Monkey Trouble
Christopher Peterson

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INTRODUCTION

5. Agamben, The Open, 37. Agamben argues that the premodern machine operated in an inverted fashion by humanizing animal life such that some humans came to signify the border between human and animal: the slave, the barbarian, the foreigner, etc.
8. See Wolfe, Animal Rites, 124.
10. Ibid., 211, 138.
15. Ibid., 51, 2, 52.
16. Ibid., 52.
17. Ibid., 2.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid. Projecting the passivity of death onto animals, Heidegger famously declared that “only man dies.” The animal merely “perishes” because death names an ostensibly unique human capability or capacity to know death “as such.” See Heidegger, “The Thing,” 178. As Derrida counters, however, humans no more have access to the “as such” of death than do
animals because finitude marks precisely the threshold that separates life from an inaccessible death. See Derrida, *Aporias*, 77.

22. On this necessary and irresolvable tension between univocity and equivocity, see Derrida, *Edmund Husserl’s Origin of Geometry*, 105. I provide an expanded discussion of this tension in chapters 1 and 4.


25. Ibid., 196.

26. Ibid., 7, 6, 205.

27. Ibid., 199; Agamben, *The Open*, 38.


31. Ibid., 80.


33. Ibid., 20.


38. Ibid., 86.

39. Derrida, *Animal*, 4. David Wood’s article “If a Cat Could Talk” is accompanied by a photo of Derrida holding a Siamese cat in his lap. The caption gives the name “Logos” to the animal, but Wood does not mention this name in the article. One of Derrida’s translators has advised me that Derrida called the cat depicted in the photo Lucrèce. A number of websites give the name Logos to Derrida’s cat based on a quotation from “Plato’s Pharmacy”: “Logos, a living animate creature, is thus also an organism that has been engendered.” Yet in context Derrida is clearly not talking about his or any other cat. See Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy,” 84.


42. Coetzee, “Exposing the Beast.” Kari Weil argues similarly that, “unlike in women’s studies or ethnic studies . . . those who constitute the objects of animal studies cannot speak for themselves, or at least they cannot speak any of the languages that the academy recognizes as necessary for such self-representation” (*Thinking Animals*, 4).


52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid., 86.

55. See Wolfe, *Before the Law*, 93. Wolfe acknowledges that the *à venir* does not equate with the Kantian idea, yet teleology slips in through the back door when he figures full inclusivity as either desirable but impossible or desirable and achievable. As I argue in chapter 4, the *à venir* is neither reducible to the Kantian idea nor diametrically opposed to it.

56. Ibid., 92.

57. I draw here from a similar claim advanced by Martin Hägglund that the perfect democracy is *normatively* undesirable. As I explain in chapter 4, however, I disagree with him that democracy (or anything else for that matter) is *descriptively* undesirable in the sense that we cannot desire it. See Hägglund, *Radical Atheism*.


61. The “wound” narrative also does not consider popular curiosity with natural history in the nineteenth century, which prompted museum exhibits of orangutans as well as ubiquitous performances of “missing links” and “monkey men” on Victorian stages in the decades prior to the publication of Darwin’s *Origin*. See Goodall, *Performance and Evolution*, 9. See also Fleming and Goodall, “Dangerous Darwinism,” 259–271.


63. Lestel, *L’Animal Singulier*, 59–86. Carrie Rohman also writes of “Darwin’s catastrophic blow to human privilege” in *Stalking the Subject*, 1. I would be remiss not to acknowledge that Derrida also registers his belief in the Copernican and Darwinian myths in *The Animal That Therefore I am*. That he does so in the context of an argument that insists on the nonpower of the human to erase its or any other trace, however, suggests that he does not conceive this series of wounds as belonging to a teleological movement that could successfully eradicate narcissism. See Derrida, *Animal*, 136.


65. Freud, “An Outline of Psychoanalysis,” 61. For an expanded discussion of disavowal as it relates to the intersection of race, sexuality, and
animality, see the introduction to my Bestial Traces. On disavowal and ego splitting as a fundamental component of psychopathology, see Bass, *Difference and Disavowal*, 33.

68. I thank J. Hillis Miller for alerting me to the etymology of cabbage as well as to the anthropomorphism it implies.
76. Gratton, *Speculative Realism*, 2, 1, 2.
77. Sontag, “Imagination of Disaster.”

1. The Scandal of the Human: Immanent Transcendence and the Question of Animal Language

2. Ibid., *Vibrant Matter*, ix.
3. Ibid., 120.
4. Ibid., ix.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., 28.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., 29.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Coetzee, “Exposing the Beast.”
14. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 14, 42.
18. Ibid., 165.
21. Ibid., 121.
23. Ibid.

29. Ibid., xx.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., xvii, ix.
33. Ibid.
35. Ibid., viii. While Bennett shares with object-oriented ontology a concern for the agency and vitality of things, she does not describe her work as object-oriented ontology. Bennett’s vibrant materialism is in fact distinct from object-oriented ontology insofar as it does not position itself as anti-Kantian, and thus does not disavow subjectivity or relationality tout court.

36. Ibid., 100.
37. Ibid., 107.
38. Ibid., 122. See Levinas, “Paradox of Morality,” 168–180. According to Levinas: “The ethical extends to all living beings. We do not want to make an animal suffer needlessly and so on” (172). He expresses this concern for animal suffering independent of the Kantian principle that animal cruelty fosters harm toward humans. Yet he does not affirm that animals have faces, which would mean that, consistent with his larger philosophical principles, animal slaughter is unethical. Kant acknowledged animal suffering, but he nevertheless acquiesced to the practice of vivisection because “it is employed for a good purpose” (*Lectures on Ethics*, 213). Levinas does not comment on vivisection, but he gives the impression that some suffering is justifiable: “Vegetarianism, for example, arises from the transference to animals of the idea of suffering. The animal suffers. It is because we, as human, know what suffering is that we can have this obligation” (172). If “human ethics” is the “prototype” according to which we should not cause unnecessary animal suffering, then carnivorism would seem to occupy the same position in Levinasian ethics as vivisection does in Kantian ethics: an unavoidable yet justifiable cruelty (ibid.).
41. Ibid., 165.
42. Naas, Derrida from Now On, 188.
43. Ibid., 193.
44. Ibid., 192.
45. Derrida, Voice and Phenomenon.
46. Ibid., 89.
47. Ibid., 88.
51. Kant, Lectures on Ethics, 212.
52. Ibid., 51, 2, 52.
53. Ibid., 52.
On the topic of how these experiments produce talking apes, see Chruliew, “Philosophical Ethology of Dominique Lestel,” 17–44.
56. Lestel, L’animal singulier, 120; my translation.
59. Lestel, L’animal singulier, 119; my translation.
60. Derrida, Monolingualism of the Other, 2.
61. Ibid., 25.
63. de Man “Autobiography as De-Facement,” 70.
64. Pepperberg, Alex Studies, 41.
65. Ibid., 44.
66. Pepperberg, Alex and Me.
67. Terrace et al., “Can an Ape Create a Sentence?,” 900.
68. Smith, “Thinking Bird or Just Another Birdbrain?”
69. Derrida, Rogues, 7.
70. Pepperberg, Alex Studies, 41.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid., 44.
73. Ibid.
76. Ibid., 103.
80. Ibid., 8, 45.
81. Ibid., 26, 8.
82. Ibid., 2, 8.
83. Ibid., 8.
84. Ibid., 50.
85. Ibid., 77.

2. SOVEREIGN SILENCE: THE DESIRE FOR ANSWERING SPEECH
2. I discuss these racist representations in the introduction to my *Bestial Traces*, 1–7.
4. Ibid., 80.
5. MacLeod, “‘Do we of necessity become puppets in the story?’ Or Narrating the World,” 1–18.
7. Ibid., 152.
8. Ibid., 153.
11. Ibid., 154.
12. Ibid., 152.
13. Ibid., 141.
14. Ibid., 142.
15. Ibid., 157.
16. Ibid., 8.
17. Ibid., 59.
18. Ibid., 118.
20. Ibid., 150, 149.
21. Kalpana Rahita Seshadri argues similarly that we should avoid reducing silence either to an effect of repression or to a “pristine state” exterior to language. See her *HumAnimal*, 33.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., 39, 40.
25. Ibid., 1.
26. Ibid., 25.
29. We need only replace the word bodies with words in Coetzee’s phrase to grasp this impossible idiomaticity: *This is a place where words are their own signs*. How could words be their own signs? How could any word belong fully to itself? How could it sign anything except on the condition that it exist in relation to other signs whose alterity deprives it of its ownness?
30. Ibid., 88.
32. Derrida refers explicitly to Husserl’s notion of analogical appresen-tation in a number of texts in addition to *Violence and Metaphysics* and *Voice and Phenomenon*. See “Rams,” 135–164; and *Gift of Death*.
34. Derrida does not employ the concept of “citationality” in *Voice and Phenomenon*, but his discussion of Husserl anticipates the circulation of this term in later texts such as “Signature Event Context.” See Derrida, “Signature Event Context,” 307–330.
35. Ibid., 69.
36. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., 248, 249.
40. Parry, “Speech and Silence,” 154, 158.
41. Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other*, 64.
42. Ibid., 65.
44. This opacity of meaning is further muddied by the puzzling dream logic that conflates the individual events that brought Cruso, Friday, and Susan to the island. In one of his conflicting stories, Cruso claims that he and Friday were the sole survivors of a shipwreck. Although Susan was cast adrift in a rowboat along with her dead captain when the crew of their ship muti-nied, the final section of the novel imagines Susan, Friday, and the captain entombed within the same wreckage.
46. Ibid., 69.
47. Ibid., 98, 119.
48. Ibid., 146.
49. Ibid., 198.
52. Brown, “In the ‘folds of our own discourse,’” 186.
55. Brown, “In the ‘folds of our own discourse,’” 189.
56. Chesnutt, *Conjure Woman*.
57. Ibid., 163, 166.
58. Ibid., 160.
59. Ibid., 170, 169.
60. Ibid., 172.
63. I say “almost always” not to imply that an individual act of slave resistance can overturn racial hierarchies altogether. Yet if a slave were to commit an extreme act of resistance, such as killing the master, she can reasonably be said to have gained the upper hand, at least fleetingly. Moreover, the impossible purity of sovereignty *as such*, should not be collapsed onto the experience of slavery in which the master’s authority is felt *as if* it were absolute.
64. Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations*, 390.
66. Ibid., 162, 160.
68. Chesnutt, *Conjure Woman*, 162.
70. Ibid. Washington goes on to explain that “this news was usually gotten from the coloured man who was sent to the post-office for the mail. In our case the post-office was about three miles from the plantation, and the mail came once or twice a week. The man who was sent to the office would linger about the place long enough to get the drift of the conversation from the group of white people who naturally congregated there, after receiving their mail, to discuss the latest news. The mail-carrier on his way back to our master’s house would as naturally retail the news that he had secured among the slaves, and in this way they often heard of important events before the white people at the ‘big house,’ as the master’s house was called.”
72. Ibid., 172.
73. “The Dumb Witness” was accepted for publication in 1897, but ultimately was not published during Chesnutt’s lifetime. A modified version was incorporated into Chesnutt’s novel, *The Colonel’s Dream* (1905). For more
on the complicated publication history of Chesnutt’s story, see Richard Broadhead’s introduction to *The Conjure Woman and Other Conjure Tales*, 18.

76. Ibid., 8.
79. This “yes” is related to Derrida’s notion of the *arrivant*, which signifies whoever or whatever arrives (*ce qui arrive*). Even if we say “no” to this *arrivant* because it threatens injury or harm, this negation nevertheless presupposes a prior “yes,” an originary vulnerability and exposure to a world with others. See Derrida, *Aporias*, 33–34; and Derrida, “A Number of Yes,” 231–240.

3. THE GRAVITY OF MELANCHOLIA:
A CRITIQUE OF SPECULATIVE REALISM
11. Ibid., 3.
15. Husserl, *Crisis of European Sciences*, 185.
17. Ibid.
19. Ibid., 45.
20. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
31. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*.
32. Harman, “Aesthetics as First Philosophy.”
37. See my “Slavery’s Bestiary: Joel Chandler Harris’s *Uncle Remus Tales*,” in *Bestial Traces*, 50–73.
39. Ibid., 195.
40. Ibid., 199.
42. As Derrida argues, “absolute power can be figured by the grandeur of the grandest but also by smallness, arch-smallness, the absolute diminution of the smallest. . . . The political power that is today trying to make its sovereignty prevail thanks to its economic and techno-scientific resources (I was mentioning last time the satellites of worldwide surveillance, whose information is sometimes bought by the United States) does so through the refinement of what are now called nanotechnologies” (*Beast and the Sovereign*, 1:257–258).
44. While I subscribe to Derrida’s view that mourning and melancholia are not absolutely distinct—that is, the death of the other engenders an irre- mediable loss of the world, thereby forcing us to “carry the world of the other . . . after the end of the world”—some forms of melancholia are clearly more livable than others, more open to a future that says “yes” to mourning even if this affirmation must remain equivocal. Mourning may be interminable, but a mourning that says “yes” to loss without any pang of regret would be, in the final analysis, indistinguishable from the disavowal of loss that conditions melancholia in the first place. See Derrida, “Rams,” 140.
46. Ibid., 12.
50. Ibid., 255, 254.
54. Ibid., 170.
55. Bryant, Democracy of Objects, 29.
57. Ibid., 185.
58. Faulkner, As I Lay Dying, 160.
59. Coetzee, Foe, 152.
60. Meillassoux, After Finitude, 124.
61. Ibid., 121.
63. Meillassoux, After Finitude, 14, 13.
64. Ibid. The original French states that the correlationist codicil is “discretèment [discreetly] placé en bout de phrase.” The English translation introduces the incorrect “discretely.” See Meillassoux, Après la finitude, 30.
65. Ibid., 15.
66. Ibid.
68. Meillassoux, After Finitude, 17.
69. Ibid., 115, 116.
70. Ibid., 117.
71. Ibid., 118.
72. Ibid., 136.
75. Dante, Divine Comedy, 185.
78. Ibid., 110.
79. Arendt, On Revolution, 42.
80. Ibid., 45. Arendt suggests that this shift in sense from restoration to transformation explains why no less a revolutionary than Thomas Paine could characterize the French and American revolutions as “counterrevolutions” (in
a positive sense) that declared the inalienable political rights of all men by virtue of birth yet denied by centuries of tyranny.

82. Ibid., 118.
83. Ibid., 123.
85. *Another Earth*, directed by Mike Cahill (Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2011), DVD.
86. *Solaris*, directed by Andrei Tarkovsky (Criterion Collection, 2011), DVD.
87. The figure of the counter-earth can be traced to the origins of science fiction cinema in the iconic scene from Georges Méliès’s *Le Voyage dans la Lune* (1902), in which a bullet-shaped space capsule carrying earthly inhabitants strikes the eye of the moon’s anthropomorphized face. Humans project their own image as far away as the moon, whose vision must be immediately rendered half blind, as if to proscribe in advance the possibility of any cosmic reverse shot, thus preserving the unidirectional gaze. For an analysis of this scene from Méliès’s film in terms of what this interplanetary shot/reverse shot implies for even the most intimate of intraterrestrial gazes between self and other, see Szendy, *Kant in the Land of Extraterrestrials*, 129–133.
90. Sontag, “Imagination of Disaster.”
91. Carlsen, “The Only Redeeming Factor is the World Ending.”
92. I previously discussed this scene and several others from von Trier’s film in an analysis that interrogated the false choice between literal and allegorical interpretation. See my “Magic Cave of Allegory,” 400–422.

4. LISTING TOWARD COSMOCRACY: THE LIMITS OF HOSPITALITY

4. Ibid., 131.
9. Ibid.
13. Ibid., 52. 1855 edition.
14. Ibid., 715; ellipses in the original.
15. Ibid., 233.
17. Levinas, *Time and the Other*, 64.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., 65.
22. Ibid., 77.
23. Ibid., 32.
26. In “The Poet,” Emerson wrote that “bare lists of words are found suggestive, to an imaginative and excited mind” (334). The objects cataloged by OOO are deliberately chosen for their apparent incongruity, which is to say that they are chosen precisely to give the impression of not having been chosen, of having been selected at random, as if attesting to a form of non-judgmental, “solar” judgment.
31. Ibid., 425.
32. Ibid., 36.
33. Previously signifying a human or animal bed as well as nonhuman offspring, litter assumed an expanded sense in the nineteenth century due to its association with straw and animal waste, leading to its modern equation with disorder and debris.
38. For more on Whitman’s complex relation to feminism, see Pollak, “In Loftiest Spheres,” 172–193.
43. Ibid., 142.
44. Ibid., 133.
45. Ibid., 138.
46. Ibid., 142.
48. Ibid., 66.
51. Ibid., 75.
53. Peter Gratton argues persuasively that speculative realists, in particular Meillassou and Harman, exclude temporality and thereby reinscribe the metaphysics of presence. If virtually everything is an object for Harman, then how, Gratton asks, can we account for an object such as music since it depends precisely on time? See Gratton, “Post-Deconstructive Realism,” 84–90.
54. Ibid., 133.
58. Ibid., 78, 83, 81.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid., 54.
69. Ibid., 29.
71. Ibid., 458.
72. Ibid., 460.
73. Ibid., 458.
74. Ibid., 458.
75. Ibid., 457.
76. Ibid., 461. This identification of America with novelty and futurity in opposition to European morbidity is one of the quintessential gestures of
American exceptionalism. The myth of “virgin land,” for instance, not only licensed the extermination of native peoples, but equated Europe with temporality and America with timeless space, thus exempting the latter from “the human experience of birth, death, and rebirth” (Noble, *Death of a Nation*, xl). In this regard, the “living present” of Whitman’s new world, a present that contains both the past and the future, echoes George Berkeley’s “Verses on the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America” (1728), which similarly characterizes America as “time’s noblest offspring,” a progeny that escapes European “decay” (234).

77. Ibid.
78. Ibid., 459.
79. Ibid., 460.
80. Ibid., 457.
82. Morton, “Here Comes Everything,” 163.
83. Marder, “For a Phytocentrism to Come,” 249.
84. For an expanded critique of Marder, see my “Races.”
91. Ibid., 13.
93. Ibid., 102.
94. “Cette réduction doit être indéfiniment recommencée, car le langage ne peut ni ne doit se maintenir sous la protection de l’univocité” (Derrida, “Introduction,” in Husserl, *L’origine de la géométrie*, 104).

99. Ibid., 32.
100. Ibid., 202.
101. Ibid., 170.
102. Ibid.

103. In a critique of Hägglund, Naas asks, “Isn’t it possible to desire and yet not desire something? Might it not make more sense to talk about an aporia or denegation of desire rather than a so-called or purported desire that dissimulates a real one?” (“An Atheism,” 61).
104. Hägglund, *Radical Atheism*, 204.
105. Ibid., 169.
106. Ibid., 203.
107. Ibid.
112. For an analysis of this undesirability in relation to Coetzee’s *Disgrace*, see my “Ashamed of Shame” in *Bestial Traces*, 113–146.
115. Ibid.
118. Ibid., 369.
120. Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, 369
121. Ibid.
123. Ibid., 37.
125. Ibid., 81.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid., 79, 80.
128. Ibid., 77.
129. Ibid., 80.
130. Fleming and O’Carroll, “Paganism.”