



Dance with Nothing but Heart (2001): Death, the 'Animal' and the Queer 'Taste' of the Other

Literature and Meat Since 1900 pp 213-230 | Cite as

- Ruth Lipschitz (1)

1. Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Johannesburg, ,
Johannesburg, South Africa

Chapter

First Online: 30 October 2019

- 42 Downloads

Part of the Palgrave Studies in Animals and Literature book series (PSAAL)

Abstract

Dance with Nothing but Heart (2001) is a collaborative performance by Steven Cohen and his “life-partner in love and ‘outlaw’ dance”, Elu, in which Elu dances naked with an ox’s heart. I argue that the interaction between sex/gender and species in this performance vexes the Western humanist subject through queering its death-bearing, carnophallogocentric relation to what it calls ‘animal’. Drawing on Jacques Derrida’s deconstructive ethics of “eating well”, and Judith Butler’s politics of performativity and grievability, I read the auto-affective ‘taste’ at stake in this work as always already in relation to an alterity that exceeds it and conditions how we ‘carry’ and ‘eat’ the dead. The performance renders “limitrophic” *the* limit between human and animal and subjects its hetero-patriarchal privileges to *differánce*. This work turns choreographic improvisations into an ethico-politics in which the relation between self, animal, and death is exposed to, in Derrida’s words, an “infinite hospitality” that passes, queerly, by way of the heart (and the mouth).

This is a preview of subscription content, [log in](#) to check access.

Works Cited

Abrahams, Yvette. “Images of Sara Bartman: Sexuality, Race and Gender in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain.” In *Nation, Empire, Colony: Historizing Gender and Race*, edited by Ruth Roach Pierson and Nupur Chaudri, 220–236. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.

Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Abrahams%2C%20Yvette.%20%2E%20%9CImages%20of%20Sara%20Bartman%3A%20Sexuality%2C%20Race%20and%20Gender%20in%20Early%20Nineteenth-Century%20Britain.%2E%20%9D%20In%20Nation%2C%20Empire%2C%20Colon%3A%20Historizing%20Gender%20and%20Race%2C%20edited%20by%20Ruth%20Roach%20Pierson%20and%20Nupur%20Chaudri%2C%202020%2E%20%93236.%20Bloomington%3A%20Indiana%20University%20Press%2C%201998.>)

Bannerman, Henrietta. "An Overview of the Development of Martha Graham's Movement System (1926–1991)." *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 17, no. 2 (1999): 9–46. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1290837> (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1290837>). Accessed 30 January 2013.

Google Scholar (http://scholar.google.com/scholar_lookup?title=AN%20OVERVIEW%20OF%20THE%20DEVELOPMENT%20OF%20MARTHA%20GRAHAM%27S%20MOVEMENT%20SYSTEM%20%281926%2E%20%931991%29&author=Henrietta.%20Bannerman&journal=Dance%20Research&volume=17&issue=2&pages=9-46&publication_year=1999)

Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*. London: Routledge 1993.

Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Butler%2C%20Judith.%20Bodies%20That%20Matter%3A%20On%20the%20Discursive%20Limits%20of%20%2E%20%98Sex%2E%20%99.%20London%3A%20Routledge%201993.>)

———. *Precarious Lives: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. London: Verso, 2004.

Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=%2E%20%94%2E%20%94%2E%20%94.%20Precarious%20Lives%3A%20The%20Powers%20of%20Mourning%20and%20Violence.%20London%3A%20Verso%2C%202004.>)

———. "Violence, Mourning, Politics." *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 4, no. 1 (2003): 9–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15240650409349213> (<https://doi.org/10.1080/15240650409349213>). Accessed 18 December 2018.

CrossRef (<https://doi.org/10.1080/15240650409349213>)

Google Scholar (http://scholar.google.com/scholar_lookup?title=Violence%2C%20Mourning%2C%20Politics&author=Judith.%20Butler&journal=Studies%20in%20Gender%20and%20Sexuality&volume=4&issue=1&pages=9-37&publication_year=2003)

Calarco, Matthew. *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Calarco%2C%20Matthew.%20Zoographies%3A%20The%20Question%20of%20the%20Animal%20from%20Heidegger%20to%20Derrida.%20New%20York%3A%20Columbia%20University%20Press%2C%202008.>)

Cohen, Steven. "Dance with Nothing but Heart." *Q-Online*, Johannesburg. Last modified 8 March 2001.

<http://web.archive.org/web/20061012004238/http://www.q.co.za/2001/2001/03/08-dance.html>

(<http://web.archive.org/web/20061012004238/www.q.co.za/2001/2001/03/08-dance.html>). Accessed 14 September 2014.

———. *Put Your Heart Under Your Feet ...and Walk!* Cape Town: Stevenson, 2017.

[Google Scholar](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=%E2%80%94%E2%80%94%E2%80%94.%20Put%20Your%20Heart%20Under%20Your%20Feet%20%E2%80%A6and%20Walk%21%20Cape%20Town%3A%20Stevenson%2C%202017.) (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=%E2%80%94%E2%80%94%E2%80%94.%20Put%20Your%20Heart%20Under%20Your%20Feet%20%E2%80%A6and%20Walk%21%20Cape%20Town%3A%20Stevenson%2C%202017.>)

Coetzee, J. M. *Elizabeth Costello: Eight Lessons*. Milsons Point: Knopf.

[Google Scholar](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Coetzee%2C%20J.%20M.%20Elizabeth%20Costello%3A%20Eight%20Lessons.%20Milsons%20Point%3A%20Knopf.) (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Coetzee%2C%20J.%20M.%20Elizabeth%20Costello%3A%20Eight%20Lessons.%20Milsons%20Point%3A%20Knopf.>)

Corey, Frederick C. "A Queer Divine Dissatisfaction." *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 1, no. 3 (2014): 142–145.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.14321/qed.1.3.0142>
(<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.14321/qed.1.3.0142>). Accessed 21 March 2019.

Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*, translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

[Google Scholar](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Derrida%2C%20Jacques.%20Of%20Grammatology%2C%20translated%20by%20Gayatri%20Chakravorty%20Spivak.%20Baltimore%3A%20Johns%20Hopkins%20University%20Press%2C%201976.) (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Derrida%2C%20Jacques.%20Of%20Grammatology%2C%20translated%20by%20Gayatri%20Chakravorty%20Spivak.%20Baltimore%3A%20Johns%20Hopkins%20University%20Press%2C%201976.>)

———. *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, translated by Peggy Kamuf. London: Routledge, 1994.

[Google Scholar](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=%E2%80%94%E2%80%94%E2%80%94.%20Specters%20of%20Marx%3A%20The%20State%20of%20the%20Debt%2C%20the%20Work%20of%20Mourning%2C%20and%20the%20New%20International%2C%20translated%20by%20Peggy%20Kamuf.%20London%3A%20Routledge%2C%201994.) (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=%E2%80%94%E2%80%94%E2%80%94.%20Specters%20of%20Marx%3A%20The%20State%20of%20the%20Debt%2C%20the%20Work%20of%20Mourning%2C%20and%20the%20New%20International%2C%20translated%20by%20Peggy%20Kamuf.%20London%3A%20Routledge%2C%201994.>)

———. "Eating Well, or the Calculation of the Subject (Interview with Jean-Luc Nancy)." In Jacques Derrida, *Points ...Interviews*, 1974–1994, translated by Peter Connor and Avital Ronell, edited by Elizabeth Weber, 255–287. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.

[Google Scholar](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=%E2%80%94%E2%80%94%E2%80%94.%20Eating%20Well%2C%20or%20the%20Calculation%20of%20the%20Subject%20%28Interview%20with%20Jean-Luc%20Nancy%29.%20In%20Jacques%20Derrida%2C%20Points%20%E2%80%A6Interviews%2C%201974%E2%80%931994%2C%20translated%20by%20Peter%20Connor%20and%20Avital%20Ronell%2C%20edited%20by%20Elizabeth%20Weber%2C%20255%E2%80%93287.%20Stanford%3A%20Stanford%20University%20Press%2C%201995.) (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=%E2%80%94%E2%80%94%E2%80%94.%20Eating%20Well%2C%20or%20the%20Calculation%20of%20the%20Subject%20%28Interview%20with%20Jean-Luc%20Nancy%29.%20In%20Jacques%20Derrida%2C%20Points%20%E2%80%A6Interviews%2C%201974%E2%80%931994%2C%20translated%20by%20Peter%20Connor%20and%20Avital%20Ronell%2C%20edited%20by%20Elizabeth%20Weber%2C%20255%E2%80%93287.%20Stanford%3A%20Stanford%20University%20Press%2C%201995.>)

———. *Sovereignities in Question: The Poetics of Paul Celan*, edited by Thomas Dutoit and Outi Pasanen. New York: Fordham University Press, 2005.

[Google Scholar](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=%E2%80%94%E2%80%94%E2%80%94.%20Sovereignities%20in%20Question%3A%20The%20Poetics%20of%20Paul%20Celan%2C%20edited%20by%20Thomas) (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=%E2%80%94%E2%80%94%E2%80%94.%20Sovereignities%20in%20Question%3A%20The%20Poetics%20of%20Paul%20Celan%2C%20edited%20by%20Thomas>)

%20Dutoit%20and%20Outi%20Pasanen.%20New%20York%3A%20Fordham%20University%20Press%2C%202005.)

———. *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, translated by David Wills, edited by Marie-Louise Mallet. New York: Fordham University Press, 2008.

[Google Scholar \(https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=%E2%80%94%E2%80%94%E2%80%94.%20The%20Animal%20That%20Therefore%20I%20Am%2C%20translated%20by%20David%20Wills%2C%20edited%20by%20Marie-Louise%20Mallet.%20New%20York%3A%20Fordham%20University%20Press%2C%202008.\)](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=%E2%80%94%E2%80%94%E2%80%94.%20The%20Animal%20That%20Therefore%20I%20Am%2C%20translated%20by%20David%20Wills%2C%20edited%20by%20Marie-Louise%20Mallet.%20New%20York%3A%20Fordham%20University%20Press%2C%202008.)

Freud, Sigmund. *Totem and Taboo: Some Correspondences on the Mental life of Savages and Neurotics*, translated by A. A. Brill. Mineola: Dover Publications, 1998.

[Google Scholar \(https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Freud%2C%20Sigmund.%20Totem%20and%20Taboo%3A%20Some%20Correspondences%20on%20the%20Mental%20life%20of%20Savages%20and%20Neurotics%2C%20translated%20by%20A.%20A.%20Brill.%20Mineola%3A%20Dover%20Publications%2C%201998.\)](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Freud%2C%20Sigmund.%20Totem%20and%20Taboo%3A%20Some%20Correspondences%20on%20the%20Mental%20life%20of%20Savages%20and%20Neurotics%2C%20translated%20by%20A.%20A.%20Brill.%20Mineola%3A%20Dover%20Publications%2C%201998.)

Hodgkiss, John. "Dance with Nothing but Heart." In *Steven Cohen*, edited by Bettina Schultz. Johannesburg: David Krut Publishing, 2003.

[Google Scholar \(https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Hodgkiss%2C%20John.%20%E2%80%9CDance%20with%20Nothing%20but%20Heart.%E2%80%9D%20In%20Steven%20Cohen%2C%20edited%20by%20Bettina%20Schultz.%20Johannesburg%3A%20David%20Krut%20Publishing%2C%202003.\)](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Hodgkiss%2C%20John.%20%E2%80%9CDance%20with%20Nothing%20but%20Heart.%E2%80%9D%20In%20Steven%20Cohen%2C%20edited%20by%20Bettina%20Schultz.%20Johannesburg%3A%20David%20Krut%20Publishing%2C%202003.)

Iveson, Richard. "Domestic Scenes and Species Trouble: On Judith Butler and other Animals." *Journal of Critical Animal Studies* 10, no. 4 (2012): 20–40.

<http://www.criticalanimalstudies.org/volume12-issue-2-2014/> (http://www.criticalanimalstudies.org/volume12-issue-2-2014/). Accessed 20 March 2019.

Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, translated by Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

[Google Scholar \(https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Kristeva%2C%20Julia.%20Powers%20of%20Horror%3A%20An%20Essay%20on%20Abjection%2C%20translated%20by%20Leon%20S.%20Roudiez.%20New%20York%3A%20Columbia%20University%20Press%2C%201982.\)](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Kristeva%2C%20Julia.%20Powers%20of%20Horror%3A%20An%20Essay%20on%20Abjection%2C%20translated%20by%20Leon%20S.%20Roudiez.%20New%20York%3A%20Columbia%20University%20Press%2C%201982.)

Lipschitz, Ruth. "Skin/ed Politics: Species Discourse and the Limits of 'the Human' in Nandipha Mntambo's Art." *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 27, no. 3 (2012): 546–566.

[CrossRef](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2012.01273.x) (https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2012.01273.x)
[Google Scholar](http://scholar.google.com/scholar_lookup?title=Skin%2Fned%20Politics%3A%20Species%20Discourse%20and%20the%20Limits%20of%20%E2%80%9CThe%20Human%E2%80%9D%20in%20Nandipha%20Mntambo%27s%20Art&author=Ruth.%20Lipschitz&journal=Hypatia&volume=27&issue=3&pages=546-566&publication_year=2012) (http://scholar.google.com/scholar_lookup?title=Skin%2Fned%20Politics%3A%20Species%20Discourse%20and%20the%20Limits%20of%20%E2%80%9CThe%20Human%E2%80%9D%20in%20Nandipha%20Mntambo%27s%20Art&author=Ruth.%20Lipschitz&journal=Hypatia&volume=27&issue=3&pages=546-566&publication_year=2012)

———. "Animality and Alterity: Species Discourse and the Limits of the 'Human' in Contemporary South African Art." PhD Diss., Goldsmiths, University of London, 2015. Goldsmiths Research Online GRO (11759)

<https://doi.org/10.25602/GOLD.00011759>

(<https://doi.org/10.25602/GOLD.00011759>).

———. “Abjection.” In *The Edinburgh Companion to Animal Studies*, edited by Lynn Turner, Ron Broglio, and Undine Sellbach, 13–29. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018.

Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=%E2%80%94%20Abjection.%E2%80%9D%20In%20The%20Edinburgh%20Companion%20to%20Animal%20Studies%20%20edited%20by%20Lynn%20Turner%20%20and%20Undine%20Sellbach%20%2013%20-%2029.%20Edinburgh%20University%20Press%202018.>)

Lipschitz, Ruth, and Benita de Robillard, “Race and ‘the Animal’ in the Post-Apartheid ‘National Symbolic’.” *Image and Text* 30 (2017): 73–93.

<https://journals.co.za/content/journal/10520/EJC-c60cda06a>

(<https://journals.co.za/content/journal/10520/EJC-c60cda06a>).

McAfee, Noëlle. *Julia Kristeva*. London: Routledge, 2004.

Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=McAfee%20Noelle%20Julia%20Kristeva.%20London%20Routledge%202004.>)

McKay, Carolyn. “Murder Ob/Scene: The Seen, the Unseen, and the Ob/Scene in Murder Trials.” *Law Text Culture* 14 (2010): 79–93.

<http://ro.uow.edu.au/ltc/vol14/iss1/6> (<http://ro.uow.edu.au/ltc/vol14/iss1/6>).

Accessed 21 April 2018.

Oliver, Kelly. *Animal Lessons: How They Teach Us to Be Human*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.

Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Oliver%20Kelly.%20Animal%20Lessons%20How%20They%20Teach%20Us%20to%20Be%20Human.%20New%20York%20Columbia%20University%20Press%202009.>)

Seshadri-Crooks, Kalpana. “Being Human: Bestiality, Anthropophagy, and Law.” *Umbr(a): A Journal of the Unconscious*, no. 1 (2003): 97–114.

Google Scholar ([https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Seshadri-Crooks%20Kalpana.%20Being%20Human%20Bestiality%20%20and%20Law.%20Umbr\(a\)%20Journal%20of%20the%20Unconscious%20no.%201%202003%29%3A%2097-114.](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Seshadri-Crooks%20Kalpana.%20Being%20Human%20Bestiality%20%20and%20Law.%20Umbr(a)%20Journal%20of%20the%20Unconscious%20no.%201%202003%29%3A%2097-114.))

Stanescu, James. “Species Trouble: Judith Butler, Mourning, and the Precarious Lives of Animals.” *Hypatia: Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 27, no. 3 (2012): 567–582.

CrossRef (<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2012.01280.x>)

Google Scholar (http://scholar.google.com/scholar_lookup?title=Species%20Trouble%20Judith%20Butler%20Mourning%20and%20the%20Precarious%20Lives%20of%20Animals&author=James.%20Stanescu&journal=Hypatia&volume=27&issue=3&pages=567-582&publication_year=2012)

Wolfe, Cary. *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species and Posthumanist Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Wolfe%2C%20Cary.%20Animal%20Rites%3A%20American%20Culture%2C%20the%20Discourse%20of%20Species%20and%20Posthumanist%20Theory.%20Chicago%3A%20University%20of%20Chicago%20Press%2C%202003.>)

Wood, David. "Comment ne pas manger—Deconstruction and Humanism." In *Animal others: On Ethics, Ontology and Animal Life*, edited by H. Peter Steeves, 15–36. New York: State University of New York Press, 1999.

Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Wood%2C%20David.%20%E2%80%9CComment%20ne%20pas%20manger%E2%80%94Deconstruction%20and%20Humanism.%E2%80%9D%20In%20Animal%20others%3A%20On%20Ethics%2C%20Ontology%20and%20Animal%20Life%2C%20edited%20by%20H.%20Peter%20Steeves%2C%2015%E2%80%9336.%20New%20York%3A%20State%20University%20of%20New%20York%20Press%2C%201999.>)

Copyright information

© The Author(s) 2019

About this chapter

Cite this chapter as:

Lipschitz R. (2019) *Dance with Nothing but Heart* (2001): Death, the 'Animal' and the Queer 'Taste' of the Other. In: McCorry S., Miller J. (eds) *Literature and Meat Since 1900*. Palgrave Studies in Animals and Literature. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham

- First Online 30 October 2019
- DOI https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-26917-3_13
- Publisher Name Palgrave Macmillan, Cham
- Print ISBN 978-3-030-26916-6
- Online ISBN 978-3-030-26917-3
- eBook Packages [Literature, Cultural and Media Studies](#)
- [Buy this book on publisher's site](#)
- [Reprints and Permissions](#)

Personalised recommendations

SPRINGER NATURE

© 2019 Springer Nature Switzerland AG. Part of [Springer Nature](#).

Not logged in Not affiliated 197.245.228.177