

**Phenomenology and Normativity:
A Merleau-Pontian Approach to Animal Ethics**

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Masters of Research

Macquarie University

October 2015

Table of Contents

Abstract

Statement

Acknowledgements

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1.....	6
Chapter 2.....	21
Chapter 3.....	35
Conclusion.....	47
Bibliography.....	51

Abstract

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Abstract

This thesis begins by offering a critique of Kant's moral theory, demonstrating that what lies behind Kant's moral theory is a metaphysical excision separating the human and the animal, resulting in the exclusion of the animal from moral consideration. Drawing on the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, I provide an alternative metaphysical framework that illustrates the expressiveness of animal life. In approaching the task of moving from an ontology of animal life to the foundations of a moral theory, our focus shifts to the work of Hans Jonas and his unique argument for the obligating force ontology has upon us.

Statement

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled “Phenomenology and Normativity” has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that this thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Jean-Philippe Deranty, for his continued support of this project and guidance in matters of research and writing, for which I will always be thankful. To Sam, my childhood animal companion, a beautiful and much loved German Shepard, who was the first to demonstrate to me, in his very being, the moral significance of animal life. Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank my wife Bec and my children, Lachlan and Clare, for their ongoing love, support and encouragement throughout this project. This thesis would not be possible if it were not for their love and support —this thesis is as much theirs as it is mine.

Introduction

In the introduction to his work *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida*, Matthew Calarco reflects on the phrase ‘the question of the animal’. Calarco directs us to the ethical dimension of the phrase ‘the question of the animal,’ introducing some of the key questions I will be addressing in this thesis. The question of the animal, Calarco insists, is “a question deriving from an animal who faces me, an interruption deriving from a singular ‘animal,’ an animal whom I face and by whom I am faced and who calls my mode of existence into question”¹. The question of the animal is not simply a question of the ways in which animals may obligate us, this is clearly a motivating force. The question is also a reference to the way in which philosophers have hitherto spoken of animals in reductionist and essentialist terms, seeking to determine what constitutes animality or ‘the animal,’ understood in the general plural², denying animals their disparate modes of being, communication and relations³. Calarco suggests that by grouping individual animals into recognisable and repeatable categories, we neutralise their singularity and domesticate their strangeness⁴. The point regarding reductionist claims cannot be overstated: since Descartes, the rise of the subject as the source of certainty and knowledge has also seen the external natural world reduced to and explained through mechanistic processes that have unified animal life in such a way as to delimit the expressiveness of their being. Beyond an epistemological framework that finds certainty and knowledge deriving from the human subject, we also encounter an ontology that divides the human and the animal into separate modes of being. This is demonstrated most sharply in the work of Immanuel Kant, who, in his ontology, makes the separation between those beings who have the capacity for reason on the one side, and those beings who do not have the capacity for reason on the other —effectively making a demarcation between rational and non-rational beings. At an initial glance, the idea of an ontological separation between the human and the animal along the lines of the presence or

¹ Calarco 2008, p.5

² In recognising how problematic grouping individual animals is with regard to neutralising their singularity and uniqueness, as I wish to establish a moral theory that incorporates all types of animals, for purposes of economy and ease, I will nevertheless refer to animals in the general plural term, ‘the animal’.

³ Calarco 2008, p.4

⁴ Calarco 2015, p.31

absence of reason does not reveal the underlying complexities that drive this separation. The separation between the human and the animal operates through an apparatus that Giorgio Agamben refers to as the ‘anthropological machine,’ and it is through this anthropological machine that the notions of the human and the animal are produced. According to Agamben, the anthropological machine functions by animalising the human, isolating this animal nature from the human for exclusion⁵. In terms of how the anthropological machine operates in Kant, this means that the non-rational aspect of the human is isolated and excluded to a separate ontological zone. This separation between humans and animals, however, is not simply confined to his ontology: Kant’s moral theory, which is fundamentally grounded in his ontology, also makes a separation between the human and the animal —here both the ontological and the moral separations strengthen each other. The issue of ontological dualism arises for me not out of ontological or metaphysical concerns, but because ontological dualism underpins a series of key moral intuitions I think need to be challenged. Dualistic ontology needs to be challenged because it opens the way for a dualistic exclusion between the morally worthy and the morally insignificant. It is my contention that the type of dualism propounded by Kant, one that separates the human and the animal on the grounds of the presence or absence of reason, needs to be normatively challenge because it fails to consider a more holistic account of intentionality that includes and identifies the body as a locus of intentionality. As a result of his moral theory being grounded in a dualistic ontology, Kant excludes the animal from moral consideration. It is for these reasons, I will argue, that a critique of Kant’s moral theory is necessary.

There is a particularly important reason why I critically focus on Kant in this way. Namely, Kant’s moral theory appears to provide a philosophical foundation for our common intuitions regarding the treatment of animals. These intuitions suggest that while we must refrain from torturing animals, it is still permissible to kill them for food and other commodities. Kant explicitly endorses this paradoxical attitude toward animals, and in doing so, Kant makes it abundantly clear that a so called humane treatment of animals is in fact reflective of our own moral standing and not of the animal’s substantive moral being. In order to find some resolution in this paradoxical conflict between the animal and its place within the moral realm, we will turn

⁵ Agamben 2004, p.37

to eminent Kant scholar, Christine Korsgaard, in the hope to clarify moral boundaries. Despite Korsgaard's attempts to clarify these boundaries and include animals within the moral framework, we find that Korsgaard is unable to shake the anthropocentric foundations that plague Kant's moral theory. In light of our analysis of Kant and Korsgaard, I will argue that in order for the animal to be included within a moral framework that considers the animal a moral subject, we not only need to jam the anthropological machine that produces the separation between the human and the animal, we need to provide an alternative ontological model to serve as the foundation for a new moral theory. It is here that I will turn to the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

Merleau-Ponty's work on the animal marks a radical break in the way animals had been written about in the history of philosophy. This break comes via contrasting the human and the animal with the machine. Where previous work on the animal in the history of philosophy had seen the animal as machine, as we see in Descartes, thus marking an ontological separation between the human and the animal, Merleau-Ponty contrasts the human and the animal with the machine because unlike machines, humans and animals have bodies and live, whereas machines merely function. The key to Merleau-Ponty's break with traditional ways of describing an animal ontology is his introduction of the body as a locus of experience and intention, demonstrating the significance of the body in engaged activity. For Merleau-Ponty, the animal's bodily intentionality brings the possibility of meaning, and it is this possibility of meaning that leads Merleau-Ponty to argue that animals are, like humans, world-forming. Merleau-Ponty not only continues to use Heideggerian terminology with reference to the animal and their being-in-the-world, Merleau-Ponty also draws on the work of Jakob von Uexküll and his notion of the *umwelt*. The significance of the expressiveness of animal life demonstrates a meaningful proximity to human being-in-the-world. As I will argue, this proximity is significant for two reasons: on the one hand, the possibilities of behaviour that are present in the conditions of an animal's *umwelt* point to the beginning of a culture; and on the other, the connection Merleau-Ponty draws between animals and humans culminates in what Merleau-Ponty refers to as an *Ineinander*, that is, an intertwining of animality and humanity. While Merleau-Ponty provides details of an animal ontology, my thesis is primarily concerned with the normative question of the animal, of which

Merleau-Ponty's ontology serves as a means to this end. The remaining task, then, is to move from an animal ontology to the foundations of a moral theory. The task of moving from the descriptive to the normative is taken up by an analysis of the work of Hans Jonas.

Jonas' work is significant for our purposes for a number of reasons. Firstly, Jonas offers an existential interpretation of biological facts in his *Phenomenon of Life* that is in philosophical proximity to the work of Merleau-Ponty. Secondly, in *The Imperative of Responsibility*, Jonas argues for an ontological grounding of our ethical obligations to nature. Jonas' progression from an existential interpretation of biological facts to an ontological grounding for our ethical obligations to nature is fuelled by what he takes to be an ethical vacuum formed by the erosion of norms. The erosion of norms has come through the neutralisation of value, beginning first with nature, then with humanity. As we will see, Jonas' claim regarding the neutralisation of value and the erosion of norms drives his claim that through this process, the notion of 'the good' is losing the foundation from which it derives its standard. The problem for Jonas is that when values are not ontologically supported, value is posited as a fact of valuation; in other words, value lacks objective grounding. Jonas contends that the conception that obligation is a human invention is misguided; while the capacity for the idea of obligation may appear in the human alone, it does not necessarily follow that the conception of obligation must therefore be an invention and not a discovery. Instead, Jonas insists that by virtue of the fact that nature and non-human natural beings have a stake in the discovery of obligation, this stake is grounds for obligation that covers more than just the human. Here Jonas' claim that value ought to be ontologically supported comes into its own. If value is objectively grounded in the reality of organic beings, then Jonas' argument regarding obligation as a discovery that nature has some stake in becomes significant to the question of ethics and our attitudes towards nature. The argument that the 'good' is objectively grounded in organic living being not only supports the notion that value becomes part of ontology, Jonas' argument also provides morality with an objective grounding. The key element for us here is Jonas' argument that the obligating force lies in the fact that being is not indifferent toward itself, that being's very striving in its existence marks the basic value of all values, the first 'yes'. The first claim we can make regarding Jonas' argument of the obligating force is a general claim about the grounding of all morality, the second is the grounding of the

animal's moral standing. This brings us to our *Ineinander* with animals. As our *Ineinander* constitutes a site of knowing, a knowing of the value of beings as living beings, that opens us to the possibility of making the ends of other beings our own, this intertwining between human and animal offers specific insight into not only our shared moral standing with animals based on a shared ontological status, but also our capacity to take in the moral standing of animals. This signals the importance of Merleau-Ponty's alternative ontology: the 'goodness' of animals is revealed through our intertwining with their own organic being. What we learn from Jonas' ethics of responsibility is that the animal addresses an ought to the world, and that this ought translates into a moral obligation on our part to affirm or at least not to oppose their striving to exist. In finding an alternative ontological model, I will not only show the expressiveness of animal life and the ontological intertwining we have with them, I will also aim to demonstrate that this model can adequately serve as the ontological grounding for an ethical theory that takes seriously the challenge the animal makes, and that we have a moral responsibility to affirm their existence.

Chapter One

In the third chapter of his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, titled “Passage from a Metaphysic of Morals to a Critique of Pure Practical Reason,” Immanuel Kant begins by providing a treatment of the notion of freedom as the key concept to explain autonomy of the will. In these initial stages of Kant’s argument, freedom is constructed as a property of the will, characterised as a causality belonging to rational beings. What we learn in this initial stage is that the notions of freedom and autonomy are analytically linked to the presence of a rational being. This presence of a rational being, since it is central to the notions of freedom and autonomy, is also the central concern for Kant’s moral theory. The question of who is worthy of moral consideration is fundamentally connected to this presence of a rational agent. This fundamental connection between moral worth and the presence of a rational agent points towards the exclusion of non-rational animals from the consideration of moral worth.

The way in which Kant has set up this framework is by defining freedom as a causal property of the will, a property in turn that belongs to rational beings. The crucial importance of this move to define freedom as a causal property of the will belonging to rational agents is that we can directly see how his moral theory relies on the juxtaposition between freedom and natural necessity. Kant argues that freedom is not determined by alien causes; if freedom is the final cause of reason, it must therefore be brought about from within —freedom is self-determining⁶. By contrast, natural necessity is, Kant suggests, the property by which the causality of all non-rational beings can be characterised; that is, natural necessity is the “property of being determined to activity by the influence of alien causes”⁷. Natural necessity is the condition affecting non-rational beings, which situates them as being governed by determinable laws⁸. The juxtaposition of free versus natural necessity thus sets up a negative dimension that is crucial in Kant’s overall framework: both the will and natural necessity are elements of a chain of cause and effect, but what sets them apart is the presence of rational agency on the one hand and the absence of

⁶ Kant 1964, p.114

⁷ Kant 1964, p.114

⁸ Kant 1964, p.114

rational agency on the other. This juxtaposition of a positive, free necessity and a negative natural necessity applies even to the human being as a being who possesses the capacity for reason but also has a non-rational nature.

Kant's distinction between human and non-human being is thus unmistakable: the human being is characterised by the constitutive power of reason, which is the foundation of our freedom in the world; while the non-human being is characteristically determined by forces alien to them—non-human beings lack autonomy and freedom as their behaviour is considered entirely mechanistic. The distinction between human and non-human, rational and non-rational, is fundamental to Kant's theory of morality. This juxtaposition between freedom and natural necessity is also characterised as the distinction between two types of ontological zones, or two types of "natures", the *supersensible* and the *sensible*. Falling under the umbrella of the *sensible* is phenomenal being: here both rational and non-rational beings fall under this category. However, the *supersensible* is purely connected with the presence of rational beings. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, published between the *Groundwork* and the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant remarks that "nature in the most general sense is the existence of things under laws"⁹. The laws Kant is referring to here with regard to nature are empirically conditioned laws, that is, laws that are not formulated by reason but are instead laws that we experience as being effected by; as we have just mentioned above, all phenomenal being, human and non-human phenomenal being alike, exist under such empirically conditioned laws. This is existence characterised within the *sensible* realm. Kant's aim, he writes, is to provide the *sensible* world with a law of a different kind, a law formulated by reason, without infringing upon the empirical mechanisms that govern the *sensible* world¹⁰. The existence of laws that depend on cognition such as those laws formulated by reason are of a *supersensible* nature. Kant writes that the *supersensible* nature of rational beings "is their existence in accordance with laws that are independent of any empirical condition and thus belong to the *autonomy* of pure reason"¹¹. Kant emphasises this claim by adding as such laws that are of a *supersensible* nature are also practical, laws formulated by

⁹ Kant 2015 (1997), p.38

¹⁰ Kant 2015 (1997), p.38

¹¹ Kant 2015 (1997), p.38

reason are “nothing other than *a nature under the autonomy of pure practical reason*”¹². The sensible nature of rational beings, that is, existence under empirically conditioned laws, is thus heteronomy for reason¹³. This description is quite striking: Kant’s concern here is moral grounding, the foundation of which lies in reason. The law of the autonomy of pure reason is the moral law and thus the fundamental law of *supersensible* nature. What is revealed here in Kant’s distinction of the *sensible* and the *supersensible* are two separate zones or two separate modes of being that are conditioned by the laws that govern each zone. This highlights Kant’s dualistic ontology, which is fundamental to his moral theory.

Behind the connection between having a body and *sensible* being, and the capacity for reason and *supersensible* being, there is operating an exclusion of what is not rational; this exclusion of what is not rational is not just ontological but also an exclusion from moral consideration. The excluded zone of *sensible* being is where animals exist. In establishing an autonomous zone of being that is governed by moral laws formulated from within, that is, by pure reason, Kant thus establishes a zone by which “the outside is nothing but the exclusion of an inside”, as Giorgio Agamben argues.¹⁴ To see what Agamben means by this, it is useful to return to Kant’s further characterisation of the two separate ontological/normative zones. The *supersensible* zone, which can only be cognised through reason, is called by Kant the *archetypal world* (*natura archetypa*), while the *sensible* zone whose beings are governed by empirically conditioned laws, is called the *ectypal world* (*natura ectypa*) as this world “contains the possible effect of the idea of the former as the determining ground of the will”¹⁵. Such a dynamic between the *archetypal* world and the *ectypal* world is significant. Kant’s thesis suggests the *ectypal* world contains the possible effects of the ideas of the *archetypal* world, that the ideas created in pure reason find their effect in the sensible world. A critical element of the ideas of the *archetypal* world are the moral laws, that, in finding their possible effect in the *ectypal* world, condition how the bodies of rational beings act. Kant is able to show how moral laws can intervene in the *sensible* world precisely because rational agents, human beings, reside not simply in the *sensible*

¹² Kant 2015 (1997), p.38

¹³ Kant 2015 (1997), p.38

¹⁴ Agamben 2004, p.37

¹⁵ Kant 2015 (1997), p.38

world, but also have a *supersensible* nature. In a sense, Kant is providing the *sensible* world with the moral law *as if* it were a universal law of nature. Kant situates the human being as both creator and recipient of the moral laws, and so implicitly situates the animal within a zone outside the realm of moral consideration. The separation of the human from the animal—or vice versa—as well as the demarcation into separate zones of the moral realm operates in what Giorgio Agamben refers to as the ‘anthropological machine’. Using language befitting this machine metaphor, we could suggest that it is the ‘anthropological machine’ that produces the human and the animal; the former a positive production, the latter a negative, based on the presence or absence of rational powers. This machine that operates both within philosophy and the sciences is, Agamben suggests, “an ironic apparatus that verifies the absence of a nature proper to *Homo*, holding him suspended between a celestial and a terrestrial nature, between animal and human—and, thus, his being always less and more than himself.”¹⁶ In verifying the absence of what is proper to *Homo*, the anthropological machine functions by animalising the human, isolating this animal nature from the human for exclusion¹⁷. If we apply this same logic of the anthropological machine to Kant, this means isolating the non-rational aspect of human being and excluding it to a separate zone, demarcating a zone, the *sensible* world, where non-rational beings exist, but in such a way that this animal side of humanity is still potentially related to the zone it is excluded from. Traditionally the non-rational examples of human being were slaves, women, and children, but also animals, since it is precisely animality that was the ground for exclusion into that zone. In the *supersensible* realm by contrast, only rational beings exist, those who are fully human. While the production of the animal is of little concern for either Kant or Agamben, nevertheless, Agamben’s notion of the anthropological machine provides a useful model to think how the animal is excluded in a way that retains its proximity to what it is excluded from—an apparatus that will continue to illuminate the ways in which the animal is, for our purposes here, excluded from moral consideration in a direct sense and yet somehow included in an indirect sense as an object of moral consideration. But the question here of moral consideration regarding the animal is left paradoxically ambiguous. The *sensible* world is populated with both rational and non-rational beings, and furnished with both natural and moral laws; the *sensible* world is not just

¹⁶ Agamben 2004, p.29

¹⁷ Agamben 2004, p.37

separate from the *supersensible* world, it is in fact essentially connected through the presence of rational agency. But in what sense do moral laws apply to non-rational beings in the way the moral laws govern rational beings? If Kant considers non-human beings as mechanistically determined by the laws of nature but the *ectypal* world is supposed to show the effects of the *archetypal* one, how will universal moral laws concern non-human beings?

In a section titled 'On an Amphiboly in Moral Concepts of Reflection, Taking What Is a Human Being's Duty to Himself for a Duty to Other Beings' of *The Metaphysics of Morals*, we see Kant begin to include animals into the discussion of which beings have moral significance. Kant's inclusion of the animal into the discussion of moral significance is a particularly late inclusion in his overall corpus of moral philosophy, as no discussion of this kind appears in any of his earlier texts. Regardless of this late inclusion, Kant's treatment of animals is limited in its scope, amounting to only a few paragraphs, and as we shall see, the manner and tone in which Kant discusses the prospect of moral obligation towards animals is indicative of his general outlook on the value of animals. The term 'amphiboly of reason,' which Kant initially refers to in the section title, is crucial for understanding this very outlook on the value of animals. An amphiboly of reason is the mistake of confusing duties *with regard to* objects or things for duties *to* subjects or persons. This confusion is not only possible with regard to animals but also other natural objects or aspects of nature¹⁸. As we have already established, Kant makes a distinct ontological separation between the human and the animal as we see in both the *Groundwork* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*, but it is in his clarification of the amphiboly of reason that Kant explicates in *The Metaphysics of Morals* that we see how this ontological separation unfolds within the moral realm. In the opening paragraph of the section just mentioned, Kant writes that "from all our experience we know of no being other than a human being that would be capable of obligation," adding "a human being can therefore have no duty to any beings other than human beings"¹⁹. From this passage by Kant we see that he regards humans as objects of moral obligation in a direct sense, however, the question of whether animals are also regarded as moral

¹⁸ Kant 2006, p.192; 6:442

¹⁹ Kant 2006, p.192

objects is not answered until later in *The Metaphysics of Morals* where he argues that animals are worthy of moral consideration only indirectly, that any obligation to animals matters only to the extent that it reflects on our own humanity²⁰.

In a passage from *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant's attention is drawn to the pedagogical implications of the distinction and difference between direct and indirect duties. Kant writes:

“a propensity to wanton destruction of what is *beautiful* in inanimate nature (*spiritus destructionis*) is opposed to a human being's duty to himself; for it weakens or uproots that feeling in him which, though not itself moral, is still a disposition of sensibility that greatly promotes morality or at least prepares the way for it: the disposition, namely, to love something (e.g., beautiful crystal formations, the indescribable beauty of plants) even apart from any intention to use it”²¹.

It is clear from this passage that Kant is in no way intending to argue that the beauty of nature carries moral significance in any direct sense. Instead, the pedagogical implications of Kant's reflections on nature express the duty humans have to themselves. It is not nature itself that holds moral value, but nature *with regard to* its beauty insofar as appreciation or love of nature's beauty is a “disposition of sensibility that greatly promotes morality.” This passage is not simply an illustration of our duty toward ourselves, it is equally about correcting an amphiboly of reason. For our concerns here, the importance of this distinction between direct and indirect duties cannot be overstated: we have direct duties to other humans, but only indirect duties with regards to non-humans. Through this distinction between direct and indirect duties, Kant identifies both a subject of morality, that is, who can formulate moral laws, and objects of morality, those who are worthy of moral consideration. While animals are not subjects of morality, as they do not formulate moral laws, they are objects of morality —albeit indirectly. In accounting for animals as indirect objects of morality, there still seems to indicate some tension in being able to properly ground non-rational beings within the moral realm: they are neither objects of morality, nor are they entirely excluded from the designation of being an object of morality.

Beyond the purely rational aspect of his moral theory, Kant also argues for the promotion of morality through both an emotional and aesthetic grounding. We can see aspects of this

²⁰ Kant 2006, p.193; 6:443

²¹ Kant 2006, p.192; 6:443

emotional and aesthetic grounding being employed with regard to animals, as Kant insists that “violent and cruel treatment of animals is far more intimately opposed to human being's duty to himself, and he has a duty to refrain from this; for it dulls his shared feeling of their suffering”²². Kant’s mention of our shared feeling of suffering appears to be making some connection between animals and our phenomenal selves (*homo phenomenon*). This connection also grounds our indirect duty with regards to animals. Kant argues that our shared sense of feeling we have with animals is “serviceable to morality in one's relations with other men,”²³ leading to the notion that indirect duties only exist in relation to us. In harming animals we not only cause injury to the animal itself, more importantly, we cause injury to ourselves. Under the logic of indirect duties, it is only because harm to animals injures us that we should not harm animals. While it appears as though Kant is atoning for his strict rationalistic foundation of morality through this emotional and aesthetic grounding, what this grounding reveals is a moral paradox with regard to the animal. On a strict rational account of morality, animals are excluded from the realm of moral consideration, yet through an emotional and aesthetic grounding, animals are brought in through the back door as a tool to demonstrate how our behaviour towards non-human beings is directly related to a human being’s duty to humanity.

This indirect way of salvaging some moral value for animals is of particular significance because it appears to capture our common intuitions regarding animals. What our common intuitions regarding animals conveys is that while it is morally acceptable to kill or slaughter an animal for food and other commodities such as clothing, it is morally reprehensible to torture animals. Animals on this intuition have no direct right, we seem to have no direct duty towards them as such, their existence is only instrumentally significant for us; and yet we recognise that they are also more than just inanimate things. Hence the paradoxical conclusion: you can kill them but you can’t hurt them. Kant in fact endorses this paradoxical attitude explicitly:

“[t]he human being is authorized to kill animals quickly (without pain) and to put them to work that does not strain them beyond their capacities (such work he himself must submit to). But agonizing physical experiments for the sake of mere speculation, when the end could also be achieved without these, are to

²² Kant 2006, p.192; 6:443

²³ Kant 2006, p.192-3; 6:443

abhorred. — Even gratitude for the long service of an old horse or dog (just as if they were members of the household) belongs *indirectly* to a human being's duty *with regard to* these animals; considered as a *direct* duty, however, it is always only a duty of the human being *to himself*²⁴.

Our common intuitions find, as we can see, not only an echo in Kant's work but a direct philosophical grounding. The question of direct and indirect duties unfolds again as a question of inclusion and exclusion. Paradoxically, animals exist within a zone of indeterminacy insofar as animals co-exist with human beings within the sensible world on the one hand, having a shared sense of suffering; while on the other, animals are quite distinct from human beings, lacking a supersensible nature, or the capacity for reason. Animals are therefore both within and out of scope of our moral compass. This paradox is played out most vividly in animal testing where the rationale appears to be that animals are close enough to us that they offer an alternative to human testing; yet these animals are distinct enough from us that they can be utilised in testing in order to save human lives from any potential negative effects such testing may elicit. The killing of animals, then, ought to be quick and painless, and their work not strain them beyond their capacities. Crucially however, as Kant argues, such treatment is not a reflection of their substantive moral being, it is instead a reflection of our own humanity insofar as such treatment is serviceable to morality in the relation we have to ourselves and potentially our relations with other human beings.

This point regarding the emotional and aesthetic grounding of morality is made again by Kant in his Third Critique, *The Critique of Judgement*. In it, Kant remarks about our mind being disposed to moral feeling, suggesting “if, amid beautiful natural surroundings, he is in calm and serene enjoyment of his existence, he feels within him a need —a need of being grateful for it to some one”²⁵. Again, we see that this disposition toward moral feeling is not a reflection of the substantive moral being of nature, but that this disposition is directed toward humanity. Kant's reiteration of the emotional and aesthetic grounding of morality in his Third Critique not only reinforces how problematic the concept of nature is to its inclusion within the moral realm, but also appears to serve as the foundation for the paradoxical connection between animals and the moral realm. Despite this paradoxical connection between the animal and the moral realm, these

²⁴ Kant 2006, p.193; 6:443

²⁵ Kant 1978 (1928), p. 112; 445.

two elements, our common intuitions and shared feeling with animals, are perhaps more sociologically pregnant than other moral theories that consider whether animals suffer, such as the moral theory of utilitarianism, precisely because our practices reflect the philosophical grounding we have mentioned. What can be identified as the principle issue regarding Kant's moral theory is that under a purely rational foundation of morality, the animal is excluded from moral consideration. The concept of reason holds a significant place in Kant's work: while the moral cultivation is possible through an emotional and aesthetic grounding as we have argued, reason constitutes not simply our separation with non-human beings, reason marks our overcoming of nature. In order to elucidate this further, we will now turn to Kant's writings on history.

In his essay *Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History*, Kant offers an account by which humans emerge out of nature and finally overcome it, taking as his point of departure the biblical stories of Genesis, Chapters II-VI. In this essay, Kant argues that reason raises humankind above all other animals, concluding that the human being is the true end of nature. In what he regards as the fourth and last step, Kant remarks that “when he [Adam] first said to the sheep '*the fleece which you wear was given to you by nature not for your own use, but for mine*' and took it from the sheep to wear himself, he became aware of a prerogative which, by his nature, he enjoyed over all animals”²⁶. The prerogative that humans enjoy over all other animals, as Kant follows, establishes animals as “means and instruments to be used at will for the attainment of whatever ends” so desired by humanity²⁷. Reason is not only the catalyst for our own emergence that separates us from animals, it becomes clear from Kant's onto-theological framework that reason is also the grounds for our mastery and dominion over nature, which sees our use of animals for our own ends —animals do not exist for themselves, they are not the end of creation. Humans by contrast are such ends, and therefore, through the expediency of speech and reason, their morally justified domination over the animal is assured. Animals are essentially commodified as goods.

²⁶ Kant 1970, p.225

²⁷ Kant1970, p.225

The question of value and commodification in Kant's writing on animals are linked in an interesting way. In his *Conjectures* essay, as a result of our mastery over nature, Kant establishes the economic value of animals, where they are commodified as goods for human consumption; whereas in the *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant establishes a different type of value, that is, moral value, where the focus is on demonstrating our own duty to humanity and how this is done through the animal and our indirect duties we have with regard to them. At this point it would be permissible to ask: if the basis for being a moral object worthy of direct moral consideration is to also be regarded as a moral subject, one who sets the moral grammar, then why should it necessarily follow for non-rational beings, who lack the capacity to frame the moral grammar, to fall outside the realm of moral consideration? The question of animals failing to be regarded as ends-in-themselves as we saw so clearly expressed in Kant's *Conjectures* essay is also of concern, as the problem of who or what is considered a moral object arises again. In this regard, we could ask: why is the fleece which the sheep 'wears' as is given by nature not for its own use? Of *The Metaphysics of Morals* we could ask similar questions regarding the connection between our actions towards animals and the duty to ourselves: Why is the cruel treatment of animals 'far more intimately opposed to human being's duty to himself' than to the animal forced to suffer cruel treatment? The notion of having duties to animals as a misunderstanding of the moral grammar, leading to mistaking duties *with regard to* animals for duties *to* them²⁸, is of course a question of moral value. Operating within the parameters of Kant's work, eminent Kant scholar Christine Korsgaard takes up the notion of value and morality in an attempt to solve the problem we have identified in Kant as to who is worthy of moral consideration. Korsgaard's solution as we shall see is to broaden the scope of moral value and offer a pluralistic approach to the problem.

In her article 'Fellow Creatures: Kantian Ethics and Our Duties to Animals', Korsgaard attempts to question these moral boundaries as she picks up the discussion of value, explaining that the concept of value as seen in Kant is a purely human creation. Korsgaard notes that "the very act of treating our own ends as good and worthy of pursuit, in spite of their lack of inherent

²⁸ Kant 2006, p.192; 6:442

value, we in effect *confer* the status of end-in-itself on ourselves”²⁹, a point that is made explicitly clear in Kant’s rendering of the story of Adam and his taking of the sheep’s fleece. Obligation, then, does not arise from value —here humans and non-human animals are on level ground — instead, as Korsgaard reminds us, “obligation and value arise together from acts of legislative will”³⁰. Given Kant’s own views on animals, as we have already addressed, the move that Korsgaard makes in ‘Fellow Creatures’ to establish universal laws for the treatment of animals appears to be built on unstable foundations. However, Korsgaard notes that Kant, by suggesting that morality is the condition by which rational beings become ends-in-themselves, conflates two slightly different concepts of end-in-itself³¹. Korsgaard argues that “in one sense, an end-in-itself is the source of legitimate normative claims —claims that must be recognised by all rational agents,” though in the second sense, Korsgaard continues, “an end-in-itself is someone who can *give* the force of law to his claims, by participation in moral legislation”³². Korsgaard manages to clearly identify here the problematic distinction between moral subject and moral object we have been working through above. Interestingly, Korsgaard draws on the two senses of end-in-itself she has distinguished to demonstrate how universal laws conceptually apply to the treatment of animals. In so doing, Korsgaard reflects on Kant’s Formula of Humanity in order to demonstrate the ways in which animals obligate us. Kant’s Formula of Humanity states that we ought not act in any way that we treat humanity, whether in our own person or in another, as a mere means but always as an end in itself. By her own admission, Korsgaard suggests that the Formula of Humanity may lead to a dead end because it is the “very formula that translates the moral law into a law about how we are to treat human beings”³³. Despite this, Korsgaard still insists that the Formula of Humanity is worthy of reflection in showing us how and why animals may obligate us by drawing a connection between the natural incentives or goods both humans and non-humans experience. In order to demonstrate why Korsgaard insists on the Formula of Humanity as a way to think through the ways animals obligate us, we will continue with our analysis of Korsgaard’s conception of value and how it emerges in Kant’s moral system.

²⁹ Korsgaard 2005, p.20

³⁰ Korsgaard 2005, p.20

³¹ Korsgaard 2005, p.21

³² Korsgaard 2005, p.21

³³ Korsgaard 2005, p.25-26

In drawing a connection between the natural incentives or goods both humans and non-humans experience, Korsgaard suggests that ‘good’ can be described as a form of biological functionalism, namely that what is a natural good for the human and non-human animal alike “is whatever enables it to function at all and to function well”³⁴. As animals have desires, becomings and affectations, these experiences form the basis of the animal’s incentives, “making its own good the end of its actions”³⁵. In essence, the animal is a being that matters to itself as the animal pursues its own good for its own sake³⁶. As the connection is made between humans and non-human animals and the shared experience of having one’s individual incentives directed toward its respective natural good, Korsgaard notes that it is from our natural good “that we *confer* normative value when we value ourselves as ends-in-ourselves”³⁷. It is not only our autonomous selves we confer value to and take to be an end-in-itself. This is where Korsgaard’s value pluralism finds its foundation: it is also our animal selves that we confer normative value to and it is this interest we have in continuing the existence of that animal self that makes us, and other animals as well, an end-in-itself³⁸. Here we come back to the two senses of end-in-itself Korsgaard suggests Kant conflates. The human as an autonomous agent is someone who can give the force of law to their claims through participation in moral legislation, thus conferring value as an end-in-itself; while what we find in the second sense of end-in-itself is that the animal, in sharing with the human a phenomenal self, is a legitimate claimant of normativity³⁹. The connection between the animal and our phenomenal self is one we drew earlier in our analysis of Kant’s emotional and aesthetic grounding of morality, but Korsgaard takes this connection a step further by arguing that in taking our own animal being as an end-in-itself, we also consider all animal being as ends-in-themselves. Thus, for Korsgaard, the animal is a source of a normative claim. Though given the central role reason plays in Kant’s moral theory, the conclusion Korsgaard makes as we have just noted appears problematic. Kant refers to the moral value of

³⁴ Korsgaard 2005, p.29

³⁵ Korsgaard 2005 p.30

³⁶ Korsgaard 2005, p.30

³⁷ Korsgaard 2005, p.31

³⁸ Korsgaard 2005, p.31

³⁹ Korsgaard 2005, p.21

our animal being purely in the negative sense: while the “duty of a human being to himself as an animal being is *to preserve himself* in his animal nature” is indeed a duty, it is not the principal duty⁴⁰. The core element of the duty to preserve one’s animal being for Kant is not to deprive oneself of the capacity for the natural use of one’s powers, that is to say, the natural use of one’s reason⁴¹. Kant emphasises the role reason plays in preserving our animal being, yet Korsgaard does not adequately address this issue: the role of reason in preserving our animal being is either overlooked by Korsgaard, or is somehow implied as being part of our natural incentive, leaving the matter unresolved. Leaving the matter unresolved compounds the problem: if the preservation of animal being is for the continued use of reason, and animals do not have the capacity for reason, certainly not in the same way humans do, then we are still presented with the problem of animals being excluded from the moral framework because of the absence of reason. By not adequately addressing the central role reason plays in Kant’s moral philosophy as we have just addressed, particularly its relation to the notion of our animal being as an end-in-itself as we stated above, Korsgaard is unable to draw the connection between our animal being as an end-in-itself and other animal beings as ends-in-themselves. If our animal being is only of instrumental value to the use of reason, as it appears to be in Kant, then the connection Korsgaard makes between animals and our animal selves as the platform of her pluralism lacks positive foundation in Kant. Animals as objects of morality are thus objects in the negative sense. Despite Korsgaard’s attempt to correct Kant’s ontological dualism, Korsgaard’s pluralism posits animals as, at best, moral objects. Korsgaard shows how animals can be considered in the moral framework of a Kantian system, but the same problem remains: at the foundation of the metaphysical framework that grounds the moral theory and attempts to include animals within the fabric of moral consideration lies a radical anthropocentrism, the separation between beings along the line of reason. Korsgaard’s inability to adequately account for the central role of reason in her attempt to draw a connection between our animal being and other animal beings jeopardises the promotion of animals to the status of moral objects in a positive sense. As such, we find that Korsgaard’s pluralism fundamentally rests on the same ontological boundaries that inform Kant’s metaphysical dualism and it is this dualism, I will argue, that needs to be challenged. While

⁴⁰ Kant 2006, p.176; 6:421

⁴¹ Kant 2006, p.176; 6:421

Korsgaard offers some insight into the potential of drawing animals within the fold of moral consideration, the anthropocentric foundation Korsgaard draws from only arranges her theory within the assembly of a larger machine that still excludes the animal and remains unsatisfactory to the task of counting animals as worthy of moral consideration in a positive sense. Korsgaard's attempt to introduce animals within a Kantian moral framework is done by attempting to posit the very existence of the animal as the grounding of such a normative claim, yet this is done without adequately confronting the grounds of Kantian morality, namely, without confronting the centrality of reason, thus the problem of exclusion remains. For animals to be counted as worthy of moral consideration in a positive sense, their very existence ought to be the grounding of such a normative claim without qualification to the presence of reason. In other words, the animal's being ought to be the grounds for the normative claim of moral consideration.

The importance of recognising the grounding of the Formula of Humanity as problematic for any proceeding articulation of the way in which animals may obligate us can be expressed in a basic understanding of Kantian humanism: "it is the human subject who carries Being [existence]"⁴². In writing on the humanist conception of nature, Merleau-Ponty remarks that "from the moment that we make Being rest on man, we can no longer start with the notion of Being"⁴³. Merleau-Ponty's remarks not only come as a reflection on the anthropological meaning of the humanist conception of nature, it is at the same time a critique of the anthropological machine that marks the separation between human and animal. Merleau-Ponty's words also come as a kind of warning. As the human being under Kant has the power to construct, and the only reference for this construction is human phenomena, "human representation becomes synonymous with Being"⁴⁴. Merleau-Ponty remarks on this problem in *Phenomenology of Perception* noting that the reflective action at the basis of the subjective consciousness that "embraces and constitutes the world" had caused Kant to overlook "the phenomenon of the body and the phenomenon of the thing"⁴⁵. Merleau-Ponty's claim is that it is our bodily intentionality that brings the possibility of meaning, that "our embodiment brings to our perceptual experience

⁴² Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.21

⁴³ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.21

⁴⁴ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.22

⁴⁵ Merleau-Ponty 2014, (1945) p.317

an *a priori* structure whereby it presents itself to us in consciousness as experience of a world of things in space and time whose nature is independent of us”⁴⁶. What Merleau-Ponty is positing here is subjectivity in embodiment, which then opens the possibility for a sharing of experience between embodied beings, beyond species boundaries. While it has been noted that Merleau-Ponty's philosophical project has been to integrate 'the phenomenon of the body' into a Kantian philosophy⁴⁷, such an integration of the phenomenon of the body into a Kantian philosophy adds, as one might expect, a new metaphysical dimension that provides a different perspective to the moral implications —duty and obligation— of the metaphysics of value. This is precisely the point: the deconstruction of dualism has been a core component of Merleau-Ponty's work, followed by the construction of a monistic ontology. If the anthropological machine is to be sabotaged, and the animal is to be considered as a moral subject, an alternative ontological model is needed, and it is in Merleau-Ponty's ontology of the body that we find such an alternative model.

⁴⁶ Baldwin 2004, p.10

⁴⁷ Baldwin 2004, p.10

Chapter 2

The anthropological machine that appears to be operating in the background of Kant's metaphysics, driving the separation between the human and the animal, seems to emerge as a transitional phase between what Agamben describes as the "ancient" and "modern versions" of the "machine". The ancient machine produces the human by means of an exclusion of an outside; the non-human, as Agamben suggests, is produced by the humanisation of the animal: the slave and the barbarian are produced as figures of an animal in human form⁴⁸. The modern machine by contrast excludes an interior, the not-yet-human from the human; by animalising the human in an effort to isolate and exclude it⁴⁹. Kant's isolation and exclusion of the animal still echoes the sound of the ancient machine whereby the "divine providence of man is guaranteed only by his metaphysical separation from animals"⁵⁰. Indeed, in keeping with the ancient machine, Kant makes a metaphysical separation between the human and the animal; though, perhaps in anticipation of the modern machine, Kant's separation of the human and the animal, produces not simply the human, but also producing the animal (or animality) through the exclusion of the non-rational in the human. While it seems as though Kant's exclusion anticipates the modern machine in this sense, by producing the animal through an exclusion of an inside, Kant's separation of the human and the animal does not point to the biological continuity of the modern machine that reduces human life to animal life (bare life), thus rendering human life open to disposal⁵¹. We can imagine the kind of disposal Agamben has in mind through the very metaphor of the machine. Although animal exploitation is already made possible by the ancient machine, since the industrial innovations in agriculture that began in the late 19th Century, paralleling the developments of mass production of the Industrial Revolution, animals have been subjected to more automated and mechanised processes as part of a complex of intensive factory farming⁵². As we noted in the previous chapter, Agamben is not concerned with the production of the animal as a result of the work done by the anthropological machine; though what Agamben can see is

⁴⁸ Agamben 2004, p.37

⁴⁹ Agamben 2004, p.37

⁵⁰ Oliver 2009, p.240

⁵¹ Oliver 2009, p.240

⁵² Oliver 2009, p. 237

that the conceptual production of the human through the machine metaphor has the potential to render human life as animal life, thus subjecting human life to the same automated processes. In fact, we find in Agamben some correlation, at least conceptually, between the automated processes of factory farming and the concentration camp. While this is a particularly daring parallel to make, Agamben is in no way denying those who died in concentration camps moral value. On the contrary: what Agamben is highlighting here is that human life was rendered *as if* it were animal life, and as such, human life became open to disposal, that this is in fact part of the logic of the modern machine.

The metaphor of the machine emerges from the dichotomy of the human and the animal as a new ontological category, a third term, to be considered alongside the human and the animal. Kelly Oliver makes the suggestion that by considering the machine metaphor as the third term, we may well end up with Descartes' machine-animal, however, Oliver goes on to remark that what our thinking about the machine may in fact do is transform our thinking about both the human and the animal⁵³. Oliver mentions that Merleau-Ponty in fact takes up the notion of the machine and the science of cybernetics in contrast with the human and the animal⁵⁴. For Merleau-Ponty, our interest in cybernetics and automata stems from the notion of animality as an apparatus of organising perspectives⁵⁵. The curiosity cybernetics has with automata, Merleau-Ponty explains, is that cybernetics sees in automata "the articulation of the body and objects," adding that "we have the impression of a body that manipulates objects, of the constitution of the behavior of the body that responds to the situation"⁵⁶. As we will see below, Merleau-Ponty draws attention to the difference between the machine and its 'impressions' of the body and the organic body's behaviour within its environment. Nevertheless, the notion of the machine as the third ontological term is a significant contrast to the approach taken by those before Merleau-Ponty; consider Heidegger's third ontological category, the inanimate stone. For however ground-breaking Heidegger's approach to the question of being was, and the kind of departure Heidegger's conception of being was from the tradition of Western metaphysics, he nevertheless

⁵³ Oliver 2009, p.237

⁵⁴ Oliver 2009, p.237

⁵⁵ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.166

⁵⁶ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.166

maintained ties with the Western metaphysical tradition with his anthropocentric comparison between the human and the animal. While the animal has access to its own environmental world, the animal is, as Heidegger suggests, “confined to its environmental world, immured as it were within a fixed sphere that is incapable of further expansion or contraction”⁵⁷. Heidegger refers to this inability for the animal to further expand or contract its environmental world, this inability to penetrate what is accessible to it, as being poor in the world. For the animal there is a certain deprivation in the relationship it has with the world, and this is a point we will address further as we go on.

Merleau-Ponty’s radical break comes through his *contrast* of both humans and animals *with* machines. Recall Merleau-Ponty’s remarks on cybernetics as we noted above. By making the contrast between organic and mechanical bodies, Merleau-Ponty finds similarities between humans and animals, “because unlike machines, both man and animal have living bodies”⁵⁸. The alliance between human and animal is further forged when we consider the human in relation to the machine: humans and animals as organic beings live rather than function. As Merleau-Ponty writes, “the machine functions, the animal lives”⁵⁹. The body that is at the center of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology, as Oliver points out, is not that of an object, but instead of dynamic life⁶⁰. If we turn our attention specifically to animal life, what this suggests is that the dynamic life of animal bodies cannot be reduced to the mechanisms of biological functioning—for example, the utility of reproduction. Instead, the dynamics of animal life reveals the richness of their expressions as the “mystery of life in the way that animals show themselves to each other”⁶¹—the animal body that is reduced to the mechanisms of biological functions resemble, perhaps, a cyborg. The animal becomes the machine in this sense. Reflecting on the machine metaphor that regulates our articulations of the human/animal binary may in fact help sabotage the anthropological machine⁶². Beneath either articulation, mechanistic or dynamic, there is a logic or structure of behaviour that underlies them, and it is these underlying structures we will now focus

⁵⁷ Heidegger 1995 (1983), p.198

⁵⁸ Oliver 2009, p.237

⁵⁹ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.162

⁶⁰ Oliver 2009, p.241

⁶¹ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.188

⁶² Oliver 2009, p.237

our attention.

From our analysis of Kant's writing on the animal as we saw in the previous chapter, we were presented with a conception of the animal that was "determined to activity by the influence of alien causes"⁶³. What this conception of the animal suggests is that animal behaviour is driven by forces that are not determined by reason. As such, we find that the kind of forces that drive animal behaviour range from biological functions such as reproduction, as well as hunting and eluding predators that may be described as instinctual drives that intend towards self preservation. From this perspective, animals "remain caught within a causal mechanism"⁶⁴. Merleau-Ponty makes the critique that this form of causality "ignores the totality of the organism's being"⁶⁵. As Brett Buchanan argues: "behaviour demonstrates a relational enclosure insofar as the organism is structurally united with its world"⁶⁶. Merleau-Ponty's remarks regarding mechanistic causality and the way in which this kind of causality ignores the totality of the animal's being is an important point of departure. We can identify this kind of causality in Kant and his writing on the animal, and the presence of this kind of causality suggests, that is, mechanistic causality, is a total disconnect between the animal and the world: for the animal there is no structural unity with its world. As early as in his work *The Structure of Behavior*, Merleau-Ponty makes the argument that behaviour is directly linked to the animal's being and world. For the kinds of relations the animal has with its world that may fall under Kant's conception of natural necessity, whether these relations may be between animals of the same species or the relation of animals from one species with another, there must first be a "prior and fundamental relation to the world out of which all other relations may be considered"⁶⁷. Buchanan notes that for Merleau-Ponty the world emerges as a Gestaltist framework, an organised whole, out of which the organism may present itself through its behaviour⁶⁸. Merleau-Ponty considers behaviour to be a form that executes a higher relation between an organism and its world, a

⁶³ Kant 1964, p.114

⁶⁴ Buchanan 2008, p.119

⁶⁵ Buchanan 2008, p.120

⁶⁶ Buchanan 2008, p.120

⁶⁷ Buchanan 2008, p.121

⁶⁸ Buchanan 2008, p.121

relation that “brings about the appearance of new relations”⁶⁹. The animal’s relationship with its world is prior to the relationships it has with other animals, whether of the same species or another, thus the animal’s initial comportment with its world brings the appearance of new relations. Kant makes no account of this initial relationship between the animal and its world, and it is for this reason Merleau-Ponty’s conception of behaviour assumes its relevance as an alternative to the Kantian approach to animal behaviour as deterministic.

In *The Structure of Behavior*, Merleau-Ponty argues that the gestures of animal behaviour directed toward the world are characteristic of its species, revealing a certain manner of treating the world, as he writes:

The gestures of behavior, the intentions which it traces in the space around the animal, are not directed to the true world or pure being, but to being-for-the-animal, that is to a certain milieu characteristic of the species; they do not allow the showing through of a consciousness, that is, a being whose whole essence is to know, but rather a certain manner of treating the world, of “being-in-the-world” or of “existing”⁷⁰.

As I will now show, Merleau-Ponty’s remarks regarding animal behaviour as a manner of treating the world are central to this thesis. The animal’s behaviour offers a “means of accessing the mode of being-animal, which, importantly, is expressed as a manner of being-in-the-world”⁷¹. Merleau-Ponty’s reference to the term being-in-the-world is of particular interest for what it signifies and captures. Originally used by Heidegger, occurring for the first time in his magnum opus *Being and Time*, the term being-in-the-world signifies in the first instance a necessary *a priori* constitution that expresses the world as something I dwell in, as something that is familiar to me, that is “‘being alongside’ the world in the sense of being absorbed in the world”⁷². What is striking is that Merleau-Ponty is using an expression meant for humans. Heidegger’s sketch of being-in-the-world as a necessary *a priori* constitution “stands for a *unitary* phenomenon” that expresses and essential state of human being⁷³. Now as we see above, Merleau-Ponty makes the argument that in order for animals to disclose characteristics of their being, and here we mean the

⁶⁹ Merleau-Ponty 2015 (1942), p.148

⁷⁰ Merleau-Ponty 2015 (1942), p.125-6

⁷¹ Buchanan 2008, p.121

⁷² Heidegger 1962, p.79-80

⁷³ Heidegger 1962, p.78

basic existentials of the way they are in the world⁷⁴, there must be a necessary *a priori* constitution that stands for a unitary phenomenon that expresses an essential state of animal being. We can see here Heidegger's influence on Merleau-Ponty, and how this influence has shaped Merleau-Ponty's conception of the phenomenon of the body and how bodily intentionality brings the possibility of meaning. For Merleau-Ponty, our embodiment brings to our perceptual experience this very *a priori* structure; that is, our embodiment brings to our perceptual experience the world as something familiar to the animal, that it is absorbed in the world. As we have already noted in the previous chapter, our embodiment presents itself to us in consciousness as experience of a world of things we encounter and exist alongside. With regards to the term 'world,' in the sense we are using it here, Merleau-Ponty conveys a particular meaning to the way in which 'world' is to be understood. The world, Merleau-Ponty explains, "inasmuch as it harbors living beings, ceases to be a material plenum consisting of juxtaposed parts; it opens up at a place where behavior appears"⁷⁵. What this positive conception of 'world' captures, turning from an ontic conception of the world as the totality of entities that live in the world, to an ontological conception of the world is that from the appearance or unfolding of behaviour, a world springs forth. This ontological conception of the world describes how the animal creates its 'own' world by making a particular space appear structured—a unitary phenomenon—in meaningful ways. The world in an ontological sense is familiar to the animal in the sense that the animal is absorbed in the world, and it is in this sense that the meaning of these structures relate to meaningful modes of behaviour on the part of the animal. This relation of meaning demonstrates the expressiveness of the animal's interaction not only with the external natural world, but also the animal's social world. Here Merleau-Ponty establishes the point that animals are world-forming, that through their behaviour and the relation of meaning that unfolds in the wake of the animal's interaction with the world, the animal demonstrates that existence is a concern for them in their being-in-the-world. To articulate this point further, I will now provide an analysis of Heidegger's original intention regarding the terminology used by Merleau-Ponty and demonstrate the significance of Merleau-Ponty's use of terminology originally meant for humans.

⁷⁴ Dahlstrom 2013, p.37

⁷⁵ Merleau-Ponty 2015 (1942), p.125

The way Merleau-Ponty articulates the conception of being-in-the-world is not consistent with the way it is originally used by Heidegger. For Heidegger, only *dasein* was considered to be world-forming compared to the animal as being poor in the world. As we remember, Heidegger begins the third chapter of *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* with this very examination, though Heidegger undertakes this examination of the thesis that animals are poor in the world in a very specific way. In offering analysis of both biology and zoology with regard to the question of the animal, Heidegger admits that the present thesis that animals are poor in the world runs counter to the “penetrating fundamental reflections in biology and zoology”⁷⁶. Heidegger’s consideration of the life sciences is based on an analysis of the work of Jacob von Uexküll, and it is through Uexküll’s work we are introduced to the phrase “environmental world of the animal”^{77a}. By insisting that the present examination of the question of the animal runs counter to Uexküll’s reflections on the environmental world of the animal, Heidegger remarks that his own considerations do not rest upon a thematic metaphysics of life; instead, his thesis that the animal is poor in the world is placed *between* the assertion that the stone is worldless and that the human is world-forming. We may remember our reference to Heidegger’s third term the stone; it has now become clearer as to its importance as part of a trinity of entities and describing their ontological significance. Heidegger comments that it is now clear as to the reason why he considers the thesis that animals are poor in the world in relation to the thesis that the human is world-forming. Poor in the world, Heidegger explains, “implies poverty as opposed to richness”⁷⁸. The animal is poor in the world, that the animal somehow possesses less, refers to “what is accessible to it, of whatever as an animal it can deal with, of whatever it can be affected by as an animal, of whatever it can relate to as a living being”⁷⁹. The animal according to Heidegger has less “against the richness of all those relationships that the human has as its

⁷⁶ Heidegger 1995 (1942), p.192

⁷⁷ Heidegger 1995 (1942), p.192

^a The phrase “environmental world of the animal” is also referred to as *umwelt* both in Heidegger and in Merleau-Ponty as was in Uexküll.

⁷⁸ Heidegger 1995 (1942), p.193

⁷⁹ Heidegger 1995 (1942), p.193

disposal”⁸⁰. Heidegger adds that not only is the world of the animal limited in its range, that is, the structures of meaning are limited, the relations of meaning are also limited in the sense of the depth of what is accessible to the animal⁸¹. Heidegger uses the example of the bee to illustrate how the bee’s world is limited to other bees within the swarm, the hive, cells, and the blossoms they seek out, though in terms of the bees access to this world, Heidegger makes the suggestion that “the worker bee is familiar with the blossoms it frequents, along with their odour and scent, but it does not know the stamens of these blossoms *as* stamens”⁸². We can see here what Heidegger is referring to when he states that whatever is accessible to the animal, in this case the bee, is also limited. The bee does not encounter the flower, according to Heidegger, as a manifest thing. Later, Heidegger makes the argument that the bee is ‘given over’ to its environment, that the bee is captivated by whatever its environment occasions in its behaviour⁸³. It is perfectly reasonable to question Heidegger’s line of argument here and propose an alternative explanation, instead suggesting that the bee encounters aspects of its environment and interacts with them in a way that is characteristic of its species⁸⁴. In Heidegger’s argument of the bee’s captivation with its environment, he makes the suggestion that the bee does not recognise things or aspects of its environment in its being captivated. In considering Merleau-Ponty’s formulation of recognition, Glen Mazis notes that recognition "is a perceptually integrative experience that combines feeling, memory, intuition, and the relating of different entities to one another is an existential flow of directedness and energy within the surround, and it does so in an immediate or a ‘felt’ fashion registered in one’s body and from within a ‘perceptual field’”⁸⁵. This immediate perceptual ‘knowing’ is not considered by Heidegger; instead, Heidegger conflates both the notions of reflection and recognition⁸⁶, and as a result prioritises conscious perception⁸⁷. In his *Nature* lectures, Merleau-Ponty suggests that the unity of an organism “must rest on an activity”⁸⁸. That the unity of an organism rests on activity “simultaneously unites the organism as a whole and acts

⁸⁰ Heidegger 1995 (1942), p.193

⁸¹ Heidegger 1995 (1942), p.193

⁸² Heidegger 1995 (1942), p.193

⁸³ Heidegger 1995 (1942), p.247

⁸⁴ Mazis 2008, p.34

⁸⁵ Mazis 2008, p.35

⁸⁶ Mazis 2008, p.35

⁸⁷ Buchanan 2008, p.134

⁸⁸ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.170

as a cohesive bond between the organism and its *Umwelt*⁸⁹. Like Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty draws on the work of Jakob von Uexküll and his notion of *umwelt*, though where Merleau-Ponty differs from Heidegger is in his reflection of the notion of the *umwelt* to situate the ‘phenomenon of the body’ with the primary focus being behaviour. Thus for Merleau-Ponty, movement is central to our understanding of the organism⁹⁰. What is stressed by Merleau-Ponty, however, is that behaviour cannot be understood if we take animal behaviour to be movement to movement, much as it is in the classical sense —that is to say, mechanistic⁹¹. Instead of the classical understanding of animal behaviour as mechanistic, the animal *umwelt* highlights the reaction triggered by stimulus from the milieu; “this reaction puts the animal in contact with other stimulus in the milieu, hence a new reaction, and so on”⁹². Merleau-Ponty argues that “between the stimulation and the movement of the animal,” stimulus from the milieu triggering a reaction “there is a relation of meaning which is what the expression *umwelt* conveys”⁹³. Further to this, the *umwelt*, as Merleau-Ponty goes on to suggest, “is the world implied by the movement of the animal, and that regulates the animal’s movements by its own structure”⁹⁴. In his earlier text, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty discusses the phenomenon of movement, suggesting that if we are to take seriously the phenomenon of movement, we must conceive of a world which is not made up merely of things, but also a world of what Merleau-Ponty refers to as pure transitions⁹⁵, that is, “a movement that manifests unitary phenomenon of an animal with its environment through behavior”⁹⁶. Behaviour is the site of a new phenomenon that manifests itself as a unity by which the animal gives expression to itself, meaning that the bird in flight expresses its being-in-the-world⁹⁷. Merleau-Ponty’s comments in the *Phenomenology of Perception* not only express stark contrast with Heidegger, but also with Kant. A world conceived merely of things alludes to a type of intellectualism where our understanding of the thing is derived primarily through pure reason. Of course, this is one of the main points of contention for

⁸⁹ Buchanan 2008, p.134

⁹⁰ Buchanan 2008, p.134

⁹¹ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.175

⁹² Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.175

⁹³ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.175

⁹⁴ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.175

⁹⁵ Merleau-Ponty 2014 (1945), p.288/(326)

⁹⁶ Buchanan 2008, p.135

⁹⁷ Buchanan 2008, p.135

Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception* that leads him to write in chapter three, ‘The Thing and the Natural World,’ that by arguing that the human is “a consciousness who encompasses and constitutes the world,” Kant passed over the “phenomenon of the body and the phenomenon of the thing”⁹⁸. To illustrate his point regarding the phenomenon of movement, Merleau-Ponty refers to the flight of a bird:

“the bird that crosses my garden is, in the very moment of the movement, merely a grayish power of flight and, in a general way, we shall see that things are primarily defined by their ‘behavior,’ and not by static ‘properties’. It is not I who recognize, in each point and in each instant passed through, the same bird defined by explicit properties; rather, it is the bird in flight that accomplishes the unity of its movement”⁹⁹.

It is not in each point and in each instant that I recognise the bird by explicit properties, as if each point and instant were broken down by some sort of high-speed camera obscura; it is instead, as Merleau-Ponty writes, we recognise in the phenomenon of movement this unity that is already accomplished by the animal itself. The notion of a unity of movement will later turn to the notion of an “adhesion between the elements of the multiple”¹⁰⁰. As he writes in his *Nature* lectures, Merleau-Ponty suggests that “in a sense, there is only the multiple, and this totality that surges from it is not a totality in potential, but the establishment of a certain dimension”¹⁰¹. Following this, Merleau-Ponty points out that this adhesion of multiple elements of behaviour is expressive of life: “from the moment when the animal swims, there will be life, a theatre, of the multiple”¹⁰². Merleau-Ponty is not suggesting here that any interruption to the adhesion of the multiple necessarily sees the end of life, what is being expressed here is “each dimension of life is only a momentary adhesion held together through behavior”¹⁰³. Behaviour as the ‘glue’ that holds each dimension of life together, demonstrating temporal continuity. The still-silent-deer standing on the edges of a forest clearing becomes the darting-evading-deer, attempting to escape capture from a pack of prowling-wolves. Merleau-Ponty suggests that each dimension gives meaning to its surroundings¹⁰⁴, whereby the “animal-environment is transformed and takes on new

⁹⁸ Merleau-Ponty 2014 (1945), p.317/(356)

⁹⁹ Merleau-Ponty 2014 (1945), p.288/(326)

¹⁰⁰ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.156

¹⁰¹ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.156

¹⁰² Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.156

¹⁰³ Buchanan 2008, p.135

¹⁰⁴ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.156

meaning”¹⁰⁵. The environment of the deer transforms from an environment of tranquility, where the breeze could be heard blowing through the surrounding trees and the tall grass the deer eats, swaying in the direction of the wind, to an environment where the tension and the stillness of the air can be read as a sign of danger for the deer, as the wolves attempt to chase the deer down. The surging forth of the multiple, the interruptions that break the adhesion to form new dimensions that give meaning to its surroundings not only provide a general depiction of life itself, the flurry of activity and movement manifested in behaviour demonstrates, as Mazis suggests, that “the world is a world not only of movement but of ceaseless transformation and change, which is not grounded by a static being, but as becoming”¹⁰⁶. By now we should see the stark contrast between the conception of the animal in Kant and in Merleau-Ponty. The difference between the way the animal is conceived by Kant and Merleau-Ponty is that for Kant the animal’s behaviour is in a constant state of flux and externally produced, whereas with Merleau-Ponty, the focus is on behavioural activity. Again, coming back to his *Nature* lectures, Merleau-Ponty offers an analysis of animal life that is characterised by a series relations that the animal maintains within its spatio-temporal milieu, relations of inter-animality:

We must understand life as an opening of a field of action. The animal is produced by the production of a milieu, that is, by the appearing in the physical world of a field radically different from the physical world with its specific temporality and spaciality. Hence the analysis of the general life of the animal, of relations that it maintains with its body, of the relations of its body to its spatial milieu (its territory), of inter-animality either within the species or between two different species, those that are usually enemies, as the rat lives among vipers. Here two *umwelten*, two cycles of finality cross each other¹⁰⁷.

The spatial milieu of the deer intersects with the spatial milieu of the wolf; the deer encounters the wolf as another being-in-the-world, as a relation of their inter-animality. Ted Toadvine suggests that Merleau-Ponty affirms that through their actions or behaviour in response to their environment, that is, no longer being held captive by their environment, non-human animals cannot be denied a kind of interiority¹⁰⁸. Merleau-Ponty aims to reconcile this notion of interiority with the notion of the *umwelt* that produces it, asking “what is the ‘subject’ that Uexküll speaks of” in an attempt to articulate this relation¹⁰⁹. Through a series of metaphors,

¹⁰⁵ Buchanan 2008, p.135

¹⁰⁶ Mazis 2000, p.232

¹⁰⁷ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.173

¹⁰⁸ Toadvine 2009, p.85

¹⁰⁹ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.176

Merleau-Ponty attempts to capture this relation between the animal and its *umwelt*, borrowing from Uexküll directly, he expands on the metaphor of behaviour as melody, explaining that:

“at the moment when the melody begins, the last note is there, in its own manner. In a melody, a reciprocal influence between the first and the last note takes place, and we have to say that the first note is possible only because of the last, and vice versa. It is in this way that things happen in the construction of a living being”¹¹⁰.

Merleau-Ponty’s description of the melody as a reciprocal exchange helps to avoid the contention of causal determination between the animal and its environment¹¹¹, as he further elucidates that “there is no priority of effect over cause”¹¹². “The melody sings in us much more than we sing it” Merleau-Ponty remarks¹¹³. The relation between the animal and its *umwelt* is an unfurling of animal bodies that plays out like a melody¹¹⁴. This unfurling of living bodies plays into Merleau-Ponty’s second metaphor in his attempt to articulate this relation between the animal and its *umwelt*. In asking the question “what is thus unfurling?”, Merleau-Ponty answers by suggesting that “the unfurling of the animal is like a pure wake that is related to no boat”¹¹⁵. For Buchanan, the use of metaphorical language signifies Merleau-Ponty grappling with something new, something that he has not yet formulated language for to fully express this relation. Despite what Buchanan sees as a lack in Merleau-Ponty being able to fully articulate and express what the relation between the animal and its *umwelt* is, what is clear is the ontological aspect of this relation: “the *umwelt* unfurls like a melody, the animal unfurls like a pure wake”¹¹⁶. While Buchanan’s commentary points to something unfinished in Merleau-Ponty’s thought, the conclusion Merleau-Ponty is trying draw in describing the possibilities of behaviour that are present in the conditions of an animal’s *umwelt* is the beginning of culture¹¹⁷. Part of the possibilities of behaviour include the development of animal communication with other animals, as well as communication between the animal and its environment that demonstrates the

¹¹⁰ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.174

¹¹¹ Buchanan 2008, p.136

¹¹² Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.174

¹¹³ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.174

¹¹⁴ Buchanan 2008, p.137

¹¹⁵ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.176

¹¹⁶ Buchanan 2008, p.137

¹¹⁷ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.176

emergence of symbolism in and through ritualistic behaviour¹¹⁸. It is not only behaviour as the expression of life that leads Merleau-Ponty to conclude that “we can speak in a valid way of an animal culture,” it is also the emergence of symbolism through behaviour that marks out the ontological character of animal culture. Drawing out the ontological characteristics of animal culture is an important step in the development of Merleau-Ponty’s thought for two reasons: the first is that Merleau-Ponty’s ontological conclusions mark a reversal of method when comparing his later *Nature* lectures with his earlier works *The Structure of Behavior* and *Phenomenology of Perception*, though most importantly for our purposes here, Merleau-Ponty’s reversal of thought comes back to the problem of the anthropological machine. The relation of the animal to its milieu and the behaviour characteristic of such a relation “can be defined only by a perceptual relation and that Being cannot be defined outside of perceived being”¹¹⁹. Toadvine suggests that the development of the “melodic unity of animal life into the articulation of an ontology of perceived being” indicates a “constitutive reference to perception within Being itself”¹²⁰. Merleau-Ponty’s turn from subjectivity in his early works to natural being in his latter suggests, as Toadvine argues, that he is “no longer thinking nature, and the animal in particular, in accordance with Agamben’s ‘anthropological machine,’ that is, with the aim of marking an internal schism in ‘man;’” in approaching both the animal and the human in terms of natural being, Merleau-Ponty recognises “an irreducible *Ineinander*, an intertwining, of animality and humanity”¹²¹.

If there is an irreducible *Ineinander*, an intertwining of animality and humanity, how does this intertwining position us in terms of ethics? The problem as we noted earlier with regard to the anthropological machine was that along with the human, the animal was produced and cast aside, falling outside the scope of moral consideration. Merleau-Ponty’s consideration of animal’s relation with its own *umwelt* demonstrates that the animal produces itself in and through this relation, and is not the outcast of an internal schism in the human as Toadvine pointed to above. Because Merleau-Ponty conceives the animal in a positive way, that the animal is an autonomous

¹¹⁸ Toadvine 2009, p.89

¹¹⁹ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.189

¹²⁰ Toadvine 2009, p.90

¹²¹ Toadvine 2009, p.90

being that produces itself in and through its relations with its environment and other animals, Merleau-Ponty's animal ontology not only jams the anthropological machine that produces both human and animal, he also demonstrates the animal striving in its existence and a connection to the human in natural being. It is the animal's bodily intentionality that brings the possibility of meaning; though we may have shared embodiment, and animals may be said to have some form of interiority and culture, the problem of moral consideration remains. Merleau-Ponty provides details of an animal ontology, though the task is to move from this ontology to, at minimum, the foundations of a moral theory. The task at hand at this point is to move from the descriptive to the normative.

Chapter 3

Merleau-Ponty's conception of the *Ineinander* between the human and the animal, where an intertwining of organic intentionalities becomes possible, opens us to the potential of an animal ethics. The challenge as we noted in the previous chapter is moving from a descriptive account of how things are to a normative account of how things ought to be. Hans Jonas insightfully notes that it is precisely this transition from an ontology to an ethics that is the critical point of moral theory, that attempts to lay the foundation for this transition from ontology to an ethics becomes problematic¹²². The question is, how might we flesh out such a transition? For Kant, the transition between his ontology and his ethics was grounded in the human being's capacity for reason, and extending from this capacity for reason the ability to formulate moral laws that gave force to what binds the will and creates obligation. How is it, then, that we can bridge the transition from an animal ontology to an animal ethics whereby animals would have the same obligating force humans do? There is a critical difference between Kant's anthropocentric grounding of what binds the will, and attempting to ground the binding force between will and obligation in being as such, that is, in a being's striving to continue to live. In this final chapter we will attempt to answer these difficult questions, first by briefly looking at Merleau-Ponty's conception of *Ineinander* to better understand our intertwining with animality and how this intertwining positions us in terms of ethics. Secondly, we will look at Jonas' unique account of the obligating force ontology has upon us, by turning to his existential philosophy of life and the metaphysical grounding he provides for our ethical obligations to nature. We will note the strong philosophical proximity of Jonas' work to Merleau-Ponty. This will underscore the fact that Merleau-Ponty's ontology of the animal precisely demonstrates Jonas' notion that a living being is not indifferent toward itself, forming the first, basic value of all values. It is this first value that challenges us to take seriously the 'ought' animal life presents to us in their striving to live.

The *Umwelt* provides the source for Merleau-Ponty's new ontology of nature. Merleau-

¹²² Jonas 1984 (1979), p.82

Ponty, describes the *Umwelt* as ‘world + body,’ expressing the particular cohesion the body has with its milieu. This characterisation of the *Umwelt* has a particular resonance throughout Merleau-Ponty’s work that fits into a more general theory of nature “insofar as nature shows itself as an ontological leaf of brute being”¹²³. Buchanan reinforces this characterisation of nature suggesting that “being reveals itself allusively in the leaves and folds between bodies”¹²⁴. Merleau-Ponty’s investigations of nature, Buchanan suggests, offer an “immediate participation between humans and animals in the same source of life”¹²⁵. The notion that humans and animals participate in the same source of life is an important step. If we remember, Kant made a distinction between the *supersensible* and the *sensible* that culminated in the allocation of the human and the animal to different zones of being. Merleau-Ponty does not make this same distinction, instead arguing that both the human and the animal are to be taken together in the *Ineinander*. In this *Ineinander*, Merleau-Ponty writes, “animality and human being are given only together within a whole of Being that would have been visible ahead of time in the first animal had there been someone to read it”¹²⁶. The aim here is not to suggest that being a human is the same as being an animal, Merleau-Ponty is clear in making this point, commenting further that “this visible and invisible Being, the sensible, our *Ineinander* in the sensible, with the animals, are permanent attestations, even though visible being is not the whole of Being, because it [Being] already has its other invisible side”¹²⁷. We see here that Merleau-Ponty is describing two sides to being, the visible and the invisible. It is in the visible side of being, what Merleau-Ponty also describes as the sensible, that we are intertwined with animals —our *Ineinander* is in the sensible. While it appears as though we are coming back to traditional accounts of the human and the animal as separated into different zones or modes of being, it is important to note that Kant’s conception of the sensible is quite different from Merleau-Ponty’s. For Kant, the sensible is existence under empirically conditioned laws, leading to a conception of living beings that is quite mechanistic; whereas the body for Merleau-Ponty is the primary site for knowing the world,

¹²³ Buchanan 2008, p.147

¹²⁴ Buchanan 2008, p.147

¹²⁵ Buchanan 2008, p. 147

¹²⁶ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.271

¹²⁷ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.271

constituting “a ‘nexus’ within the visible”¹²⁸. As our bodies are immersed in the sensible world, we encounter other bodies, “not constituted by our thought, but lived as a variant of our corporeity, that is, as the appearance of behaviors in the field of our behavior”¹²⁹. This reciprocal formation of the body within the field of behaviour works as a sort of circularity. Buchanan notes that from its *umwelt*, each animal forms a circle that “overlaps with the rings of other living beings, all together intersecting and crossing with each other, each a chiasm with the other”¹³⁰. In a working note from *The Visible and the Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty considers the prospect of multiple chiasms, noting that multiple chiasms are one, not in the sense of a synthesis or synthetic unity, “but always in the sense of *Uebertragung*, encroachment, radiation of being”¹³¹. This transmission or radiation of being is, as Buchanan notes, the sensible itself¹³². What is at stake in Merleau-Ponty’s argument that both the human and the animal are given together within the whole of being is that “all manners of life partake in the whole of a natural ontology”¹³³. Merleau-Ponty does highlight areas of disparity between the human and the animal. However, he is far more concerned with providing a “description of the man-animality *intertwining*”¹³⁴, and it is this concern with describing the man-animality intertwining that leads Merleau-Ponty to write in his *Nature* lectures that “this [intertwining] is not a hierarchical but a lateral relation”¹³⁵. In other words, the ontological differences between humans and animals does not ground an ontological hierarchy because these ontological differences are premised on ontological proximity.

So far we have shown through our analysis of Merleau-Ponty’s work an ontological connection, an intertwining, between the human and the animal in natural being, but the question remains as to how we can move from this ontological intertwining to include animals within the scope of moral consideration. Merleau-Ponty does not leave us with any systematic moral

¹²⁸ Buchanan 2008, p.144

¹²⁹ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.271

¹³⁰ Buchanan 2008, p.145

¹³¹ Merleau-Ponty 1968 (1964), 261

¹³² Buchanan 2008, p.145

¹³³ Buchanan 2008, p.147

¹³⁴ Merleau-Ponty 1968 (1964), p.274

¹³⁵ Merleau-Ponty 2003 (1995), p.268

philosophy; however, the absence of a moral philosophy from Merleau-Ponty's corpus does not necessarily leave us empty handed. The work of Hans Jonas, particularly his existential account of the biological facts as we see in *The Phenomenon of Life*, is situated in close proximity to that of Merleau-Ponty. But it is in Jonas' *The Imperative of Responsibility* we find an ontological grounding of our ethical obligations to nature. Before we provide an analysis of Jonas' ontological grounding of his ethics of responsibility, we shall begin with a sketch of the problems Jonas is attempting to deal with, that is, what Jonas is trying to alert us to.

In chapter one of *The Imperative of Responsibility*, Jonas speaks of an ethical vacuum. This ethical vacuum stems from the erosion of norms and the foundations from which these norms could be derived¹³⁶. Jonas contends that the erosion of norms has come through the neutralisation of value, beginning first with nature, then with humanity¹³⁷. Modern science, Jonas argues, has "destroyed the very idea of norm as such" by stripping nature and humanity of the notion of the sacred¹³⁸. Jonas' notion of value suggests that nature has innate or inherent value, and the problem Jonas sees in modern science is that it renders nature and humanity disposable to the pursuits of knowledge and power. Jonas equates this neutralisation of value and the erosion of the foundations from which norms are derived with nihilism. What we are faced with is emptiness, Jonas contends. The consequence of the neutralisation of value is not merely the coming of nihilism but what this nihilism entails, namely, whether we can have an ethics capable of coping with "the extreme powers which we possess today and constantly increase and are almost compelled to wield"¹³⁹. The extreme powers Jonas refers to is the continual expansion of scientific knowledge and the related exponential development of technology. Our compulsion to wield these powers is part of a mechanism that renders life disposable. On the notion of whether we can have an ethics capable of coping with these extreme powers, Jonas laments that

[ethics] must be there because men act, and ethics is for the ordering of actions and for regulating the power to act. It must be there all the more, then, the greater the powers of acting that are to be regulated¹⁴⁰.

¹³⁶ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.22

¹³⁷ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.23

¹³⁸ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.23

¹³⁹ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.23

¹⁴⁰ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.23

It is only under the pressure of real habits, Jonas continues later, “that ethics as the ruling of such acting under the standard of the good or permitted enters the stage”¹⁴¹. The problem as we can see thus far is that in the pursuit of knowledge and technological advancement, science has neutralised the foundations by which the ‘good’ derives its standard, but nevertheless continues to act in spite of the erosion of norms. Jonas contends that science, as a collective technological practice, is more than just the sum of its novel methods. Science has become a new kind of human action, Jonas argues, “because of the unprecedented nature of some of its objects, because of the sheer magnitude of most of its enterprises, and because of the indefinitely cumulative propagation of its effects”¹⁴². Richard Wolin argues that “under the radically changed situation inaugurated by technological modernity,” traditional ethics, which “were accustomed to dealing with human action that fell within well-defined and familiar parameters¹⁴³” is ill-equipped to account for our responsibilities in a rapidly changing technological age. This disparity between traditional ethics and a rapidly changing technological world has only intensified this ethical vacuum¹⁴⁴, leading Jonas to write that “novel powers to act require novel ethical rules and perhaps even new ethics”¹⁴⁵. Jonas offers a way beyond the nihilism at the centre of our cultural crisis, one that has seen the erosion of natural standards of value, targeting firstly his mentor, Heidegger. Though Jonas recognises Heidegger’s *Being and Time* as the “most profound and still most important manifesto of existentialist philosophy,” Jonas nevertheless criticises Heidegger for restricting existential interpretation to human beings¹⁴⁶. This criticism is made clear in *The Phenomenon of Life* as Jonas remarks:

“*Vorhanden* [‘standing before me’] is what is merely and indifferently ‘extant,’ the ‘there’ of bare nature, there to be looked at outside the relevance of the existential situation and of practical ‘concern.’ It is being, as it were, stripped and alienated to the mode of mute thinghood. This is the status left to ‘nature’ for the relation of theory—a deficient mode of being—and the relation in which it is so objectified is a deficient mode of existence, its defection from the futurity of care into the spurious present of mere onlooking curiosity”¹⁴⁷.

¹⁴¹ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.23

¹⁴² Jonas 1984 (1979), p.23

¹⁴³ Wolin 2001, p.117-118

¹⁴⁴ Vogel 1996, p.168

¹⁴⁵ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.23

¹⁴⁶ Jonas 2001 (1966), p.229

¹⁴⁷ Jonas 2001 (1966), p.231

Jonas' criticism of Heidegger does not culminate in a rejection of his mentor as one might expect; instead, Jonas extends Heidegger's categories to provide an existential interpretation of nature. This will already sound familiar as we saw in the last chapter, as Merleau-Ponty uses Heidegger's existential categories to argue that animals are indeed world-forming. Jonas' reading of Heidegger suggests that Heidegger uncritically accepts the metaphysical background of modern nihilism: the dualism between humanity and nature¹⁴⁸. The idea that nature has no ends, writes Lawrence Vogel, "and is indifferent to human purposes throws us back on ourselves in our quest for meaning"¹⁴⁹. Jonas makes the argument that when values are not ontologically supported, that is, supported in the reality of beings,

the self is thrown back entirely upon itself in its quest for meaning and value. Meaning is no longer found but is 'conferred.' Values are no longer beheld in the vision of objective reality, but are posited as facts of valuation. As functions of the will, ends are solely my own creation¹⁵⁰.

Jonas' remarks regarding the human being as the source of all value is not only a criticism against Heidegger, we can also imagine how such a criticism may well be an argument made against Kant as well. Jonas' argument that meaning is no longer found but instead conferred bears a striking resemblance to Korsgaard's analysis of Kant. Korsgaard, if we remember, suggested that despite the lack of intrinsic value, by treating our own ends as good, Kant conferred value to human being as an end-in-itself. Our obligation to ourselves does not arise from value as such, instead both obligation and value arise simultaneously from acts of the legislative will. By Jonas's account of modern nihilism and the metaphysical assumptions that underpin it, Kant too seems well placed within the scope of modern nihilism. While the source of value for Kant is the human being and his or her capacity for reason, Kant would contend that for this very reason, the human is the source of value, and that value *is* in fact ontologically grounded. Jonas remarks that what fuels the ethical vacuum are two key assumptions, that while

"true it is that obligation cannot be without the idea of obligation, and true that within the known world the capacity for that or any idea appears in man alone: but it does not follow that the idea must therefore be an invention, and cannot be a discovery. Nor does it follow that the rest of existence is indifferent to that

¹⁴⁸ Vogel 1996, p.170

¹⁴⁹ Vogel 1996, p.171

¹⁵⁰ Jonas 2001 (1966), p.215

discovery: it may have a stake in it, and in virtue of that stake may even be the ground of the obligation which man acknowledges for himself'¹⁵¹.

Following his acknowledgement of those capacities that are uniquely human, Jonas makes the critical point of distinguishing between the capacity to discursively articulate moral values, and the beings to whom those moral values ought to be attached. Jonas' point provides a strong foundation for the argument we have been making so far: that there is an ontological separation between rational and non-rational animals, and that this separation has served as the grounding for the moral exclusion of non-rational animals. By calling into question traditional assumptions regarding obligation, namely, that the idea of obligation is a human invention, and that the rest of existence is indifferent to our experience of obligation, Jonas calls into question traditional ethical frameworks. If we remember, Kant's moral theory is based on this same ontological separation Jonas is critical of: that humans as rational beings have the capacity to discursively articulate moral values and are therefore those beings to whom those moral values ought to be attached. The second part of Jonas' critical point is the experience of existential vulnerability that is shared by all beings. In light of this shared existential vulnerability, Jonas argues that all beings have a stake in the discovery of obligation, not just human beings. That is, even if human beings are the only beings who can discursively articulate the grounds and principles of morality, all living beings have an interest in the protection of their life, precisely as beings that can experience vulnerability, suffer and die —non-rational beings therefore have an interest in morality. This is in stark contrast with Kant's conception of obligation, which suggests that obligation is derived from the capacity to reason and the participation in formulating moral laws. In Kant we find that obligation is a human invention, and while the emotional and aesthetic cultivation of morality may well find some grounding in our experience with animals and nature, as we have noted previously, any notion of obligation that may be derived from our experience with animals and nature is primarily "serviceable to morality in one's relations with other men". Jonas turns this conception of obligation around by insisting that by virtue of the very notion that nature has an interest in the discovery of obligation, through the recognition of a shared existential vulnerability, this interest in the discovery of obligation is itself grounds for said obligation. Lawrence Vogel notes that "though we humans can take stock of our lives as a whole,

¹⁵¹ Jonas 2001 (1966), p.283

reflect on the ontological structure of existence, and be thematically aware of death, all organisms show concern for their own being and reach out to the world in order to fend off not-being”¹⁵². There is an important and meaningful existential dynamic between being and non-being. As Vogel explains, this dynamic between being and not-being is defined by the ever-present potentiality of not-being that being consistently confronts, and it is through this confrontation with not-being that being comes to “feel itself, affirm itself, make itself its own purpose”¹⁵³. Through this cycle of confrontation, this constant negation of not-being, being’s constant choosing of itself transforms the ‘to be’ into ‘existence’¹⁵⁴. It is here the concepts of concern and meaning enter into being for the first time. The negative alternative —not-being— is already embodied in the notion of being; as such, being is intrinsically qualified by this threat of negation, by not-being, that being must always strive to affirm itself¹⁵⁵. There is an existential paradox in this dialectic between being and not-being: “the fact that life carries its own negation within itself is what provides it with the ultimate incentive for self-affirmation”¹⁵⁶. As Jonas suggests, “existence affirmed is existence as *concern*”¹⁵⁷. As we have already noted, Merleau-Ponty makes the argument that through their behaviour, the world opens up for the animal in an ontological sense, demonstrating that existence is a concern for the animal in its being-in-the-world. Here we find philosophical proximity between Jonas and Merleau-Ponty in their conceptions of being and concern. It is this connection between Jonas’ and Merleau-Ponty’s ontology that strengthens the proposition of an animal ethics grounded in an animal ontology.

The existential tension between being and not-being is clearly operating behind Jonas’ articulation of the development of emotional life in animals. Jonas begins by drawing our attention to what lies at the basis of the emotional lives of animals, suggesting that at the core of this development is locomotion. Jonas writes:

“Locomotion is toward or away from an object, i.e., pursuit or flight. A protracted pursuit, in which the

¹⁵² Vogel 1996, p.171

¹⁵³ Vogel 1996, p.171-2

¹⁵⁴ Vogel 1996, p.172

¹⁵⁵ Jonas 2001 (1966), p.4

¹⁵⁶ Wolin 2001, p.114

¹⁵⁷ Jonas 2001 (1966), p.4

animal matches its powers of movement against those of the intended prey, bespeaks not only developed motor and sensor faculties but also distinct powers of emotion”¹⁵⁸.

Before the pursuit of an intended prey, there is always already a complex series of relations at play that is measured by stages of emotional development. The span between the beginning and end of emotional development, which a series of relations represents, is bridged by continuous emotional intent¹⁵⁹. The link between motility and emotion is interposed by the possibility of a distant goal¹⁶⁰. By establishing a connection between existential modes of the past (facticity, becoming, having been thrown) and existential modes of the future (existence, care, resolve), Jonas is not positing that the animal is confronted by moments of crisis between its past and its future; what Jonas is suggesting is that animals participate in existential space and time, an inner world unfolds and is externalised in their behaviour and communication. The complexity of these relations and the development of emotion and sentience is explained by Jonas in the following:

“to experience the distantly perceived *as* a goal and to keep its goal quality alive, so as to carry the motion over the necessary span of effort and time, desire is required. Fulfillment not yet at hand is the essential condition of desire, and deferred fulfillment is what desire in turn makes possible. Thus desire represents the time-aspect of the situation of which perception represents the space-aspect. Distance in both respects is disclosed and bridged: perception presents the object ‘not here but over there’; desire presents the goal ‘not yet but to come’: motility guided by perception and driven by desire turns *there* into *here* and *not yet* into *now*”¹⁶¹.

Jonas reveals that “the great secret of animal life lies precisely in the gap which it is able to maintain between immediate concern and mediate satisfaction”¹⁶². The emotional and sentient development of an animal demonstrates an existence profoundly different from a mechanistic view of animal life. If we recognise that animals have expressive lives that display a range of emotional, motile and sentient development who value whatever contributes to their existence and welfare, we are able to determine Kant’s mechanistic view of nature and animality, for example, as a metaphysical prejudice¹⁶³. Though what does an existential interpretation of nature and animal life mean in terms of formulating the grounds for an animal ethics? Disclosing value

¹⁵⁸ Jonas 2001 (1966), p.101

¹⁵⁹ Jonas 2001 (1966), p.101

¹⁶⁰ Jonas 2001 (1966), p.101

¹⁶¹ Jonas 2001 (1966), p.101

¹⁶² Jonas 2001 (1966), p.102

¹⁶³ Vogel 1996, p.173

in non-human organic beings is not quite sufficient to ground a principle of responsibility or obligation¹⁶⁴. Jonas' concern is that in showing that non-human organic beings harbour values because it harbours ends, we have "not yet answered the question of whether we are at pleasure or duty bound to join in her 'value-decisions'¹⁶⁵. The task now is to develop and show a relationship between goodness and being, and it is in this relationship, as Jonas argues, "whose clarification a theory of value can hope to ground a possibly binding force of values"¹⁶⁶. Put otherwise, we need to ground the good in living being.

At the beginning of chapter 4, "The Good, the 'Ought,' and Being: A Theory of Responsibility', of his *Imperative of Responsibility*, Jonas acknowledges that to ground the 'good' in being is to bridge the gap between 'is' and 'ought'. Jonas contends that when the good-in-itself is a concept entailed in a living being, the demand for its being turns, he continues, "into an 'ought' when a will is present which can hear the demand and translate it into action"¹⁶⁷. Following this, Jonas advises that if the 'good' or 'value' is indeed something by itself, then the 'good' or 'value' belongs to being in general, not necessarily to a specific kind of being that exists at a given time¹⁶⁸. By fixing the 'good' to being in general, value —axiology— then becomes part of ontology¹⁶⁹. By grounding ethics in organic life, Jonas provides morality with an objective grounding. This is quite a contrast from what we see in Kant. The categorical imperative is justified as an end-in-itself, where an action is committed in accordance with a maxim which at the same time can be willed as a universal law. The maxim originates in the subject and is then universalised —Jonas' proposal is the inverse. Kant is indeed attempting to showcase the power and creativity of reason; but the striking appeal of Jonas' moral philosophy is that the 'good' is in fact objectively grounded. As Jonas writes in *Mortality and Morality*: "only from the objectivity of value could an objective 'ought-to-be' in itself be derived, and hence for us a binding *obligation* to the guarding of being, that is, a responsibility towards it"¹⁷⁰.

¹⁶⁴ Vogel 1996, p.174

¹⁶⁵ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.78

¹⁶⁶ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.77-78

¹⁶⁷ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.79

¹⁶⁸ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.79

¹⁶⁹ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.79

¹⁷⁰ Jonas 1996, p.101

This is an important step: by grounding the good in life, in living being itself, Jonas “ grounds the ontological goodness of being as such, *prior* to the ontic goods that are relative to the purposes of particular living beings”¹⁷¹. Coming back to the example of Adam and the sheep that we originally encountered in Kant’s *Conjectures* essay, Adam had recognised the ontic goodness of the sheep prior to the ontological goodness —if Adam had recognised ontological goodness at all. Jonas’ inversion would alter this narrative and what Adam would instead recognise is that the sheep has intrinsic value, that in fact the fleece is for the sheep, helps the sheep continue in its being, and therefore has intrinsic value for it.

Here we arrive at a critical juncture. Even if Adam sees intrinsic value in the sheep, why does this value now become a duty? This force of obligation begins for Jonas in the “mere fact that being is not indifferent toward itself”. This in turn “makes its difference from non-being the basic value of all values, the first 'yes' in general”¹⁷². This affirmation of being that all being has, from tree to human, demonstrates value: “that being is concerned with something, at least with itself, is the first thing we can learn about it from the presence of purpose within”¹⁷³. Jonas continues, adding that the next value, which is derived from this first, basic value, the value of being as such, “would be the maximization of purposiveness, that is, the growing wealth of goals striven for and thus of possible good and evil”¹⁷⁴. Every striving being, therefore, is an end-in-itself, namely, its own end¹⁷⁵. In a note to a passage that articulates this striving of being as an end-in-itself, Jonas elucidates that “only human freedom permits the setting and choosing of ends and thereby the willing inclusion of the ends of others in one’s immediate own, to the point of fully and devotedly making them his own”¹⁷⁶. This conception of moral legislation will already sound familiar as we find the same conception of moral legislation in Kant. This is why Merleau-Ponty’s notion of the *Ineinander* is so crucial to our argument, as our *Ineinander* with animals opens us to this very possibility of making the ends of other beings our own. Our being-with animals constitutes a site of knowing, a knowing of the value of beings as ends-in-themselves.

¹⁷¹ Vogel 1996, p.175 (emphasis mine)

¹⁷² Jonas 1984 (1979), p.81

¹⁷³ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.81

¹⁷⁴ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.81

¹⁷⁵ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.81

¹⁷⁶ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.235

The goodness of being, that is, the ontological goodness of animals, is revealed to us through our intertwining with them. That I also see the animal as an end-in-itself, and a purpose I set myself, “must mean that the object of the effort [to see the animal as an end-in-itself] is *good*, independent of the verdict of my inclination”¹⁷⁷. Jonas argues that this is precisely what makes the animal “the source of an ‘ought,’ with which it addresses the subject in the situation where the realisation or preservation of *this* good by *this* subject is a concrete issue”¹⁷⁸. Jonas explains that because the good has its foundation in living being, the good is placed over against the will, and while the good cannot compel the free will to make it its purpose, what the good can do is “extort from it the recognition that this would be its duty”¹⁷⁹. To demonstrate the thrust of his argument, Jonas provides us with the example of the archetype of responsibility. Jonas prefaces his example by disclosing that “the concept of responsibility implies that of an ought,” and in such an instance the intrinsic right of the object is prior to the duty of the subject”¹⁸⁰. Objectivity of obligation, Jonas continues, must really stem from the object¹⁸¹. It is here that we come to Jonas’ example of the archetype of responsibility:

“For when asked for a single instance (one is enough to break the ontological dogma) where that coincidence of ‘is and ‘ought’ occurs, we can point at the most familiar sight: the newborn, whose mere breathing uncontradictably addresses an ought to the world around, namely, take care of him”¹⁸².

What we learn from Jonas’ archetype of responsibility is that by the mere fact that the animal exists as an end-in-itself, striving to achieve its own goals, the animal addresses an ought to the world that translates into the human being adopting the ‘yes’ of life affirmation into her will and imposing the ‘no’ to not-being on her power to act¹⁸³. By grounding the ‘good’ in being we not only fundamentally transform the ontological grounding of morality, but we also ground the ‘ought’ in the animal itself, as a living being with its own intrinsic interests. The animal presents to us a moral challenge that we are bound to accept, and by accepting this moral challenge we are obligated to ensure that the animal has every possibility to continue to live in its environment.

¹⁷⁷ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.84

¹⁷⁸ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.84

¹⁷⁹ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.84

¹⁸⁰ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.130

¹⁸¹ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.130

¹⁸² Jonas 1984 (1979), p.131

¹⁸³ Jonas 1984 (1979), p.82

Conclusion

The central question of this thesis has been one concerning the moral status of animals, and whether a phenomenological approach to finding an alternative ontological framework to ground an animal ethics would be possible. The importance of beginning with Kant for our concerns here is that Kant's moral theory is based on an ontological separation that posits humans as rational beings who have the capacity to discursively articulate moral values and are therefore those beings to whom those moral values ought to be attached. It is these assumptions, as I have argued, that need to be challenged. In our analysis of Kant we drew attention to the two separate modes of being that are conditioned by the laws governing each of these zones, forming the basis of his dualistic ontology. The critical difference that divides these laws, thus forming separate modes of being, is that on the one hand *supersensible* nature is independent of empirical laws, belonging solely to the autonomy of pure reason; while on the other hand, *sensible* nature, conditioned by empirical laws, is heteronomous to reason. The operative terms with regard to each respective zone are autonomy and heteronomy. The foundation of human freedom for Kant is set out along the lines that define autonomy: our will is independent of sensuous impulses and external forces, and in formulating our moral laws from pure reason, we give ourselves these moral laws that govern our actions in what ought to be done. Thus, the notions of autonomy and freedom are conditions of a subject's capacity for reason. This leaves us with the notion of heteronomy. As Kant argues that moral grounding has its foundation in reason, the *sensible* is not only heteronomy for reason, the *sensible* must also be heteronomy for morality; that is, for Kant, moral impetus does not come from other beings. This is made quite evident in his view on animals and the tension that we see arise in the attempt to include them within the moral framework. Agamben's notion of the anthropological machine provided a useful model to think how the animal is excluded from moral consideration in any direct sense, yet the animal's proximity as an indirect moral object remains a thorn in the side of morality, suggesting that Kant himself sees the limits of his restriction of morality to autonomy understood in a restrictive ontological way. Merleau-Ponty's criticism of Kantian humanism points to the possibility of meaning being derived from something outside of the human. For Merleau-Ponty, our

embodiment brings to our perceptual experience a world of other beings whose embodiment is independent of us. Here we encounter something other than ourselves, we encounter the animal as another organic living being that has an ethical dimension.

Matthew Calarco's writing on animals captures nicely the alternative ontology and ethics we have tried to develop in this thesis, arguing that when we encounter the animal, we encounter it as something that is "*ethically different*, as radically different from me, as irreducible to my usual ways of understanding and my usual projects and interests"¹⁸⁴. Calarco's point, which addresses some of the key intuitions this thesis has attempted to pursue, is that the animal issues a challenge to our way of life and forces us to recognise that there are other beings who are fundamentally different from us¹⁸⁵. The critical element that comes out of Merleau-Ponty's alternative ontology is the possibility for a shared experience through our *Ineinander* with animals, a shared experience that extends beyond species boundaries. Calarco admits that one response to encounters with animals may result in the rejection of any challenge the animal may put to us, but if we accept the challenge put to us by the animal, we recognise that our "usual mode of existence fails in profound ways to do justice to the lives of singular Others and that a change in our basic way of living is required"¹⁸⁶. As I have argued, by extending the possibility of meaningful intentionality to all organic living beings, Merleau-Ponty's ontology provides the framework for a different perspective on the moral implications of the metaphysics of value. It is here we come back to the notion of heteronomy. Through our *Ineinander* with animals we encounter something that is radically different from us, and in this radical difference we encounter something that is ethically different. It is through this encounter with the animal as something radically and ethically different, we are presented with a challenge put to us by the animal. In our shared experience with animals we recognise that through their striving to continue to exist, animals value their lives as something good-in-itself. It is important to note that by accepting this challenge put to us by the animal in our encounter with it, we recognise that our affirmation of the animal derives from an encounter not entirely of our own making. Our duty to

¹⁸⁴ Calarco 2015, p.31

¹⁸⁵ Calarco 2015, p.31

¹⁸⁶ Calarco 2015, p.32

animals does not stem from our own freedom or autonomy, instead, our duty to animals originates with the animal itself, thus the moral impetus to accept the challenge put to us by the animal and affirm them in their life is heteronomy¹⁸⁷.

An ethics that is capable of answering this challenge takes seriously the premise that the our ethical duties to animals resides not with my rationality, freedom, or my autonomy, that is, with the subject, but instead with the animal¹⁸⁸. An ethics that is capable of answering such a challenge does not deny autonomy, there is of course the potential to negate the challenge put to us by the animal, but whatever the response is, Calarco notes, “it arises precisely *as a response* to the Other, from a source radically different from me that calls into question my typical ways of thinking and living”¹⁸⁹. Calarco’s message that whatever response we may have to the ethical challenge the animal puts to us in our encounter arises as a response to the animal weaves perfectly with Merleau-Ponty’s notion of the *umwelt*. If our encounter with the animal happens within our intertwined milieu, the challenge the animal puts to us and our response to this challenge also happens within this milieu, which in turn draws us, both human and animal, into a relationship of meaning. The relation of meaning that unfolds as a condition of our encounter within the milieu houses the ethical relation between the human and the animal; that is to say, the passage from ontological proximity to ethical duty is made possible because the animal striving to continue in its existence, seeing its own life as valuable and good-in-itself, unfolds as a relation of meaning within our intertwined milieu. Thus, the ethical relation, which implies both possible outcomes in either the negation or affirmation of the animal, is conveyed in the term *umwelt*.

Our encounter with animals initiates this ethical relationship and challenges us to rethink our ways of living. Importantly, just as the ethical relation between humans and animals is initiated through our encounter with animals, so too is the notion of responsibility¹⁹⁰. In the event that marks an encounter with an animal, we are confronted by a series of meaningful relations and willful behaviour by the animal. This confrontation with the animal’s intentionality, which

¹⁸⁷ Calarco 2015, p.32

¹⁸⁸ Calarco 2015, p.32

¹⁸⁹ Calarco 2015, p.32

¹⁹⁰ Calarco 2015, p.39

could be said to be the origin of our ethical relationship and signal their ethical status, arrives to our encounter before our autonomy, before our autonomy can be instituted within the milieu to meet the animal¹⁹¹. As animals harbour values, for instance, continuing in their existence, these beings also harbour ends, to which these ends are prefigured in the ethical call made by the animal in our encounter. By grounding ethics in organic life, as Jonas does, morality finds an objective grounding. Taken as an end-in-itself, the animal addresses an ought through its challenge to us that translates into the ethical duty of responsibility when we affirm the animal in its challenge to us.

Our objective has been to challenge the anthropocentrism in traditional moral theory, as well as our social practices. In doing so, we have shown that within the milieu of their own *umwelt*, animals have lives that express a range of emotional and behavioural development, affectations and becomings that demonstrate a range of values and ends. This animal ontology has served as the foundation for an ethics that grounds the good in an organism's striving to exist, in being as such. In our *Ineinander* with the animal, we are confronted with an ethical demand that challenges us to affirm the animal —to negate the nihilism of anthropocentrism. By affirming the ethical challenge of obligation, we affirm an ethics of responsibility towards all living beings, notably towards animals.

¹⁹¹ Calarco 2015, p.39

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