Beasts of the Modern Imagination

Norris, Margot

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Beasts of the Modern Imagination: Darwin, Nietzsche, Kafka, Ernst, and Lawrence.

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Introduction: The Biocentric Tradition

Beasts of the Modern Imagination explores a specific tradition in modern thought and art: the critique of anthropocentrism at the hands of "beasts"—writers whose works constitute animal gestures or acts of fatality. It is not a study of animal imagery, although the works I explore do present us with apes, horses, bulls, and mice who appear in the foreground of fiction, not as the tropes of allegory or fable, but as narrators and protagonists reappropriating their animality amid an anthropocentric universe. These beasts are finally the masks of the human animals who create them, and the textual strategies that bring them into being constitute another version of their struggle. The focus of this study will then be a small group of thinkers, writers, and artists, who create as the animal—not like the animal, in imitation of the animal—but with their animality speaking. I will treat Charles Darwin as the founder of this tradition, as the naturalist whose shattering conclusions inevitably turned back upon him and subordinated him, the human being, the rational man, the scientist, to the very Nature he studied. Friedrich Nietzsche heeded the advice implicit in his criticism of David Strauss and used Darwinian ideas as critical tools to interrogate the status of man as a natural being. He also responded to the implications of his own animality for his writing, by transforming his work into bestial acts and gestures. The third, and last, generation of these creative animals includes Franz Kafka, the Surrealist artist Max Ernst, and D. H. Lawrence.

There are, of course, others who might plausibly have been included in this tradition: the biologist George Romanes; vitalists like Henri Bergson; other Surrealists, such as Masson, perhaps; the Blaue Reiter painter, Franz Marc; and, of course, Sigmund Freud, the great cartographer of the libido. But I decided to develop my explorations around producers of the self-reflexive animal metaphor for philosophical as well as organizational reasons. In keeping with the biocentric spirit of my subjects, I did not wish to use the animal as a mere pretext: the discarded basis of more abstract speculation, the victim of a
seemingly inevitable cultural drift into the realms of idealism, rationalism, or metaphysics. I wanted to maintain a zoocentric perspective and to keep animal life central to my study. But following this rationale led me into curious problems while exploring the feasibility of including American producers of animal imagery in my study. Ernest Hemingway, the experiential writer, the denizen of the wilderness, the hunter and advocate of power and aggression, turned out, upon careful scrutiny, to be a “ringer,” an aesthete masked as a beast, who actually subordinates life to art and Nature to representation. In the end, I do conclude my study with *Death in the Afternoon* because it seemed that Hemingway’s prose would serve as an instructive counterpoint to biocentric writing. But I decided to defer study of other American writers such as Jack London and the poet Robinson Jeffers until I can extend my historical background beyond the Continental philosophies that form the basis of the tradition I delineate here.

Like Kafka in his tales, which often begin with a statement whose ultimate retraction is the major burden of the story, I will eventually have to concede that this “tradition” is no tradition at all. In a conventional sense, Darwin does influence Nietzsche and make his work possible; and Darwin and Nietzsche together inspire the disanthropic and misanthropic visions of Max Ernst, Franz Kafka, and D. H. Lawrence. But their intertextual relations do not reflect the smooth, linear transmission of ideas that founds our notions of intellectual tradition on models of continuity such as familial genealogy and legal inheritance. Without recourse to the Freudian anxiety of influence that propels Harold Bloom’s model of a literary tradition founded on poetic méconnaissance, I would suggest a similar circularity in the intertextual relations of Darwin, Nietzsche, and Lawrence. Nietzsche misunderstands, rejects, and reappropriates an alienated version of Darwin’s most radical thinking, as Lawrence does also with respect to Nietzsche. But Nietzsche’s méconnaissance of Darwin (and Lawrence’s of Nietzsche) is grounded not in personal and psychological necessities, but in ontological ones, in the need to erase the anthropomorphic interventions of pedagogy, mimesis, and intellectual influence itself in the execution of the bestial gesture.

In exploring these modern philosophers of the animal and its instinctual life, I inevitably rebiologize them even in the face of contemporary momentum (manifested in Jacques Lacan’s neo-Freudianism, for example) to debiologize thinkers whose works
can be studied profitably for their models of signification. For, although the negative and critical aspect of this tradition (its disanthropic, deconstructive, antianthropocentric revolution) is my major focus, I also consider the vitalistic, biocentric, zoomorphic energy that propels this Nietzschean Anknüpfung, this suture over the great cleft produced in our human being by the repression of the animal and the living body. But the biocentricity of this tradition—its valuation of the body and the body’s effusion of power, its instinctual epistemology, its celebration of unmediated experience—renders its writings at war with themselves, hostile to art, impervious to representation, inimitable. As a result the short-lived tradition ends in a cul-de-sac, and one finds little evidence of it after the 1930s.

The biocentric understanding of the ontological nature of the animal evolved dialectically out of its difference from the exclusively human aspects of culture, culture as the product of homo significans. As a result, the biocentric critique of anthropocentrism is aimed at the human being as a cultural creature, as implicated in the Symbolic Order. While Darwin collapsed the cardinal distinctions between animal and human, arguing that they exhibit intellectual, moral, and cultural differences in degree only, not in kind, Hegel made the function of the “other” in human desire the cornerstone of the symbolic life that marks the radical distinction between Nature and culture. But art is, of course, implicated in complex ways in the subject’s exchanges with the “other”: by functioning as a putative repository of meaning, by embodying authority, by distributing status and prestige to authors, audiences, and representations, and so on. Biocentric thinking cannot, therefore, be accommodated by traditional art and will require modes that further frustrate communication, that negate their authority, that rupture representation and rebuff interpretation. The art produced by a biocentric discourse consists, consequently, of tormented generic and rhetorical experiments that have suffered an evolutionary disadvantage, as it were, with respect to reception by a wide public.

The value of observing the contrast between Darwin’s and Hegel’s premises is that they generate a distinction between animal and human, and between creatural and cultural man, that reverses the structural premises upon which such distinctions have been traditionally founded. The animal’s putative inferiority to the human is conventionally ascribed to a lack, a deficiency in reason, speech, soul, morality, a higher nature, while in contrast to the animal the human being is viewed as
complete, perfect, fulfilled. But the biocentric thinkers treat the animal (including the human as animal), as they do Nature, the realm of the biological, the real: as a plenum. It is cultural man, rather, who is engendered by an imaginary lack that gives birth to desire, language, intersubjectivity, social life, that is, the entire Lacanian Symbolic Order that is governed by the "other." The result is a difference in natural and cultural ontology: the animal's desire is direct and appropriative while the human's is mediated and directed toward the recognition of the "other"; the animal's natural power is sufficient for its kind while the human's biological power is inadequate to capture recognition and achieve prestige and must be supplemented by signifiers and symbols; the animal is autotelic and lives for itself in the fullness of its being while the cultural man lives in imitation of the desire of the "other," driven by his manque-à-être; the animal surrenders to biological fate and evolutionary destiny while the human disregards the physicality of what is and reads his fate in the gaze of the "other."

By identifying these distinctions, we can better sort out the ambiguous ontological status of man as the human animal. In place of the traditional binary opposition of mind and body, there emerges a new system whose distinctive criteria are structural: for example, present and absent, direct or mediated, original or representational, spontaneous or calculated, autotelic or instrumental. As a result, the traditional oppositions are replaced by false doubles. Two kinds of desire, two kinds of power, two kinds of violence must be distinguished on the ground of their origin (instinct or self-consciousness), their process (direct or mediated), and their end (autotelic or instrumental) in order to determine which is creatural and which is cultural. This new system of formulating the difference between Nature and culture is enormously useful in exploring modern writers intent on creating new ontological alternatives for man, such as the Übermenschen or instinctual aristocrats in Nietzsche and Lawrence. Nietzschean and Lawrencian heroes are predators, but not Hegelian Masters: they are cruel, but they are not sadists; their aggression is a pure discharge of vitality and power, which does not have as its aim the domination of the minds and souls of others. These distinctions begin to clarify for us the vexing question of Nietzschean and Lawrencian "fascism." We can explain, for example, why the premises their philosophies share with the later Nazi, Fascist, and Falangist ideologies do not result, in Nietzsche and Lawrence, in a similar political program. Their
antihumanistic, antidemocratic, supramoral sentiments are also antisocial and antiideological. Nietzschean and Lawrencian heroes want no more homage from their victims than lions do from lambs, and they therefore abjure the demagogic capture of the masses.

The salient difference between Nature and culture in this new way of formulating their distinction is the “political” function of mediation and, by extension, mimesis. I say “political” because for biocentric thinkers mediation functions to insert a lack or an absence into the play of natural power. For example, the predator simply overcomes and appropriates his victim by natural force, while the demagogue relies on the mediation of his polemic to persuade others to relinquish their power and surrender to him. The demagogue lacks the natural force to subdue others directly, and he therefore uses the supplement of a mediated object (“I want you to desire what I desire”) for his victory. The demagogue depends upon a mimetic response from the masses, demonstrating the politicizing of mimesis that prevails also in the “identification” of son with father in psychoanalytical oedipal development, as well as in the politics of religious worship. The Antichrist in Nietzsche’s work signifies, among other things, a rejection of the mystical program of imitating Christ, saints, and prophets, as demonstrated in Zarathustra’s rejection of disciples.

For biocentric thinkers, then, mimesis acquires a negative value as inimical to the animal’s power and to the body’s life. Mimesis is the negative mark, the mark of absence, castration, and death, an insight that required artists to reevaluate the ontological status of their media as negative being, as mere simulacra of life. Nietzschean antipathy to mimesis, which can be traced in the progressive devaluation and virtual disappearance of the Apollonian in his philosophy, contributes to spawning pervasive antiart sentiments and practices in early twentieth-century art. This movement has two major, related consequences: a subversive interrogation of the anthropocentric premises of Western philosophy and art, and the invention of artistic and philosophical strategies that would allow the animal, the unconscious, the instincts, the body, to speak again in their work. These biocentric practices have in common the outflanking of reason and submission to fate, an aim apparent in the gamut of their experimental practices, from the improvisations and automatic writing of the Surrealists to Kafka’s logical erasures of his own fictions.

The experiential, spontaneous, gestural, performative aspect
of biocentric art made it inherently unsuitable for transmission from one generation of artists to another and therefore militated against its formation of a tradition. This resistance to tradition operated on several levels. Deliberately or inadvertently, these writers discouraged disciples, by their misanthropy, hermitry, or itinerancy. Just as they attempted to deny the influence of their predecessors, that is, their imitation of other writers, so they refrained from becoming Masters, from exerting influence and capturing the recognition of followers. Nietzsche’s aim is often to assault rather than to persuade. Lawrence is less the evangelist the critics make of him than the schoolteacher who rejected the very premises of pedagogy. And Kafka is the extreme case of the writer who resisted publication throughout his life and, at its end, sought to frustrate his artistic heirs utterly by attempting to wipe his works off the face of the earth. Furthermore, they created styles that were largely inimitable by virtue of either their multiplicity (Nietzsche and Ernst) or their singularity (the libidinal force in Lawrence’s writing, the nihilism of Kafka’s). And they made themselves dangerous to imitate by implicating any prospective followers in their own fundamental cultural subversion. Contemporary fiction reflects, rather, the influence of James Joyce, the master parodist, the genius of imitative form, the consummately domestic writer, who, in spite of his coziness with the libido, never ventures into the ontological wildernesses of the biocentric thinkers.

Historically, I trace the biocentric tradition to Charles Darwin, and particularly to his break with eighteenth-century rationalism. Darwin’s implicit nemesis was not Hegel, but Descartes, philosophically transplanted into the contemporary “argument from Design,” whose deistically useful application of a mechanistic model of creation made possible the wedding of natural science and natural theology in the early nineteenth century. “If, as Paley put it, we find a watch, we necessarily infer a watchmaker; therefore, the contrivances of nature are conclusive evidence for the existence of their Creator” (Gruber, 52). Darwin replaced this cybernetic model of Nature as a machine with his theory of natural selection, which removed intelligence (and, by inference, a rational Creator) altogether as the source of life and put in its place innumerable, dispersed, trivial organic forces operating unconsciously and irrationally, on an ad hoc basis, subject to chance, over time. Darwin thereby liberated biology from its Enlightenment enthrallment to physics. In place of a rational cause, he gave Nature an organic cause; in place of an

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extrinsic teleology, he freed Nature from its mediated instrumentality and made it autotelic. With his theory of natural selection, physis triumphed over technē. And, in the very bloom of the Industrial Revolution, the machine and the rational intelligence that designs it become philosophically inimical to the burgeoning vitality of Nature and of living things.

The machine, as the emblem of the rational, obsesses the thinkers of the biocentric tradition and becomes the perennial target of their critiques. The dominant theme states both the inverted causality formulated by Darwin, that reason is the product, not the producer, of Nature, and its perilous and ironic consequence, that reason is enthralled to the organic, the unconscious, the irrational, and that, for all of the anthropocentric claims and prerogatives it has traditionally validated, it is deployed by the libido. Even Darwin’s contemporary, the witty Thomas Huxley, recognized as much when (only partly in jest) he imputed instinctual and predatory motives to the learned scientific debate over evolution itself. His clever animal metaphors contain a serious residue, a covert reminder that the scholars’ aggressive behavior will betray its own atavism. “And as to the curs which will bark and yelp, you must recollect that some of your friends, at any rate, are endowed with an amount of combativeness which (though you have often and justly rebuked it) may stand you in good stead. I am sharpening up my claws and beak in readiness.”

Darwin wrote in his Autobiography: “The old argument of design in nature, as given by Paley, which formerly seemed to me so conclusive, fails, now that the law of natural selection has been discovered. We can no longer argue that, for instance, the beautiful hinge of a bivalve shell must have been made by an intelligent being, like the hinge of a door by man.” But where Darwin’s abjuration of the mechanical model of Nature bore down most heavily on theology, Nietzsche’s critique of Descartes exposes its limiting and reductive effect on our concept of living (animal and human) creatures: “With respect to animals, it was Descartes who first dared, with admirable boldness, to conceive of the animal as machina [sic] . . . what is grasped at all about man today extends only to understanding him as ‘machinal’ [sic]” (3, AC, 620). The Cartesian model produces a vitalistically castrated animal and a mechanical man who thinks like a robot with a computer, “an unliving and yet uncannily active concept and word factory. . . . I am guaranteed only empty

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‘being’, not the full and green life; my original perception guarantees me only that I am a thinking, not a living creature, that I am not an animal [sic], but, at best, a cogital [sic]” (1, UM, 280). In the semantically paradoxical qualification of “at best” (“höchstens”), Nietzsche implies the deficiency of the cogito: that Cartesian consciousness presents us to ourselves only as a partial object, not as a complete organism.

Nietzsche’s structural approach to analyzing the history of the body / mind relationship usefully focuses the hidden assumptions behind anthropocentrism, particularly when it assumes a diachronic dimension as well. In trying to discover why the animal is traditionally negatively marked and construed as lacking that which makes the human complete, he notes that not only is rational consciousness regarded as a tessera, an essential part needed to complete the whole, but that the Cartesian dictum grants it logical priority as well, allowing us to say of ourselves only “cogito, ergo sum, but not vivo, ergo cogito” (1, UM, 280). Ultimately, Nietzsche uses Darwinian notions to defeat the Cartesian logical priority of consciousness with a historical argument (disguised as fable) for the ontological priority of living Nature.

Once upon a time, upon a star in some remote corner of the universe glittering and bestrewn with innumerable solar systems, clever animals invented knowledge. It was the most arrogant and untruthful moment in the “history of the world”; but it lasted only a minute. Nature had just taken a few breaths when the star petrified, and the clever animals died. One could invent such a fable and still not illustrate sufficiently how pitiful, how insubstantial and ephemeral, how purposeless and arbitrary the human intellect appears in the context of nature. For eternities it did not exist; and when it is once more extinct, nothing will have changed. For this intellect has no broader mission that would extend beyond human life. It is human, only, and only its possessor and inventor treats it as seriously as if the axis of the world revolved inside it. But if we could communicate with the mosquito, we would discover that it sails through the air with the same empathy and feels inside itself the flying center of the world.

(3, Truth, 1017)

We can live without thinking (in the Rausch, for example), Nietzsche seems to be implying, but we cannot think without living. Vital nature precedes, and survives, the advent of human consciousness and reason, which, set against the immense back-
drop of evolutionary history, constitute rational man as a mere ephemerid.

But Nietzsche, who treats intellectual forms as being as temporal, mutable, and contingent as biological forms, regards them as adaptations produced to compensate for bodily and instinctual weaknesses. He therefore explains why, historically, intellectual and spiritual ascendancy is coupled with repression of the sensual and passionate body, and why human cultural evolution has favored the survival of effete intellectual traditions (Christianity, democratic socialism, Romanticism, rationalism) at the expense of Dionysian modes of behavior (the militarism of Caesar and Napoleon, chthonic religions, the immorality of the Borgias, and so forth). Nietzsche's model of the birth of rational consciousness therefore complements Hegel's by giving human desire (for the desire of the "other") a causal lack (libidinal enervation) and thereby inversely relating animal and human desire.

Since Nietzsche regards rational consciousness as a compensation for instinctual deficiencies, the elision of the libido in Cartesian rationalism (evident both in the mechanical conception of the animal and in the primacy of the cogito) constitutes the human being as a eunuch. Both Freud, who in his essay on "The Uncanny" explores the relationship of mechanistic science and machines (automata) with fears of castration, and D. H. Lawrence, who treats the cogito as a partial object, a fetish, elaborate the psychosexual implications of Nietzsche's critique. In place of the traditional mind / body opposition, a far more sophisticated structural model of their interaction emerges in which a libidinal and a symbolic economy interact. In this economy a libidinal deficiency, which may be either real (the physiological enervation of Nietzsche's theory) or imaginary (the Lacanian threat of castration, for example), requires compensation. The human organism generates substitutions that always take the form of symbolic objects or fetishes. These acquire their symbolic value because libidinal energy is attached (cathected) to them, and they thereby assume phallic significance, that is, they come to stand for desirability itself.

This new model of the libidinal exchanges between natural and cultural life has its most disturbing consequences in connection with the redefinition of human violence. Violence has traditionally been attributed to the beast and the repression of the animalistic in man justified as the containment of violence nec-
essay to permit the flourishing of a rational, ideal, humanistic culture. However, in biocentric thought, animal violence is restored to its amoral Dionysian innocence: it functions as a discharge of power for its own sake, as an expenditure of superfluous, opulent energy and strength, and it is therefore simply appropriative, destroying its victims without malice or hatred, in the simple fulfillment of its biological destiny. In humans, this is the militarism and barbarism of Nietzsche’s Übermenschen and Lawrence’s lords of creation, and the attitude of both Nietzsche and Lawrence toward this natural human cruelty is a fatalistic assent. “Blessed are the powerful, for theirs is the kingdom of earth,” writes Lawrence. “Even Attila, the Scourge of God, who helped to scourge the Roman world out of existence, was great with power.”7 And Nietzsche writes in his Nachlass, “I rejoice in the military development of Europe, as well as its internal anarchic conditions; the time of peace and chinoiserie predicted by Galiani for this century is over. Personal, masculine capability, corporeal capability [Leibes-Tüchtigkeit] is becoming valued again, values are becoming more physical, nutrition more carnivorous. . . . The barbarian, as well as the wild animal, is affirmed in each of us” (4, PW, 27).

Implicit in this assent to animal (and human animal) violence is a critique of the myriad forms of cultural cruelty that are justified in the interest of civilization: the sanctions of morality, discipline, punishment, execution, repression, ideological persecution, and so on. Nietzsche’s deconstructions of morality in The Genealogy of Morals and The Birth of Tragedy expose culture’s fatuous claim to have abolished the bestial. “Virtually everything we call ‘higher culture’ rests on the spiritualization and sublimation of cruelty [Grausamkeit]—that is my proposition; the ‘wild animal’ has not been exterminated at all; it lives, it thrives, it has only become—deified” (3, BGE, 139). But Nietzsche’s critique has a complex teleology: his outrage at civilization’s hypocrisy and self-deception is motivated less by the violence it does to truth than by the violence it does to life. The civilized strategy against animal aggressiveness is both illogical and subversive: it multiplies rather than negates violence by repressing biological force with rational force, and, because it is motivated by the resentment of the weak against the strong, its aim is not the conservation and defense of life but its diminution and enervation in vital, potent, creatures. D. H. Lawrence represents this effete cultural righteousness in the figure of the castrating eunuch.

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Nietzsche’s exploration of the perversity of cultural violence, in both its logical self-contradiction and its bizarre libidinal circularity, paves the way for the biocentric indictment of the cultural figures of the priest, the scientist, and the artist. These are regarded as inimical to life because they sacrifice the interests of the animal and the living body on the altar of ideology, to reason, spirit, ideals, virtues, beauty, form. In excoriating the figure of the priest for sadism, Nietzsche deliberately uses the metaphor of the Tierbändiger to evoke the ironic interplay of means and ends (cruelty fighting cruelty) and the perverse exchange of roles as the “priest” becomes a more monstrous version of the very beast he tames. “Morality is a menagerie; its premise, that iron bars are more useful than freedom, even for the captive; its other premise, that there are animal tamers who do not shrink from frightful means, who know how to handle red-hot iron. This horrific species, which accepts battle with the wild animal, calls itself ‘priest’” (4, *PW*, 399). Other versions of these sadistic animal tamers occur in Kafka’s work, and, without critique, in Hemingway’s, such as the matadors in *Death in the Afternoon*.

The critique of pornology (the hypocritical investment of libido in cultural forms) is extremely difficult precisely because pornology speaks a devious discourse that purports to repress eroticism and violence while promoting and indulging it in a cultural guise. We therefore find quite different strategies at work in the critiques of different biocentric thinkers. Nietzsche and Lawrence practice a direct and brutal polemic, extruding pornological thought as an alien and “other” cultural form from which their own natural ontology and animality set them apart. Franz Kafka and Max Ernst, in contrast, are themselves deeply implicated in pornological modes, and they therefore pose as pornologists in order to invite the audience’s complicity. When, upon first reading, we admire the hunger artist or applaud Kafka’s ape for his successful human evolution, we become unwitting victims of a critique conducted in the form of a trap. I include a limited study of Hemingway precisely to serve as an instructive contrast, since his is uncritical pornology, naïve about its own hypocrisy. As a thoroughly anthropocentric writer superficially camouflaged as an advocate of life and power, Hemingway serves as a perfect foil for biocentric thinkers.

Hemingway’s work is particularly useful for displaying the artist as sadist, and he thereby inadvertently helps to demonstrate the two antithetical kinds of violence (natural and cul-

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tural, predatory and sadistic). He further unwittingly reveals them to be related and continuous, as the matador literally creates "art" out of torture and killing, thereby transforming an act of cruelty into a cultural event. Kafka seemingly does the same thing as he presents us with great cultural achievements in the guise of macabre performances: torture and killing ("In the Penal Colony"), suicide ("A Hunger Artist"), oppression and degradation ("A Report to an Academy"). But the difference lies in Kafka's technique of slyly repealing the representation, by de-signifying the event, stripping it of symbolic meaning, rendering its justifications absurd, reducing it to the order of the real, until the putatively transcendent heroes end like dead animals thrown into ditches and garbage dumps (Gregor, the officer, the hunger artist, and Josef K). Hemingway encodes atrocity as cultural performance; Kafka decodes cultural performance as atrocity. This antirepresentational strategy is a major weapon in the biocentric critique of an anthropocentric art in the service of human (as opposed to animal) desire.

The differences between biocentric and anthropocentric art correspond to the models of animal and human desire and the opposition they engender between creatural and cultural man. The end of biocentric art is autotelic—not the production of a representation, an artifact, a form, an ideal, but the creative process itself, the discharge of energy and power. "Art reminds us of conditions of animal vigor [sic]; it is sometimes an excess and effusion of burgeoning corporality in the world of images and wishes; at other times, an arousal of animalistic functions through images and wishes of intensified life, a heightening of the sensation of life and its stimulant" (4, PW, 128). Nietzsche gives these physiological metaphors of art as the ultimate aphrodisiac (als grösstes Stimulans des Lebens [4, PW, 344]) an increasingly literal twist; he describes artists as powerful animals (Krafttiere, sensuell) and equates their artistic productivity with their sexual prowess "with artists creativity ends with reproductive capability [Zeugungskraft]" (4, PW, 348). Yet it is on the question of art's erotic power that a structural distinction of Nature and culture can serve to avoid a potential confusion: neither Nietzsche's nor Lawrence's aphrodisiac art is allied to pornography precisely because of its biocentricity, its animal atavism, its primitiveness. It stimulates the body ("All art serves as suggestions to the muscles and senses, which are primordially active in naïve artistic peoples" [4, PW, 345]), not the cultural imagination.

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Anthropocentric art, formulated according to the Hegelian model of human desire, follows the triangular structure of all social and cultural mediations. The art consists of representations, whose function is to serve as tokens of cultural exchange and as media of social communication, that is, as mediated objects in the intersubjective relations between artist and public, who constitute a reciprocal “other.” This explains the significance and prestige of art, which is not intrinsic in the material but is invested in it by a subject seeking validation from an imaginary “other.” For example, if I “know” or “understand” a great work of art, I achieve a particular prestige because I have ostensibly appropriated the hidden “meaning” bestowed upon it by an “other” with the power to signify, for instance, God, the Author, Philosophy. Nietzsche reserves particular scorn for artists he deems the handmaidens of morality, philosophy, and religion, precisely because he detects in their practice the politics of the sycophantic panderer (3, GM, 289) whose power is derivative, cast from the shadow of an imaginary “other.” “At the least they always require a shield, a reserve, an already established authority: the artists never stand for themselves; independence goes counter to their deepest instincts” (3, GM, 289). But in those cases where independence is claimed for art, l’art pour l’art, Nietzsche devises an even more subtle twist to the anthropocentric model of art. “If we subtract from the lyric in tone and word the suggestion of this intestinal fever, what remains of lyric and music? . . . Perhaps l’art pour l’art: the virtuoso squawking of cold-blooded frogs, despairing in their swamp” (4, PW, 344). The subtraction of the intestinal fever (here, the physiological effect of being in love) marks the cold objectivity of l’art pour l’art as the site of a castration, the symptom of a missing passion.

In this second case, where no apparent external authority guarantees the significance of the anthropocentric work of art, the ulterior mechanism behind its idealization becomes more easily discernible. Since the physiological impulse appears to be lacking, that deficiency or lack becomes itself the source of an effete art whose function is that of a fetish, an arbitrary object invested with phallic significance in order to deny castration. Nietzsche, like Lacan in this century, seems to recognize that all idealization (and idealism) is psychologically grounded in symbolic castration (Nietzsche calls the idealist the Ideale Kastrat, [4, PW, 171]) and that the overestimation of the ideal is no more than displaced libidinal energy in the form of phallic signifi-
cance. The very prestige of art is consequently a symptom of its divorce from living vitality that betrays the status of its representations as mere simulacra of life. Nietzsche is therefore able to call the art of various ages (New Attic comedy, modern literature) counterfeit and the functions of various artists (Hugo, Wagner) charlatanism, without succumbing to the naïveté of the ancient charge that actors are liars and that the stage purveys untruths. But in Nietzschean psychology, the deficiency of life engenders hatred and resentment (resentment) in the weak, who fear the power of the strong as a threat to their survival. Idealism therefore has as an ulterior motive a hatred (dédaïn) for life and “natural things” (4, PW, 173), which prompts it to devalue Nature as its opposite. This dédaïn of the natural world constitutes the hidden cultural violence embedded in idealism, which Nietzsche finds represented in the figure of the castrato. “The voice of the castrato does not nauseate [dégoûté] us either despite the grisly mutilation that is its necessary condition: it has become sweeter” (4, PW, 171).

Their mediated status renders the representations of anthropocentric art suspect on two related grounds: they lie, and their falsehood prompts and perpetuates a devaluation of Nature and of life. Nietzsche’s critique of representation therefore proceeds from a psychological analysis of the metaphysical presuppositions of such abstractions as form, species, law, idea, purpose—all fictions with a false reality slipped under them (4, PW, 117). The function of these philosophical concepts is precisely to make living Nature intellectually tractable; to render its eternal changing, its infinite variety, its illogical procedures, its shape-shifting becoming intelligible to the rational imagination. Abstractions make it possible to freeze Nature in time, to fix it and make it hold still like a butterfly on a pin, to make objects equal to each other in order to create a “world of identical cases” that is “calculable, simplified, comprehensible, to us” (4, PW, 118). Abstractions are therefore more valued than Nature, Nietzsche argues, not because they are truer, or because they represent a truer world, but because they are useful for domesticating the world for our easier consumption. “Form counts as something permanent and therefore more valuable; but form is merely invented by us” (4, PW, 117). But it is the violence representation does to life, rather than to truth, that Nietzsche most thoroughly excoriates.

A nonartistic example does as well to illustrate the cultural overestimation of the abstract at the expense of the natural. The

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young Darwin who kills the curious, intent Chiloean fox in order to have it stuffed and displayed in the museum of the Zoological Society (JR, 280), values its cultural representation, its abstract function as a scientific model or "specimen," more highly than its unique, vivid, creatural existence. But Darwin, whose theories were not yet fully developed at the time of the Beagle voyage, is participating here in a scientific representational mode that he himself will render obsolete. After the discovery of evolution, the zoological museum, with its atemporal, discontinuous representations that virtually adumbrate a system of Platonic preexisting forms, is no longer adequate to represent the salient characteristics of biological form: its contingency and mutability. For Darwin himself revolutionized the concept of form, demonstrating that Nature produces form, not vice versa, and that form is engendered by force and desire rather than by mind. Specifically, it is natural selection and sexual selection that give the elephant her trunk and the stag his horns. Visual representation can communicate only the effect and symptom, never the organic process itself, unless the representation attacks the representation itself, as Surrealist art does when it hybridizes and mutates human and animal forms.

Given the two kinds of art engendered by natural and cultural perspectives, biocentric art confronts the challenge of producing a physiological or aphrodisiac art, an art that stimulates rather than persuades, that communicates viscerally rather than intellectually, that is transmitted animal to animal, organism to organism, like an infection rather than a philosophy. Of course, the paradox implicit in this caveat, of producing an art within culture that is not of culture, is only imperfectly resolvable in practice. All aspects of the work of art—its production, reception, and mechanisms—would need to escape cultural appropriation at the same time that books are written, printed, and sold in the usual way. But the philosophical model of culture I have been using, which delineates its distinctive features as mediation and enthrallment to the "other," does indeed suggest practical ways for biocentric art to preserve its bestial, autoletic aims. It would have to be produced unselfconsciously, without the motive, overt or covert, of aggrandizing the artist's ego, reputation, or social condition; its aim must be neither to impress nor to persuade, and the artist must be indifferent to misunderstanding; it must rely on techniques that circumvent reason but that speak to blood and bowels in those whose instincts are not yet atrophied.

The Biocentric Tradition
Because of the implication of representation in anthropocentric art (its abstraction, overestimation, and displacement of Nature), biocentric art turns to an antirepresentational mode best deployed in the form of the critique. A more logical recourse for biocentric artists might appear to be the total abolition of representation and the invention of a nonrepresentational mode. But the purely formalistic concerns of much abstract art (of synthetic cubism, for example) suggest that such a strategy might have exacerbated the problem by simply producing more abstraction. Instead, their technical solution lay in the skillful use of the critique, which invokes representation only to dismantle it, and thereby accommodates both an affective and an intellectually destructive (and deconstructive) aim. Nietzsche’s program for philosophizing “with the hammer” presents a suitable metaphor for those complex functions, as the critical act becomes an exercise in both power and aggression, and the destruction of the idols of culture by de-signifying and demythifying them (that is, using the “hammer” to sound the hollowness at their center) reveals their meanings as a lack and their prestige as founded on a void. This antirepresentational mode takes heterogeneous forms in different artists, including the representation of violence to representation, the de-signification of the figure of the animal, and rhetorical experiments with animal point of view.

The Surrealism of Max Ernst demonstrates best the biocentric attack on representation. I remember the first time I ever looked at Ernst’s collage novels. I sat in the college library with the volume held at arm’s length, taking quick, squinty peeks at the page, then snapping the book shut after each plate, as though in recoil from an assault. At the time I attributed my revulsion to the representations of violence in the works (hangings, beatings, stabbings, and so forth). But later I concluded that I was as repelled by the monstrous and fragmented figures in whom violence was, at best, a matter of inference rather than representation, and that my visceral shock had been triggered as much by the violent distortions of form as by the content of the scenes, that is, by the violence to representations, rather than in them. Ernst assaults one’s Platonic notions of form as something unified, ideal, permanent, and normative by inserting into his representations the Darwinian disruptions of form: time, mutability, variability, and chance. A post-Darwinian bird-headed man therefore produces a double shock in the viewer: the destruction of species as a normative category and the realization that, given the evolutionary play of time and chance, the creature represents

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a biological possibility. Ernst also occasionally represents his assault on representation narratively or pictorially, as in *Une Semaine de bonté*, where cultural monuments and classical figures are infested by vermin and teeming animal life, and where animals appropriate cultural roles (as in "The Lion of Belfort") and practice cultural forms of cruelty.

Although Ernst's art constitutes a radical questioning of the metaphysical presuppositions that govern our thinking about form and representation, it is Lawrence who specifically uncovers the dédain for life and natural things concealed in much literary practice and who devises a biocentric poetics to combat it. When I first began this study out of a more or less idle curiosity about the prominence of "animal imagery" in modern art, it was with utter naïveté about the vexed and oxymoronic nature of that term. Imagery presupposes the use of the concrete to express the abstract, and indeed, it seemed that nowhere in literature were animals to be allowed to be themselves, to refer to Nature and to their own animality without being pressed into symbolic service as metaphors, or as figures in fable or allegory (invariably of some aspect of the human). This poetic practice has ancient philosophical roots; Nietzsche, in an argument echoed and elaborated in Derrida's discussion of "white mythology," suggests the empirical foundations, the experiences of the body, effaced in such metaphysical concepts as "being." This widespread tendency to subordinate our perceptions of the natural world to cultural uses is generalized by Karl-Heinz Fingerhut in his careful and compendious study of Kafka's *Tierfiguren* into the postulate of a universal human instinct, an Anthropomorphisierungstrieb. The hidden assumption behind this thinking—that the animal and Nature do not signify—is, of course, literally true, and biocentric thinking would neither dispute nor wish to reverse it. But the practical consequence of this assumption, the devaluation of Nature as Nature and the contempt of all that is animal, renders the cultural bias of literary practice pernicious and dangerous from the biocentric point of view.

Lawrence, who, like Nietzsche, seems to measure human strength by the ability to dispense with meaning, implicitly critiques the confusion of signification with value. He consequently treats the encoding of the animal as symbol, metaphor, or allegory, as an impoverishment and a denigration, and, in a maneuver that challenges the traditional anthropomorphic functions of figurative language itself, he restores the animal qua animal to literature by liberating it from its tropological enslave-
ment to the human. "And this is the result of making, in our own conceit, man the measure of the universe. . . . Do you imagine the great realities, even the ram of Amon, are only symbols of something human? Do you imagine the great symbols, the dragon, the snake, the bull, only refer to bits, qualities or attributes of little man? It is puerile. The puerility [sic], the puppyish conceit of modern white humanity is almost funny."

Lawrence’s practice, like Ernst’s, is to insert aspects of Darwinian living form, such as temporality, mutability, and susceptibility to chance, into literary conventions, thereby transforming character into multiplicitous and fluid “allotropes,” eschewing novelistic closure, propelling events by irrational mechanisms of impulse, nostalgia, and free association that Lawrence often cloaks in the language of animism, as magic or spells. Lawrence’s rich figurative language continually repeals its representational function by recalling its literal (ergo concrete or natural) residue, a technique that echoes the dream’s literal decoding of idiomatic language. St. Mawr, the great stallion, is finally reclaimed as a symbol of a horse, a horse in the power and glory of his animality.

Lawrence effects the dissolution of culture in his works with various strategies aimed at neutralizing the effects of the “other” on the individual. The thematic divestiture of cultural artifacts and attributes (houses, careers, ambition, marriage, even speech and memory) follows, in Lawrence’s fiction, upon an ontological shift in the protagonist, for whom the entire social realm becomes unreal, and, therefore, dispensible. Lawrence portrays this ontological shift through a system of visual metaphors that correspond to representation and invisibility. Before the social world becomes wholly transparent and fades out of the protagonist’s imagination like a mirage or a hallucination, its unreality is first signaled through various attributes of representation: two-dimensional, miniaturized, synecdochic, fetishistic, abstract. Implicit in Lawrence’s sense of the social realm as mimetic theater—a tableau vivant, a charade, with houses and meubles as theatrical props—is the dominance of an illusory “other” that makes us play self-consciously for its approval. Lawrence’s “other” functions like an ocellus, a false eye (I) or an illusory consciousness, like the circles on butterfly wings that frighten predators away, or the portraits of Jesus in which the eyes seem to follow one about the room. Lawrence contrasts human enthrallment to this false eye (I), this illusory consciousness of the social world, with human disregard for the real eye of the animal: people utterly negate the animal as a

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perceiving consciousness by acting as though animals do not see them, and yet society’s ocelli make them self-conscious, afraid, ashamed, gratified. In *St. Mawr*, the animal eye, or “third eye,” ultimately reclaims the protagonist to Nature as it reclaims the novella’s point of view. The voice that speaks of the feral landscape at the end of the work speaks for Nature and its creatures (including human creatures) and places them beyond the reach of the “other.” Impervious to human judgment, admiration, and significance, Lawrence’s is not a Romantic wilderness.

Beneath the striking surface dissimilarities, Lawrence and Kafka share a philosophical “deep structure” grounded in their common interplay with Nietzsche’s biocentric premises. This common ground is a similar grasp of the ontological relationship of the animal to culture, the common impetus behind their experiments with cultural divestiture and its implications for narrative perspective. For Lawrence, for example, this divestiture is portrayed as an enormous leap that defies novelistic plausibility; beginning with maximal cultural representation (in *St. Mawr*, an Edwardian heroine of rank and wealth, with a house in Westminster), he ends with the greatest practicable ferity (a stripped-down, natural existence in an unconquerable wilderness) with its threat to individualism, sanity, and survival preserved. Kafka practices his cultural divestiture over time, with a gradual shedding of his figures’ bourgeois attributes (beginning with Gregor Samsa), so that in his last published story only the minimal cultural representations of the remnants (or rudiments) of Josefine’s rodent society remain to be divested. But if Lawrence divests greater quantities of cultural appurtenances, Kafka divests culture more absolutely. Not only is Josefine stripped of her artistic semiological functions, but also the narrator abdicates his role as an “other” by dismantling and destroying his own discourse. His narration cancels itself in the act of telling; his argument retracts itself after every point. The animal point of view, in Kafka, turns out to be no point of view at all, but rather a comportment toward others that negates itself because it is marked by a lack of judgment, by a lack of otherness, by profound indifference. Kafka, in “Josefine, the Singer or the Mouse Folk,” produces the most radical and most brilliant solution to the technical paradox of biocentric art.

By experimenting with alternative ontologies, biocentric artists were inevitably confronted with the metaphysical presuppositions underlying literary modes and genres. The rationalistic assumptions of conventional realism (including a logical subject,
cause and effect, the relationship of part and whole, "plausibility," noncontradiction) could scarcely accommodate the exploration of organic, feral, natural life. Biocentric art therefore eschewed realism in favor of new, experimental modes that are easily confused with the visionary, the allegorical, or the satirical, if we consider only their representations and disregard the destructive rhetorical strategies aimed at those representations. The novel, likewise, is historically and conventionally grounded in the social or Symbolic Order, and, although later generations of postmodern writers have indeed deranged the relationship between subject, world, and "other" in complex ways, the experiments of modern novelists are difficult to push, hermeneutically, beyond the point of mere subversion. However antirational, anti-institutional, and misanthropic their purpose, *Women in Love* and *The Trial* seem finally to explore the fate of cultural man in society without giving more than incidental voice to the animal. For these reasons, biocentric art tends to flourish in the minor works of major authors, in loose, short, informal, fictional genres without clear traditional functions or conventional expectations, such as sketches, short stories, novellettes, dramatic monologues, and travelogues. But because it requires a philosophical reeducation of the reader, generic and modal experimentation invariably has a decisive (and usually negative) impact on the reception of the literary work. In the case of Kafka, for example, allegorical readings have tended to prevail over rhetorical readings of the works (perhaps because translation renders Kafka's rhetorical nuances uncertain and elusive to the American readership that constitutes such a crucial element in his international market), and the incomplete and inconclusive novels take precedence, as major works, over the brilliant animal narratives that are the product of his literary maturity. I would argue that the canonical triumph of the novels lies precisely in their vestigial anthropocentrism, which blunts the reader's confrontation with Kafka's radical animal ontology.

The reception of the biocentric tradition has been such that one might think its art had been designed to frustrate communication and thereby ensure its own obscurity and ephemerality. And so, in a sense, it has, although less from perversity than from philosophical necessity. Once a text abdicates its anthropocentric functions of meaning, of representing its author, and authorizing, its cultural relationship to the reader becomes disturbed and ceases to operate along conventional lines. Although texts accomplish this in the variety of ways I have been discuss-

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ing, Kafka’s critique in “Josefine” serves as a uniquely radical example of an antirepresentational and anticultural text. By calling up representations only to repeal them, making statements only to recant them, Kafka’s text achieves an interplay between presence and absence (like a word that is crossed out, or an order that is cancelled) that serves as an exemplar for the Derridean antimetaphysical concepts of the trace, or, more specifically, for “writing under erasure,” *sous rature*. How then do we read texts *sous rature*, texts that rebuff us, that withdraw their meaning from us, that abdicate authority? Since the psychoanalyst performs a similar role in therapy, we may use this situation as a model, and it suggests that such texts force us to read ourselves, to reflect upon our own enthrallment to the “other,” to listen to the voice of our own beast.

These self-reflexive metaphors of recognizing the animal in oneself have acquired a glibness in the post-Darwinian age that belies the scandal produced by biocentrism. In recounting the three great shocks inflicted upon the human ego by science—the Copernican revolution, Darwinism, and psychoanalytic theory—Freud reveals modern man as displaced from the center of his universe three times over, from cosmos, earth (“biological research destroyed man’s putative priority in creation and relegated him to a descent from the animal kingdom, and to an ineradicable animal nature”), and the human mind itself. But it was a Victorian lady who revealed even more clearly the dimensions of human vanity threatened by evolutionary theory. “It is said, that when the Bishop of Worcester communicated the intelligence to his wife that the horrid Professor Huxley had announced that man was descended from the apes, she exclaimed, ‘Descended from the apes! My dear, let us hope it is not true, but if it is, let us pray that it will not become generally known.’” The good lady minds less being an animal, than being seen or regarded as an animal, a comportment that, in fact, proves her humanity (in a Hegelian sense) by revealing her primary enthrallment to the “other.” The anguished cry of the “Elephant Man” (in the recent Lynch film production), “I am not an animal!” is precisely a proclamation to the “other” of his consciousness, his function as a subject, his power to signify, claims that alone can guarantee him the social prerogatives of the human (freedom from abuse, enslavement, and reification). The point I wish to emphasize is that the question of the status of the animal has meaning only in the context of the social realm, the Symbolic Order, in which it is negated as a value, and

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in which it enjoys only negative prestige. To biocentric thinkers like Lawrence, the concerns of the bishop’s wife constitute the primordial scandal: the scandal of being scandalized. In the Lawrencean biocentric universe there would be power and splendor in proclaiming, “I am an animal,” although in that asocial realm, with its negation of the “other,” that ontological proclamation would be superfluous.

The question of the psychological enactment of biocentrism, that is, What exactly does one do about it? inevitably raises concomitant questions about the fate of culture. The fictional program of biocentric thinkers evades this dilemma to some extent by isolating biocentric protagonists from culture, like Zarathustra on his mountain top, Lawrence’s heroes on their exotic voyages, and Kafka’s animal protagonists, whose milieux become increasingly feral until all traces of culture are effaced. This lends a certain naiveté to the most direct solution to the biocentric dilemma, namely that what is called for is not doing but undoing, that for humans, becoming the animal entails becoming what one already is, a reclamation produced not by acts of consciousness but by acts of forgetting. This ontological shift would not constitute a nihilistic act but a Dionysian affirmation of the body, the animal, and vitalistic nature. The “highest state a philosopher can achieve: a Dionysian standing in Dasein—my formula for this is amor fati’” (4, PW, 426). Presumably the mutability and diversity of organic life would produce many versions of biocentric behavior, including aggressive carnivores like Nietzsche and vegetarian herbivores like Kafka.

Careful to avoid the anthropomorphizations of Nature and natural man implicit in Romanticism, Nietzsche elaborates and complicates this model of natural reclamation to keep it consistent with biocentric objectives. Although he claims that domestication is superficial and reversible (thereby contesting its putative Darwinian formulation), Nietzsche rigorously hedges the “return to Nature” with qualifications. Nature is not a lost Eden or a privileged origin, and a simple return is impossible because “there has never been a natural humanness” (4, PW, 208). Rather, the process entails a struggle against unnatural values, and its result is better described in the metaphor of recuperation and convalescence as a “healing” of Nature “from” culture (4, PW, 334). The result of this process is not Rousseau’s noble savage but the wild man, who, culturally speaking, is der böse Mensch. Furthermore, Nietzsche considers Darwinian Nature
inimical to the "higher type" of human organism, the lucky accident, producing instead a human creature constituted of adaptation and compromise, the average type of the Nivellierten (4, PW, 221). "I find the 'cruelty of Nature,' of which one speaks so much, in a different quarter: she is cruel to her lucky ones [Glückskinder], she preserves and protects and loves les humbles [sic]" (4, PW, 341). The return to Nature is therefore complicated by the "great question" posed in Darwinian metaphors, "where has the plant 'Mensch' grown most splendidly before now?" (4, PW, 439)—that is, under what optimal conditions can a higher type of wild man, a barbarian of the heights (4, PW, 438) be produced? Without actually presenting a program, Nietzsche suggests that Übermenschen will not thrive in Nature but must be carefully bred and nurtured like hothouse plants. This eugenic proposal is saved from the anthropocentric implications of its agricultural metaphor only by Darwin's own reminder that the breeder is not a creator, that he does not control natural process but merely interferes with its directions, and that from the point of view of the organism, his function is analogous to that of chance.

Nietzsche no more produces a political program than do the other biocentric thinkers, even though the political ramifications of his ideas are by no means benign, and even though his ideas are, and have been, misappropriated. These misappropriations not only result from the hermeneutical challenges that biocentric thought poses to readers, but are indigenous to any translations from Nature to culture that disregard the role of the "other" as the key to distinguishing natural and cultural systems. Without analysis of its rhetorical strategies and the crucial manipulation of the "other" at the heart of propaganda and spectacle, the Third Reich may indeed be misconstrued as a biocentric dystopia. But the tasks of distinguishing biocentrism from its cultural parodies, and of distinguishing the myriad false doubles created by the insertion of the lack and the "other" into the libidinal realms, are not easily mastered. Biocentrism, with its affirmation of the animal and, by possible extension, physical prowess, genetic constitution, and racial destiny, has therefore undergone intellectual repression along with fascist ideology in the aftermath to World War II. But given its own aspirations to the status of an intellectual trace, as well as its dangerous vulnerability to ideological misappropriation, the disappearance of the biocentric tradition need not be mourned.

Biocentrism is inevitably reanthropomorphized when it is
translated into cultural practice, in its benevolent versions no less than its malevolent. The democratic extension of recognition and protection to natural, organic, unconscious life—Nature, land, animals, and (in a curious ideological misalliance) prenatal life—is as much a false double of biocentrism as fascism. Undoubtedly biocentric impulses propel many of these concerns, for example, wilderness and wildlife conservation and animal liberation. But their effectiveness as political objectives depends upon justifying them on traditional humanist grounds, as exemplifying rational and ethical human behavior, particularly behavior in relation to property, an argument that demonstrates Nature’s appropriation into the Symbolic Order. The concept of responsible stewardship that informs much of the rhetoric of these movements actually reasserts the anthropocentrism implicit in the Biblical hierarchy of creation. Only a radical variant of these philosophies, one that essentially advocated returning the earth to a feral state, would approximate a genuine biocentric vision.

Since biocentrism has no real practical effects, the outcome of a study of biocentric thought and art should be, strictly speaking, an experience sous nature: something recognized, forgotten, and yet insistent still in affects, instincts, and dreams, like a faint nostalgia for our own infantile and presocial past. But in my own case, the forgetting and fatalism of biocentrism did not entirely heal the strange pain of having once seen through animal eyes. Instead of feeling enriched, like Tiresias, who lived two lives and enjoyed double vision, I felt scarred, like one discovering a hidden kinship with the most brutally oppressed creatures upon the earth. The gaze of wild animals in a zoo still makes me feel diffident and ashamed, as do, at times, the eyes of degraded household pets. And although I recognize it as no more than a humanistic compromise whose residue of virtue is corrupted at the outset, I try to protest the more egregious cultural appropriations of sensate life in food production, sport, clothing manufacture, and scientific experimentation. I try (however imperfectly) to maintain a vegetarian diet; to eschew fur and (when possible) leather clothing; to protest the genetic debilitations of wildlife by commercial and trophy hunters, and after once listening to the anguished bellow of a trapped wild boar in the German Odenwald, the unimaginable cruelties of trapping. I also pledge ten percent of my proceeds from this book to support the Animal Protection Institute in its fight against scientific experimen-

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tation upon live animal bodies. But my philosophically inconsist­tent and confused response is not intended to serve as a model for anyone else. The biocentric vision speaks with no strictly homogeneous voice, and everyone will hear a different call in the wild cry of the beasts of the modern imagination.