ONE

Interspecies Ethics and Phenomenology of Body

Precursors and Pathways

> Sometimes we think / that we humans can live / without them, / but we are wrong.
>
> JOSEPH BRUHAC (1992)

THE GUIDING QUESTION of this study is: How can we sensibly describe, explain, and interpret transhuman morality? Note that I did not say justify. That is because I rather doubt that transhuman morality can be justified. This will strike many animal ethicists and advocates, as well as most moral philosophers, as a nonstarter position. However, I am not trying to indicate some special deficiency of so-called animal ethics against more traditional forms of purely human morality. Indeed, I do not see that any form of normative ethics has ever been justified in the classical, hard-core sense of truly objective legitimacy. Though surprising, even shocking to some, this stance is not unprecedented. In adopting it, I tend to agree with such contemporary critics of moralism as John Caputo and Richard Garner.[1]

I am not denying that humans have evolved, naturally and culturally, various practices and discourses that might rightly be called "moral" or "ethical." I do believe, however, that such classifications run the risk of misleading the

incautious, because they commonly imply a tone of objective normativity that I want to deny or at least hold in abeyance. A rough analogy with the distinction between science and scientism may help illuminate what I take to be the difference between modest morality and haughty moralism. Just as one may practice and/or defend certain more or less well-established methods of scientific investigation without necessarily adopting the scientistic position that science is the ultimate metaphysical or ontological arbiter of the "really real," so I wish to acknowledge the existence of certain more or less well-established modes of moral or ethical valuing without endorsing any moralistic pretense of metaphysical justification for or axiological objectivity of those modes.[2]

I am not going to rehearse in detail the defenses of metaethical skepticism mounted by Caputo and Garner. I find the skeptical arguments and reflections of these authors compelling,[3] and I am as yet unaware of any convincing refutations of their outlooks. The basic idea they espouse is that there is nothing else "backing up" or "undergirding" our systems of morality other than essentially contingent forces of natural evolution and/or cultural convention (what Husserl would call "lifeworld" and Wittgenstein "form of life").[4] There does not appear to be any metaphysical guarantor of our values—neither the divine dictates of God, nor the transcendental presuppositions of pure or practical reason, nor some putatively foundational normativity threaded into the fabric of the universe. In other words, we can always ask the question *why?* of any given attempt to ground a moral prescription or judgment in some principle of alleged necessity—and such efforts at justification have historically resulted in infinite (or indefinite) regresses that are simply abandoned, or circular argumentation (whether unwitting or mischievous), or an arbitrary terminus. A late-modern example of the last tactic is G. E. Moore's intuitionism, the essentially occult nature of which has led many (including myself) to reject it as a mystification of the conventional.[5]

Rather than impaling myself on any of this trilemma's horns (infinity, circularity, or sheer finality), I prefer to get off the train of thought that seeks necessity in the first place. It does not seem—ultimately—that any of our values "must" be or "had" to be as they in fact are, have come to be, or might become over the course of future evolution or cultural development. This viewpoint, though, does not give up the whole project of moral philosophy and its ancillary pursuit of ethical critique. In the practical zone of applied ethics at least, the relatively ordinary yet potent standards of consistency and coherence can serve as a critical fulcrum sufficient to dislodge ideological construction. Con-

sider, for example, that in animal ethics great mileage has been gotten by exposing speciesism with analogies to racism and/or sexism.[6] We need not get embroiled in metaphysical controversies surrounding intrinsic value or inherent worth to recognize that there is much in our culture's treatment of other species that is wildly out of reflective equilibrium with our denunciations of racial and sexual prejudice.

Moreover, some of the most historically influential moral thinking has occurred in the mode of prophetic illumination or edification rather than in the vein of analytical argumentation or foundational deduction. What made Martin Luther King Jr. both effective and memorable was that he had a dream, not a proof. I am not saying that King's discourse was all heat and no light. The visionary language of metaphor he and others have drawn upon can light up a moral phenomenon where none had previously been seen (or had been obscured for too long). This poetic function of ethics is no less a part of philosophy than is logical discourse. Like Mark Johnson, we can "view moral deliberation as expansive, imaginative inquiry into possibilities for enhancing the quality of our communally shared experience."[7]

Even in the absence of grand projects of grounding our moral values, we are not reduced simply to compiling a catalog of descriptive ethics. There is still room for articulating, contextualizing, comparing, organizing, and clarifying moral systems, as well as showing their internal relationships (of constitutive concepts, principles, metaphors) and external implications (for practice or inquiry). Let us call such programs of moral philosophizing explanative or interpretive ethics—something less presumptuous than objectively normative ethics, yet more discursively systematic than an ethnographic recording of various moral beliefs and practices.

How might this sort of approach redound upon the issue of interspecies ethics? It would be helpful to consider the context out of which reflections on the ethical consideration of animals (human and nonhuman) occur. The major terms of debate are generally organized around whether nonhuman animals should be included in the realm(s) of moral consideration already staked out for human animals. The burden of proof lies at the feet of those arguing for inclusion.

Over many years of discussion and reflection concerning the nature of transhuman morality, I have noticed a pronounced and repeated rhetorical feature in exchanges with interlocutors (an aspect, in fact, even of the interior dialogue philosophers notoriously conduct within themselves). The set-up starts

out like this: what justifies inclusion of other animals in the ethical sphere—what, in other words, gives them moral standing or considerability? Then the inquiry or debate proceeds to look for and contest certain morally relevant properties as candidates to fit the bill, for example: having a higher intelligence such that they are at least minimally rationally competent (and thus approach a kind of autonomy); having something like a will and thus deserving of credit and blame, etc.; or being sentient and thus capable of feeling pleasure and pain. Because of a prevalent psychocentric bias in favor of mentality's moral significance, this move typically mobilizes investigations into and applications of philosophy of mind or comparative psychology.[8] Despite the best efforts of many animal ethologists and ethicists, however, there persists—at least amongst philosophers and scientists (less so in the public at large)—widespread resistance to or reservations about attributions of morally robust mentality to members of most, if not all, other species. In a conversation that impacted me, one philosopher objected that we just don't get enough "traction" for such attributions to legitimate them.[9] Here, "traction" refers to that which could serve as a basis of comparison for claiming that animals are sufficiently like us in a way that is morally relevant. Animals are obviously like us in many ways, but the issue at hand is usually framed as one that asserts or challenges similarity in the specific characteristics upon which human moral worth is measured. Those seeking to support a case for inclusion, then, have at least two challenges: they must identify the characteristic(s) that make human animals worthy of moral consideration (about which there is certainly not unanimous agreement), and they must then show that nonhuman animals, or some particular members of that set, have the requisite characteristic(s). Thus, assuming a certain (and special) kind of separation already exists, the interspecies ethical theorist must bridge the gulf to and from other creatures.

My approach suggests that this way of framing the issue has the experienced phenomena and the ethical problem entirely backwards. We do not, either as a matter of firsthand experience or of now fairly well-established fact, initially find ourselves as discrete objects whose original problem is to figure out how to connect with the world. We are not in some abstract, retro-Cartesian position of species solipsism where our minds seem to just float in a rarified space of pure spectatorship apart from all ecological enmeshment and social connection with other organisms and persons, wondering, as it were, if "there's anybody out there." That is a portrait borne not of philosophic rigor but of

psychological malady or hyperintellectual pretense (or both). Where we begin, quite on the contrary, is always already caught up in the experience of being a live body thoroughly involved in a plethora of ecological and social interrelationships with other living bodies and people. That, I hold, is our native position, and it deserves—existentially, phenomenologically, and indeed (as I shall later argue) scientifically—to be recognized as such and consequently to be taken as our philosophic starting point.[10] The ethical upshot of such a gestalt-shift in the ontological background is profound, because it effectively transfers the burden of proof from what has been denigrated as ethical "extensionism" or expansion[11] to, instead, what we should rightly refer to as ethical isolationism or contraction (i.e., homo-exclusive anthropocentrism). From this perspective, the problem of traction for moral consideration of nonhuman animals dissolves, because the moral motion at stake is no longer felt to be a pull (into the ethical sphere) but is reconceived as a push (out of or away from it). It is the movement toward dissociation and nonaffiliation that needs to be justified against a background of relatedness and interconnectivity.[12] Put another way, it is relinquishment or disavowal of our aboriginally constituted bodily being with others, or our "somatic sociability" if you will, that would require defense. The goal of this book, then, is to describe, explain, and interpret the constitution and interspecific implications of such somatic sociability —and leave it to the anthropocentrists to justify, if they can, why we ought to renounce, give up, or let go of that primordial experience.

It is the fact that we have or, rather, are animate bodies—bodies that are experienced and come to be known through interaction with other animate bodies—that I will take as primary. I emphasize one route into the investigation of the ontology of animate modes of body as applicable to humans and at least some other nonhuman animals alike. Certain historical and methodological orientations lend themselves quite readily to this inquiry. I take what I consider to be a late-modern rather than a postmodern approach insofar as I rely upon a number of nineteenth- and twentieth-century figures of classical Continental philosophy rather than more recent or contemporary figures usually identified as postmodernist or poststructuralist. My approach is chiefly phenomenological, drawing heavily on existential philosophy and hermeneutics.

A brief comment on Nietzsche's relevance is appropriate from the start, since Nietzsche sent up the battle cry for philosophical investigation and appreciation of the body, and so greatly influenced significant strands of twentieth-

(and now twenty-first) century philosophy of the body and reflection on human animality. David Michael Levin goes so far as to claim that "Nietzsche is really the first philosopher since the beginning of the Judeo-Christian influence to espouse the human body in its truth, its beauty, and its goodness," and, indeed, Nietzsche prefigures a veritable corporeal turn taken of late by much intellectual inquiry.[13] Seen in nineteenth-century context, Nietzsche was an avant-garde sniper, waging lonesome guerrilla warfare against those traditionalists he dubbed "the despisers of the body."[14] Toward and during the middle of the twentieth century, admirers of the body began to join forces and mount a positive program for philosophy of *bodiment*—a term that deliberately resists the inner/outer distinction that abides in the more familiar term of 'embodiment.' Reflective research projects for studying the lived ontology of the body-phenomenon had early practitioners in vitalist Henri Bergson and religious existentialist Gabriel Marcel and a vigorous exponent in psychological phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty. But it was Jean-Paul Sartre who truly brought the body to the center of philosophical inquiry with his meditations on sadomasochistic sexuality.[15]

The theoretical point of Sartre's treatment of sexual attraction and manipulation was to dramatically highlight a generic thesis about (human) bodiment —namely, that there is a radical, ontological rupture between the *body-for-me* (qua conscious subject) and the *body-as-other* (qua perceptual/practical object).[16] To further explore my main query, I have found it necessary to depart from this central claim of Sartrean somatology. Values are not items or ideas (furniture of the world or mind), but rather field-phenomena: they arise within and are made up out of relationships between certain entities. Since I favor an axiological context of (constitutive or internal) relations, any ethic of bodiment that would do justice to such an axiology would have to bridge the very gap between bodies that Sartre believes to be an impassable gulf.[17] More precisely, an ethic of bodiment would have to deny Sartre's dualistic divide in the first place. I think that, with the assistance of Merleau-Ponty, this move is possible—and, saving philosophic priority, I think it is also preferable as a matter of ontology.

Before moving on to Merleau-Ponty, however, it is helpful to consider Martin Heidegger's influence on the enquiry at hand. The homo-exclusivist anti-vitalism of *Being and Time*'s project of fundamental ontology is stimulating but ultimately limiting insofar as it exerts an arresting gravitational pull

on those phenomenologists who would move beyond Sartre's false dilemma of bodily being into a zone of "transpecific intersomaticity" in the spirit of Merleau-Ponty. Despite Heidegger's admirable effort to give priority to being-in-the-world, the ontology of *Being and Time* is too coarse and its *Daseinsanalyse* is still too disembodied. We shall also consider relevant elaborations furnished by Heidegger in his 1929–1930 lecture course on the foundations of metaphysics. Still, as Jacques Derrida points out, the early Heidegger's ontological framework remains fairly ill-equipped to deal with animality.[18]

Three modes of being are significantly discussed in Heidegger's earlier writings: being-there (*Dasein*), readiness-to-hand (*Zuhandensein*), and presence-at-hand (*Vorhandensein*). How shall we regard the animal, given this division? Strictly speaking, unless an organism is ontologically oriented—that is, unless the organism *cares*, in the special sense that Heidegger gives to that term, about the question of the meaning of being—it cannot be (or be called) properly *Dasein*. In other words, a being that lacks such care about being does not exist in the special way that Heidegger appears to think that human beings do. A fundamental characteristic of the kind of being attributed to human beings, that is to *Dasein*, is that their primordial experience as being-in-the-world is the condition for the possibility of all other experience. But if that is so, then all (or certainly most) nonhuman animals must be deemed either ready-to-hand or present-at-hand. Yet surely these designations do not exhaustively account for the existential being of many (if not most or all) other animals.[19] Natural familiarity with animals who share the same perceptual sphere or scale with humans, what Paul Shepard calls "phenomenological fauna,"[20] is sufficiently convincing that other forms of life are not merely tools-to-use or objects-of-study (or contemplation). It would, indeed, be quite strange if we decided that in terms of their ontological status, animals could be properly heaped alongside hammers and minerals. As Czech philosopher Erazim Kohak remarks, apropos of existentialist ontology (glossing Sartre, but with relevance to Heidegger as well): "Only from a very great conceptual distance could one mistake a porcupine for a boulder and lump them both together under the common label of *l'être-en-soi* [being-in-itself]."[21]

Nonhuman animality suffers this ontological reduction if we follow Heidegger in disembodying the living worldhood of *Dasein*. In fact, the disappearance of *human* being's animal nature is likewise the result of this tendency in the *Daseinsanalyse,* the phenomenological investigation of how being there

(*Dasein*) occurs. In this analysis Heidegger places great emphasis on time—particularly insofar as the prospective death of *Dasein*, which it can anticipate and ultimately dwell upon as its ultimate possibility, serves as that in which all other possibilities can appear in relief and thereby acquire their significance. The kind of end that death appears to represent for Heidegger is a decidedly temporal one—our "finitude" indicates the limit of our duration. The possibility of "death as mine" does not bring forward, in Heidegger's analysis, the fleshy vulnerability that live bodies experience in each moment. This move forces him to diminish interpretation of the dimension in which embodiment has purchase (i.e., space).

Heidegger certainly considers the significance of spatial relations in the worldhood of *Dasein*—the very name of the entity under discussion emphasizes its having what we might call *em-placement,* that is, it is always already located somewhere. This is a significant advance over philosophical stances that characterized the modern period in which disembodied thinking subjects bedeviled the philosopher trying to figure out how such an entity could "inhabit" a body and then "connect" with the world. In my own effort to shift the burden of proof off the inclusion of nonhuman animals in the moral sphere, I am to some extent reenacting, in a crude form, a philosophical turn that Heidegger takes with regard to the mind-body problem. For Heidegger, there is no problem of explaining how a discrete mental (or spiritual) substance interacts with a discrete and separate physical substance, because the supposed separation is overcome in the analysis of the pre-reflective condition of being-in-the-world —which we might also say, albeit problematically, is being-(in)-a-body. However, the immersion in a world that provides the condition for the possibility of ethical relations (in Heidegger's terms, being-with, or *Mitsein*) appears predicated on the anticipation of *Dasein*'s end or temporal finitude. While other animals clearly take actions to avoid mortal danger, it is not clear how many (if any) can sufficiently anticipate something akin to taking death "as their own," as a possibility that ends all possibilities (which is what Heidegger considers to be the case for *Dasein*). Yet it is precisely this interpretive or hermeneutic possibility of "death as mine" that supplies the basis for *Dasein* to forge relations (including ethical ones). Thus Heidegger's ontological framework provides fewer opportunities for the vitality of organic animate being to emerge for serious consideration.

The possibilities that are available to *Dasein* emerge and acquire their significance precisely because of the fundamental way in which *Dasein* can "stand

out," or achieve a kind of ecstasis, in its realization and contemplation of its ultimate possibility of death—and it is this feature of Heidegger's analysis that ultimately pushes his work toward even greater dissociation from the body than his predecessors. As Didier Franck puts it rather starkly, "The ecstatic determination of man's essence implies the total exclusion of his live animality, and never in the history of metaphysics has the Being of man been so profoundly disincarnated [as it is in Heidegger's thought]."[22] Even when Heidegger seems to become aware of this problem, he only reinforces the fact that his interest is exclusively human when he insists that "the human body is something essentially other than an animal organism."[23] Thus we are left largely alien to other animals, and little understanding of our incarnate interrelationships with them is allowed.[24]

I suspect that this sundering of the human-animal nexus may actually be intended by Heidegger himself. Only a couple of years after publishing *Being and Time,* he taught a course at the University of Freiburg in which he lectured precisely on the phenomenology of animality.[25] Here Heidegger treats the question of animal constitution in much greater detail than the mere hints he supplies elsewhere in his corpus. Yet, despite the care with which he addresses the question, the ultimate result further betrays, rather than transcends, the life-philosophical limitations of *Being and Time*'s *Daseinsanalyse.* The very approach Heidegger undertakes is dubious, inasmuch as his stated concern is with "finding out what constitutes the *essence of the animality* of the animal."[26] Such essentialism is likely to conceal much more than it could reveal, for it tends to enshroud the existential manifold of animal be(com)ings in a conceptual abstraction—assigning and consigning them, that is, to a generic philosopheme of "animality." (Jacques Derrida characterizes the term "animality" as "an immense group, a single and fundamentally homogeneous set that one has [presumed] the right, the theoretical or philosophical right, to distinguish and mark as opposite" to humanity.[27]) But an essence of this sort does not appear to exist in reality. In cannot be the basis of phenomenological investigation; there are no generic animals roaming the earth, and pure/perfect "animalness" as such can be conjured in Plato's heaven only by speculation. Consequently, I concur with Derrida's excoriation of the concept when he declares that "this agreement concerning philosophical sense and common sense that allows one to speak blithely of the Animal in the general singular is perhaps one of the greatest and most symptomatic idiocies of those who call themselves human" (or *Dasein,* I would add).[28]

While it is heartening to see Heidegger seriously engage the issue of animal worldhood, the categories he chooses to frame the discussion are worrisome. The clearest example of terminological liability is his description of animal world as "poor," and it will strike all but the most charitable audience as disingenuous of him to insist that such "poverty" does not imply or at least suggest "hierarchical assessment" or "evaluative ranking."[29] In claiming that "every animal and every species of animal as such is just as perfect and complete as any other," Heidegger appears to be echoing Nietzsche's revaluation of animal difference in *The Anti-Christ(ian):* "man is absolutely not the crown of creation: every creature stands beside him at the same stage of perfection."[30] However, it becomes hard to take Heidegger at his word on this score when he goes on to characterize animal being as essentially a condition of "deprivation."[31] Hard, but perhaps not impossible: in subsequent chapters I will have recourse to and critical elaboration of some useful insights as well as some inadequate notions that Heidegger unfolds in the course of these lectures. At this point, it suffices to note that *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* does not constitute in its basic outlines a readily serviceable framework for articulating and interpreting primordial experiences of sharing lifeworld with other species. My appraisal in this respect is not unique. Commenting on the discourse at issue, for instance, Michel Haar has observed that "the aim seems to be an exorcism, a demystification of the 'link' with nature"—indeed it appears that "Heidegger wants . . . to destroy the idea of an *animal lineage*" altogether.[32] These moves away from evolutionary theory, however, invite an older mystification of humanity under the imagery of divine descent. It may be that, in spite of his desire to deconstruct the Occident's ontotheological tradition, Heidegger rebinds his thought within the confines of that tradition's anthropocentrism. In this light, Heidegger partakes in a counter-Darwinian tendency that seems to run through much of the hermeneutic movement—an inclination toward what Hans Albert calls "excision of the human realm from the natural world," and which he criticizes for being "rooted in [the] socio-cosmic thought of the unique status of man in nature—an idea of predominantly theological significance."[33]

Returning more specifically to the issue of Heidegger's metaphysical antipathy for animalic genealogy, even a sympathetic reader such as David Farrell Krell is forced to acknowledge in Heidegger a kind of retro-religious backsliding—namely, that "when Heidegger tries to separate Dasein from the animal, or to dig an abyss of essence between them, he causes the whole of his

[phenomeno-hermeneutic] project to collapse back into the congealed categories and oblivious decisions of ontotheology."[34]

Beyond exegetical questions regarding the internal consistency of Heideggerian discourse (in its critique of ontotheology), the more relevant issue is whether philosophy rightly ignores or excludes humanity's animal aspects and associations in its traditional preference for the supposedly divine dimensions of human existence. Nietzsche's Zarathustra endeavors to recast such associations when he famously claims, "Man is a rope, tied between beast and overman —a rope over an abyss."[35] Such an image suggests connection, perhaps even interpenetration, between humankind's animalistic and superhuman capacities.[36] Krell tries to resurrect the notion of bestial divinity as he attempts to walk a neo-Nietzschean tightrope over the abyss that Heidegger digs between *Dasein* and the living (as such).[37] What Krell calls "daimon life" (the physical pulsion of vital energy) is supposed to imbue Heidegger's phenomenological hermeneutics with organic drive. Thus we see one of the foremost contemporary Continental scholars advocating a more subtle reappropriation of "the quest for the essence of animality and of life in emphatic disclosure." Doing Heideggerian violence to the etymology of the ancient Greek *zoon,* Krell denominates this search *za-ology* in order to show that the enquiry he engages "is neither altogether independent of the science of zoology, nor simply a part of it."

Although Krell does not reach the goal of this quest, his work provides clues that could serve as a catalyst for the continuance of (animal) life-philosophical inquiry. For example, one could take up the concept of daimon life precisely in order to graft life into the notion of *Da-sein* so as to furnish "za-ological" interpretation with the working concept of "*living*-in-the-world" instead of Heidegger's reorientation of inquiry on the focus of "*being*-in-the-world." Certainly, the liveliness of such a conception would be an improvement (over regular Heideggerian discourse). Still, the proposed replacement of 'da' with 'za' is objectionable in that it nevertheless would maintain, if the Heideggerian focus of analysis otherwise remains intact, a monological version of worldhood (whereby world is always only thought as a universal). And this would too readily lend itself to a variety of hegemonic interpretive approaches that draw upon further exclusionary ideologies—as when speciesism, ethnocentrism, and the like insist that "the" human or "the" white world(view) constitutes or describes "the" totality of "the" universe as such or at large. Agnes

Heller reminds us that our (human) being is not existentially life-in-*the*-world but rather—more modestly and tolerantly—life-in-*a*-world.[38] To be human might very well be, at least in part, to have a world—or even, as per Heidegger, to emerge phenomenologically "in-*the*-world"—but it might very well be that other varieties of world organization are available to different kinds of sapient or sentient being *and* that some beings just might have the possibilities of "world-traveling" to some extent.

We who would undertake ontologically transpecific inquiries would do better to begin our study from some form of "being-in-*a*-world."[39] A caveat is in order for those reading with Ockham's razor ready-to-hand: loosening the circumscription and uniformity of worldhood risks proliferation of worlds beyond necessity. For example, Heller eventually slides into egological worlding as she concludes: "there are as many wor[l]ds as persons: a world is subjective."[40] Despite being dubious—even, that is, if it fails to supply compelling evidence for personalistic subjectivism—her evidence remains intriguing. Heller appeals to Wittgenstein's observation (in the *Tractatus*) that a happy man's world is "entirely different" from that of an unhappy man. Perhaps this remark is too extreme. Yet, although affective differentiation may not radically *fragment* worldliness, it may nonetheless place worldhood on a *continuum* and broaden that spectrum's constituency.[41] Such an approach, at any rate, affords at least the possibility for considering the different ways different species reveal their worlds.

To gain ontological access to the varied life-modes of different animals, one must enter environments not wholly of human making. This means beginning without making the assumption that there is just one world, permitting the possibility of other *Umwelten*—foreign, yet potentially familiar, forms of worldhood. Indeed, starting out this way may itself contribute to the revelation (or even constitution) of other animal worlds. Approaching others as if they are capable of relating or being related to us, in other words, can help enable the cultivation of that very relationship.[42] It may be instructive to reconsider why it is that this sort of move does not come to full fruition within a strictly Heideggerian horizon. One factor is the emphatically temporal nature of the *Daseinsanalyse.* But what is it about temporality that is so world-retentive that its overemphasis would obscure otherwise evident worldliness from the manifold environment(s) of other organisms?

The history of philosophy provides us with a good illustration in the system of Kant, for whom time-without-space would spell implosion of interi-

ority away from the outer world as such. For Kant, although time is a form of both internal and external intuition, its "expansion" into the outer world requires the formal intuition of space to lend exteriority to phenomenal experience. Without spatiality, a Kantian time-keeper would be left dwelling upon its own temporality, suspecting that being *is* time, becoming full of angst as it fretfully counted and contemplated the disembodied moments of its denatured existence. To readers of *Being and Time,* this scenario should sound familiar. If Heidegger is operating against the background of Kantian temporality, then his emphasis on time and diminishment of (or at least comparative inattention to) space leaves *Dasein* dreadfully disincarnated and deanimalized, unable to understand any *Umwelt* qua world. Although an "ek-statically" worlding entity, *Dasein* "stands out" into a world largely bereft of breathing beings; it stands *apart* from most environmental conditioning. *Dasein* knows little of any living *oikos.*[43] Kantian time-without-space is a recipe for the transcendental unity of apperception's self-enclosure;[44] Heidegger's *Dasein* tends toward a twilight zone of time alone, which establishes its "ownmost possibility" as a wholly individualized being-unto-death.[45]

Linking Kantian and Heideggerian philosophy in this way can be justified as a heuristic device—for it leads one to reflect on how the false person/thing dichotomy of Kantian ontology, though mutated by Heidegger, is essentially replicated in Heidegger's own ontological researches. Certainly the notion of *Dasein* is meant to get beyond or behind such metapsychological concepts as personhood and consciousness; likewise, Kantian "thinghood" is dismantled into Heideggerian "handiness" of the present and ready varieties. Several commentators have noted that *Dasein* is a primordially "handed" being. Accordingly, and expanding from this observation, some have seen in Heidegger's work a salvageable philosophy of body. While there is (barely) enough textual testimony to permit such a rereading, hermeneutically the overall enterprise strikes me more as reconstruction than as rescue.[46] All the phenomenal variety of nonhuman and immature life, neither fully *Dasein*-people nor (merely) "handy" things, must either be mangled ontologically to fit into misshapen categories, or else be retired from ontological discourse (and thus have its philosophic treatment aborted). In recognizing this impasse, I am indebted to the work of Mary Midgley, both for the person/thing characterization of Kantian ontology and for highlighting the artificial alienation inherent to the anthropic, adults-only lifescape conjured by much existentialism.[47] The former ontology coupled with the latter "community" pretty well precludes the development of an inclu-

sive moral conscience. Kids, not to mention kittens, must fall by the ethical wayside of *Dasein*—an ontological loner whom we cannot easily imagine will be much worried about ontically humane or ecological matters.[48]

What is the upshot of these critical observations regarding the Heideggerian difficulties in dealing with the phenomena of bodiment and animality? Simply this—that we ought to accept Didier Franck's seemingly severe conclusion: "*Dasein* institutes the abyss that separates it from the animal . . . . It is therefore necessary to cease to determine the essence of [the hu]man as *Dasein* if due consideration is to be given to its incarnation and to its life."[49] Despite his attempt to break with the ontotheological metaphysics of Western philosophy, Heidegger retains a core tenet of that tradition, namely, belief in the absolute uniqueness of humanity.[50] Maintenance of this belief in our post-Darwinian context is possible only through an antiscientific predilection toward a priori methods that involves dismissal of the most reliable knowledge currently available from empirically based enquiries such as evolutionary biology and ecology. Conversely, as Franck phrases it, "only the relegation of ontological difference can render our bodily animality thinkable."[51]

Having sacrificed Sartre's dichotomy between the subjectively conscious body-for-me and the practically or perceptually objectified body-as-other, and having also surrendered Heidegger's homo-exclusive *Daseinsanalyse,* where are we now? In return for abandoning these two strongholds of traditional phenomenology, we gain entry into a possible *Lebenswelt,* configured as the zone of shared and interactively sensed "live bodiment." In what follows, I shall suggest that we look more toward Merleau-Ponty as a guide to such a zone. In the spirit of Nietzsche's call to remain faithful to the earth, Merleau-Ponty advises: "There is a kinship between the being of the earth and that of my body (*Leib*). . . . This kinship extends to others, who appear to me as other bodies, to animals whom I understand as variants of my embodiment."[52] A central part of my project aims to show that this kinship is a more promising setting within which to work out philosophically satisfying and empirically responsible bioethical views.

How, more precisely, are we to understand this sort of kinship? Merleau-Ponty makes somewhat sketchy references to Portmann's ideas of *Tiergestalt* and "interanimality."[53] Is there anything in the corpus of Merleau-Ponty's own work that might provide a philosophic context for thematically elucidating such notions? In his early work, there is a kind of "vital order" acknowledged in *The*

Structure of Behavior. Gary Madison has claimed that, "it must be said that [for Merleau-Ponty] animal behavior has a meaning (*sens*)."[54] But, as Madison himself recognizes, one may wonder whether Merleau-Ponty believes animal behavior is meaningful *to* us (humans only) or also *for* the animal itself. Merleau-Ponty apparently opts for the former, certainly against the latter—without implying thereby a dichotomous collapse of animality into the Sartrean alternative of inert stuff. Denying that the nonhuman organism is an entity cognizant of self-realizing complexity does not entail reducing it to mere thinghood: "it is a whole which is significant for a[n external?] consciousness which knows it, not a thing which rests in-itself (*en soi*)."[55] Still, not much importance is accorded animality, and, at least at that stage of his career, it can be said with good reason that Merleau-Ponty's philosophy centered on a decidedly human perspective.[56]

But once Merleau-Ponty introduces the notion of *flesh* in his later work, he begins to talk of carnal chiasm and sensate intertwining (e.g., the felt nexus of touching and being-touched simultaneously, noticeable within oneself). Indeed, he seems to hint at cross-species carnality when he rhetorically asks, "Why would not the synergy [of perceptive reversibility] exist among different organisms, if it is possible within each?"[57] Satisfied that such synergy is not solipsistic in scope, Merleau-Ponty concludes that "there is finally a propagation of these [intersomatic] exchanges to all the bodies of the same type and of the same style which I see and touch." Upon closer inspection, however, these statements do not carry any necessarily transpecific implications. The token/type distinction of linguistic analysis may be of use here. Clearly Merleau-Ponty's reference to intersomatic exchanges among *all* bodies deals with intersubjectivity as it is experienced across a *type* of organism; his question about possible perceptive reversibility among different organisms is most plausibly interpreted as treating synergistic similarity between different *token* organisms (within a given type). In other words, one can become aware of the nexus of active/receptive sensation (only) within oneself and as regards members of the same species. Using this interpretation, it would seem that the subtextual domain of discourse—what is implicitly written *about*—is here entirely *intra*typical to the species *Homo sapiens.* That is to say, in writings published during his lifetime, Merleau-Ponty's thought remains leashed to anthropocentrism.

Although he was tantalizingly ecological in his last years of lecturing, Merleau-Ponty met an untimely death before he could flesh out the transpecific

somatology toward which he gestures.[58] Following Merleau-Ponty's penchant for probing ever more deeply into the density of Husserl's philosophy, it might be supposed that we should mine phenomenology's historical source for further guidance. Husserl does grant somatology ("the science of animate organicity") a significant liminal niche between properly material and spiritual studies.[59] Methodologically, somatology's "foundation is finally the direct *somatic perception* that every empirical investigator can effect only on his own body and the somatic interpretation that he performs in the interpretive apprehension of perceived alien animate organisms as such." Following this special study, we are afforded three salient insights (building successively): (1) acknowledgment that "in experience, in the sphere of original constitution . . . also [besides material objects] originally given are *zoa*";[60] (2) interpretation of these "animalia as primally present [living] bodies with appresented interiority"; and (3) recognition that "human animate organism . . . is with regard to essence a particularization of animate organism generally."[61] Here, however, the transpecific ontology comes to a halt. Husserl's inquiry instead proceeds along its customary egological horizon and returns to its preoccupation insofar as it remains fixed on human psychic phenomena.[62] Such egology's fatal philosophic flaw (and the ground of Husserl's residual anthropocentrism) is the mistake of positing solipsistic experience as phenomenologically *originary* when in actuality it appears always only *abstracted* from the more basic *Mitwelt* of "mixed community."[63]

Elsewhere in Husserl's published reflections on the theme of intersubjectivity, he reveals a welcome yet ambiguous and abortive awareness of animality. Although his text is comprehensive enough to take notice of other organisms, it runs the risk of degrading them conceptually and, in any case, fails to develop the philosophic significance of their being: "Among the problems of abnormality the problems of non-human animality and that of the levels of the "higher and lower" brutes are included. Relative to the brute, man is, constitutionally speaking, the normal case. . . . Brutes are essentially constituted for me as abnormal "variants" of my humanness, even though among them in turns normality and abnormality may be differentiated. . . All of that, to be sure, needs a more thorough phenomenological explication."[64]

Approaching the animal kingdom thus, "man" does not roam across an existentially enriching realm of related otherness but rather wanders down a hallway of mirrors, bombarded by isolating images of deviant similitude.[65] At least this is the conclusion one might draw when exercising hermeneutic sus-

picion (in the vein of Foucault), for in such a case one sees that Husserl appears to take normalizing thought (which sets up a standard in light of which "the other" is known) as bound to categoric demotion of difference (abnormal variance implicitly occupying an position of inferiority).

Parenthetically, it should be noted that more charitable perspectives are possible, and those intent on doing exegesis of Husserl's work have made admirable strides toward such an end. For example, the concepts of normality and abnormality in Husserl, one might argue, do not set up a violent devaluatory dualism but rather engage a mildly tolerant pluralism.[66] Still, however we construe this distinction, it seems to me that Husserl's thought remains resistant to thematizing interspecificity, and since I am less interested in strictly or solely providing an analysis of Husserl's work than I am in borrowing genuinely helpful insights and approaches, I am reluctant to strain the texts under consideration to make them suit my objectives. Where I encounter resistance of the sort I find in Husserl and in Heidegger (and later in Levinas), I am content to move on and to look elsewhere.[67]

To Husserl's credit, he is struggling against an ideological heritage of anthropocentrism—witness the subtlety of his designation ("*non-human* animality"), the trepidation of his punctuation ("higher and lower"), and finally his admission of deficiency in articulation (de facto, albeit, thematic abortion).[68] Yet Husserl has not quite managed to overcome that repressive heritage; his philosophy remains solipsistic within a sphere of human concern, developing an ontology that is decidedly and specifically human.

Since the father of phenomenology, then, is unlikely to furnish us with an interspecific somatology of animal being and value, it would appear best to take whatever cues we can from Merleau-Ponty. In his early work, *The Structure of Behavior,* the vital order of being is patterned by styles of worldly orientation or address.[69] This concept of existential theme or style stays with him into the late lectures on nature, where he describes its somatic mediation: "The body belongs to a dynamic of behavior. Behavior is sunk into corporeity. The organism does not exist as a thing endowed with absolute properties, as fragments of Cartesian space. An organism is a fluctuation around norms, which are events enframed by a structure that would not be realized in another order, but has relations with these events."[70]

Now Merleau-Ponty allows that there can be an existentially intercorporeal zone between live bodies "of the same type and of the same style." The notion of existential equivalence implicitly invoked here is best interpreted as

a spectral concept of phenomenal resemblance. 'Sameness' is not precisely synonymous with 'identity'. (If it were, we would not employ such phrases as 'exactly the same' or 'selfsame.') The concept of sameness designates a relational fit not necessarily as absolutely "tight" as identity. So, as a matter of somewhat charitable interpretation, Merleau-Ponty cannot coherently mean "same type" and "same style" in the strictest sense of identity—for, textually, the philosophical mileage required of the intercorporeal zone is (at least) the overcoming or undermining of solipsism. If the text's most plausible meaning calls for "same" to be rendered as "strongly similar" (more loosely, i.e., than "literally identical"), then it is permissible for *degrees* of similarity associated with the relevant sameness to become an issue.

By the end of his life, Merleau-Ponty was set to abandon residual anthropocentrism inherited from Husserl: "precisely what has to be done is to show that philosophy can no longer think according to this cleavage: God, man, creatures"; the new focus of interest for him was "description of the [hu]man-animal *intertwining*."[71] Hence, the issue of cross-species exchange of somatic sensibilities related to material bodies can be explored with these cues from Merleau-Ponty as starters. How is it that some species' bodily modes of address to their world are similar enough to others' to allow and account for an overlay of what we might call *intersomaticity,* a characteristic of animate experience in which felt senses of bodiment are shared and potentially in dynamic relation? Answering such a question would elucidate an animal ethos that is close to lived experience. It is the chief task of the rest of this book to pursue this question and trace its implications.

A helpful answer to the sort of question I am asking comes into focus against the background of an ontology of organisms as such.[72] What exists most inclusively is "Being," though this manner of speaking is too abstract and requires a more determinate formulation. Depending on whether one takes a universal or planetary point of view, the whole of existence can be conceived either cosmocentrically or ecocentrically. Among all beings that exist, some have the special mode of existence that we call *life.* A necessary and sufficient condition of life is the possession of worldhood—that is, having a self-generated perspective (in scientific parlance, "autopoietic orientation") on being-at-large. This condition points to a biocentric definition of the phenomenological concept of world—a definition that significantly broadens the interpretation of "world" beyond its original meaning in the work of phenomenologists and

hermeneuts such as Husserl, Heidegger, and Gadamer (for whom world or *Welt* is, for the most part, coextensive with humanity only).[73]

One kind of minimal worldhood occurs within the horizon of plant life. For example, consider the sunflower's display of diurnal vectorality. The sunflower can be said to dwell in its surroundings, since it has an environment (or *Umwelt*) in a living, orientational sense unavailable to inorganic things such as stones.[74] There is an intensification of worldhood in an animal's mode of living. Kenneth Shapiro identifies this worldhood as habitat, in the sense of incorporating one's environmental niche through an active awareness.[75] One especially illustrative example of this zoöcentric conception of ontologically constitutive habitat is *territoriality,* whereby an animal ranges within its territory so intimately that it is no longer just spatially *in* or *on* the land but rather becomes a conscious part *of* it.[76] With the self-consciousness of human beings, a robustly cultural world emerges. Humans, in ways that are more complex than those of any other animal, can change and symbolize their environments and habitats by relocating and redefining them and themselves. Cultural processes take two directions: one whereby we inhabit someplace with ever-intensifying degrees of domestication, and another whereby we "dehabit" our usual domicile via various ecstatic techniques.[77] Certain aesthetic or ritual practices could serve as examples of these techniques, such as Native American vision quests, Buddhist meditation trances, psychoactive drug trips, and perhaps even Mardi Gras carnivals. The positive functions of this cultural modality are: (1) to encourage exploration of other non/human lifeworlds, and (2) to continually revitalize our own cultural home by transgressing and reshaping its boundaries.

It is important to realize that this hermeneutic phenomenology of biotic worldhood demonstrates an important multispecies linkage. The types of worldliness considered—environmental dwelling, conscious habitation, cultural domesticity—all revolve around some sort of residential relation to being-at-large. Different species have an appropriate scale or spectrum of worldly address style that can be used to intelligibly discuss (at least the hypothesis of) what I shall call *transpecific* intersomaticity. To strictly satisfy Merleau-Ponty's criterion of somatological evidence, one would have to show a similarity of worldliness sufficiently strong to qualify the comparable modes as being of "the *same* style."[78] What needs to be concretely investigated, then, is whether this theoretical possibility of transpecific worldhood actually receives phenom-

enological grounding in some existentially significant experience of intersomaticity. In more precise terms, the question can be framed: Would well-attuned familiarity with flesh put us in touch with a living fellowship of ontological residency? Or, to ask this more poetically: Can our bodies nourish biosophic neighborliness with other organisms?[79] In attempting answers to such questions, it would be wise to heed Carleton Dallery's advice. "Ironically," he remarks, "the[ir] rightful ontological place is the one they [all animals] already have in perception—though in an alienated, abstract society one has to look to children, painters, poets, 'primitives', and other exceptional people to find thought and practice based on concrete perception."[80] Following Dallery, one may become attracted to ethnophilosophy (of historically submerged or "uncivilized" oral traditions) and away from the ever-sedimenting exegesis of European texts. Consider, for example, the words of Austral-Aboriginal ("primitive") storyteller Bill Neidjie:

> Eagle there!/ e make you "oh" . . . and how you feel yourself/ how your body. . . .
>
> I feel it . . . my body same as you. . . . no-matter what sort of a animal, bird or snake . . . all that animal same like us. Our friend that.[81]

Neidjie gives perceptive witness to a bodily co-presencing (or *Mitsein*) between human, and among all, animals.[82]

Western philosophy's readiness to "go native," however, is limited. It remains important to tap multiple springs of thought, particularly those historically sidelined by the mainstream heritage.[83] In that spirit I refer to two figures from natural philosophy in the twentieth century. The first is the little-known and underappreciated philosophical biologist Jakob von Uexküll. Courageously speculative, Uexküll resisted the contemporary surge of mechanico-behavioral reductionism; he created, instead, an imaginative yet empirical somatology of animal worldhood:

> We who still hold that our sense organs serve our perceptions, and our motor organs our actions, see in animals as well not only the mechanical structure, but also the operator, who is built into their organs, as we are into our bodies. *We no longer regard animals as mere machines, but as subjects whose essential activity consists of perceiving and acting. We thus unlock the gates that lead to other realms,* for all that a subject perceives becomes

> his perceptual world and all that he does, his effector world. Perceptual and effector worlds together form a closed unit, the *Umwelt. These different worlds*, which *are as manifold as the animals themselves*, present to all nature lovers new lands of such wealth and beauty that a walk through them is well worthwhile.[84]

Here Uexküll issues a veritable declaration of phenomenological independence from the entire Cartesian tradition of automated animality (and its by-product, ghost-in-the-machine humanity).[85]

Consider also the work of Frederik Buytendijk, a phenomenologist who worked on philosophical anthropology in the context of comparative psychology. He held: "if one views without prejudice the structure . . . of the relation between an animal and its surroundings as it manifests itself to us, then this relation can only be described by . . . defin[ing] the animal organism as a subject *whose* life we understand insofar as it demonstrates a relationship with our own life."[86] Certainly, such a position sounds favorable to inquiry concerning transpecific interanimality. Curiously, however, Buytendijk goes on to commit himself to the doctrine of (corporeal) human uniqueness: "*The human body,* because of its cultural and social ties with personal-mental existence . . . *is absolutely different from the animal body.*"[87]

Showing how profoundly this textual paradox plays itself out is instructive. If human and (nonhuman) animal bodies are "absolutely different," then there can hardly emerge any significant cross-species relationship at all. But then we would be utterly unable to understand other animal life (except perhaps by weak analogies)—since, as Buytendijk conceives it, nonhuman animality is intelligible only to the extent that it displays exactly the sort of relationship that has just been excluded. Yet Buytendijk makes positive claims about how to sensibly (even cognitively) interpret animal being. He states: "the animal organism shows in [its] behavior . . . that it *exists*—even if only in its species-typical way—and that the behavior is perceived by us as belonging to a *subject*." Moreover, he further maintains: "the animal organism as meaning-giving existence manifests itself as a subject that occupies a position with respect to [its] surroundings which is evoked by the meaning of things." Finally, he allows: "we can understand the animal as a 'body-subject', and consequently as a 'knowing-body', as a way of being, ensouled by *its* world and ensouling it."[88] All these unqualified claims are idle (or tenuous at best)—if our own mode of bodiment

is radically distinct from other animals', and if understanding alien animality is limited to (presumably corporeal or somatic) relations therewith. Thus does Buytendijk's text become self-inconsistent as it endeavors to pay due attention to the lifeworlds of other animals while also maintaining homo-exclusivity of outlook.[89]

Maintenance of anthropocentrism here appears suspiciously dogmatic. Ultimately, the conviction behind the scenes of belief in absolute human uniqueness is the dogma of a radical conceptual split between nature and culture. Many recent critics, however, believe that the nature/culture dichotomy is an article of humanistic faith no longer tenable in the context of contemporary liberal arts and sciences.[90] Avoiding what I take to be the (inconsistent) anthropocentrism of Buytendijk's otherwise admirable and subtle stance, and thereby clearing the way for explanation of my basic thesis, I am inclined to agree with Carol Bigwood when she argues: "the way life articulates itself has as much to do with the response of other nonhuman beings, with the currents of the earthly and skyly environment, and with temporal contingencies, as it does with our subjectivist cultural wills. The crux of the matter, then, as I see it, is to 'renaturalize' the body, truly releasing it from a dichotomized nature and culture. We need to work out a new "natural-cultural" model of the body that goes beyond both the fixed, biological body and the poststructuralist culturally inscribed body."[91] Bigwood nicely maps the task before us—avoiding the false methodological dilemma of an old-fashioned, naively scientific, or romantic return to pristine nature versus a new-fangled, overly abstracted cultural decoding of hypertextualized embodiment.[92]

Interpreting the phenomenon of transpecific intersomaticity in the company of Bigwood's Merleau-Pontyan sense of place, I will construct an ontology of body via the phenomeno-hermeneutic route of making manifest and rendering thematic the fleshly vitality of animate beings. I will use phenomenology of body to supplant the standard recourse to philosophy of mind that animal ethicists have usually thought it necessary to rely upon when arguing for interspecies morality. Of course, this makes it sound as if we can maintain the old Cartesian dualism and retreat from affairs of mentality to turn our attention onto matters of bodiment. But a simple inversion (or reversion) of principles that preserves the original dichotomy would neither do justice to the phenomena at hand nor be very helpful to the transhuman ethics I eventually want to explain. Since somatic phenomena present a field of experience

always already intertwined as conscious materiality, I will refer to the work of body-oriented psychologists and cognitive theorists when it comes time to analyze such modes of awareness.[93] Because our consideration of somatology is motivated by an overarching concern with animal relation(ship)s, I will also return to an engagement with and more extended criticism of Heidegger's reflections on animality in *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. All these ontological preparations will provide some mooring for subsequent axiological researches.

I will articulate values pertaining to the flesh of animate life, some of which are instrumental or extrinsic, and others of which are subjectively or socially intrinsic or inherent (i.e., a person or culture values *x* for its own sake, not as a means to anything else). Consistent with the amoralist metaethic outlined at the start of this chapter, I do not think any of these values are wholly objective (i.e., none are entirely intrinsic to or inherent in the object of value itself). Instead, I challenge the dichotomy of subjectivism and objectivism in axiology and outline a relational account of valuation that is pragmatically process-oriented rather than property-based. As a historical illustration of bodily/zootic values, and because it sets the stage for so much of more recent and contemporary somatology in general, Nietzsche's revaluation of the body and animality is examined at some length, as well.

At that juncture, I will be in a better position to set forth and explain the somaesthetic nature of the phenomena that generate animal ethics. In the spirit of Luce Irigaray's testimonial on her experiences with other animals, I want "to bear witness through relating" and through the explication of cross-species relationships.[94] I will join the company of those thinkers who see compassion rather than rationality at the root of interspecies morality,[95] but suggest a novel explanation for this idea. Behind or beneath the imaginative means of empathy usually appealed to, I will show that cross-species compassion is mediated by somatic experiences that I will denominate *symphysis* (to emphasize its corporal component and to distinguish it from sympathy[96]). In relating morality primarily to compassion, I stand in a philosophic tradition of some repute (e.g., Hume, Schopenhauer, and Schweitzer to name a few) with the support of much contemporary child psychology and primate ethology.[97] In relating moral compassion to corporal provenance and propagation, I move out of mainstream intellectual traditions (at least of the West).[98] Finally, in relating corporal compassion to interspecies ethics, I may be pioneering (and consequently, more susceptible to encounter stumbling blocks).

Following my discussion of symphysis, I will enter into what could be called the "applied ethics" portion of the study. But doing so would conceal more than it reveals, for the work displays not so much the application of a theory as the operation of an *ethos*. Since the transhuman morality I am explaining has an existential or experiential backbone, it will be edifying to see how it works in particular arenas of practice. The two practical arenas I have selected to focus on are zoological parks and research laboratories. From the perspective of animal advocacy in recent decades, zoos and labs appear as cage-keeping institutions of abuse; from the vantage of Noachic and Baconian humanism, they have the aspect of species preservation and advancement. I will be looking for the extent to which an ethos of corporal compassion takes sides on this split and/or whether it reframes the controversy surrounding such spaces of transpecific interface. Finally, I will indicate some of the study's more salient implications for bio- and eco-ethics, for moral philosophy in general, and for culture at large.