of imagining is the key to literature and art, if not to what makes us human. Except that we must not suppose that we know that such imagining is restricted to humans.

But this is not what interests me here. I am interested in another story present in what Elizabeth Costello says. What is it to be full of being? And can we imagine fullness of being in another human or animal, even

a plant or stone, without denigration—in her words, without implying that such others, with less fullness or a different fullness, are ours to use in any way whatever.[3]

I have intimated that this fullness of being is corporeal, we live in our bodies, and bodily living is the fullness of being. The limits of philosophy, then, and of any other mode of thought as such, is given by the abstractions such thought imposes on us—very strong, overwhelming in philosophy. The greatness and weakness of philosophy lie in the power of its abstractions.

Fullness of being, then, is the abundance of being in a body. Bodies are proximate, relational, embedded, and entangled. Embodiment is relationality. Indeed, bodies are so embedded and entangled that we are constantly surprised by what emerges from such bodily relations. I would call that process of emergence *evolution*. In Spinoza's words, "we do not know what bodies can do." (*E*, Pt. 3, P2, Sch.)

This surprise does not entail miscomprehension or distance alone, for we are frequently surprised even more by how intimate and affective other bodies are. Fullness of being, then, is inherently strange and unfamiliar, in the midst of kinship and love.

This disparition pervades the physical world. I say this aware that Enlightenment thought has made the science of physics the model of clarity and certainty. More of this later. Here I want to call attention to the pervasiveness of what cannot be said (in philosophy or science) without difficulty (in Cora Diamond's words), what cannot be understood, because it is itself, inherently, difficult to understand, difficult to be (Diamond, *DRDP*). In other words, what we may learn from the proximities and intimacies of animals (and others, including those we love) is the strange difficulty of being. Being in a body is strange and difficult. Being as a body also. Being a mind, a soul, a being fully present in a body that is present somehow to itself, and thereby present to others, is inconceivably strange.

I am suggesting that this strangeness pervades the world. I am suggesting that all that we take to be beings as such are present strangely and difficultly to themselves. Every identity is nonidentical with itself, and present to itself nonidentically. I call this *betraying*. It is the ongo-

ing condition of the enchantment of the world, beyond accounting. More of this later.

Returning to fullness and denigration:

Fullness of being is being in a body, embedded and entangled with other bodies. In this way, the denigration of other bodies is interrupted by the ways in which these other bodies are me, ways in which I am entangled among them.

John Donne said this several centuries ago in Europe: no one is an island, entire to itself. Buddhism describes it as emptiness, *sunyata*, without complete and separate self identity. Western individuality promotes a myth of self ownership in the context of a capitalist world of labor and consumption in which individuals are as they produce and as they consume. If we add the presence of others—individual bodies betrayed in who they are by others, other bodies and other things, historical and relational—the picture expands to make identity impossible in itself, nonidentical with itself.

The fullness of being is its nonidentity with itself. Every being betrays itself, and betrays the others; every identity is nonidentical with itself, is what it is in virtue of others. We are embedded in the being of others, as they are embedded in ours. In our bodies we are full of other bodies, however strange and difficult this may be.

To denigrate an other—animal, human, and others—is to denigrate ourselves. Each of us is so embodied, so embedded, entangled among others in our bodies, that we are what and who we are in virtue of what and who they are. We can elevate ourselves only by diminishing the fullness of our own identities.

This means that the fullness of my being is embodied in the fullness of yours. What I might gain in elevation I lose in the resulting attenuation of our shared being.[4]

Here is a well-known example:[5]

> Levinas uses the Kantian expression "friend of man" in order to designate the dog that is capable of transcendence. It is a question of the dogs of Egypt, which are thunderstruck at the moment of the "death of the firstborn," when "Israel is about to be released from the house of bondage." You will hear how the dog, which is still in lack and privation, as Heidegger will decidedly say, "without," still lacking the logos and ethics, "with neither ethics nor logos," in

Levinas's words, sees itself convoked, in its very silence, as a witness, simply as witness to the humanity of man. This mute witness is there merely to attest to the dignity (*Würde*) of man. (Derrida, *ATTIA*, 116-7)

No one is more corporeal than Levinas, no one more ethical. And yet he cannot think himself into the being of an animal, neither in general nor in the particular case of Bobby, the famous dog whose presence in the camp was to acknowledge the humanity of the prisoners.

The dignity of man is said to elevate humanity above all other creatures and things in the world. Yet this Kantian claim, no matter how elevated, carries with it a profound destitution of being. Certain traits and not others define the dignity of man—not to mention how long and in what ways dignity has been withheld from women.

What would it mean if we granted dignity to all things—not rights but dignity, self identity and self realization, with the proviso that not only the being but the identity and the realization are nonidentical with themselves? This is to say that the fullness of their being means to me as a body that I can never realize the fullness of my being except in relation to them, through their fullness; and not in any predetermined way. The fullness of being opens onto the difficulty of being nonidentical with oneself.

This can be said in the language of bodies and animality—first Levinas again:

But is not the diachrony of the inspiration and expiration separated by the instant that belongs to an animality? Would animality be the openness upon the beyond essence? But perhaps animality is only the soul's still being too short of breath. In human breathing, in its everyday equality, perhaps we have to already hear the breathlessness of an inspiration that paralyzes essence, that transpierces it with an inspiration by the other, an inspiration that is already expiration, that "rends the soul"! It is the longest breath there is, spirit. Is man not the living being capable of the longest breath in inspiration, without a stopping point, and in expiration, without return? (Levinas, *OB*, 181-2)

Let us think within a certain European tradition of this conjunction of inspiration, transcendence, and breath as *spirit*, together with dignity, subjectivity, and humanity. The key term in this passage is *animality*, first as the corporeality of humanity—but not its inspiration—second as the brutality of the natural world—or, what may be the same thing

again, its indifference. *Nature is red in tooth and claw. Evil belongs to humanity alone. No creature is as destructive as human beings.* We are higher than our animality.

Except, as Nietzsche says, *we are our animality. We are our bodies. Bodies are us*. In all their transcendence. The miracle of humans is the miracle of bodies.[6] And the miracle of bodies is not only human.

It seems that we are always asked to take sides where there are no sides. The side of humanity, the side of animals, the side of goodness, the side of death. We must know, we must believe, we must take a stand. As if these existed except in the subjunctive. Each of them nonidentical with itself.

Here, in the name of taking sides, Derrida has something remarkable to say. On the sides, then, of life and death—let us call this the fullness of living.

> Hélène Cixous took sides "for life." This is not an obvious thing to do, unlike what one might imagine. The side [*parti*] is also a wager [*pari*], an act of faith. What does it mean to wager one's life on life? What will the choice of life have meant for her? Not a "life-choice," but the side of life against death, for life without death, beyond a death whose test and threat are none the less endured, in mourning even in the life blood and breath, in the soul of writing. (Derrida, *HCL*, xiii)

The fullness of living takes place in the subjunctive.

> As for me, I keep forever reminding her each time, on my side, that we die in the end, too quickly. And I always have to begin again.
>
> For she—because she loves to live—does not believe me. She, on her side, knows well that one dies in the end, too quickly; she knows it and writes about it better than anyone, she has the knowledge of it but she believes none of it. She does not believe, she knows; she is the one who knows and who tries, but she believes none of it. (2)

On one side, this beginning leads toward the subjunctive mood of believing: would that I (or we) might believe—a mood that teeters on the edge of the deepest abyss (if there be such). On another side, this beginning leads toward enchanting, a term, like betraying, that plunges into the abyss without fear of dying. If that be possible.

By *enchanting* I mean to evoke Max Weber's suggestion a century ago that the world has become disenchanted, that we believe (but not

in the subjunctive) that we can account for all things by rationality and calculation (Weber, *SV*, 155). Might the fullness of being be enchanting, in the subjunctive, full of unaccountable things?

Derrida—*jd*—insists that *hc*'s writing is en-chanting, that literature can be en-chanting, in the face of dying, on the side of living, if that be possible, if that be not the impossible. Or unbelievable. Always in the subjunctive.

> How would the mighty powers of this unbelievable belief in the impossible watch over what is called so glibly the fiction of a so-called literary event, over all that complies with the modality of a certain "as if"? And as each art entertains a different experience of fiction and therefore of belief, one may wonder what happens to believing and to the "would that I might believe" when arts graft, haunt, and mingle with one another. … When one hears a piece of music, if one can hear it, for instance a song [*chant*], an "enchanting chant [*enchant*]," as is said in a text about magical enchantment, a hymn or incantation of which we will have more to say, then one believes or one no longer needs to believe in the same way as someone who would only hear the words of a narrative (whether fictional or not). What happens then, as far as belief and the impossible are concerned, when the song of the enchanting chant [*chant de l'enchant*] can no longer be dissociated from the whole body of words and from what still presents itself as the literality of literature? When literature becomes an enchanting chant? (Derrida, *HC*, 4-5)

I might ask—perhaps—why literature (alone?) can become an enchanting chant. What would it mean to insist or to deny this?—that it can, that only it can. Perhaps as if it might. And why not music?

What happens when anything, literature or music, philosophy or poem, becomes enchanting? I responded in detail to this question elsewhere.[7] Enchanting expresses what is unaccountable, miraculous, without a name. Neither the name of a god for what is beyond accounting, nor the name of a science for what is perhaps not beyond. The nonidentity of every identity with itself. Enchanting is betraying. Bodies are enchanting. Whatever is enchanting is bodies, bodies are full of being, embodied and embedded and entangled among themselves, always as if perhaps beyond themselves.

In hc's name, jd says the following:

As I accumulate the false steps and false starts to begin with, I will say at least that not only do I no longer know which side I am on and from which side I am about to speak (neither from hers nor from mine), not only do I no longer know what a side is (for example, as they say, the side of life or the side of death), but above all I do not know whom I name or call when I say "she" or "her." How to speak of her? How not to do so? How to avoid her? (21)

In the name of animals, he says something similar:

The deconstruction that matters to me here should also promote itself in the name of another history, another concept of history, and of the history *of* the human as well as that of reason. An immense history, a macro- and microhistory. [The history, but also something much more, that is—] The simplisticness, misunderstanding, and violent disavowal that we are analyzing at present also seem to me to be betrayals of repressed human possibilities, of other powers of reason, of a more comprehensive logic of argument, of a more demanding responsibility concerning the power of questioning and response, concerning science as well, and, for example—but this is only an example—as regards the most open and critical forms of zoological or ethological knowledge. (Derrida, *ATTIA*, 104)

As always I would emphasize the bodies.

I would bring the themes of enchanting, believing, and betraying together in the subjunctive form of a thesis: these may perhaps express the fullness of being in the proximities of bodies. The fullness of being in animal bodies, and other bodies, can be expressed only subjunctively. The double meaning of *might* expresses the intensities and the subjunctivities of bodies in the abundance of being. Finally, then, the subjunctive forms in which bodies are embodied and embedded, the entanglements of bodies among themselves, are also expressed in the subjunctive. For example, believing includes brain cells and iron atoms and who knows what else? In the fullness of being we are not who we are except insofar as we are something else, and we are intimately entangled together. This enables us to cross over to them in imagination. It enables this crossing subjunctively.

I believe who I am
I believe I know who I am
I believe I believe who I am
I may believe I may know who and what you are… who and what I am… who and what the world is that we share.

I come to conclusion with two other voices. First, Cora Diamond again:

> What is expressed [in the poem from Ted Hughes] is the sense of a difficulty that pushes us beyond what we can think. To attempt to think it is to feel one's thinking come unhinged. Our concepts, our ordinary life with our concepts, pass by this difficulty as if it were not there; the difficulty, if we try to see it, shoulders us out of life, is deadly chilling. (*DRDP*, 56)

> [Yet] what is capable of astonishing one in its incomprehensibility, its not being fittable in with the world as one understands it, may be seen by others as unsurprising. (60)

Elizabeth Costello, in Coetzee's first lecture, speaks of her own knowledge of death, in a passage which (in the present context) takes us to the "contradictory permanent horrors" spoken of in Hughes's poem. "For an instant at a time," she says, "I know what it is like to be a corpse. The knowledge repels me. It fills me with terror; I shy away from it, refuse to entertain it." She goes on to say that we all have such moments, and that the knowledge we then have is not abstract but embodied.

"For a moment we are that knowledge. We live the impossible: we live beyond our death, look back on it, yet look back as only a dead self can." She goes on, making the contradiction explicit: "What I know is what a corpse cannot know: that it is extinct, that it knows nothing and will never know anything anymore. For an instant, before my whole structure of knowledge collapses in panic, I am alive inside that contradiction, dead and alive at the same time" (32). The awareness we each have of being a living body, being "alive to the world," carries with it exposure to the bodily sense of vulnerability to death, sheer animal vulnerability, the vulnerability we share with them. This vulnerability is capable of panicking us. To be able to acknowledge it at all, let alone as shared, is wounding; but acknowledging it as shared with other animals, in the presence of what we do to them, is capable not only of panicking one but also of isolating one, as Elizabeth Costello is isolated. Is there any difficulty in seeing why we should not prefer to return to moral debate, in which the livingness and death of animals enter as facts that we treat as relevant in this or that way, not as presences that may unseat our reason? (71-2)

I cannot repeat too often that the presences that may unseat our reason are embedded bodies, that we—and others—who inhabit bodies experience difficulties of reality in virtue of living in our bodies with other bodies, that the fullness of being that we and animals and who knows what else experience and live may well be—even cows placidly chewing in the field—something of a difficulty that can only be *subjunctively*, because it is never just what it is.

I conclude with a different subjunctive, where the fullness of bodily language meets the fullness of love. The lips that speak are the lips that love, as if to believe that loving and speaking might be the same while always different, because of the bodily orifices they caress.

> We are luminous. Neither one nor two. I've never known how to count. … An odd sort of two. And yet not one. Especially not one.
>
> But how can I put "I love you" differently? I love you, my indifferent one? (Irigaray, *WOLST*, 207)

> I love you: our two lips cannot separate to let just *one* word pass. (208)

How can I put *I love you* differently in the subjunctive? which is to say that love is never identical with itself.

Irigaray's famous if not notorious words, so often taken in the declarative—there are only men and women—cry out in the subjunctive. As does the universal.

> I am, therefore, a political militant for the impossible, which is not to say a utopian. Rather, what I want is yet to be as the only possibility of a future. (*ILTY*, 10)

> Without doubt, the most appropriate content for the universal is sexual difference. Indeed, this content is both real and universal. Sexual difference is an immediate natural given and it is a real and irreducible component of the universal. The whole of human kind is composed of women and men and of nothing else. The problem of race is, in fact, a secondary problem—except from a geographic point of view?—which means we cannot see the wood for the trees, and the same goes for other cultural diversities—religious, economic, and political ones.
>
> Sexual difference probably represents the most universal question we can address. Our era is faced with the task of dealing with this issue, because, across the whole world, there are, there are only, men and women.

The culture of this universal is yet to be. The individual has been considered as a particular without an adequate interpretation of the universal that is in her or him: woman or man. (47-8)

What kind of universal, what fullness of being, is waiting for us in the subjunctive? Other words and other holocausts, all subjunctive.

To each wounding separation, I would answer by refusing the holocaust while silently affirming, for myself and for the other, that the most intimate perception of the flesh escapes every sacrificial substitution, every assimilation into discourse, every surrender to the God. Scent or premonition between my self and the other, this memory of the flesh as the place of approach means ethical fidelity to incarnation. To destroy it is to risk the suppression of alterity, both the God's and the other's. Thereby dissolving any possibility of access to transcendence. (*ESD*, 217)

Betray the subjunctive. Refuse the holocaust. Sacrifice sacrifice. Enchant disenchantment.

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Notes

[1] The complete passage is as follows:

The moral question is thus not, nor has it ever been: should one eat or not eat, eat this and not that, the living or the nonliving, man or animal, but since one must eat in any case and since it is and tastes good to eat, and since there's no other definition of the good [*du bien*], how for goodness' sake should one eat well [*bien manger*]? And what does this imply? What is eating? How is this metonymy of introjection to be regulated? And in what respect does the formulation of these questions in language give us still more food for thought? In what respect is the question, if you will, still carnivorous? The infinitely metonymical question on the subject of "one must eat well" must be nourishing not only for me, for a "self," which would thus eat badly; it must be shared, as you might put it, and not only in language. "One must eat well [*il faut bien manger*]" does not mean above all taking in and grasping in itself, but learning and giving to eat, learning-to-give-the-other-to-eat. One never eats entirely on one's own: this constitutes the rule underlying the statement, "One must eat well." It is a rule offering infinite hospitality. (Derrida, *EW*, 282-3)

[2] Discussed at length in Derrida, *OS*, 11-2 and *ATTIA*, 144-5.

[3] Spinoza's words again, around whom all these words circulate. (Spinoza, *E*, Pt. 4, App. XXVI)

[4] This is famously expressed in the master slave dialectic in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, but it is at the heart of domination. My world is diminished by what I do to diminish yours.

[5] The dog, of course, is Bobby, from Levinas, *ND*.

[6] See Whitehead, *PR*, 339.

[7] See my *E*.

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