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# Violence, Animality, and Territoriality

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## Abstract

The aim of this article is to address the question of the anthropological difference by focusing on the intersubjective relation between the human and the animal in the context of a phenomenological analysis of violence. Following some Levinasian and Derridian insights, my goal is to analyze the structural differences between interspecific and intraspecific violence by asking how the generic phenomenon of violence is modalized across various levels: from human to human, from human to animal, from animal to human, from animal to animal. I will address questions of incarnated vulnerability and altered states of affectivity, and I will relate the various forms of violence emerging in the context of the anthropological difference to the question of territoriality, arguing that violence is structurally modified in relation to particular articulations of our worldly spatiality.

## Keywords

anthropological difference – animality – violence – empathy – intersubjectivity – territoriality

## 1 Derrida's Cat and the Crossing of Gazes

In the preamble of his book *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Derrida evokes a scene that prefigures the whole intrigue of his reflection on animals. He narrates here, with some self-irony, an autobiographical episode having as central character his own cat: coming out of the bathroom, Derrida discovers himself totally exposed and quite embarrassed in front of his cat, who insistently

scrutinizes his nudity.<sup>1</sup> Starting from this awkward situation, Derrida opens a series of aporetic interrogations regarding human and animal nakedness (which of the two is actually naked?), regarding what is proper to the human, regarding the impossibility of containing the multiplicity of animals in a single conceptual generality. The key to this initial scene is a certain dynamic of intersubjectively *seeing each other*: more specifically, at stake here is not the man who looks at the animal, but the animal who is staring at the man. In this way Derrida discovers himself exposed to foreign eyes, to a strange look that he cannot fully understand, for there is a fundamentally different gaze. A certain reversal occurs in this situation, a conversion of activity into passivity, a reversal of an active and dominant “seeing” into a passive “being seen,” a switch from a secure and covered subjectivity to a vulnerable exposed and naked one. And one aspect of the criticism Derrida addresses to the traditional understanding of animality is related to the fact that philosophy has neglected precisely *the animal gaze*: the fact that the animal, too, *looks at me*. The animal discussed by traditional philosophy is an animal *seen* by man, sought from the human perspective, starting from human categories, thus reduced to our typically comprehensive structures. Here we are not dealing with an animal who *sees*, in its turn, and the subjective look of the animal (its own view) is therefore not taken into consideration, having no place in the play of world-constitution. For traditional philosophy, my strictly *human* subjectivity, and the intentional gaze that accompanies it, is the only one possessing constitutive virtues. In order to overcome the unilaterality of this traditional relation with the animal, Derrida suggests that we should also take into account the reverse side of the question: perhaps the human is not *the only agent* of the discovery of being, and is not *the only subject* having the privilege of constitutive sight. Perhaps the intentional vector is not a strictly unidirectional one, exclusively from human to animal: the human too finds him/herself somehow looked at, exposed to other eyes, to a strange and foreign gaze, to a look that s/he cannot analogize fully with his/her own, for it is not a human look, but precisely an animal one, similar but somehow profoundly different.

Although the interpretation of Jacques Derrida is very thought-provoking, it nevertheless seems that this dynamics of seeing, this crisscrossed looking at each other between human and animal, is accomplished in a climate somewhat too domesticated, too secure, and this quite peaceful framework risks hiding an essential dimension of the question of animality. This context—let’s say, the philosopher’s home, the bathroom from which he exits, the room from

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1 Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*; trans. David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 3f.

which he is watched, the organized environment as such—is still too human, too carefully controlled, too well mastered and humanly structured, having a too well organized instrumental function. The animal who *appears* in this context submits, from one end to the other, to the conditions of possibility of the appearance opened by this very framework. The worldly setting corresponds to what appears (or is meant to appear) in this wholly human context. Of course, this strange and disturbing gaze of the cat, this inquiring and abysmal look, beyond any language and meaning, can awaken in the philosopher's mind a form of astonishment, stupor, or even panic. Undoubtedly, the striking otherness of the animal can call us into question, and can challenge our identity. But we need to emphasize that in Derrida's more or less fictional narration, there is a *tight phenomenological concordance* between "what appears" and the "very framework of the appearance," a fitting correspondence: the cat who appears fits the context in which it appears, and only in this way does this creature belong to the place that constitutes the familiar everydayness of Derrida's environmental world.

Yet perhaps we should bring into play other situations in which this concordance between "what appears" and the "framework of the appearance" is not accomplished in such a harmonious way. Maybe a genuine understanding of animality should include, from the very beginning, an unpredictable moment, a phenomenological disturbance of the framework of appearance, a primordial derangement of the world as such. The scene described by Derrida seems to erase precisely the *potential violence* involved in the encounter with the animal, either from one direction or from the other. Indeed, the climate sketched here is already thoroughly tamed, and not only because of the fact that in the end, the cat is a so-called "peaceful animal" (and this, first of all, makes it possible to accept it in our own house), but also because the whole context is a fully urban one: it is a human *home*, a place where the *man* Jacques Derrida lives. And it is precisely *in and through* his human dwelling, and *starting from* it, that Derrida allows an animal otherness to enter into his world, by adopting a cat, for instance. Consequently, here we are dealing with an animal otherness that complies with the framework that allows it to appear: the cat keeps its place in Derrida's human world, and the world remains undisturbed in its structure. At stake is not an otherness that would have the power to destabilize the constitution of that world in which the human makes room for the animal. Here it is the human who opens the worldliness of dwelling for the animal, who is hosted and accepted, allowed and sometimes only tolerated. In any case, the dimension of the uncanny is neutralized, and the disturbing meaning of potential violence does not arise in this wholly controlled context, in spite of the animal's intriguing gaze that unsettles us.

But we can imagine another scenario, where things can look quite different: for example, if a human is alone, without other means at hand, in a wild, uninhabited, non-humanized region—in the jungle, let's say. The anxiety of being alone in the wilderness is naturally articulated with a constant fear of losing one's own life, and the first potential danger that comes to one's mind is related, of course, to the so-called wild animals who, no doubt, move here or there, unseen but vaguely sensed, glimpsed as an imminent threat coming from the unknown edge. This human knows, of course, that there are animals who, though living in the wilderness, will not attack (the so-called “peaceful” animals, the “herbivores”), but will also sense that there are dangerous animals around, the so-called “carnivores,” in the face of whom there is no chance of surviving. This limit situation opens not only the possibility of *dying* (a possibility that every human essentially carries within him/herself, since “as soon as a human being is born, he is old enough to die right away”<sup>2</sup>), not only the possibility of *being killed*, which can be seen as a particularization of the way in which the other in its otherness relates to me,<sup>3</sup> but a quite unthinkable possibility, that of actually *being eaten* by another living being: the fact that my own living body itself, which essentially constitutes my own being, can suddenly become food “material” for a “beast” seems to engage a limit situation of the phenomenology of embodiment.

In any case, this wholly insecure experience of the wilderness would open a totally different relationship between human and animal, radically distinct from the situation indicated by Derrida in reference to his cat, deployed in the far too secure environment of his urban dwelling. This wilderness in which one finds oneself is not at all the Heideggerian world, constituted by the network of references of functional tools in the horizon of factual significances, a world having the human *Dasein* in its center, as its ultimate “for the sake of which.” It is a totally unpredictable realm that has not received the structural marks of human dwelling, and where one cannot build, dwell, or think. Here one can only flee, hide, or defend oneself, being haunted by unknown dangers, desperately trying to find an impossible escape. It is not only that the human subject cannot control this realm, but it is precisely the human who is subjected to and dominated by the unknown totality of threatening being.

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2 Johannes von Tepl, cited by Martin Heidegger in *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: SUNY Press, 1996), 228.

3 “In death I am exposed to absolute violence, to murder in the night. [...] The Other, inseparable from the very event of transcendence, is situated in the region from which death, possibly murder, comes.” Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*; trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1979), 233.

A radical reversal takes place here, since the human is no longer the hunter who pursues the prey (the autonomous and autochthonous subject grasping the object), but it is precisely the human who is hunted, continuously seeking a shelter that no longer appears. The human is not the one who detachedly examines the surrounding environment while being secure and hidden; instead, it is the human who is totally exposed to unpredictable and presumptively ferocious looks. There is no formal significance that can make this world hold together as a stable and clear world where an orientation toward a goal would be possible. No, here there is no orientation, no existential space, and this world does not make any purpose possible. Or perhaps there is only one purpose: to avoid falling prey *today* to a voracious predator, to resist *at least until tomorrow*. Only such a precarious temporality—expressed in the phrase “at least until tomorrow ...”—temporalizes itself in this wild world, a simple postponement of the fatal moment.

This brief reverie can give us the opportunity to ask whether and how we can compare the gaze of the small feline (the cat), quietly staring at a naked human, and the look that the big feline (say, the tiger), hidden just before the final attack, casts toward its future victim. We can also compare the two ways of *being seen*, in their particular affectivity—namely, the diffuse discomfort of Derrida, surprised by his cat in his nudity, and the dread of discovering oneself totally helpless, frozen by the ferocious look of the tiger’s attacking approach: two completely different ways of being seen, two incomparable modes of the subject’s exposure, and two entirely distinct relations with the animal. The environment in which Derrida discovers himself being watched by his cat is still the Heideggerian world, a world of meanings and functional references among tools, a human world of dwelling. But the situation of the jungle is instead the world Levinas described in *Totality and Infinity* with the notion of the elemental, in relation to which the subject feels vulnerable and threatened at every step, but is at the same time fascinated by the elemental that comes prior to building a shelter, a house, or a home, prior to the establishment of the fortress of subjectivity.<sup>4</sup>

These two distinct understandings of the world (Heideggerian and Levinasian) thus open two distinct ways of envisioning the crossing of gazes (or the intersection of looks) between the human and the animal. The small feline who stares at human nudity nevertheless appears *within* the human world and conforms to it. But the big feline who stares at the human as its imminent prey comes from its own “world”: it doesn’t belong to the human world, for it

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4 Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 130–142. Cf. John Sallis, “Levinas and the Elemental”, *Research in Phenomenology* 28, no.1 (1998): 152–159.

is not the human who allows it to show itself within a human worldly framework fixed in advance. Here the human is not *chez soi*, as an autochthonous subject in his/her homeland, but rather discovers him/herself exposed in the alien “world” of the beasts, at their mercy, one’s life hanging by a hair. There, in the world of the Levinasian elemental, everything is at every moment in a “life-and-death” situation, in constant tension and risk, which is not at all suspected in the secure (still too Heideggerian) home of Jacques Derrida.

## 2 Animality and Violence

Therefore, the question we can ask is if, somehow, the phenomenon of violence should not be placed in the center of the understanding of the relation between humans and animals. And it is somewhat surprising that although phenomenologists have largely analyzed both animality and violence separately, the very *connection* between these two topics has not been much discussed in the field of phenomenology. For example, the most recent phenomenological approaches to violence—in the first instance, the rich explorations of James Dodd<sup>5</sup> and Michael Staudigl,<sup>6</sup> but also those of James Mensch<sup>7</sup> and Bernhard Waldenfels<sup>8</sup>—are mainly focused on the *human* or *interpersonal*

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5 James Dodd, *Violence and Phenomenology* (New York: Routledge, 2009); “On the Concept of Violence: Intelligibility and Risk,” in *Phenomenologies of Violence*, ed. Michael Staudigl (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 35–63.

6 Michael Staudigl, “The Vulnerable Body: Toward a Phenomenological Theory of Violence,” *Analecta Husserliana* LXXXIX (2006): 259–272; “Towards a Phenomenological Theory of Violence: Reflections Following Merleau-Ponty and Schutz,” *Human Studies* 30 (2007): 233–253; “The Many Faces of Violence: A Phenomenological Inquiry,” in *Phenomenology 2005*, vol. 4; *Selected Essays from Northern Europe*, ed. Hans Rainer Sepp and Ion Copoeru (Bucharest: Zeta Books, 2007): 685–716; “Esquisse d’une phénoménologie de la violence,” *Revue Germanique Internationale* 13 (2011): 205–220; “Toward a Relational Phenomenology of Violence,” *Human Studies* 36 (2013): 43–66; “Disembodiments: A Merleau-Pontian Approach to Violence,” in *Corporeity and Affectivity*, ed. K. Novotny et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 313–329; *Phänomenologie der Gewalt* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2015).

7 James Mensch, “Violence and Embodiment,” *Symposium, Journal of the Canadian Society for Continental Thought* 12, no.1 (2008): 4–15; “Violence and Selfhood,” *Human Studies* 36 (2013): 25–41.

8 Bernhard Waldenfels, “Violence as Violation,” in *Violence, Victims, Justifications*, ed. F. Ó Murchadha (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2006), 73–94; “Apories de la violence,” in *Épreuves de la vie et souffrances d’existence*, ed. Sylvain Camilleri and Christophe Perrin (Argenteuil: Le Cercle Herméneutique, 2011), 157–175.

level of violence.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, the way in which the experience of violence is constituted in the *particular* circumstance when *an animal* is involved has not attracted very much attention. And when this challenging topic is sometimes touched on, it seems that there is, strictly speaking, *no phenomenological attitude* engaged: in a quite unproblematic way, what is most often spontaneously assumed is a *non-phenomenological* point of view, coming mainly from animal ethics or from other theoretical fields.<sup>10</sup> Of course, as we all know, the

9 In the last two decades, the phenomenon of violence has been discussed in a more applied manner in the field of phenomenology. See, for example, Harun Maye and Hans Rainer Sepp (eds.), *Phänomenologie und Gewalt* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2005); Michael Staudigl (ed.), *Phenomenologies of Violence* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Michael Staudigl (ed.), *Gesichter der Gewalt. Beiträge aus phänomenologischer Sicht* (Paderborn: Fink, 2014). The problematic network in which violence is analyzed is quite complex in phenomenological scholarship: James Dodd (*Violence and Phenomenology*, op. cit.) and James Mensch ("Violence and Embodiment", op. cit., "Violence and Selfhood", op. cit.) discuss the dimension of meaning (or of its implosion) that occurs in the experience of violence through the originarily embodied character of the existential relation to the world—a theme that also appears in the studies written by Thiemo Breyer ("Violence as violation of experiential structures," *Phenomenology and Cognitive Sciences*, 2016), and Michael Staudigl ("The Vulnerable Body", op. cit.; "Disembodiments", op. cit.); Jennifer L. Geddes ("Violence and Vulnerability: Kafka and Levinas on Human Suffering" *Literature and Theology* 29/4 (2015): 400–414) focuses on the relation between violence and vulnerability, while Roger Burggraeve ("Violence and the Vulnerable Face of the Other: The Vision of Emmanuel Levinas on Moral Evil and Our Responsibility," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 30, no.1 (1999): 29–45) emphasizes the relation between violence and otherness. In connection to the temporalization of the past, Anthony J. Steinbock ("Repentance as a Response to Violence in the Dynamic of Forgiveness," in *Phenomenologies of Violence*, op. cit., 181–205) insists on the relation between violence, repentance, and forgiveness, while Stefan Nowotny ("Speaking Out of the Experience of Violence: On the Question of Testimony," in *Phenomenologies of Violence*, op. cit., 159–179) discusses the issue of testimony related to violence. In turn, Jeffrey Hanson ("Returning (to) the gift of death: Violence and history in Derrida and Levinas," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 67, no.1 (2010): 1–15) and Michael Naas ("Violence and Historicity: Derrida's Early Readings of Heidegger," *Research in Phenomenology* 45, no.2 (2015): 191–213) investigate the relations between violence, time, and historicity. The interdisciplinary openness of phenomenology is fully at work when the question of violence is analyzed from the perspective of social phenomenology (see Alessandro Salice, "Violence as a social fact," *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 13 (2014): 161–177, who focuses on the social dimension of violent acts) or from the perspective of phenomenological sociology (see Martin Endress and Andrea Pabst, "Violence and Shattered Trust: Sociological Considerations," *Human Studies* 36 (2013): 89–106, who address the relation between physical violence and structural violence).

10 Even when Derrida discusses the phenomenon of violence, he focuses only on some of its particularizations: on the *conceptual violence* that forces the inclusion in a single general term—that of "the" animal—of a diverse multiplicity of animals, otherwise irreducible,



discussion of violence *and* animality is quite central in the field of animal ethics. But here the debates are mostly focused on a *single* type of violence, the one inflicted by humans upon animals, predominantly in the context of contemporary large-scale industrial farming and slaughtering. Thus, animal ethics not only leaves out of the discussion the other modes of violence that may be relevant in the human–animal relation, but never questions whether we can conceive an integrative articulation of the various forms of violence appearing in this complicated intersubjective equation.

And perhaps it is precisely the task of phenomenology to raise such questions. Is there an inner connection between *inter*-species and *intra*-species violence? Can we articulate human–animal violence (in its double direction) with *inter-human* violence, on the one hand, and with *inter-animal* violence, on the other hand? What, precisely, differentiates and binds together these particular modes of violence? If the phenomenon of violence is modalized across various levels—from human to human, from human to animal, from animal to human, from animal to animal—how can we conceive an integrative structure that might be able to hold together all these particular modes of violence?

Thus, it is necessary not only to open the phenomenology of violence toward the issue of animality, but also to see how we might articulate, in a comprehensive way, the various possibilities of the phenomenological constellation that brings together *human, animal, and violence*, without limiting ourselves to a singular aspect of it, be it the most widespread and acute in the contemporary world. Another challenge would be to draw a *clear boundary* between, on the one hand, a purely phenomenological approach to violence and, on the other hand, the militant discourse belonging to animal ethics. The question is therefore whether phenomenology can find the resources in its own tradition of thought, in its own descriptive and neutral style, to address the relation between violence and animality. What would it therefore mean to explore, in a strictly phenomenological manner, the relation between human and animal in the context of the emergence of violence? How should we develop a descriptive analysis of this constellation of meaning, so that it would

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but especially on the *systemic violence* that contemporary humans inflict on the animal in the context of industrial-mechanized agriculture, leading to a submission without precedent of the being of animals in a *Gestell* of a planetary scale, compared by Derrida with a genocide or even a holocaust. Although he is not a supporter of animal ethics, many of Derrida's remarks seem to merge harmoniously with the positions of this philosophical line. Cf. Jacques Derrida and Elisabeth Roudinesco, *For What Tomorrow ... A Dialogue*; trans. Jeff Fort (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 62–76.



rigorously belong to the phenomenological way of thinking? Can we defend a strictly phenomenological point of view on this topic?

If we stick to a rigorously phenomenological approach, this approach must emphasize, in a descriptive way, the structural moments that constitute the phenomenon of violence and its fundamental possibilities. The phenomenological method compels us to take violence as it shows itself, where it shows itself, in our pre-theoretical and even pre-reflexive facticity, as it occurs in the world of our everyday lives, in the lived concreteness of our experience. At the same time, we must avoid approaching the phenomenon of violence with a “ready-made” definition, as if we already had it in our pocket, as if we already knew very well what its way of being consists in and how it articulates its main modalizations. The descriptive approach not only requires that we avoid entering upon the investigation with a preliminary preconception about violence, but especially demands that we refrain from intervening in the meaning of the phenomenon with some axiological significations given in advance. Rather, if some value-related significations occur during the analysis, they must be exposed starting from the meaning of the phenomenon investigated, starting from the way in which it shows itself in our world, in our genuine experience. Moreover, the phenomenological approach to violence will not aim to explain violence starting from so-called objective cause-effect relations, and it will also avoid assuming any practical purpose of social intervention, in this case related to the goal of reducing or preventing violence. In order to remain strictly faithful to what phenomenology is and was meant to be, a phenomenological discourse about violence, especially one related to the problem of animality, must be neither moralistic nor activist-polemic, neither political nor geared toward providing practical solutions. It cannot fall into apology, in one direction or another, but must consistently remain loyal to its essential task: namely, to understand violence solely through the comprehensive act of descriptive analysis, based on concrete intuition, prior to any militancy, any pros and cons. It will not of course justify or legitimize the violence, but neither will it accuse it starting from an unquestioned ideal of non-violence. Phenomenological investigation must remain prior to any concrete position.

Furthermore, what distinguishes the phenomenological approach to violence is that here the description is constantly related to *first-person experience*, which can belong distinctly to the active pole (the one who *inflicts* the violence upon the other) or to the passive pole (the one who *undergoes* others' aggression). Therefore, the structure of this experience is different in the context of *symmetrical* violence, when all the subjects are actively engaged in the exercise of violence, and in the context of *asymmetrical* violence, when one or more subjects are passive, being the ones who endure violence. In the latter

case, where a power is exercised over a lack of power and over a vulnerability, a genuine ethical dimension is unavoidably involved. Besides these two poles that instantiate the active-passive duality, the phenomenological analysis should also take into account a third possible subjective pole: that pertaining to the one who, whether willingly or not, *witnesses* the emergence of violence. As an involuntary or voluntary witness, the “third party” does or does not intervene, does or does not mediate, and is also affected by violence by virtue of his/her characteristic empathy. Even if violence must be understood primordially starting from the “I-you” conflictual relation, the third is the one who intervenes or not, mediates or not, and only on the neutral space of the third can one seek peace or sign an armistice.<sup>11</sup>

In the violent confrontation between “I” and “you,” a certain relation between identity and difference is configured, insofar as in such an experience of alterity and exteriority, a particular understanding of difference is what ignites violence. Therefore, the forms of violence vary depending on the types of differences one encounters: the elementary and primary form of interpersonal violence (as in a fistfight) corresponds to the *ontic* difference between an individual and any other; conjugal violence corresponds to the *sexual* difference; pedagogical violence corresponds to the *ontogenetic* difference between adults and children; to the *ethnic* and *racial* difference corresponds other forms of violence, such as ethnic cleansing, genocide, or slavery; to the *state or political* difference corresponds war; to the *social class* difference corresponds revolution or uprising; the violence inherent in any system of psychiatric mental classification corresponds to the *psychological* difference between normal and abnormal; the violence intrinsic to any penitentiary system corresponds to the *legal* difference between lawful and delinquent; finally, the *interspecific* difference corresponds not only to the violence between human and animal (in both directions of this relation), but also to the violence between animals belonging to different species. If difference is understood as differend, adversity occurs starting from a certain thing that is at stake—those involved in a violent situation dispute over something, and we are dealing with a conflict around the fact of sharing something, with a “to want or not to want” to share with the other: a good, a territory, a name, a status. This entire constellation of “to dominate” and “to master,” within the tension between *to be* and *to have*, occurs in connection with the parts of a whole that is to be divided, hence in connection with a totality that is disputed; consequently, as Levinas suggested, violence is intimately related to totality.

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11 As Levinas (*Totality and Infinity*, 222) has said, “Only beings capable of war can rise to peace.”

In any case, phenomenology focuses on the lived experience of violence, prior to its scientific objectification. What is at stake is not to see the violence from the outside, already constituted as a distant object of study and statistics, but to detect first of all the subjective dimensions, the experiential layers of this phenomenon, as well as the particular way in which it involves the deeper levels of the constitution of the self. Phenomenology's aim is neither to seek some explanations for a fact nor to highlight the reasons for and the consequences of violence, but to explore those structures in and through which violence becomes violence. Especially essential in phenomenology is the *actualization-sense* or *fulfillment-sense* of a subjective phenomenon: this "pragmatic" dimension of phenomenology allows us to analyze the phenomenon not only in a static manner, but especially in a manner that reveals its dynamics, its very emergence and realization.

And this naturally involves the *temporalization* of violence. How is the constitution of the phenomenon of violence modalized according to the essential possibilities of temporalization? How is the temporalization of violence constituted differently in relation to the present, the past, and the future? Indeed, violence can be analyzed in its various temporal modalities: when violence is experienced as *present* and in terms of the effectiveness of presence, the phenomenon of embodiment comes to the fore, and the emphasis is on sensitivity and bodily vulnerability, on pain and suffering; when violence is experienced as *future*, the phenomenon of affectivity becomes manifest, since violence is lived as a possibility that stands in front of us, in the fear and terror in the face of a threat; and when violence is temporalized in the direction of the *past*, in connection to memory, it manifests as affective trauma and as a trace or scar of an embodied vulnerability.

Thus understood, the phenomenology of violence can be brought to light only in the interstices that articulate the phenomenology of intersubjectivity, the phenomenology of affectivity, and the phenomenology of the body. On the one hand, we have the problem of the hostile other, understood in its adversity, an alterity that manifests itself as antagonism and opposition (how does alterity modulate into adversity in an intersubjective situation that becomes violent?);<sup>12</sup> on the other hand, we need to descriptively approach not only fear and terror, as mentioned before, but also the emergence and development of irritation, fury, and anger leading to conflict (without ignoring the neutralization of affectivity in the case of that violence which is exercised programmatically

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12 Ibid., 223: "How could separated beings maintain any relation, even violence? It is that the refusal of totality in war does not refuse relationship—since in war the adversaries seek out one another."

and detachedly); and finally, it is essential to consider the problem of vulnerability and pain, since this dimension of embodiment is always intended in any factual violent situation, having crime as its limit and murder as the ultimate violence.<sup>13</sup> However, the fact that these existential structures are constitutive for the phenomenon of violence does not mean that they are at work in a homogeneous and undifferentiated way in all conceivable types of violence; instead, they are modalized depending on the context, either by coming to the fore, or by fading, or by changing their configuration. Therefore, the description of the typological variations of violence would involve the task of concretely showing how each of these subjective dimensions is modalized in a differentiated way.

For example, when an animal comes into play, the possible modalizations of violence (either the aggression of a human upon an animal or, vice versa, the aggression of an animal upon a human) should follow the variations that occur in each of the three phenomenological dimensions just mentioned: intersubjectivity, embodiment, and affectivity. For violence must be understood in light of how, precisely, the animal is given to us as an other in its otherness (vice versa, how the animal sees the human as an “other,” we cannot really know); violence is also understood starting from the possibility of empathy, which allows us to have access to the pain and suffering of the animal, in its particular vulnerability (the reverse side is also worth questioning); and finally, violence occurring in relation with the animal engages distinctive emotional dimensions that have their peculiar role in the constitution of the phenomenon.

### 3 Violence and Territoriality

However, it might be fruitful to include in our analysis another invariant that seems to be highly relevant for the constitution of the phenomenon of violence, namely, *space*, or more precisely, *territoriality*. The spatial context where violence emerges and occurs between a human and an animal, be it in one direction or the other, be it symmetrical or asymmetrical, always plays an essential role in the meaning of this phenomenon. There can be, of course, an animal who appears and shows itself, but perhaps also an animal who does not

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13 Hence “we approach death as nothingness in the passion for murder” (ibid., 232); “The Other is the sole being I can wish to kill” (ibid., 198); “qua I, I am not innocent spontaneity but usurper and murderer” (ibid., 84); “The acceptance of death therefore does not enable me to resist with certainty the murderous will of the Other” (ibid., 230).

appear, one who rather remains unseen, at the edge of the human world. As appearing at the margins of the human world, the animal can thus be understood as a figure of marginality, or as the subject of marginalization. One question would then be: what if the human world, as it is structurally constituted, necessarily implies, in order to remain a human world, a certain marginalization of the animal? Can this marginalization be seen as a primordial form of *structural* violence, due to the fact that it allows, within the human world, only the emergence of a certain number of animal beings, while excluding the others? How is the anthropological difference articulated in the tension between the possibilities of inclusion and the requirements of exclusion?

Thus, the interactive connections between human and animal are differentiated first according to the basic meaning of the human world, the one that is related to the phenomenon of habitation. We can have interactions between humans and animals within this world of human habitation, but also outside it (in the wild), as well as at the border between the inside and outside, each of these particular territorial areas entailing distinct modes of violence. The relation with the animal is modalized differently according to these differences related to the order of territoriality. It is true that the boundary between the world of human habitation and its exteriority (“the wilderness”) is no longer a fixed and stable one, namely, we cannot draw a clear and unique border that separates the two areas. As we know, the human apparently wants to ceaselessly grasp the entire earth, and only certain areas still remain inaccessible, escaping human control. As a total appropriation of the earth, this totalizing aspiration of the human—the work of *Gestell*—seems to leave no free, unoccupied place for the animal, a place that humans would not wish to control and claim for human dwelling. In turn, this dwelling area that we call “the human world” is not homogeneous, since we can trace a number of territorial differences, the first being between the so-called “urban” and “rural” areas: the latter is more permissive concerning animal presence, the natural neighborhood and human–animal interference is more concrete, operating on numerous experiential layers, while the urban framework seems to be automatically more restrictive. Of course, this differentiation between urban and rural is a porous and permeable one, since other intermediate or mixed stages can be conceived. Moreover, the urban region itself can be specified in further territorial demarcations: within or outside our own house, in our courtyard or in the garden, on the streets or in public parks, but also in the town’s peripheral areas. These are secondary delimitations of the urban area, which emerge like concentric circles around the primordial phenomenon of dwelling, prefiguring distinct modalizations of intersubjectivity with animals, each of which

occasions distinct modes of violence. The meaning of the experience of violence is modified according to these modalizations of intersubjectivity and to various differentiations of territorialization.

However, beyond these somewhat rigid territorial distinctions between *inhabited* and *uninhabited*, *dwelling* and *not-dwelling*, *urban* and *rural*, *domestic* and *wild*, we also need to explore the horizon of *extraterritoriality*. By extraterritoriality we understand an area that is determined by the logic of “neither/nor”: *neither* inhabited *nor* uninhabited, *neither* urban *nor* rural, *neither* domestic *nor* wild, a place where the worldliness of the world seems to be shaking, and where the potential for violence increases immeasurably.<sup>14</sup> Here we can envision at least four main registers.

1. Within the urban dwelling space where we have a distinctive intersubjectivity with our pets, a strong quasi-personal familiarity excludes practically any form of animal use; in this case, the alterity of the animal, assumed as “one of us,” has the form of non-conflictual familiarity and neighborhood, in the community of living-together. But here we also find other complicated and conflictual relations, such as those with stray dogs who are potentially violent.

2. Then we have rural dwelling space, specific to so-called traditional farming, where the natural forms of animal use are polymorphic, but somewhat connected with a kind of soft familiarity, which, paradoxically, blurs or weakens the alterity of the animal being: it is nearby, almost ready-to-hand, an intermediary being, between our fellow humans and inert tools. No peasant living in the traditional way of raising animals (for traction or food) will treat the animal as “one of us.” And in addition, a peasant will not have pets, since having pets is an urban phenomenon.

3. Third, there is the non-human space, the area of non-habitation, in the wilderness, where the human goes beyond the frontiers of his/her dwelling world, either as an explorer animated by the desire for knowledge, or as a hunter. Here the alterity of the animal is strong, but it is understood as a conflictual alterity, even if only as a latency. The animal other is understood as the totally strange, simultaneously fascinating and dangerous. Here the absolute non-familiarity of wild animals intensifies their alterity.

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14 Thus, here we are not understanding the term “extraterritoriality” in the sense determined by Levinas in *Totality and Infinity* (131, 150). For the Levinasian meaning of this concept, cf. Robert Bernasconi, “Extraterritoriality: Outside the Subject, Outside the State,” in *Levinas: Chinese and Western Perspectives*, ed. Nicholas Bunnin, Dachun Yang, and Linyu Gu (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 167–181.

4. And finally, we have the extraterritorial areas of *neither/nor* about which we prefer to know nothing—marginal areas that embarrass us, that bother us, that we prefer to pass over in silence. And here we can include areas of intensive farming, industrial slaughterhouses, and also places where experiments with animals are carried out, and so on. Here the principle of use practically erases any possibility of intersubjective connection with the animals.

In each of these territorial areas (and in the interstices between them, or in their interferences), the alterity of the animal assumes a different shape; it appears differently each time, in a different intersubjective context, which leads to the variation of the affective-emotional dimensions and, therefore, to variations in the possibilities of empathy. Through these various modifications of territoriality, the human–animal interactions change according to whether the poles involved are seen or unseen, known or unknown, hostile or approachable, belonging to their own milieu or not, balancing between diurnal or nocturnal alterity. Therefore, inter-species violence—as it is constituted through intersubjectivity, embodiment, and affectivity—also varies in relation to the modalizations of territoriality, and first of all starting from the basic spatial figures of proximity and distance. In other words, the various forms of violence depend upon the modifications that occur in each of these three phenomenological structures in relation to all these multiple variations of territoriality. In the same way, the possibilities of becoming aware of pain, suffering, and vulnerability, as well as the limits of these possibilities, depend on the meaning of alterity epitomized by the “animal other” in a determined territorial context in relation to the proximity of the “here” and distance of the “there.” Similarly, the modalizations of affectivity that accompany the phenomenon of violence are also configured according to the territorial areas in which they occur; moreover, by including both vectors of the intersubjective human–animal relation, we can refer to the way violence emerges and erupts (by going from irritation, anger, or fury to the actual violent action), to the impassiveness associated with the exercise of violence in cold blood, or to the affective way the imminence of violence is felt, in fear or horror.

For example, if we consider the first territorial demarcation, and we focus only on an urban dwelling context where we have relationships with animals, we can distinguish a whole range of additional possibilities. Each one of us may adopt and integrate in our own home a cat, a dog, a parrot in a cage, a hamster in a cage, a beautiful fish in an aquarium, and so on, without considering other possible eccentric cases. Some of these creatures (such as a dog or a cat) are integrated into the world of human habitation as “pets” because they show some inherent capacity to enter into relationship with the human,



thus forming a special type of intersubjectivity in terms of both affectivity and understanding, in a distinctive kind of reciprocity and mutuality. Of course, the phenomenological determination of the specificity of human–animal *Mitbefindlichkeit* and *Mitverstehen*, in contrast with the human–human counterparts, is essential in this context. In any case, in the case of pets, it allows us to *name* the animals, to properly give them names: not the common name indicating the animal *as* animal, its species (dog or cat) or breed (Cocker Spaniel or Burmese), but a proper name, an individual and quasi-personal name, addressing it in its individuality. By receiving an individual name, these animals exit the realm of anonymity: by getting a name, and getting to respond in their own particular way to that name, they assume it or appropriate it in a certain way.

But other animals we receive in our house, such as the canary in the cage, the hamster in the cage, or the fish in the aquarium, do not display such complex relational capabilities, at least not equally obviously, so it seems that they do not form any concrete intersubjectivity with us that would be effectively responsive at the level of meaning. Of course, like any living being, they have their own form of reactivity in response to stimuli (food, heat, light), but we can still assume that the intersubjective relationality would involve a developed form of mutual recognition, which articulates itself as meaning. And even if we can project upon the hamster in the cage or upon the fish in the aquarium all sorts of meanings, even if we attribute to each of them the so-called “proper names,” it would be hazardous to assume that these animals (hamster or fish) actually respond as our pet dog does. The name “does not stick” to them, and they do not really “appropriate” that name. What is then the basis upon which we still accept these animals in our human world, a basis we might categorize as *non-intersubjective*? Perhaps we can say that they enter our world on a rather *aesthetic* level because we consider them beautiful, exotic, special, spectacular, strange, etc., because they are enjoyable and agreeable, because they are “simply cute,” a kind of “animated version” of some toys.

In any case, one of the two levels (intersubjective or aesthetic/ludic) must be present in order for us to accept an animal into our dwelling world. An animal with whom, on the one hand, we cannot “communicate” (as we do with the dog and cat), and, on the other hand, an animal we do not really enjoy (be it on an aesthetic or a ludic level), cannot possibly be *accepted* in the world of human habitation.

If we ask what types of violence may occur in relation to animals that we receive in our world, the most philosophically relevant instances are not necessarily the obvious cases of deprivation of vital elements (food, water, heat, space, etc.) or aberrant forms of cruelty, sadism, or torture (such as organizing

fight between dogs, and so on). We should perhaps ask ourselves whether, beyond these patent forms, other forms of violence, maybe not as direct, can be seen. Here we can assume either a maximalist position or a minimalist one, or perhaps an intermediate variant. Thus, if we adopt a maximalist criterion, and take as violence whatever we may spontaneously see as absolutely unacceptable if a human being were to be involved in the current situation in the same way as the animal, then a large variety of behaviors commonly accepted regarding the animals integrated into the human urban world would effectively appear as clear forms of violence: hamster's cage, parrot's cage, dog's leash and muzzle, cat's neutering (castration of the male and spaying of the female)—all these matters, accepted by most of those who adopt animals in their homes, would appear downright grotesque if a human being were to be in the place of the animal. A human in a cage, with a leash or a muzzle, subject to castration, these are actually images of a nightmare. However, in the case of animals, these facts are permissible, sometimes quite recommended by animal lovers, and occasionally even mandatory. Does the fact that these practices are considered normal and acceptable when applied to an animal, but are also considered absolutely outrageous, degrading, and unacceptable when applied to humans, say something relevant about the anthropological difference? Can we see here the trace of a boundary between an acceptable and an unacceptable violence?

However, in addition to the animals we willingly receive in our dwelling world, and for whom we make room in our environmental space (be it in the intersubjective mode of adopting pets, or only in the somewhat "aesthetic" way mentioned earlier), we can discover a class of creatures we do not receive in our dwelling world, even though they still *appear* in it. Consider, for example, that on the level of urban dwelling, there are recurrent practices of mouse and rat extermination, or of pest control. Some creatures, such as mice and rats, bugs and cockroaches, do occur and appear in our dwelling world. The fact that they "appear" has to be taken with caution here, because in fact they do not fully appear in the patency of daily manifestation, but rather insinuate themselves from behind the appearances, especially at night, from areas of the unseen, from underground caves below the visible, from basements, near pipes and sewers; these are areas that we might assign to "extraterritoriality," the peripheral areas of our dwelling world, areas in which we do not properly dwell, and for the administration of which we always need "experts" who enter where we do not enter. Of course, in the case of these creatures coming from the underground beneath the appearances, we cannot develop any concrete intersubjective relation as we do with our dog and cat. At the same time, such creatures do not give rise to any sort of so-called "aesthetic" admiration, as happens with the magnificent fish in the aquarium and the splendid parrot

in the cage. Quite the contrary, their appearance is, for most of our fellow humans, quite repulsive. These criteria seem to be sufficient, for most of us, to call the cleaning and pest control services, with the explicit aim of exterminating these unwelcome creatures.<sup>15</sup> Violence happens here as well, but we feel that it does not concern us, because no intersubjective relationship—however mediated, modified, or privative it might be—seems to be possible at all. However, a sensation of abhorrence, a kind of horrified repugnance, even repressed, still subsists, a strange feeling that somehow, something sordid is happening with my implicit consent, even if I look elsewhere. And this abhorrence is structurally related to the extraterritoriality with which we are thus unwillingly confronted, to the marginality beyond any frontier of dwelling, beyond the limits of my living world. The human–animal violence occurring in the area of extraterritoriality is related to that feeling of disgust and horror. And perhaps this is the distinctive mark of extraterritoriality.

In a similar way, we can understand the spatial frameworks of intensive farming and industrial slaughtering as concretizations of extraterritoriality, places of neither-nor, neither urban nor rural, neither uninhabited nor inhabited, neither diurnal nor nocturnal, an intermediary crepuscular milieu, hidden but not totally concealed, somehow known but repressed, appearing but not quite, manifest but not really. They are neither urban nor rural (and obviously have no place in the wild), but occur in the area of extraterritoriality. People who operate there do not have an existential dwelling relation with that place as do the peasants living in a traditional household, where the stable is behind the house and the garden, in the proximal sphere of inhabitation. And that's why there is no empathy involved, no intersubjectivity (even a privative

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15 A similar situation occurs in the case of stray dogs, which, as is well known, represent a real danger for the inhabitants of a city when they gather in packs. But unlike rats or cockroaches, stray dogs present an intersubjective potential that cannot be ignored. It is precisely this tension between danger and empathy that makes possible the antagonism between those who fight for people's need to live in a safe city and the activists who advocate for the right of animals to be protected from unnecessary suffering. And if such activism for animal rights does not focus on creatures that humans generally considered repugnant (there are, after all, no public campaigns against rat extermination or against pest control, as there are against euthanasia of stray dogs), this fact is primarily due precisely to the two levels of meaning mentioned above: intersubjective and "aesthetic." Animal "shelters" where dogs are kept before being euthanized can also be included in the strange realm of extraterritoriality. We can of course extend this analysis to other figures of extraterritoriality (the battlefield in war, concentration camps), where everything seems possible, even the most horrifying things, where no one sees and no one is seen, where violence pulsates, where the very worldhood of the world is disrupted.

form), no affectivity, and no alterity at all. Even if slaughterhouses are spatially located in an objective area of the city, on the urban map, they are like white spots, liminal areas where the common man does not belong. It is not a no man's land, but neither is it an area of habitation.

The question is how the meaning of the peculiar type of violence belonging to industrial farming and slaughtering could be phenomenologically analyzed. Is this form of violence understandable in and on its own terms? Or does its meaning only become transparent if we focus primarily on the constitutive modifications that make the emergence of this new relation between humans and animals possible? First of all, a phenomenological analysis of this type of violence needs to describe the radical modifications that affect the three subjective levels—intersubjectivity, affectivity, and embodiment—specific to the human–animal relation of traditional farming in rural areas. Thus, the way in which contemporary mass concentration of animal breeding and husbandry constitutes an unprecedented violence should not be understood starting from the human–animal relation occurring within the urban context of dwelling (which has quite a different constitutive genesis), but from the meaning of the human–animal relation belonging to traditional farming, as a structural change thereof.

Within the framework of traditional farming, we deal with a wider openness of dwelling, which more broadly integrates the “naturalness” of the animal in a mutual belongingness in which the boundaries between human place (the “house”) and animal place (the “stable”) are more fluid. At the same time, the animal is seen here as a distinct form of otherness, because we find in this area no “pets” (with their particular type of intersubjectivity), nor creatures hosted in the space of human habitation on more or less “aesthetic” grounds (like the canary in the cage or the fish in the aquarium). But here we do not have to do with any extraterritoriality able to inspire disgust and horror, for this realm is differentiated through intermediate layers between familiar and unfamiliar, between domestic and wild, without major ruptures, without abysses, relying instead on continuities. The animal otherness here is not deprived of a certain intersubjective relationality, which in certain contexts even makes possible a degree of personalization (an exit from anonymity), but does not exclude the sacrificial dimension specific to all traditional cultures, who accepted it as an inalienable part of life. Of course, one can analyze the further differentiations of violence emerging through various traditional practices, for the structural relationship with animality is modalized differently when what is at stake is a pack animal, a guardian animal, an animal raised for direct human subsistence (food, clothing, etc.), but also in hunting (where the animal can be the hunted prey, or can accompany the hunter in search of prey), and in fighting or

war (animals used as instruments of violence, as weapons, etc.). Each of these distinct possibilities of encountering the animal will engage particular differentiations and modalizations of alterity, emotions, and empathy.

In conclusion, a phenomenological analysis of inter-species violence needs not only to explore the experiential levels that underlie this phenomenon, such as intersubjectivity and otherness, affectivity and embodiment, but also to develop a descriptive determination of territoriality, according to which all these subjective dimensions structurally change. The relation with the animal and the possible violence that occurs in this relation engages a plurality of hypostases that have to be analyzed distinctly and in detail. This model of understanding the phenomenon of violence justifies why there is not a simple and unique form of violence, but various forms: some forms of violence are motivated, or grounded, or concealed by other forms of violence. In any case, they are articulated precisely by the variations of the structural moments that constitute the phenomenon of violence. Therefore, each of these various paradigmatic forms of violence should first be phenomenologically described in itself, in its distinctive structures of meaning, understood in its own context, avoiding the fatal risk of transferring the meaning of violence occurring in a certain territorial context to a different context that has a very different constitutive genesis.<sup>16</sup>

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