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## Authority And Exaltation

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# **Authority and Exaltation**

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The Division of Social Studies  
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By  
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Something stronger than death would not permit him to die.  
Love? Bitterness? No, a person lives by virtue of the same  
reasons as a tree, a stone, a dog

—Shalamov, *Kolyma Tales*

If I have told you these details about the asteroid, and made a note of its number for you, it is on account of the grown-ups and their ways. When you tell them that you have made a new friend, they never ask you any questions about essential matters. They never say to you, ‘What does his voice sound like? What games does he love best? Does he collect butterflies?’ Instead, they demand: ‘How old is he? How many brothers has he? How much does he weigh? How much money does his father make?’ Only from these figures do they think they have learned anything about him.

—Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*

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## ***Dinner With A Philosopher***

Dear reader, I would like to begin with a personal note, from me to you about the journey of this fruitful pursuit of knowledge. You may think this to be unnecessary, but it is absolutely crucial, and it has everything to do with human value, everything to do with nature, and everything to do with how we think of knowledge and understanding.

When I first started thinking about this project I had two general interests, one was in philosophy of mind and another was in anthropology relating to how conceptions of nature as pure or impure contributed to the trafficking of women. I approached my philosophy advisor during that time and asked whether there was an angle in philosophy I could grapple with the second sort of question. Her room was pristine, and I once watched her stare at a small puddle of spilled water sitting on the table in front of another student. After five minutes of struggling to avert her eyes, she gave in to the temptation, and, pulling out a napkin, went “*Really? That doesn't bother you?*” This philosopher began to explain to me that one needs to be weary of writing historically for a philosophy paper, and this of course led her into an attempt at explaining the difference between history and philosophy and concluded with her saying, “but then you've got Foucault and Derrida and they're claimed by sociologists, anthropologists, literary critics and philosophers, so you know, I actually...don't know.” As I traversed between four different philosophers, I encountered four different desired narrative structures. The first started by insinuating that philosophy operates at a conceptual level that is somehow different from that employed by historians, leaving the Derridas and Foucaults (and I would bargain to say the Nietzsches) sadly unaccounted for. The second provided me with history and philosophy of science texts, some read more “philosophically” but many were mostly “historical nonfiction” or



something of this sort. To the third I expressed my concern that part of the difficulty of writing this was that I didn't know which philosophers to ground my work around, and it wasn't just "I'm going to take x and analyze it through the lens of y"; it was that I wasn't quite sure which voice(s) to mirror. This philosopher humorously said, "You just need to figure out what you're arguing, besides, what is the voice of philosophy really?", purportedly insinuating there to be no such thing. The last philosopher informed me that I had a "strong affinity for nonfiction writing" which remains as mysterious to me as saying someone has a "strong voice." Kudos for having a personality.

Another brief story. Sitting at a table of roughly ten people, directly across from the splendid Miranda Fricker (flown in all the way from the UK!) and a bowl of spicy curry (which proved to possibly be my only salvation) I found myself in a strange situation. The air was filled with the usual sentiment of intellectual chimes and whistles, as to be expected when graced with such a presence. "And what are you working on?" "Ah yes, well, you see..." "Oh, quite on the contrary, I suppose one could view this as..."

Somewhat apart from the general table-talk, a friend was speaking to me about his project and afterwards mentioned that he really wanted to be a highschool teacher. The project was about decolonizing the voice of philosophy, and he was working with a Latin American poet who only recently became recognized as a philosopher. Curiously, he noted, many of those in education policy were working from the same texts he was.

Public education for now, perhaps a few years later he may consider graduate school for philosophy. Another brilliant mind chimed in and exclaimed with all authority, "Well yeah, why would you want to settle?!" Laughter ensued. I promptly whipped my head around and, initially

raising my pitch a few octaves before settling into a more serious timbre, with no attempt to hide its bite, remarked “Um, *actually*, being a highschool teacher is a very honorable, worthwhile, and valuable pursuit. It is absolutely not settling.” To my delight and as a temporary conclusion to this wonderful exchange, I was condescendingly asked (it wasn’t really a question), “Well, what do you think is settling? Teaching *preschool*?” More laughter. *Do we...not need preschool teachers anymore? Was there a memo I missed?* You see dear friends, I had prepared to be philosophical. Dress appropriately, prepare some questions, make sure your heart isn’t beating too quickly, keep your voice level but light, face flat, brows ready in runner’s lunge to dispatch into concrete furrow. All that work, to no avail. You see, I had very carefully prepared myself for the kind of moment I was very carefully expecting, an academic moment, a professional moment. I was readying myself for the author I’ve heard in reference as doing “groundbreaking work,” whose book I’d personally gotten to know. One needs to prepare for these kinds of things. I needed to be tidy, I needed to order things up, I needed to know where things stood, even physically, so that were I to step onto the floor of her groundbreaking work, the floor would not break under me. Yet all that work—*breathe in 1-2-3-4, hold your breath 1-2-3-4-5-6-7, breathe out 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8*—was greeted by a moment stolen. Fate had stood me up.

Apparently a semester of reading *Epistemic Injustice* and a meet and greet with philosopher of feminist epistemology was not enough to stop this moment. It had been losing its patience, it had been lying in wait. Yes, it quite seems that there is a wide abyss between knowledge and habit. “Isn’t it ironic?” sang Alanis Morissette.

Summoning forth the lovechild of Lyssa and Medusa, my face turned as red hot as my spicy curry. I dedicated myself to the business of inhaling it with vigor in hopes that its bitterness

would drown out my own. Comedic relief came on set to distract me from the fury I was nurturing, and I imagined my professors, as well as the kindly gentlemen who decided to partake in this spectacle, playing basketball with babies and chucking them into academia. “Wah!”

“Dammit Finley! You were supposed to read your Hegel en womb!” *Drop kicks child.* “Straight ahead you go!”

At this point Fricker had shown graceful table manners by shifting the conversation to topics of education policy, but I was still focusing on trying to spice the spice right out of me. I cultivated the feeling right back up as I remembered the previous day’s frustration in my attempt to find a philosophy podcast that didn’t put me right to sleep. You can learn Kant but you can’t learn Pro Tools? What’d you think I came here for? The boombox of my brain hummed along, *“I said who do you think you are//Oh, oh (do you think you are, I said)// Ooh some kind of superstar (oh, oh, oh) You have got to swing it, shake it, move it, make it//Who do you think you are//Trust it, use it, prove it, groove it//Show me how good you are”* (Who Do You Think You Are, Spice Girls).

Huh, would you look at that--no more preschool teachers, only PhDs.

“Good morning, class, today we’re going to discuss Regan’s contractualist views.”

“Mr. Professor, are you dating Ms. Finsky?”

“Mr. Professor, Johnny laughed at me because I have two mommies!”

“Mr. Professor, you’re boring.”

“Mr. Professor what are you *dooing* here? Why are you still up there?”

“Okay class, it’s time to settle down, we need to start the reading. Please quiet down now.”

“You quiet down!”

“Yeah, you quiet down!”

“We need to establish better classroom habits, habit is what leads to excellence they say, and who doesn’t want that. Isn’t there something you want to become excellent at, little Johnny?”

“Being an ostrich.”

I wonder how they’d fare. What an absolutely delicious meal!

As I writhed in the pits of wretchedness to birth *An Idea* I realized the following few things. I still have no idea what the philosophical voice is. Better yet, I don’t even know what philosophy is, and I’m getting my degree in it. When Thus Spoke Zarathustra reads like Genesis, when Foucault reads like anthropology, when Shoemaker reads more like a scientist, and Derrida reads like what I’d imagine one would feel during an acid trip in a sensory deprivation tank (I would like to thank another professor for that mid-lecture point of advice; he described it as very “psychedelic but in womb”), it is perplexing for philosophers to tell me to use the “philosophical voice.” Thank you for the suggestion, and where am I to find this mysterious voice you speak of? Experience has it that you, my friends, are not in agreement.

## ***Introduction***

The general crux of what follows will be mostly centered on animal ethicists Regan, Singer, Diamond, and Crary with the ghost of Derrida and Descartes looming in the background. At the broadest level, I am interested in a question I inherit from Derrida pertaining to what resources it takes to discern and what becomes lost, what becomes displaced in order to do so. My interest in this question has to do with how the gap between the emotive self and the rational self parallels the incongruities of how we conceptualize and think of animality. Though it will not be my focus, this question also brushes up against the confusion surrounding debates about anthropomorphism and empathy (what do these two amount to really? Is anthropomorphism just inaccurate empathy? What would it be to say that empathy entails accuracy?). This then leads into a discussion of the difficulty in parsing apart value-laden science from politicized science, and part of this difficulty is a kind of uncertainty pertaining to where humanity and animality lie, to how emotive desire (Nature's call? Authentic nature? Bare nature?) can be reconciled with rational desire or rationality (The work of ethicists? The work of governance? Authenticated nature?).

Objectivity so often is conceived of as a question of accuracy, and insofar as it is a question of accuracy so too one fears letting their emotions and sentiments get in the way of "truly seeing" as a scientist would. I will suggest that emotion/desire and objectivity, emotion/desire and rationality, cannot be so easily put into separate corners and promptly ignored. In fact, they relate to one of the most difficult and fundamental problems we face, and an ignorance pertaining to what it means for emotion to contribute to reasonable judgment when we cannot clearly separate emotion *from* judgment, will evade questions of animality, alterity,

and disability so long as it remains reasonably seated. What is this glowing heavenly problem you ask? It is the story of the scientist, the writer, the artist, and the ambiguous but binding *human being*. It is the question of what makes them stand apart, how much their truths can overlap. It is a question of desire, education, and how we think of consequence.

I will begin with three opposing views to illustrate the persistence of the Cartesian burden, as well as indicate how there is so much confusion about that loaded term—*authentic* nature. When the values that are included in morally good science may overlap with values we hold as morally good people, it becomes difficult to be “objective” without becoming blind gods ourselves.

First, I will begin with a brief overview of Descartes and Derrida. The primary difference I am interested in is the Cartesian objective, rational self defined by a faith placed on the desire to think and affirm oneself through thought. This will be presented in opposition to Derrida’s conjecture that perhaps we may be wrong to think that thought is not as much a habit as anything we otherwise think of as an animal reaction. It should also be said, that I am interested in this because I feel that Derrida’s poststructuralist framework is somewhat more kind to taking on questions of animality and disability, and especially in accounting for the ambiguous and ambivalent realities of one’s emotive self. To the extent that the Cartesian burden has seemingly persisted through the centuries, I will suggest that arguments which align themselves with this business of finding out the “nature of things,” of taking on the illusion of an objectivity that is entirely free of mysterious human desire, cannot but evade the realities of alterity.

These accounts secure their distance from the possibility of such a confrontation by writing in the voice of the innocent child in place of where nature once stood. Curiously, it will

be shown that this issue persists even in arguments that wish to have nothing to do with metaphysical thought.

Next will be an overview of the twentieth century Nature Faker debates. These debates, coined so by an article Roosevelt published, centered around the difference between literary and scientific truth. As noted by Mighetto, it used to be the case that when animal literatures were published, authors were very didactic about it all, mimicking the manuals you may find in a laboratory hall or a medical center. That is, they were very accurate (Mighetto 35). Yet all of a sudden in came Watson with his behaviorism, and Darwin with his natural selection. How was evolution and habit to account for all that is divine (34)! Mighetto noted that “science, many Victorian writers agreed, was responsible for this malaise. Proving the natural world to be amoral, arbitrary, even cruel, it stripped man of his illusions, setting him adrift in a void” (34), and all the Lord Tennyson’s scurried forth to write about this new feeble state of man (35). As people were becoming more and more worried about “man’s bestial nature” (35), the writers arrived just in time to appeal to “evidence of dignity, beneficence, and morality in the natural world” (35). On one side were those who thought that science should be the authoritative voice of truth and that literary depictions should mimic the scientific voice and conception of objectivity. On the other hand, were sentimental nature writers, many of whom believed that literary style is what allowed for a more sympathetic engagement with individual animal lives. Long, for example wrote:

the difference between Nature and Science is the difference between a man who loves animals, and so understands them, and the man who studies Zoology; it is the difference

between the woman who cherishes her old-fashioned flower-garden and the professor who lectures on Botany in a college class-room (Long 145).

We then have a very different sort of argument. On one hand we have Singer and the Regan, who Crary calls “moral individualists” (Crary 122). These former philosophers think that what is important is identifying empirical properties across organisms (where species is not viewed as an essential property) that should be deemed morally relevant and then deciding what care or treatment should be appropriate. The other group of philosophers, such as Crary and Diamond, want to account for the moral importance of a species norm with regards to how it binds sociality through irreducible concepts.

Through these narratives I suggest a kind of inheritance of the Cartesian burden about the possibility of reconciling the authority of the desiring self and one of the rational self. First I will argue that while Crary wants to endorse (and is motivated by) Diamond’s view pertaining to concepts, her inheritance of McDowell’s naturalistic empiricism precludes her from making Diamond’s more radical claims, and in fact, aligns her structurally surprisingly close to those moral individualist arguments she opposes. Diamond, as we shall see, in some ways stands somewhat close to Derrida’s kind of views, and insofar as she does so she is the most non-essentialist of the four we will consider. I will begin by pointing out the shortages in McDowell’s argument, particularly in terms of agential as opposed to forms of natural epistemic explanation. Then I will argue that he trivializes the stakes in his own argument, by moving from what he assumes to be essential in personhood to concluding, based on this presupposition, that if perceptual experience were conceptual it would allow (human) perceptual experience to exist



within the world of empirically determined law and be agential, or that is, be able to justify the beliefs (where presumed agency is located) that must appeal to perceptual experience.

Following this, I will show that it is Crary's inheritance of McDowell's mistake that trivializes her own argument, making it unclear on either the side of a human or the side of any animal what we should make of her widespread ethical inclusion. This is specifically because she, not unlike McDowell, does not question the relationship between thought and value. It is also because of her inheritance of McDowell that she is concerned with the skeptical challenge of the empiricist. This is a question of how perceptual experience, which is not determined by us, can still be appealed to in making claims about the observable empirical world, when we hold ourselves to believe that these empirical claims can be accurately specifiable by us. This inheritance of McDowell's empiricism furthers her from Diamond's irreducible concept view (which Crary's text seems informed by) and aligns her closer to her opponents, the "moral individualists" (Crary 122), than she may think. To the extent that she is grappling with the consequences of Singer's preference utilitarianism and Regan's rights view, she thinks the relevant problem is their dissolution of a species norm, and that they "take human beings and/or animals to lack all observable moral characteristics as situating human beings and/or animals *outside ethics*" (11). It is her preoccupation with the observable, as well as her preoccupation with the empirical that trivializes the stakes in her argument. In her focus on expressivity and sociality she evades grappling with the reality of alterity, of other ways of being, of other ways of being human, of ways of being an animal, and of questions pertaining to animality. It is her preoccupation with a metaphysic that must at large and absolutely have objective moral values that gets in her way of further grappling with her own questions (14). Similarly, she focuses on

how Singer moves from his non-cognitivist stance to his preference utilitarianism and how this fails to “best [promote] the interests of all involved” (Crary 21). It’s her focus on attempting to fix how Singer fell short in accounting for “all involved” (21) (in reading people with disabilities out of the realm of human moral concern), by the “the idea of objective moral values. . .objective features of the world that are essentially practical” (23) that also trivializes her argument.

Further while she appeals to literature as “non-neutral methods in ethics” (24) and then accuses Singer of “[dismissing] the prospects that such literature might directly promote ‘the aim of gaining knowledge,’ ascribing its value instead to its ability to illuminate ‘non-cognitive human characteristics’” (24), she precludes herself from imaginatively engaged in the texts of her own choice. It is because of a desire she has to make what Singer deems meaningless, the non-cognitive, become meaningful by bringing it into the realm of the cognitive in virtue of appealing to a species norm-typicality that her argument is insufficient. It is because where Singer locates the essential property in the body of an individual being regardless of species, and because of the aforementioned incorrect identification of the relevant problems, that she simply moves the relevant empirical property to the species level. Then she ties what one can say about a species (and all the variances that are subsumed under one) to her use of conceptuality that she then wants to deem as objectively revealing of the meaning in an animal life by appealing to its expressive behavior, and in effect assuming that our conceptuality may match an animals conceptuality. To the extent that her literary examples appeals to the memoir of Murdoch’s partner recounting his experience of living with Murdoch when she had Alzheimer's (142), of endorsing Jessica Pierce’s view in *The Last Walk* that “the ‘disposal’ of ailing animals is callous and that we should rejoice at the fact that some abandoned animals receive palliative care” (154),

of only having one account of a character with a disability and having *this* account, Daniel Keyes' *Flowers for Algernon*, be not only fictional but hinge on Charlie's recognition of his unfair past treatment *in virtue of him being* "more intellectually sophisticated" (137), that she fails her own intentions.

While Crary's intentions are good, she confines herself too narrowly in the authority she grants the kinds of texts she appeals to and in her argumentative form. Not only does it make no sense to define what is or is not meaningful in animals, animality, or disability by placing the authority of their experiences in the eyes of their caretakers, but it most importantly doesn't make sense in how she locates meaning in a typical view of the adoring, but cognitively sound mind. I will most centrally argue that she, along with Singer and Regan, cannot surpass viewing what is meaningful as that which is cognitive, and meaningless as that which is non-cognitive. Not only this, but it is her strange inheritance of McDowell and her strange similarity with Singer's argument that she thinks accounting for the most severe of intellectual cognitive disability can account for all cognitive disability. It is this adoration of the corpse, of the human, and the refusal to face the complete incoherence that might color living with disability that precludes her from saying that incoherence can be meaningful. That finitude can be meaningful. That existing in a time where things are either completely meaningless, or where meaning is not relegated to the right sort of human things, where meaning is uncomfortable, where sentiment, desire and feeling is unruly, that existing in such a time can still have value. It has value because you are a being in Diamond's irreducibly conceptual way, in Derrida's poststructuralist way. She cannot get herself to admit this. While Crary moves from a property of the individual to the property of species, she still maintains this kind of unwarranted faith in having common sense

concepts stick onto empirical truths about what is meaningful to an animal of a kind by matching *its* concepts.

Then we will move into the second portion of my argument. Once I show how close Crary is to the “moral individualists” (122) she so opposes, we will shift to looking at Regan’s *The Case* and Singer’s *Animal Liberation*. Here I will draw your attention to moments in these texts when they read desire/emotions off to the sidelines and also exhibit distinct ambiguities pertaining to their role in motivation. They simultaneously write very emotional appeals to what motivates their view, while pushing against appeals to “sympathy” or “goodheartedness” in lieu of fact-driven reasoning. Their lack of consideration for pathos, their talk of the individual struggle, their withdrawal from facing their own discomfort with sentiment is revealing of their failure to grapple with alterity. The marginal location these sentiments take in the text is reflective of the marginal location humans with cognitive disability end up. Further, it is revealing in exactly the way that Crary’s adoration of the body that is not normatively social, of her focus on understanding disability by bringing it into what *is* normatively social, by holding that one can *objectively* hold another in their identity (144), that weakens her argumentative intent. It is in the way that she is Cartesian, in the way that she does not consider how sense at large has meaning in the way McDowell does not, it is in the way that she, like Descartes’, cannot surpass the visual that colors so much of human life. It is in this way that she does not engage in the imaginative, it is in this way that she does not see the real value of literature (an enterprise less concerned, perhaps, with authoritative universal proclamations), and it is in this way that she does not do alterity justice and distances herself from Diamond. Crary simply identifies the wrong problems, and, I think part of this is that she approaches the project as a

philosopher in a narrow sense and takes on the voice of her opposition, in a certain kind of way. I will relate my critique of Cary with my discussion of the differences between Descartes' and Derrida's narrative form.

My issues with Cary will be followed by the endorsement of a claim made by Cary Wolfe about how if one really wants to consider the human-animal divide in all seriousness, one needs to think about how philosophy's form and structure needs to change if it wishes to accommodate this. Here I will more clearly illustrate what Cary gets so wrong about literature, and why the way she gets it wrong is reflective of how her structure aligns with Singer's, as was already mentioned. I will argue that the issue isn't obsessing over where to draw the appropriate kinds of boundaries (cells? organisms? animals? (what's an animal?) species?), the issue is taking into full consideration how the body is a geographical map in itself. Insofar as it is a map, it must be viewed as something that wraps into the environment. That is, if we want to think of different embodiments in all seriousness, we need to stop thinking about what property is the properly binding one. Cary's expressivity is as much a property as memory, psycho-physical identity, or any of the other cognitive properties Singer and Regan deem as fundamental to moral value. The issue is not, this is an agent and this is a patient, that is conscious and this is unconscious, I value rationality so how do I make everything rational without making a rock rational. The issue is that no matter where you move the property to, or how you bound the relevant kinds, the way you bind it will be more simplistic than the variance that may underlie it.

Perhaps to the extent that the Cary, Singer, and Regan's miss the point of literature as well as moral theories that can actually be realistically feasible, is reflective not of what philosophy can do but of what they take and restrict philosophy to be. As will be shown, I will

go on to critique Crary's commitment to the adorable with regards to dogs, people, and everything else in her way with examples. I will suggest that when one imagines the kind of moral responsiveness Crary wants to endorse as tracing an aspect of reality, one needs to deify reality in order for it to have an object to respond to. This is a Cartesian view of things. One has to somewhat let all that variance, disorder, and peculiarity sift off from view or there would be frighteningly many questions that grow with any given empirical accuracy as to how one should categorically parse their emotions, desires, and sentiments into tiny little boxes. That is, how they should become "appropriate" in the light of this new information. It should be emphasized that this is not to say something like, our minds create the world or that object distinctions only exist in consciousness. Rather my view will have to do with what is different and yet so similar between Derrida and Descartes, and this is a question of form. The difficulty will be, drawing on Derrida, related to how we think of the desire that desires not knowing what it wants, in connection with its desire for consequence that determines what it is. To not acknowledge the weight of form on the sound of content, and in turn on the content itself, as Derrida does, to focus so much on tying value, meaning, and moral responsivity to accuracy one forgets that accuracy, disciplinarity, is linked to that ungoverned desire. It is also just, not very practical. This is not a challenge to empirical skepticism, this is a challenge to what, and why, we want, and wait for the world to tell us what we are, when we laid out how the world can speak.

This will then lead into a conversation on how the image of the innocent child appears in arguments from the essentialism in Regan and Singer, to Crary's somewhat more inclusive middle ground naturalism, to Diamond's more Derridean conceptualism.

I will argue that insofar as these arguments do so they still make some essentialist claims particularly about the order of forgiveness, blame, and exaltation. In these arguments the innocent child takes the place of nature's productive innocent origination. In a sense then, these arguments become forms of prescribing appropriate and inappropriate adoration in the face of voicelessness. For Regan and Singer, the image of the child implies a kind of skepticism towards the "childlike wonder" that Diamond then appeals to, but it also writes away any authoritative reality to a knowledge that does not obsess over differentiating properties of its environment, it is a result of this that they write away emotions and carry the not so palatable implications that they do.

For Crary, the image of ("natural") childlike innocence comes through in her appeal to adorable companionships between dogs, romantic partners, and the assumption that what is good and proper must always be the security of belovedness. This precludes her from considering cases in which companionship and brutality can coexist, and assumes a unitary easily centered identity for a certain kind of being. In more explicit terms, this stops her from considering the difficulties of disability in terms of what is thought of sociality, and it also stops her from grappling with the realities of awkwardness, shame, and forgiveness. This is a Cartesian and not Derridean kind of mistake. It is a mistake of form, I think, and it shows in the way she relies on authors of fiction, nonfiction and memoir and does not imagine further, in the way she does not take on the the question of the unruly, of the schismatic.

For Diamond, this innocence comes through literally in the sense that she appeals to the distance in understanding between a child and an adult when drawing on Dickens' A Christmas Carol; this stops her from acknowledging that people do eat other people, and people do torture

others in very frighteningly intimate ways. However, as I will discuss, this accusation sticks the least in the case of Diamond, and part of this is the limitlessness she places on her account of moral imagination. I will suggest that in order to take up the question of alterity one needs to stop being so purist about it all, so caught up in worry about sentiment gone “wrong.” It reduces the complexity of the problem. Perhaps, more, or as, importantly, it does seem strange the way that Regan, Singer, and Crary are so concerned with universalities yet so quick to write their opponents off. I believe philosophy should be practical, I believe philosophy is practical, and insofar as I see no reason to think otherwise at this moment, I too believe philosophy should be practiced. So to me, it is as strange to speak of all humans and all animals as inside ethics just as it is strange for Singer to do away with all species differences to try to find *that one true property of sentience*, just as it is strange for Regan to make all his proclamations about little cups of subjects-of-a-life and agents, patients, all these rights.

It is strange not because of any fancy thought experiment, it is strange in the most obvious sense, in the most practical sense that I question what they think about their discomfort. I wonder whether, and this is a flex of my imagination and not an accusation, I wonder whether they speak in the voice that they write with to those in their life. I wonder whether they have made mistakes, I wonder what it is they fear about making mistakes. I wonder if they think it makes them better for avoiding mistakes, which are the matters of the living, than those who are maintained in its grip. Furthermore I will suggest that one needs to be careful of thinking of “objectivity” in terms of “accuracy.” Rational, fair judgment does not always have to imply empirically, minutely accurate judgment, and part of that is recognizing that insofar as we are embodied beings with confusing emotions, objectivity (in the scientists sense) is only a matter of



how much distance we take from those emotions not from writing them out altogether. It is also a matter of imagining our relation as it stands to the “I desire” and the secured accuracy. If we are to talk consequentially, both in the sense of wanting to know where we stand, and of consequence as something implicit to the transgression prescribed when one argues in Regan, Singer or Crary’s sort of way, it is important to acknowledge the imaginative aspects of the distance between the child and the erudite. It is important to acknowledge the imaginative aspects of the way one craves the discipline secured by the human beings they historically are part of, to tell them how to make things matter in relation to the uncertain and unstable human being that they are. This is important because that desire, that uncertainty surrounding mattering things, traces back to the idea that we are visual creatures. Our materiality and our struggle with accepting our agency is that our hunger, is a visual kind of hunger. This, I think, is one of Derrida’s points. For example, he writes “the gaze of a seer, a visionary or extra-lucid blind one” (4). So there is a certain kind of circularity to this, a certain kind of problem, that although I may be wrong, perhaps should be taken up.

When so much of disability or what we think of as “pathological”, “infantilized” disability relates to desires misplaced (where otherwise objective “rationality” is viewed as tamed and educated desires) we need to rethink our discomfort around desire rather than refer to naturalizing a subject as the final solution. However, insofar as we do this, we are forced to rethink sentience in terms of forgiveness and transgression. We need to think, as will be illustrated, how one can be both a subject of and subjected to at the same time. This is what I believe these arguments miss.

While I think this kind of shortcoming is somewhat present in Diamond, though drastically less so, I will also argue in favor of her view of irreducible concepts and suggest that to do the frightening but revealing work of empathic confrontation, we need to accept that there are some problems that may infringe on the limits of our thought. This is because we both created them and are created by them, this is Derrida's point. Insofar as we should grapple with this, we also need to accept that thinking in terms of fundamental properties, whether at the individual, species, genus, or any taxonomic level will be deficient just as much as it will be pathologizing. This means thinking of unbodying, or unbinding, as not the sort of activity Descartes' partakes in, (I think therefore let me dream my other senses away), it is recognizing that his burden is not the one we should be responding to. Rather, I will go on to draw from Mel Chen and suggest to consider dehumanization (or humanization, animalization, etc.) as a kind of activity.

For this view I am indebted to Mel Chen and their discussion of the importance of considering concepts around toxicity, what goes into our thinking on immunity, how we categorize good or bad bacteria, and in grappling with other animals and lives with disabilities. Thinking outside of secure bodies means thinking in terms of sentiments and desires, of thinking twice before we consider certain kinds of expression, emotion, or intimacy as "ridiculous," and this means rethinking preciousness, and it also means perhaps trying to conceive of the philosophical voice in different ways. Rethinking what compelled Singer to focus so much on sentience. This is just to say that thinking disability, animals, and animality hinges on a kind of gifted trust, a comfort in discomfort, a forgiveness that is ambivalent in Fricker's sense (this view will be presented more thoroughly later) (Fricker 26), the reality that what began as

wonderful curiosity may often become a bludgeoning “why didn’t you read that book in womb baby?” It means being careful of thinking of bodies in terms of evidence, and perhaps this also means rethinking the assured tone of philosophy that possibly, it must worry a little less about the genre of the thing.

Since this covers a lot of territory, a more concise recap is as follows. Fundamentally the guiding question is whether rational (objective) judgment is separable from desires/emotions and related to this is a question of whether objectivity and accuracy are one and the same. This question stands in relation to two other claims I’m interested in making. One is that emotional responses are relevant for grasping the significance of various kinds of alterity. The second is that our emotional aspects are connected to our animality and our conceptions of animality. When one takes on the view that emotions and rationality can be cleanly divided, one impedes oneself from such an identification that is relevant for understanding other animals and other kinds of beings.

I will argue that both animality and emotionality straddle the two resources Aaltola has claimed we have for explanation: personhood and materiality (Bruns on Aaltola 714). By drawing out the problem of McDowell’s naturalism and setting it in contrast to Diamond’s conceptuality (a conceptuality that, I think, does not take interest in metaphysics), I will show how this puts Cray’s stance that all animals and humans are inside ethics in a strange position. This is because she wants to maintain Diamond’s irreducible concept view, while also maintaining the accuracy of the scientific empiricist found in McDowell. While she’s interested in arguing against the essentialism in the moral individualists view, she simply moves the essential property from the body of the individual to the body of the species. This, will be shown

to be troubling since she uses very common sense examples, yet our common sense often fails to make accurate species distinctions. It also just, generally falls short of making accurate distinctions as situationists have shown (Nisbett & Wilson 133). After this I will show how her argument aligns structurally close to the moral individualists she opposes, and has a similar but underthought reliance on emotivity in her examples as Singer does in eliciting disgust.

Following this I will focus on how emotions are made marginal yet ambiguously drawn upon (as paradoxically both authoritative and deceptive) by Singer and Regan. Then I will allude to how the face of the innocent adorable child finds its way into four different arguments that go from a more naturalistic essentialist view to the less essentialist of views. This image seems to replace the body of where pure nature once stood, and serves to secure their arguments. I will claim that insofar as this is the case, and insofar as so many of these arguments have to do with scripting out appropriate sentiments (you wouldn't *really* want to be affectionate towards a plant after all!), it is this confusing focus on the preciousness of the "body" that troubles, and connects, their claims. For example, the way Cray takes up arguments of dogs, memoirs of the authors romantic partner's disability, and otherwise very clean and affectionate examples, the voice of adoration precludes her from grappling with what is so difficult about animality and disability and in turn, deflects from engaging with the reality of such voices. Something quite similar could be said of Singer, except it's the ugly underside of adoration, disgust. On the other hand, Diamond refuses to grapple with the fact that we do eat other humans and do brutal things to those we deem as our companions, where the companionship is what contributes to the brutality. These arguments are connected in their struggle to imagine a monstrous, faceless child, and to the extent that they do, they also do not grapple with the question of origin (and sacrifice

entailed) that they take to be obvious. This question of animality and emotions is really a question of how (and whether) the truths of the scientists world, the fictional world, and the moral world overlap. Do things have to be accurate to be objective or authoritative? Do we have to hold authors as authority?

To tie this all together, I will return to Derrida. Specifically I will point to how the question of an “I desire” (where Derrida, for instance, discusses a God who gives Adam the right to name in his desire to see and the confusion of a God that says “I am that I am” (Derrida 17)) is irreducibly conceptualized against determining consequence. I will claim that in order to engage with the question of animals, human cognitive disabilities, and all those differences among living beings one needs to unhinge from the certainty and security that one imagines into their gnawing accuracy. One needs to acknowledge the difference between Descartes and Derrida. One needs to acknowledge idealization and transgression as stretchable but perhaps, one problem. By connecting Crary, Descartes and Derrida I will put forth a view that idealizing reality may be necessary in order to have an object to imaginatively morally respond to. Then I will draw on Nussbaum, Fricker, and Derrida to show where Crary falls short in her taking up of difference. In conclusion, I will argue that emotions and objectivity are only separable as a matter of degree and as a function of irreducible imaginative conceptions. After drawing out where Crary misinterprets Diamond, I will suggest the importance of acknowledging the connection between reason and emotion, as well as Diamond’s imagination, in coming to encounter other animals. Finally, I will suggest that such encounters are a form of gift-giving—kooky, not all too certain yet wonderful nonetheless.

## ***Descartes' Cogito and Derrida's Cat***

Descartes held a view that in order to land on a clear understanding, one needed to muddle through different affective communication channels. Since the only sense he could not imagine away was thought, he took this to be the most essential nature of a human. One can see then how his desire to locate “essentialism” of human nature implicitly made the presupposed value judgment that the worth of a human being is to be conceived of as a being concerned with consequence and being right about the consequence. This it seems, is some impossible striving for perfection. There is not much of an “essential” basis for this presupposition, it’s simply a result of how his desire translated in what he imagined as meaningful in how he stood in relation to himself. This is the point Diamond makes in *The Importance of Being Human*. You cannot prove, or provide enough evidence for, the idea that the desire to “think” is more “essential” than the desire or craving for something else. This would imply that desires can objectively be made observable in a way that escapes consequential operationalizations that already presuppose what aspect of what desire one may be interested in.

By his view, nature’s objective reality is tied with a unitary, abstract, perfection, self-contained and therefore infinite. In this way, it places a value on a monistic, authoritative, declarative, and almost legalistic system of governance over the insecure, non-secured, unbounded, and imperfectly tamed desires evident in the curiosity that colors “childhood” or simply the being that has not yet established or grown into discipline. This curiosity could also be said to be the origin of “rational” pursuit. Descartes thinks that since there is no more reason to suppose the images that flood the mind in daytime are any more or less true than those found in our dreams, truth exists apart from one’s imagination (Descartes 130). Instead we need to

pursue logical relation of ideas, and through our understanding grant perfection to substance that does not realize it in its material form. For Descartes, then, the reality and presence of objects is determined by an absolute authorial presence. Any objectivity given to the intellect in clear and distinct perception must then, have a trickle down effect from some infinite essence (i.e. God or law) (128). Objects remain underdetermined by the senses, and any encounter with them can only be assured through the certainty of thought, of ascribing formal properties (such as through geometry) while doubting that they exist as distinct entities apart from this means of perception. Insofar as Descartes encounters objects it is always from the position of the certainty of the subject, and the infinite being from which he derives the laws of nature in turn define the presence of other peculiar creatures only by negating their finitude. That is to say that to the extent that he viewed other kinds of objects and beings as determined this was derived from the presence of an infinite being (129). The meaningfulness of these other kinds was determined by properties of consistency subsumed under the regulatory eye. Any kind of aspect that may have escaped this (like the lack of perfect spheres to match the geometers perfect designs), would be deemed irrelevant, unaccounted for, and somewhat worthless. Reflection led to the abjection of entities and aspects not accounted for by normative rule.

On the other side of things, is grand philosopher of deconstruction, Jacques Derrida. Strolling nude around his apartment, he is faced with a small apocalypse when he finds himself feeling quite anxiously exposed in the eyes of his little cat. Derrida embarks on a meditation concerning the ways by which the consideration of philosophers with regards to animals has often begun from presupposing, from giving themselves the right to presuppose, a distinctive difference setting humans apart from animals. He writes,

“whenever ‘one’ says ‘The Animal,’ each time a philosopher, or anyone else, says ‘The Animal’ in the singular and without further ado, claiming thus to designate every living thing that is held not to be human (man as *rational animal*, man as political animal, speaking animal, *zoon logon echon*, man who says ‘I’ and takes himself to be the subject of a statement that he proffers on the subject of the said animal, etc.), well, each time the subject of that statement, this “one,” this “I,” does that he utters an *asinanity*. . . *Animal* is a word that men have given themselves the right to give” (Derrida 31).

Derrida is thrown off by what it might mean to feel ashamed in front of his cat, this individual particular animal life that has entered into the same space. This question is interesting to him with several respects. First, it appears, that there is a pervasive idea that what distinguishes rational man from animal is that animals are not aware of their nudity, and therefore of decency or indecency, of being “without consciousness of good and evil” (5). Second, he says, this idea, and any truth it is granted, is derived from what concepts are available for man to conceive from. Yet, at the same time, these concepts, this language, is the property humans might take (for granted) to be what renders them agential, rational, and unconstrained by habit, by repetition (1), moving beyond the scope of reaction into the freedom of response. Similarly, this attachment we have to truth and objectivity seems inseparable from our conceptions and everything that goes into them. Derrida claims that this leads to, for instance, the incoherence of saying that it is true that an animal is naked (a beast, and immodest) and simultaneously that an animal has no concept of modesty (5).

When Derrida feels this gripping shame, the shame of feeling shame, “the mirror of shame” (4), he is confronted with the question of our conception of sincerity and authenticity,



and recognizes that somehow those aspects we have claimed as essential and fundamental are equally constructed and *claimed* as our property, not simply the properties that comprise us. Yet these concepts “the list of ‘what is proper to man’ always forms in configuration, from the first moment. . .can never be limited to a single trait and it is never closed; structurally speaking it can attract a nonfinite number of other concepts, beginning with the concept of a concept” (5). So this concept of truth that we hold so dear seems strange to him, it seems strange to be both writing something as revealing, and being written into what has been revealed. That is, being a subject of and subjected to. Derrida’s concern is that if we are bound by, yet rely on our concepts as though they were not conceived by us, how much is our notion of truth, deceit, of dressing and undressing ourselves and our thoughts, our ideas pertaining to the prospect of modesty and sincerity equally a product of habit? (5).

With regards to shame Derrida notes that it’s peculiar that though we say the animal does not know of its nudity we also, at the same time, say the animal does not have the concept of nudity, or of modesty. Furthermore, insofar as he is interested in what goes into the conception of truth, he is also interested in the possibility of testimony, of presenting evidence, of showing what something is before one conceived it to be as what it is, or says it is. For instance on this he writes, “I am passively presented to it as naked, I am seen and seen naked, before even seeing *myself* seen by a cat. Before even seeing myself or knowing myself seen naked. I am presented to it before even introducing myself” (11). So what results in a short, playful, oftentimes difficult to grasp (which is narratively part of the message he is trying to convey), and disorienting text, has implications for not just what but for how we think of animality, animal being, and animal becoming. Tangentially it grapples with the limits of truth and sincerity when conceived

alongside exhibition and performativity. It puts into question how we think about essentialism in general, and why we are so comfortable believing there must be something like this to us or to other kinds of creatures. Thus, to the extent that Derrida is interested in the question of indecency in conjunction with our understanding of naked truth (4), of the prospect of baring oneself in all sincerity of what it means to “owe . . . truth” (21), much of this text also grapples with the necessity for distance and displacement to engage in discernment. I would bargain to say that identity politics and standpoint theories are probably somewhat indebted to this view.

This thought then, will be interesting and useful for the trouble I wish to mark in animal ethics conversations that appeal to nature, and not *only* that appeal to nature, but the way that natural conceptions show up even in conversations that focus on irreducible conceptions (such as Diamond’s) and don’t even interest themselves in metaphysics. There is something to be said of the difficulty of saying that agency and nature are just separate forms of explanation, as I will in fact proceed to do, and then observing how even when kept apart they still intermingle. I will argue that even in conversations that move away from a rhetoric of essential properties, even in accounts which appeal to the idea of irreducible conceptions, the image of nature’s innocence, of nature as pure and originary, of nature as an adorable child, is still prevalent in these later accounts. This thought, beyond philosophical interest, has implications for difficulties often encountered in generalizing from animal research to human concerns, and furthermore for how scientific efforts often become so easily, so elusively, part of pop cultural thought and social imagination of human standing. That is to say, nature and home, nature and security appear as such troubling and pervasive concepts that mark a great extent of our political life wherein our political life marks so much insecurity surrounding scientific essentialism. For example, Jennifer

Terry has noted, with regards to differences in scientific operationalizations of sexuality based on the particular research aims, “[t]he biological reductivism that underpins this kind of research leads scientists to imagine animals and humans as isomorphic, so that a brain fragment or a minute gesture is seen to be analogous across species” (Terry 165). This also seems to contribute to confused discussions surrounding the differences or similarities between empathy’s ability to perhaps enable one to see more clearly, and accusations of anthropomorphism which relate to how one’s identification with the subject may preclude one from seeing what is there. On the one hand, it says that one needs to suppress their affect, affectability, affection, their capacity to be moved by the paradigm that marks their emotional realities, in order to see clearly. On the other hand, it suggests that such ability for an emotive identification may lead to inquiry that if otherwise confined to “objective” concepts one may not surpass in order to see clearly. The confusion, more specifically lays at the intersection of questions of what contributes to morally good science and values that should come into consideration when engaging in scientific inquiry--a topic Douglas has taken up prolifically (Douglas 113).

Douglas’s work has been written in opposition to a value-free ideal of science, that, to use the words of nobel laureate and physicist Bridgman:

the understanding of nature is a challenge to the utmost capacity in us. In accepting the challenge, man can dare to accept no handicaps. That is the reason that scientific freedom is essential and that artificial limitations of tools or subject matter are unthinkable (Douglas on Bridgman 75).

As noted by Douglas, this could be read in two ways. On the stronger version Bridgman is ultimately proposing that “any sacrifice is worth scientific knowledge” (76) and on the weaker he

may claim that “the price of accepting the burden of moral reflection is too high compared to the value of science” (77). Here’s the grip. On the one hand, this sacrifice would be one of what we think is important to our notions of personhood and human values. In endorsing this sacrificial value it would be an endorsement of an absolute truth, or the pursuit of such absolute truth, as being more pressing than the truths that might color those notions of personhood, or as being more authoritative than those other truths. That would be to say that you shouldn’t necessarily call on human value to limit how you call on nature’s value or whatever natural secrets science may become privy to. Then to the extent that science and “nature” would be more authorial than personhood and humanity it would still be called upon to determine the latter conceptions in a kind of Cartesian manner. This circularity has not been properly thought through. That kind of assumption is in fact what would lead to the view that human values should not come into consideration in science in the first place. To the extent that human values were not taken into consideration, or were valued less than nature’s value, and then nature was appealed to in determining that which should be of human value, the question of the discrepancy between the two (a discrepancy that was presupposed in the scientific pursuit of the question) remains unaccounted for.

On the other hand, the question of what we see as contributing to morally good science as something that stands apart from human value and questions of value-laden inquiry, becomes mixed with questions of morally good behavior in general. The first set of values (what contributes to good science), for instance, may have overlap with the second set of values (what contributes to good human conduct), and it is from this muddlement, that the difficulty arises. This is because this muddlement is not concretely about scientific accuracy and accuracy in

ethical argumentation as separate questions. The obscured circularity just alluded to is what leads to the confusion and discussions of empathy and anthropomorphism where the parties seem to consistently talk past one another. So strangely, or perhaps not so strangely, it has undertones of inquiry pertaining to the value of coherent as opposed to incoherent systems, monistic as opposed to pluralistic views with regards to nature, value at large, and human value.

Scientists are still human agents even when partaking in the practice of doing science. The goal of science is to leave nothing unaccounted for. To speak of a person as a human “agent” is to make a claim about certain responsibilities one may have as a person that go beyond whatever activity that person may partake in (or what Douglas calls “role responsibilities” (Douglas 72)). Such role responsibilities demarcate what is considered the guiding principles of accuracy and proper inquiry that define any discipline, not solely science. These role responsibilities then also tie into epistemic motivations that define a field, yet these epistemic motivations are defined by appeal to what we, human moral “agents,” deem as important forms of knowledge for us. We appeal to nature so that it can in turn speak back to us. We want it to tell us something, but what we want it to tell us is constrained by all those ambiguous and not certainly known somethings we want it to speak to. We desire, and we want our desires to be responded to and somehow determined. So insofar as we regard what we may discover in nature as being consequential, these consequences are colored, even so slightly, by what we initially regarded as consequential without knowing what the consequence may be and hoping that “nature” may tell us. Our mysterious desires, at least to some extent, determine what is consequential, yet we are uncertain of what it is that *should* be desired. That “should” leads back to the question of personhood and personal agency. Douglas makes a similar observation in

claiming that the seeking of truth and knowledge is alone a value-laden consideration (94). This could be read in conjunction with Derrida's thought on the strangeness in a:

God [who] doesn't yet know what he really wants: this is a finitude of a God who doesn't know what he wants with respect to the animal, that is to say, with respect to the life of the living as such, a God who sees something coming without seeing it coming, a God who will say '*I am that I am*' without knowing what he is going to see when a poet enters the scene to give his name to living things (Derrida 17).

So too we are called forth by desires whose ends are yet undetermined, in order to determine what forms of desires and pursuits are worthy, and make us worthy *as human beings*. Yet it seems to determine our human worth, we in a way, play gods. Our pursuit of modes of knowledge is colored by our desire. The security of that knowledge (say once one publishes a scientific report, or an economic analysis) has political implications. That is simply to say what is obvious which is that the conduct of a political body appeals to the security (and objectivity) of certain kinds of knowledge claims in order to go about its business of governance. Thus, there seems to be an ark that goes from the ungoverned body that declares that initial "I desire", the knowledge it secures via the disciplines epistemic values (derivative in part from that initial ungoverned proclamation), having the governing body draw upon findings secured, and having the values that contribute to what one deems as imaginatively important to that "I" as telling the governing body what to make of what was secured. The personal and the political are not all that easy to parse apart. The natured body and the ethical body, the body brought forth and the body brought to bear, the testifier becoming the testified, the body undetermined that seems to know itself so surely from that which it desires (this could be said of Descartes' "I think therefore I

am”), the child glazed by wonder in contrast to the adult bound by coherence. Yet this body is riveted by the uncertainty of not knowing what that desire says, wherein lie the consequences.

What on earth is going on? It’s this question that plagues Derrida, and the incomprehensibility of this question perhaps that contributes to the texts disorientation. One instance of this observation is when he writes that it is “as if someone said, in the form of a promise or a threat: “‘You’ll see what you will see,’ without knowing what was going to end up happening” (17).

As Yoon has noted, it’s strange that science has become so authoritative and along with it has taken from the wonder of the living (Yoon 20). Yet our wonder, our way with words, with order and classifying is so often inaccurate, whether with regards to fellow human beings (as the research of situationists has shown (Ross & Nisbett 133)), or with regards to scientific properties. It is incoherent, it is unbound. Perhaps there is a reason I’ve always found that tincture of “you are not what you do” just as unsatisfying as “you are what you do.” It is difficult to not squash that wonder, the murky business of living which has led to everything that has come, as we get better at being scientifically accurate. Derrida notes:

“whoever says ‘I’ or apprehends or poses herself as an ‘I’ is a living animal. By contrast, animality, the life of the living, at least when one claims to be able to distinguish it from the inorganic, from the purely inert or cadaverous physico-chemical, is generally defined as sensibility, irritability, and *auto-motricity*, a spontaneity that is capable of movement, of organizing itself and affecting itself, marking, tracing, and affecting itself with traces of its self” (49).

Oh, dearest Derrida, how to forsake an accuracy that is such a good valerian for all of our tumultuous anxieties? Science and sensibility, what are we to make of it? That “I desire” is something like what we think of when we think of “animality.” It is what we think of as a will that ruptures unconstrained, the will that calls that “we” (no longer a clear “we”) follow. Aaltola has noted that our conceptions of objectivity hinge on explanations that either rely on “full personhood, or full materialism” (Bruns on Aaltola 714), and this in conjunction with the thoughts thus far presented, is why questions regarding empathy, anthropomorphism and accuracy, or even more generally animality and emotivity are so confused and incoherent. They rely on appeals to both, at the same time.



## ***Where's the Real Nature Hiding?***

The Nature Faker debates of the early twentieth century coincided with the rise of behaviorism, a shift away from earlier introspective models, and pertained to how to most properly represent the mental life and behavior of animals in literature. As Pettit noted, anything suggestive of animal mentation was held to “violate the [scientific] ideal of parsimony” (Pettit 406) through its erroneous anthropomorphism, and literature stood to learn from the stringency and accuracy of science. In a 1907 publication in *Everyday Magazine* titled “Nature Fakers,” Roosevelt boldly proclaimed that:

as real outdoor naturalists, real observers of nature, grew up, men who went into the wilderness to find out the truth, they naturally felt a half-indignant and half-amused contempt both for the men who invented preposterous fiction about wild animals, and for the credulous stay-at-home people who accepted such fiction as fact (Roosevelt 192).

Man must go boldly forth, with grit and eyes wide open, and record nature as it is! There's no need for adorable flourish you kitschy nature writers! No, nature is not adorable, nature is magnificent, and the fictional flourish these writers sprinkled atop it, Roosevelt declared, was indicative of their “dull” and “limited” capacities to appreciate it (193). Leave your imaginative fancies at home, and learn to face the facts with the “good sense” all this evolving has granted you (195)!

As further noted by Pettit, Roosevelt, “true hunter. . .[and] nature lover” (193), derided any attempts that did not strictly follow social Darwinism as a reckless failure of authentic description (Pettit 405). The primary target of Roosevelt's, as well as naturalist John Burroughs, vocal retorts was Reverend William John Long. One of the most prominent figures of the

sentimental nature writing movement, Long published *School of the Woods* in 1902 where he claimed that animals were not just governed by instinct but that young animals learned by observing their mothers just like human children. Pettit wrote that Long attested to have “observed hawks catching fish only to drop them into smaller pools to teach their offspring to dive for them. . .[and] that animals fashioned casts out of clay to mend their broken bones” (406). Burrough’s aligned with Cartesian thought that animals were ““machines in fur and feathers”” (406) attributable entirely to instinct “uninformed by reason or learning” (406). Long believed that all animals, human and non-human, possessed reason and viewed each as a “natural expressions of God’s mind” (406).

Prior to the popularization of sentimental nature writing, such literary descriptions found themselves more closely allied with the methods of science. This involved restricting oneself to “cataloguing. . .facts and observations” (Long 145) since by this view animals of the same species were viewed as more or less identical in their instincts. This left little to no room for a more imaginative view which was seen to tarnish worth of the observation (146), without questioning how such observation was colored by the worth the observer found in themselves.

Long held that appeals to habit are insufficient in describing the diversity of individual responses to the variety of problems faced in the wild (147). On his view, the one aspect an observer can be certain of is their own individuality. This certainty allowed the nature writer to infuse their text with style enabling it to “live” (148), and this style is what gives the creature's personality in turn allowing for a greater degree of sympathetic and truthful interpretation (148).

Long, however, was not to be ridiculed so easily and readily handed back to Roosevelt the very cards he dealt him. “Mr Roosevelt,” Long began;

is a man who takes savage delight in whooping through the woods killing everything in sight. He goes with horses and dogs and guns. He doesn't know what a square deal means, either for wild animals or men. I am a gentle mollycoddle who can't bear the sight of suffering in beast or man. I go about with a pencil and a notebook instead of a rifle. . . .having fired [his shot] he hurries back to the refuge of his office. But I propose to smoke Mr. Roosevelt out. He has given me the right to do it (172).

His response begins as a fictitious quoted narration of his emboldened testimony, inquiring about how many affidavits Mr. Roosevelt would like, and promising to deliver him his own kind of justice “before the eyes of all men” (172). The rest of the piece continues as he describes his reactions to Mr. Roosevelt in the form of a third person account, accusing Roosevelt of his lack of authority in blaming nature writers for not knowing “the heart of the wild things” (173) when the only hearts Mr. Roosevelt has known are those he put a bullet through. The piece then goes into a defense of the observations he's published. The point however is to be found in his stylistic prose which mimics Roosevelt's testimonial voice in a fictional framework and proceeds into a several page long quote of his first-personal observations, interspersed with the very literary flourish he was accused of using. The feat of Long is as much found in his humor as in his more “serious” considerations. In doing so, he puts into question Roosevelt's assurance that his detached and scientific view of things did not equally rely on an ungrounded “inauthentic” fiction.

Mr. Roosevelt had written away anyone who even gave sentimental writing its chance, accusing the people who did as the same folk who would “delight to find credulous strangers with impossible stories of wild beasts” fostering a childlike naivete and accusing Native

Americans for ascribing animals supernatural traits (194). It is worth mention that, as pointed out by Yoon as well as Sax, founding father of taxonomy, Carl Linnaeus, with full faith believed in the existence of mermaids off the coast of Brazil (Yoon 36; Sax 37).

Diamond noted the fluidity of the idea of fellowship as well as how the notion of an independent life is closely entwined with something like respect (Diamond 475). She has also noted that responding, insofar as it is related to these flexible conceptions, has more to do with our ideas surrounding indignity and pity (Diamond 475) and less to do with laying down facts of principle (47). In a way that is somewhat in line with Derrida, she holds that responding morally has more to do with how the roles that color an interaction (where roles are construals of loosely contingent concepts we read into our relation, how we stand either together, how we are with one another, or how we stand apart) than with determining what the “nature” of something is, what biological substance composes it. She writes, “we see such a notion in, for example, many people’s objections to the performance of circus tricks by animals, as an *indignity*. The conception of a hunted animal as a ‘respected enemy’ is also closely related” (Diamond 475). We can begin to see how, a pervasive thread runs through these otherwise distinct debates. We can also begin to see how Long is, in a way, with Diamond, and possibly Derrida, when he concludes his quasi-autobiographical, quasi-fictional, quasi-testimonial, and quasi-confessional piece (“If it is charged that I do not understand nature as Mr. Roosevelt does, I stand up and plead guilty; yes guilty in every page, every paragraph, every sentence” (Long 181)) by writing:

‘It is a beautiful morning,’ said the Englishman. ‘It is a heavenly morning. Come, let us go out and kill something.’ That is the idea of Mr. Roosevelt, and that is the idea the entertaining of which makes impossible the understanding of such work as I am trying to

do. . . If my little books have done anything to undo the spirit of this man's work and make it regrettable, I am well content to have written them. Indeed, the fact that they have shown, by contrast, not by criticism, the crudeness of his primitive views, and have helped to bring a new spirit of gentleness and sympathy into our study of animal life, is perhaps the chief reason for his antagonism (Long 181).

It is something of this sense brought to our attention by Diamond where we can view Long as commenting on a similar idea evident in Roosevelt's view of the matter, which then impedes him from coming to the kind of understanding Long engages in. That in pressuring Roosevelt for how much evidence he needs, Long is simultaneously noting a kind of "callousness, deadness to the needs of others, distancing oneself from their fate, as denial of the common journey" (Diamond 51).

Returning to an earlier point of structure, for that is important here, Long's response maintains the following form. It begins with a voice of testimony that mirrors back the sound of Roosevelt's and here we encounter something like confessing or responding on principle. You want evidence, eye-witnesses and testimonies Mr. Roosevelt? I would be glad to provide. You seem to think you know a whole lot about justice, though you "don't know what a square deal means, either for wild animals or men" (Long 172). Well as you have tarnished my honor, though I've done nothing to you, let me serve you what you think justice is before the eyes of all to witness. It then transforms into a third person narration where he embarks on characterizing himself ("Since he was a tiny lad..." (173)) which can be seen as a more biographical portion of the text. Next Long employs more heavily a second person narration "He says "The idea of Mr. Roosevelt assuming..." (173) which reads as a somewhat more restrained and forthright

testimony. Nested with this is a quote from Roosevelt's own autobiographical account where Long characterizes Roosevelt as "a man of the stone age who sallied forth with his club to brain some beast and drag it home to display before his wives" (174) noting that the stone age man needed food and wasn't solely out for blood-lust (174). He asks as if we are more contented with the picture of such a man "or the gentleman who we see in Mr. Roosevelt's autobiography" (174). This then continues into a more longform first-person quoted narration before ending in a conclusion that reads as confession.

We can then read Long, if we so choose, as exhibiting a sort of sensitivity towards how the rift that Roosevelt imaginatively instills between him and his observed objectified animals is a similar sort of thing that keeps him from being sympathetic of Long's "little books" (181). That is to say, Long can provide evidence, and affidavits, but no amount of that evidence will be sufficient in shifting Roosevelt's standpoint. In withholding himself from the myth and mysteries that color the life of a "naive child", we can read Roosevelt as in Diamond's view holding himself apart from "the sense of mystery surrounding our lives, the feeling of solidarity in mysterious origin and uncertain fate. . . [that] binds us together" (Diamond 55). Long charges that after having smote him, Roosevelt cowardly "hurries back to the refuge of his office" (Long 172). There's a way in which his prose aligns itself with Diamond's separation of principles and justice, her distinction of forms of understanding, but also has a kind of Derridean remove in its inversion of the kind of confession Roosevelt wants and Long's felt sense of the impossibility of giving it. In *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Derrida wants us to think about what it is in a given circumstance that enables us to ascribe attributes to ourselves with such authority and then reach over and encounter an animal other only by laying out what it is not in relation to what

we've assumed ourselves to be. In considering what it would be to speak and approach an animal before the creation of an originary being, he considers what it takes "to speak to you. . .but of myself in particular" (21).

My interest in Derrida, will be read in conjunction with what I see as a particular shortcoming of imagination among the philosophers at hand who attempt to grapple with questions pertaining to other animals, and with questions concerning disability. When so much of the texts to be presented, reads with a kind of universalist proclamatory voice, then of course, these texts impede themselves from more seriously grappling with their own inquiries. To the extent that they will be shown as inheriting the Cartesian burden in this way, while their intentions may be good, they preclude themselves from identifying the right sort of problems. They also seem to carry some anxieties about misplaced sentiments, and implicitly prescribe a kind of guilt to those whose sentiments may not line up with where they decide to draw their human-animal boundaries.

## ***Featuring Animals, Imagining Humans***

The last kind of debate I will give a short account of is between Singer's preference utilitarianism and Regan's rights view on the one hand, and kinds of special relationists such as Diamond and, presumably, Crary on the other. The first group, generally speaking, wants to say that there should be some essential property that needs to be identified by us, and then once we identify that property as the morally relevant one, then we can distribute care and make decisions about treatment. On this view insofar as species is just another property (like melanin, or sex, or pupil color), and insofar as it appears (to them) that the issue is simply that we humans think we are above animals and since this property of species is seemingly as arbitrary as anything else (skin color (racism) or sex (sexism)) so we need to reevaluate which properties we *should* care about as being essential and authoritative. The problem with this kind of view is that in any given species there's so much variation within it, and so many that are unaccounted for by the norm. With regards to humans in particular, this results in the exclusion of many cognitively disabled individuals from the human moral realm, and in turn makes other creatures who do possess those properties into 'humans'. Further, as Diamond has pointed out "the analogies are not simple and straightforward, and it is not clear how far they go. The Singer-Regan approach makes it hard to see what is important *either* in our relationship with other human beings *or* in our relationship with animals" (Diamond 467).

Diamond on the other hand, is a very different kind of philosopher, wholly uninterested in metaphysical talk, or the skeptics challenge, and for whom imagination is very important. Diamond begins with the dissection of the imaginative work of, for instance Singer and Regan. On this view, she says, one is imagining themselves as a human being based on certain properties



a human being possesses. Since being born of two human parents is a property like any other, this group of folk then say that what is important is identifying what properties are essential for moral value. This, she says, involves imagining a 'person' to be a being who includes those properties--this may include some animals, and this may read out some humans, since not all humans will have those properties (35). Next she is interested in a second kind of imaginative stance, including Rorty's and Baier's. This group does not prescribe to the thought that morality has to be non-arbitrary. Rorty rejects a timeless criteria for the moral relevance of thought, instead saying that thought belongs to the communities of which we are a part (36). Baier inherits Hume's naturalism and says that "our responses to character traits and actions depend on our feelings" (37). Since these feelings have a mechanism of wanting social reinforcement, both the community doing the assessing of another community and the community assessed exist on an expandable sliding scale (37). In this view, one's imagination could then increase or decrease each scale of generality as well as points of intersection. Diamond says, this kind of ethics, hinges on imagining ourselves as animals. With regards to Rorty, she writes, "imagination does not merely aid our identification with others: for Rorty it has a role also in construction of the self, through imaginative development of language. This, characteristically, is something poets do" (39). Then she contemplates Kant. Kant, Diamond says, hinges on an understanding oneself as being a rational being, it is on this understanding that one then extends, as generosity, the understanding of another (40). This kind of imagination is helpful for understanding the link between an action and its consequence, but this is at the stake of other, perhaps less exact, forms of imagination, such as "imaginative development of the sense of what is mysterious in human life" (40).

Diamond wants to say something like, the understanding afforded to man the rational animal hinges on our view of ourselves as scientists, “as observers and manipulators and theoreticians of nature including human nature” (43). Then we have this entirely different kind of understanding that relies on a kind of identification with, identification by, or ability to be touched by. For this form of understanding Diamond draws on Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* to say that what makes Dickens’ scrooge different from a Kantian scrooge is that Dickens’ would imagine it to morally cripple you if you cannot imagine your way into the child you once were (42). Both kinds of understanding are valuable but Diamond wants to say that they are fundamentally different kinds of understanding, and both rely on the irreducible imaginative work of what we take ourselves to be, and how we stand in relation to ourselves. That is to say, there is a kind of fundamentality to these modes of thought, where that imaginative work presses up against the limits or ability of concepts to reach beyond their own scope, a scope set out by us and constraining us. Or, to put it in other words, it is that the way we imagine ourselves to stand in relation to ourselves is somewhat also how we extend a certain resource to standing in relating to another. This starting point of understanding is an imaginative endeavor. Meanwhile, Crary draws on Wittgenstein’s work on mindedness to argue for the transparency of expressive behavior and the irreducibility of concepts to any materialism. Her examples mostly hinge on dogs, romances, and other generally affectionate relations. Her argument also draws from McDowell’s naturalism and Diamond’s work on conceptuality. I will show that Crary misinterprets Diamond and takes on too much of the wrong kind of problems from McDowell as well as from Singer, and this impedes her from more creatively engaging with the questions that interest her. I will also suggest that this may be a result of a certain kind of Cartesian problem

which leads these philosophers, Singer, Regan, and Crary, to have strange views of authorship and authority.

## ***In The Eye of The Beholder***

So far, it should have started to become clear that apart from the more debate-specific points of contention already touched upon, weaving through these conversations is an idea in which ‘sentimentality’ as well as ‘objectivity’ is conflated with an anxiety about “getting emotional.” Though sentiment and emotion are not identical (we can imagine a case in which one lovingly describes the frolicking of deer and having this be more reflective of the observers general mood than a specific emotion targeted at a formal object), what I wish to grapple with is whether this distancing from desires/sentiments/emotions more broadly is warranted or feasible. Nested within the anxiety about securing oneself as a subject, the violent passivity Derrida takes as implicit in coming into an agential existence, within the anxiety about a deceptive and inauthentic Nature contingent on fictitious sentimentality, the resistance of Regan and Singer to appeal to emotion while openly admitting to experiencing a kind of emotional urgency, the kinds of emotionally unnerving examples Singer The Utilitarian uses in conjunction with the ways by which he goes wrong with his human-animal analogies , and the kinds of emotionally unnerving examples Cray takes to be as authoritative forms of evidence as anything with regards to discovering empirically observable characteristics, is a question of proper sentiment.

This problem is that these philosophers and their universals (excluding Diamond), these philosophers who write with such offense when limiting themselves to focusing on their opponents consequence, these philosophers, they cannot help, if they wish to write this way tie an implicit narrative of guilt and exaltation into their ethics. This is also a result of limited imagination, it is also the result of the voice and form philosophers may think they should have, and this results in an ethics that is not only simplistic in its unimaginative universality, but is

impracticable. To the extent that I, though others may disagree, think philosophy should be practicable I question what kind of perfection these fellows strive for and why. I allow myself to wonder how their aversion and obsession over *proper* pleasure and disgust translates into the conversations at their dinner tables.

To sum up, I am interested in the question of whether the emotive and rational self are truly entirely separable. To the extent that I'm interested in this question, I am also interested in wondering whether accuracy and objectivity necessarily have to be one and the same if objectivity is a concept we link to authority. My proposition will be that life is a messy kind of thing, and sentiments are a messy kind of thing as well. In turn I will suggest that in order for us to be able to imaginatively morally respond to reality we must in a sense idealize it, exalt it, and secure it in its intimacy to ourselves. This would provide a not completely accurate formal object for us to respond to, but if accuracy is of concern then the proper placing of our sentiments will be questioned into disarray.

## ***Bare Necessities***

Crary's writing is impressively ambitious and ricochets between a large assortment of guideposts (from philosophy of mind, to metaphysics, to language, to disability studies, to literature, to ethics) which she takes as fundamental to achieve her missive. Her devotion to an ethics that brings humans with disabilities into the moral fold along with animals is admirable. Perhaps what is most refreshing, and why I believe her text covers so many disciplines in philosophy, is a tacit recognition that the form of argument you take in one seemingly minute arena will almost always have bearing, even if distally, on the positions made available to you in another. Moreover, between her structure and focus on fictional as well as memoir based examples is an awareness that though we may indulge in thinking about brains in vats, we are not brains in vats on wheels. Thinking so has its limits. If we hope to achieve an understanding by which to encounter the world and all those strange and diverse beings that fill it, we must, somehow, try to imaginatively come into contact with their infinite subjectivities. If we wish to do so, to cultivate such an openness--to the quirky and outlandish, the strange, the kind, loving, warm, nurturing, the riveting, the exhilarating, the mundane, the despondent, horrific, brutal, and the monstrous--and if reason is the resource we've inherited for getting there, at least for being most obvious and explicit, reason alone, cold and calculating, surely will not do. I stand in agreement with Kittay when she writes:

[We exist in] a 'social relation'. . . a matrix of relationships embedded in social practices through which the relations acquire meanings. . . A parent who has died and with whom one can no longer have any interchange still stands in the social relation of parent to us,

calling forth emotions and moral attitudes that are appropriate or inappropriate. . . (Kittay 111).

It is relying on reason in a vat that Kittay, in part, takes issue with, when responding to McMahan's anencephalic child and superchimp examples, as well as his harping insistence on cognitive prudential unity, by saying "I don't know how to answer these questions, not only because my daughter does not speak but also because I am not sure I truly understand what these concepts mean or what their significance ultimately is" (Kittay 128). In line with Derrida's unseating of the subject, it seems implicit in Crary's argumentative signposts that doing justice to Kittay's sense, to scaffolding an understanding that acknowledges and is informed by the many complex and webbed relations that situate us is imperative. Hence her focus on doing away with the abstraction ideal, on ethically irreducible but objectively authoritative concepts, on disability studies, on fiction, autobiography, and memoir. When philosophy so often feels like splitting hairs, this comes as a welcome reminder of the value of being attentive to the position from which we enter, of the importance of exhibiting a kind of sensibility in choosing which resources to draw from, of keeping in view where one wants to go.

On this front, I align myself with the majority of of her intent. However, in keeping in view where one wants to go, one need not forget where one is. What limits Crary is, for example, her belief in the problem of grappling with what is "authoritative in the sense of capable of revealing real or objective things about them that are otherwise hidden from view" (145). Insofar as Crary identifies her opposition to moral individualists inclusive of Singer, I will point out parallels between their respective forms of argument that align them closer than they may initially seem. This is not to brush aside the differences (taken by itself, reading those with

cognitive disabilities out of the human community is no small one), but to note that while the views are not so structurally different, Crary's way of getting around the moral individualists dilemma is by moving matters of relevance away from properties of an individual to properties of a species. By doing this she endorses a view in which "species matters to the evaluation of the loss because species provides the norm for good or ill fortune" (Kittay 113). However, she ignores Kittay's focus on the "matrix" (Kittay 111) of responsiveness, and Diamond's "imaginative sense of the otherness" (Diamond 41).

This move gets her into some sticky metaphysics, which does not seem necessary for her argumentative intentions to hold. It also, as just noted, appears to do her a kind of disservice by distancing her from Diamond, from whom she, to some extent, inherits her views on ethically irreducible concepts. My issue more directly is that she wants to retain the imaginative and somewhat ambiguous element central to Diamond's idea of concepts and she also wants to deny, also in line with Diamond, the reducibility of these concepts to any form of materialist underpinning. However, then she wants to connect these concepts, (concepts by which on Diamond's view we may extend concern to animals, for example, "because we think of them as having a little person inside" (Diamond 472)), to *objectively indubitably empirical facts* about what matters to a kind of creature where the perception of kinds of creatures follows from a commonsense view of creatures. She wants to claim that the concepts we employ to describe a being clicks in place with concepts that beings use that make things matter to them. That is to say that when we use concepts in this way, we reveal something *accurately* about the creature's life. It is not just that when one is prone to "sentimental" descriptions, that there is worth in this, it is that they must always, in some even graded sense, be empirically true (Crary 103).



Similarly, she takes fiction to possess the same kind of authority as evidence that scientific evidence would. Here I am less sure if this sticks. By this measure, it seems that our responses, in their varieties of sentimental or emotional flavors, may be valuable and objective though they need not be accurate and that the kind of understanding they may offer will be different from the kind enabled through scientific ventures.

After drawing out where I do not fully align with her, I will suggest the worth in considering the relationship between emotions/desires/sentiments (in the most broad sense) and rational judgments. This is not a perfect and whole solution, but a tangential element I believe deserves attention. Previously I mentioned I was interested in these three claims: 1. That insofar as objectivity (whether scientific or non-scientific) pertains to rational judgment and sound discernment it should be cultivated and allowed to flourish apart from the emotional muck of our senses that may somehow get in the way; 2. That objectivity and accurate discernment are hand in glove (or not); 3. That it is *feasible* to culture an objectivity (whether scientific or non-scientific) entirely uninformed and separate from emotion (or not).

The extent of my interest in these questions connects to what I take to be a kind of importance of emotional sensitivity, of the capacity of being moved--such that Crary's or Singer's examples can do their work--in order to grasp the meaningfulness of other worldings in one's observation of another. Further, I am interested in how proffering a cold and calculating rational objectivity carves out spaces of silence only to imbue surrounding space with affect.

Diamond writes,

*"rights* are not what is crucial. *We do not eat our dead*, even when they have died in automobile accidents or been struck by lightning, and their flesh might be first class. We

do not eat them; or if we do, it is a matter of extreme need, or of some special ritual--and even in cases of obvious extreme need, there is very great reluctance. We also do not eat our amputated limbs” (Diamond 467)

Except, we do eat our dead, we engage in unimaginable and intimate horrors with those who were once our companions. We do so in situations where survival is not at stake, that is to say, in cases that are not exceptional. For example, Appadurai, drawing on Sutton’s studies, had commented on cases of cannibalism in the Quangxi Province, which were referred to as “human flesh banquets” (Appadurai 16). He also noted that “people agreed on the best body parts and insisted on them being cooked; and the selection, killing, and consuming of victims varied were relatively systematized” (Appadurai 16). He further commented that while “eating the liver or heart of the exposed ‘class enemy’ is surely a horrible form of intimacy” (16), it is also a form that suggests that such consumption is a way of affixing a grotesque closeness to the enemy who was once also a companion (16). These are realities, and they are pervasive realities, they are horrible realities.

My problem with philosophers such as Regan, Singer, Crary is they talk as though goodness lies in the totality of things, as if death or discomfort, rather than the detriment that exists in how we persistently survive in the most ordinary kind of way. Abstraction is not a question of what we can accurately read from an expression as Crary takes it to be.

The issue philosophy has with abstraction is in its neglect of negative space. It cannot detach itself from the security it obsesses about finding something accurate to justify the worth of human life, or of life of other beings. It cannot remove itself from all its essential properties. Insofar as it has a neglect of negative space, it cannot allow itself to think of the persistence of a

life in complete and utter depravity with absolutely nothing good about it, and still think that the life of that being is good, that is has value. It struggles to separate what it thinks of as “thought”, what it thinks “thought” reveals, and letting this stand alongside the absence of it. It is this way of thinking, that I believe, colors the lives people with disabilities as stained with signs of deathliness. It cannot imagine a life to be completely worthless and still have worth, because it is a life that confronts itself. In doing so it silences the miseries that are so real, it silences the sacrifices in identity entailed to persist, it fails to understand, as Crary does, why philosophy may be accused of being abstract. It thinks it can problem solve, as though it were a rubik's cube, what makes a life virtuous, and in doing so it carries painfully blind declaratives about distributing guilt and exaltation, while somehow proffering its own univeralisty.

Diamond may not necessarily be in disagreement with my contention. She acknowledges that were you to eat your ‘pet’ it would not have been a pet to begin with, unless calling it that would be “making a crude joke of a familiar sort” (469). She also acknowledges that “there are analogies between the case of our relations to animals and the case of a dominant group’s relation to some other group of human beings which it exploits or treats unjustly in other ways” (466).

It is, admittedly, somewhat startling to come across instances such as Regan’s efforts to secure the graceful death in the innocence of a gun-wielding child (Regan 293), of Crary’s stance that the unruly Phineas’ Gage’s of the world are equally within ethics (*obviously* so and without further thought) (Crary 142), in Diamond’s position that we only eat our dead in cases of survival, of resorting to the obviousness of maintaining one’s innocence in cases where such acts may be committed in the face of preserving or defending one’s individual safety and survival

(Diamond 42). More forthrightly, in her appeal to the innocence of childhood (within her reference and use of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*) as an argumentative move (42). With self-defense and preservation, I take no issue. However, safety and survival, that old evolutionary adage, will not do in terms of containing the instances in which we engage in the horrific, in the monstrous. To put it more bluntly, there is, as it appears, a silent bookmark in the consideration of violence of the most intimate sort. My focus will not be on these sorts of violences, which the scope of this paper cannot do the kind of nuanced justice to that they would deserve. Rather, I will suggest that there is a peculiar innocence and by extension forgiveness problem that pervades across these diverse texts, and is co-extensive with Crary's struggle of saddling the metaphysics of McDowell's perception, and the imagination in Diamond's ethics. This is to further think on what is so inconceivable, difficult, or awkward in the idea of an adorable monster for the philosophical mind. Why philosophy may struggle with grappling with realities if it wishes to proceed in this sort of way.

## ***McDowell's Naturalism and the Question of Rationality***

To understand the conflict between metaphysical accuracy and moral warrant found in Cray, we must first begin by pointing out a problem with McDowell's naturalistic views, which Cray then inherits. McDowell wants to move away from an empiricism by which our sensed perceptions might not align with the way the world ("nature") truly is. That is to say, he wants to move away from an empiricism by which justification occurs only by means of a greater or lesser coherent set of beliefs but remains skeptical about how the world appears in perceptual experience. The problem for the empiricist he is then responding to, would be something like:

1. There's a biological reality to how we are able to perceive things in the world and this biological continuity ties us to our nature. This can be as seen something like instinct.
2. This biological (physical/chemical/etc.) reality is inseparable from what we can say and come to know about the world.
3. There is a seeming dilemma insofar as what we can come to say about nature is inseparable from how our nature reveals it to be. How can we then appeal to perceptual experience to justify what we think?

This can also be seen as a position against an idealist or perhaps some forms of representationalist views by which our perceptual experience does not completely correctly align with how things are in the world. McDowell is interested in addressing the empiricists skeptical challenge and opposing a "Myth of the Given" by which a non-conceptual causal experience may somehow justify thought within the scope of reason. McDowell is concerned with how the defining of nature as that which has to do with the real rather than apparent suggests that experience is excluded from the realm of the natural (Cray 101).

In turn, McDowell wants to grant merit to the idea that the world presents limits for what we can think and that what we can think is not (even in cases of hallucination, or color variance) presumably separate from how the world enables those experiences to arise. In this sense McDowell is interested in two questions. One is a question of how experience can serve its justificatory role in belief, which leads McDowell to argue that it must be conceptual. If one endorses a belief, one does so because their experienced perceptions reveal the world to be a certain way (McDowell 1). He argues that “crediting our perceptual experience with this rational significance is a fundamental insight of empiricism. . .in order to accommodate it, we need to conceive our perceptual experience as an actualization, in sensory consciousness, of conceptual capacities” (1). Since concepts feature in the content of judgments, perceptions must be conceptual in order to justify them (1).

Another one of his questions is how rationality functions insofar as it is assumed to be that which marks human beings as special and distinct from other animals (McDowell 2). On McDowell’s view what is special about human rationality is our ability to step back from certain inclinations (2), or a certain desire (or drive) and ask “whether [one]. . .*should* be so inclined” (2). He takes this natural essential property as one that contributes to our concept of personhood. Insofar as he makes this assumption, what he is truly trying to account for is a human sense of agency, autonomy, and self-determination (3). Thus he argues that if a being’s (an animal on his view) action derives, or can be directly explained by by “its natural motivational tendencies” (2). Which translates into something like, if what we think of as *nature* has to do with what we think of as *instinct*, and if animal action can be explained within the scope of “natural reactions”, i.e. that they cannot step back and assess moral reasons as we humans can, then for all intents and

purposes animals are outside the scope of rationality. For McDowell, then, what an animal has is the ability to discriminate between situations, however accurately or inaccurately, and respond in the way its nature enables it to. In this way it acts on instinct. What makes a human different from an animal is its ability to surpass instinct into the realm of free response (4). Humans, he thinks, can make inferences, whereas animals cannot and this is a virtue of their concept possession and autonomy (5). This difference was assumed.

Crary wants to expand on McDowell's idea of how animals are more bound by their "nature" than human beings are by arguing that, as will later be shown, conceptuality features in any kind of discriminative perception. Insofar as she inherits his naturalism, along with his naturalistic fallacies, she precludes herself from seeing Diamond's more radical views about the irreducibility of concepts. Though McDowell rejects a view by which animals are automata he still holds that they "must therefore be adequately describable in exclusively biological terms" (Crary 106). Crary argues that this exclusion is unnecessary since the framework of his argument easily lends itself to suggesting that while animals may lack rationality and our particular form of experience, they may exhibit "partial forms of freedom" (120) in that they may still function with universal concepts while lacking the ability to establish critical distance in McDowell's sense. It will later be shown how this naturalism will never do justice to taking up the question of animal lives, alterity, and disability.

Standing in opposition to McDowell, is a phenomenological argument posed by Dreyfus. Dreyfus responds by posing an argument from critical distance and merging. His first argument states that though one may need to exhibit a kind of stepping back, or distanced reflective thought in the acquisition of a skill, expertise is acquired when one can engage in a task without

necessarily supplying reasons for each of their actions (Dreyfus 52). Rather than simply having the initially learned rules become unconscious, Dreyfus suggests that when exhibiting mastery one does not rely on them altogether. They are not present in thought--conscious or unconscious. This objection amounts to Dreyfus claiming that we do not use reasons *all the time*, not that we do not use them at all. As Shear points out, this objection misfires on two counts. Firstly, as Schear noted, all that is required to endorse McDowell's account is that *some* kinds of sensory consciousness are conceptual and therefore in the realm of reasons, not that all are (Schear 4). Secondly, he says, capacities can in fact be pervasive. Shear contrasts the example of kindness with that of twirling a pencil. A person who has the capacity for kindness is seen as living in a kind of way, their life is holistically colored by a kind of responsiveness. The fact that they may not be kind in situations that do not call for kindness, bolsters the fact that their kindness is genuine (11). Similarly, just because one may not *always* exhibit rational thought (as in the case of mastery), that is not to say that one does not have rationality as a pervasive capacity. On the other hand, capacities like pencil twirling are not general in the way that capacities like those for kindness are, and thus do not extend past the occasions in which one exhibits does this (9). So McDowell can be salvaged from both of these charges.

The charge that sticks, as Shear points out, is Dreyfus's argument from merging (14). Dreyfus wants to argue, in opposition to McDowell, that to reject a view by which every level of human perception is conceptual does not entail that whatever "Given" one is then subjected to is necessarily "bare" (Dreyfus 55). Insofar as one can conceive of cases where human beings do not act on reasons as such, as for Dreyfus in cases of masterful chess play, he urges us to think about responding as responding to a field of affordances (56). The affordances responded to in an



engaged being will be particular to the situation (56). He writes, “given our socialized second nature, in dealing with people, we are drawn to the right distance to stand from *this* specific person, in *this* light, in *this* room, with *this* background noise, and so forth” (56). In this way, we are drawn to “grip” (57) to certain affordances in certain ways over other ways, and this in itself is normative in that we can sense when we are “losing our grip” on a situation so to speak (57). Shear noted that while what opening oneself to such affordances truly entails remains to be clarified, the reason this argument has force is because Dreyfus claims that to supply reasons there must be a distinction between a subject and some determinate objects. When one exhibits absorbed coping (in mastery), this distinction goes away, and since there are no longer determinate objects, they are also unavailable for rationality (Shear 13).

Shear ultimately reframes the McDowell-Dreyfus debate as one about whether rationality is the *essential and pervasive* feature of a human being in which it is what defines what it means to be human, it is what colors every aspect of human life *regardless* of it's exhibited on every occasion (strong venerable thesis). Or, whether it is simply one capacity of a collective, but not necessarily the core defining one (weak venerable thesis). Shear's reformulation of the question at stake brings into view why one would be so concerned with questioning essentials, whether essentials are possible with regards to human value.

This debate deserves necessary mention in that Cray sides herself wholly with a McDowellian view of things. It is because she chooses to do so that she distances herself from Diamond and faces the particular shortcoming which will be later illustrated. As I will argue, Cray's account then misfires on two counts. First in that by equating the content of phenomenal experience to concepts by the capacity to discriminate she defines non-conceptuality (or any less

stringent conceptuality) out of the picture and does not put enough consideration into what it means to say one has (and therefore relies) on an experience. This then lowers the bar for the resources it takes to attribute experiences (of meaningfulness) to animals, but insufficiently so. That is, she does not think enough about why a concept should be equated to a value. Second, I will argue that Cray commits a similar fallacy to McDowell in drawing on empiricism (which pertains to structure) to justify the meaningful.

Insofar as Dreyfus's argument has weight to it *and* insofar as his approach is squarely phenomenological and not naturalistic, the following problem with McDowell's argument should be noted. McDowell can be seen as facing a certain kind of dilemma when he writes

that is not to deny that its behaviour is voluntary; and an animal, *qua* producer of voluntary behaviour, is not to be simply identified with the motivational impulses that come naturally to it. But in this kind of case the distinction between the behaving animal and its motivational impulses has no particular importance. There is no particular point in saying it is the animal itself that determines what it does (McDowell 2).

The problem McDowell faces is this. He recognizes that there is a kind of explanatory unity to properties of nature, this we can view as the business of scientists. However, it seems that us language-using creatures make all kinds of dense choices through reflection. When we look through McDowell's microscope we see passive objects with discrete sets of relations amongst them. We look at a cell and then we look at ourselves, and we think hm, how could all of this agency have come about?

To begin "nature" is an ambiguous term which most often refers to that which is outside from humans, apart from humans, not made by humans; phenomena of the material world.

Insofar as it is defined as that which pertains to the physical realm it is also viewed as that which is bound, or limited, by physical (scientific) explanations. That is not to say that nature cannot be viewed as agential (as many new materialists are doing), rather that the methods by which we come to understand and know nature and all its natural phenomena is a distinctly different realm of explanation to that which we construe as agential phenomena. That is, it's difficult to use the language of perhaps a more agential or interactionist model and then ask how we are to interpret this new finding since there would be no clear "us". To return to McDowell's quote, it becomes incoherent to say that an animal behavior is "voluntary" (McDowell 12) while also holding that it is directly derivative of its "motivational impulses" (12). This is the same as saying that it only acts on "instinct" and is therefore "bound by its nature", and yet it doesn't act on "instinct" because it is what is doing the acting.

As noted, Aaltola has written that:

Objectivity, and existing as oneself, are based on either full personhood, or full materialism, and it is the beings that fall in between that remain lacking of these qualities. This reveals the presumed nature of animals: they are 'in between' people and material things--animality is formed of 'in betweenness,' and hence lacks a permanent and independent quality (Bruns on Aaltola 714).

This view expresses what is fundamentally the issue. Insofar as nature refers to conceptual containment by ascertaining a structure of reasons it, by definition cannot refer to the realm of reasons or explanation that have to do with experience of personhood, where such experience is that which we, in the roughest sense, attribute and derive our agency from.

This is not to say that one is more authoritative than the other point blank, but that they serve functionally different purposes. When the empiricist relies on her vision to describe the natural world, sure she is relying on her visual experience, but we do not tie our notion of agency solely by our capacity for observation in this strict sense. For example, one could either say that Sarah tripped because she's clumsy or one could say that Sarah tripped because of some medical condition with her knee. Or as another example we could say either Steve chose to buy the blue pants, Steve's brain automatically brought up a positive association with blue-ness and primed Steve to buy the pants, but to say Steve chose to buy the pants because his brain made him is confused. It is incoherent to speak of an agent driven to act by a determinable cause. In the cases that say neuroscientists or psychologists do study topics of autonomy and choice it is most often in parallel with the subject's reportable beliefs. This would allow one to know the distance or closeness in the reasons the subject attributed for their actions and the broader or more primitive set of reasons that this research may elucidate. Yet all this amounts to is determining what the individual is aware of and capable of attributing to their choice and what the individual is not aware of. In this sense it is an inquiry of the individual's conscious agency as it relates to their unconscious processes, it is not a claim about the value or lack of value about consciousness or unconsciousness per se. To pronounce, to whatever extent, "research has shown that Steve's choices are determined by x, y, z unconscious processes and a, b, c neurological interactions" is simply to not speak of Steve as a person but to speak of Steve as an organism. Once one begins to speak of a being as an organism, one then is apt (in doing what is only responsible interdisciplinary science) to appeal to biological, chemical and physical causes). This takes us

outside of the body and to the level of organs, molecules, quarks, until what was once a person becomes the environment.

Any way of speaking naturalistically is not a way of speaking that just anyone can understand. Yet no matter what century of scientific development we may find ourselves in, we confront certain kinds of distinctly human problems in an indeterminate and unpredictable amount of distinctly human situations. Yoon has noted that it is strange indeed that the progress of science has been accompanied by “a curious effect that seems restricted to our understanding of the living world. . .[where we think] wait a minute . . .we’ll need a professional to handle this” (Yoon 20). We do not call upon the physicists to explain to us the dynamics of playing soccer. She goes on to personally attest to this, claiming that though she was knowledgeable of the taxonomic debates from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, the supreme authority of science was never put in doubt even as it pressed up against our obvious instincts (7). Science could reveal that two vastly different appearing things, cauliflower and kale, were part of the same species (Yoon 7).

The situations we confront more often than not determine our behavior. For the most part, we are fairly awful at predicting a stranger’s behavior and attributing it to the situational components that elicit it (rather than a trait or disposition (Nisbett and Wilson 143)). To read this fact as a deprivation, to use this to say “look at all the ways humans are bound by instinct!”, to use this as evidence of the ways we are bound by and made into something more than, less than, or not human is simply to read as inhuman something that is so obviously part of, and that we only know by being human. It is to view something as simultaneously natural because it is determinable and somehow beyond the scope of what is natural because it does not align with

what we think humanity entails. Insofar as it gains traction by both of these paradoxical views, it still tells us not what we should do or how we should conceive ourselves to be, it merely points us back to the irreducible problem of what is.

Here the whole notion of free will loses its grip. For starters, it's unclear what a will that is not "free" would look like. An action with no cause? An action not motivated? An action which can be entirely separable from and act entirely antithetical to its motivations (which defines "motivation" right out of the picture)? Yet it is something like this that we speak of when we speak of instincts, and it is something like this that contributes to the confusion and the general obtuseness in speaking of "instincts."

To return to an issue alluded to earlier, nature, instincts, and that ambiguous "is" are sticky concepts. We are curious creatures who want to get to the fundamentals of things. We want explanations to the extent that we want solutions. We want to know when we go astray, we want to know how we can be better, we want to know that when we find ourselves confronted with difficulties and swarmed by our own imperfections that we are not alone. When our thoughts go to the grave along with the inseparable and strange shells we find ourselves in, we want to know that we did life alright, that it was worth it in the end. That whatever guilt-ridden ash we inevitably find in our hands we can finally and for the first time, allow to be blown away without an afterthought. We want to know that our life, when it is fleeting in memory and in body, when we are uncertainty tethered to what we once knew and were, when we are forgetting, that we are not committing our last mistake in thinking it is meaningful even if it will be forgotten, even if it will return to once more being forever unseen. We want to know how we can

become an afterthought with dignity, that we can dare to be at peace when the evidence is not too clear. It is all too understandable then to want theories, to want explanations.

The problem is that, to draw on Aaltola, we only have two resources to do so. We have matter, substance, forms, and then we have thought, reason, language, and concepts. This is the most fundamental problem we face. One of the problems, of being a human, is that these are the tools we were endowed with for facing the world in our kind of way. We do not see ultraviolet rays, we do not follow scents, it is difficult for us to conceive otherwise. We are tormented by our inability to grasp at a fundamental that does not circle back to the problem of what is. So the whole notion of nature's secrets presses up against the whole notion of what seems most obvious.

Theories are just as fallible as people. To make humans into theories and to hope that the theory one has erased a human into will tell you what was special about the once-was human is to commit this sort of mistake. McDowell cannot simultaneously hold that an animal's behavior may be viewed as "voluntary" and immediately follow by claiming that this is merely to say that the animal "is not to be simply identified with the motivational impulses that come to it" and since an animal is defined by its "motivational impulses" to then conclude "there is no particular point in saying it is the animal itself that determines what it does" (2). This point trivializes his own argument. That is to say, it's less clear what the stakes are in him arguing against a view of instinct at all. To perhaps make things more clear here is the layout of his claims:

1. Humans have certain capacities that generally feature in our species.
2. Humans also have that special human way of thinking and speaking and socially engaging.

3. We can causally tie these capacities to metaphysical properties of nature (i.e. we can causally explain that person x did y because a, b, c chemical forces drove him to).
4. Humans are bound by (metaphysically unclearly exceptional “human”) nature.
5. An animal (pig, ant, frog) also has certain capacities that generally feature in their species (that allow it to be scientifically classified as such).
6. An animal (deer, grasshopper, bear) also has that special animal way of socially engaging.
7. We can causally tie these capacities to metaphysical properties of nature (i.e. we can causally explain that animal x did y because a, b, c chemical forces drove him to).
8. Humans are bound by (metaphysically unclearly exceptional “animal”) nature

So then we get:

9. What is most obviously different is the thinking and speaking so this must be what accounts for our perceived human agency (and all that may come of our social way of being).
10. Because we take ourselves to be free agents and because those other aspects of our social way of engaging is determined by metaphysically dubious “human” properties (which we share with other animals, and on some rudimentary level, with other forms of matter at large), our agency is to be located in the thought and talk we do not share with other animals.



11. This thought and talk is part of our human nature (though we've not yet determined at what level of metaphysical reduction and regress we lose our property).
12. So McDowell thinks he must reconcile the agency found in our thought and talk to the determinism he assumes in a metaphysical "human" nature.

We are involuntarily human. We do not get to choose when, to whom, where, what language or into what life we are born. We are what we are. We are what we are made of and from what (and whom) we came about to be. This is our "nature." This is merely a fact, not unlike a statistic, of our conditions. Since McDowell is concerned with being objective in an empiricists sense, he wants to theorize about how that which is involuntary about us transforms into what we know and feel to be voluntary. This conflates two modes of explanation, that of matter and that of personhood. This trivializes his argument insofar as the nature of our autonomy was what was put into question (hence the concepts) where such nature is viewed as what physically determines our perception, yet "being a human" was presumed as part of our nature, and the autonomy was presumed from our "human life" or "human nature." This makes it trivially true that humans are autonomous insofar as we feel we exhibit choice in forming our beliefs and acting on them, in engaging reflectively. Trivially true that humans have language (and thought), something other animals (apparently) do not possess (unless trained by us) which is trivial in that there are also biological causes that can be attributable to this difference. It also makes it inconsequentially true that humans are "bound by their nature." Yet if we consider both these aspects as part of our nature, and we can admit that there are times we feel and judge

ourselves (or another) to have greater or lesser agency, this tells us nothing about which stance we are to take or how we are to choose.

It most centrally trivializes his argument because he wants to say that the experiential aspects of being a certain kind of way in the world is reducible to that certain kinds ontologies and their relata. That is, to point and say the thing that (the ambiguous) *you* are is actually these other things and forces, this is to dismantle “the image of a projection from a self-standing subjectivity” (18). He also does not indicate what he conceives of as being part of the content of an experience, whether that content (which needs to serve a justificatory role in thought for him) includes the phenomenal properties. Yet he appeals to those phenomenal properties in presuming capacity for choice. At the same time, with regards to animals McDowell waves his hand and says *nah*, voluntary, involuntary it’s all just a matter of explanation. He can either take nature as ontologically dictating (therefore the realm of the objectively empirically true) and extensive to what becomes relevant and meaningful (for him, human rationality). On this view the *capacity* for language, thought, and all that comes with it must be viewed as equally determined, which would make his conceptuality work redundant. Or he can take nature to be a way of explanation that does not determine what is meaningful (or how things are seen interiorly). This would let him maintain his sense of rational human agency but at the cost of admitting a gap between how things appear to be and a mind to world direction of fit for all contents of experiences which is precisely the view he wants to do away with. In other words, to maintain his views of rationality as that which is coextensive with our beliefs, thoughts, and other (human) ways of engaging meaningfully where the meaning is inseparable from our sense of autonomy he would need to admit that there is some way in which there is truth (perhaps even objective truth) in how we

humanly greet the world, but that this is a different *kind* of truth than the one found by the scientist. This is the problem Crary will be shown to inherit. Put crudely, McDowell views nature as fully determinable, deterministic, and therefore passive, and in some sense, deprived. That is what it is, by his definition, to be “natural.” His way of un-depriving it is by sprinkling some activating concepts onto his experience (and onto the world by extension) and voilà the world sings anew. Autonomy and value problem solved, except not so much.

Thus we return to Shear and Dreyfus. Dreyfus’s phenomenological account wants to illustrate the world as forces, and reframe responding to the world in terms of “affordances” (Dreyfus, 56). To the extent that he does this, he grants nature or the environment more animacy and agency. This is no small part of the fact that he takes a phenomenological approach and in doing so does not find all these ontological distinctions of what a kind is, what kind of things (or sub-kinds) make up a kind and so forth, necessary or warranted in his repertoire. Next we will briefly return to the difference between Descartes’ and Derrida between looking at how Crary’s inheritance of McDowell pulls her farther away from Diamond’s conceptuality and simultaneously puts her closer to the moral individualists she opposes.

## ***The Horses of Reason and How Well We can Rein Them***

What I am is what I am are you what you are or what?

—Eddie Brickell, What I Am

Where one stands on the issue of what to make of our rationality will have direct bearing on the form of thought one believes is necessary to appeal to in understanding alterity. In *The Animal* Derrida draws our attention to how certain arguments may have presumed a clear difference between the concept of a human and an animal which enabled them to do work on justifying or explaining properties of humanness (Derrida 20). He in turn urges for the importance of considering what the actual distinctions are without reference to what we may think ourselves to be (36). I will later suggest Crary to have taken on a kind of Cartesian burden.

Derrida is interested in putting into question the certainty of perceptible self consciousness, in the possibility of encounters without agential authors. Derrida sets out to show how a passivity pervades a construction of self-identity. In his exploration of Genesis, he notes how Jehovah allows Adam to name the animals, “watching over this man along with a mixture of curiosity and authority” (16). He asks what it is to be granted the right to do something freely, yet under observation, under “surveillance” (16), enabled to act only by one’s very subjection (16). It is perhaps, because of this, or something related to this thought, that I take him to be important for grappling with disability ethics and animal ethics.

While the Cartesian self can only define itself through a world encompassing expression of thought made certain by the existence of an originating being, Derrida seeks to show how the self, bound through the precondition of language, is always displaced and other from what it announces itself to be. The presence of something can only be encountered in following traces

that already mark the absence of what one is following (13). Derrida's playful language (admittedly confusing to grasp), portrays his overall project of questioning our confidence of holding ourselves as the only creatures capable of truly responding. Jacque writes, "When I play with my cat [*ma chatte*], who knows if I am not a pastime to her more than she is to me?" (7). For Derrida then, because any choices we may define our agency and rationality by is confined to a language we did not choose, to an authority and authorship in language that for him does not end in God but is forever multiplicitous, to encounter an essence of a being we must begin with these differences. For Derrida it is the fragmentary state of self-identity, a self in flux, that enables one to take up any projects of relating itself to another. Thus, Derrida emphasizes the possibility of tracing as following a scent, as equally authorial as tracing a thought (122).

Descartes, on the other hand, follows his desire for vision, the sense he cannot escape. Since he understands and determines other beings through thought derived from an immanent and infinite presence (God), he can only identify with and identify animals by immortalizing them, idealizing them while at the same time subjecting them. So while he may make them into "animal-machines" he simultaneously exalts the animal, makes it, beautiful in an odd and distorted sort of way.

I will suggest that Cary does something similar in her inheritance of McDowell as well as her misinterpretation of Diamond, and that she needs to take more heed to Derrida's suggestion. In grappling with difference, in being conscientious of his playful literary form, Derrida, on my understanding, acknowledges that the "I think" is an "I desire." He acknowledges the difficult connection and divide between the sense that desires, the felt immediacy of I am a being though I may not know what I am, of the "I am that I am" (Derrida 17), and how this leads

to disciplinary formation. Yet in the production of disciplinary specificity, of following narrow thought (our vision), in securing that kind of accuracy, we forget that the “I think” was an “I desire” derived from what Yoon refers to as the *umwelt* that colors a beings hierarchy of sense (Yoon, 15). That certainty, accuracy, specificity is what we think of as being authoritative, and what Crary takes to be authoritative. Or in the more practical way of things, this is just the idea that the authority of science has grown surprisingly huge in how we think of living creatures ordinarily, whereas we do not appeal to chemists to explain how we should go about making our delicious breakfasts. We don’t think, “hm you know what I really need right now? Definitely my highschool textbook on thermodynamics. If only I could remember Gibbs free energy....”

To return to Derrida, what started as a desire that did not know what it wanted, in its efforts to secure itself in stable specifiable consequence (always underwritten, destabilized by that ‘I desire’), the accuracy establishes distance from what was once precious. Or to be more specific, the authority is granted to the knowledge acquired, it’s accuracy and so forth, because one thinks it can completely separate from that initial “I desire.” The “authoritativeness” of this authority, is an imagined one. It is not that it is not *accurate* per se, it is not that science, or physics, or whatever don’t get things right. It’s that the relation the human being establishes with the disciplinary accuracy, and the belief that, that is what can secure the human being (or whatever being), make it consequential authoritatively. That is the imagined relationship. To the extent that this is unacknowledged, for example by those who inherit the Cartesian burden, Derrida’s writing suggests that the conceptual violence exists in virtue of such conceptualizations. Observation at a distance from up above, observation that reads objects as less than (observed/subjected) *and* object exalted (subject yet also subjecter).

Now, you might be thinking, why are you being so hard on our boy Descartes? Even if Derrida allegedly acknowledges that the “I think” is an “I desire”, isn’t desire also a kind of idealization? What makes his view better than our solitary thinker Descartes? I would agree with this charge. There are salient connections between the two. Derrida is simply more cognizant of how he presents the problem in his form of writing. What he acknowledges, or what I take him to acknowledge, is that form is what we respond to, yet form can never capture variation. In order to track or trace reality one responds to form, but this form is idealized, reality is idealized and it must be so in order to elicit the kind of mysterious moral responses Crary suggests. Otherwise the specificities of what she is responding to will put into question the value of such responses and perhaps impose a stringency on such sentiment that could not but lead to its own defect. This is Derrida’s point about seeing (thought) as displacement. Once more you might ask, so what’s the difference? The difference is in the similarity. That is to say, the different conceptual starting points of Descartes and Derrida still seem to circle back around in no obviously easily parsable way. That is, in my understanding, the takeaway of Derrida, and it is also, I think, the takeaway of Diamond. It is in that sense that Crary carries a kind of Cartesian burden, it is also in that sense, as I will suggest, that her argument is structurally quite close to the moral individualists (Singer and Regan) that she opposes.

## ***The Difficulty of a Scientific Moral Imagination***

Crary is struggling to straddle her commitment to McDowell's view of things with the inspiration she draws from Diamond (and her quite forward disavowal of any particular unifying metaphysic). In what follows I will suggest that her commitment to this view of things aligns her argument structurally closer to the moral individualists, and all their empirically indisputable facts, than I believe she intends. I will suggest that insofar as she is dedicated to McDowell's picture of things, her shift from Singer and Regan's focus on the individual as the relevant kind to focusing on the species as the relevant kind, and more specifically her equating a commonsense view of speciation with empirically accurate facts about their concept possession is tenuous. This is the case to the extent that she is still committed to an independent feature with an empirically specifiable reality *across all animals* (where what is or is not a sufficiently expressive animal remains ambiguous, where the way we perceive species can be very far removed from how a scientist classifies species) yet wants to retain a notion of concepts as irreducible in Diamond's sense.

After that I will suggest that a similarity that resides across the works of Crary and Singer is their trust in an audience that will be emotionally moved and how using emotionally thick examples helps shape the force of their arguments and is only strengthened by their objective ring. Further I will consider how our notion of animality relates to our notion of objectivity, will point out a tendency to preserve the trope of an innocent child while grappling with what is monstrous, and will argue that emotions and rationality do not exist in separate containers, and keeping the illusion that they do will impede us from understanding alterity. In line with this I will suggest that objectivity does not have to be coextensive with accuracy, that these values are



separable on a sliding scale and that we can claim that the more “commonsense”, “emotional” views implicit in Crary and Diamond have authority that is different from the kind of authority found in scientific understanding.

Crary can be envisioned to be responding to two groups of thought. One consists of philosophers who argue that one needs to identify a feature of moral relevance and then identify in what way it is to be morally relevant in calling for certain actions. Another consists of perhaps ordinary views at large (non-philosophers) of people who may believe animal behavior to be explained away to instinct, where because of the ‘naturalness’ of this instinct, it strips animals of agency and simultaneously of the capacity to have lives with things that matter. These groups, specificities aside, are of the same general flavor.

Crary thinks that folk psychological thought and talk relate to moral judgments and are irreducible to any materialist or physicalist underpinning. This is what she inherits from Diamond. Expanding on McDowell, she endorses a wider objectivity by arguing for a kind of transparency of expressive behavior and conceptual pervasiveness in perceptual experience that provide reasons for action (Crary 32). Crary focuses on Wittgenstein’s writing on mindedness in illuminating how “psychological categories are irreducibly ethical and metaphysically transparent” (39) focusing on how he connects understanding with expressive behavior. Crary is also motivated by a McDowellian connection between subjectivity and features of the objective world, to address the hard problem of consciousness coloring philosophy of mind debates where subjectivity may remain unaccounted for (as in the case of materialist reduction which may have a hard time accounting for qualia) or dualist accounts which render subjectivity as a “non-objective or logically private add on” (42). Conceptualists, with whom she aligns herself,

note the necessity of concepts in justification and that in “non-inferential perceptual thought experience is what plays this justificatory role” (50). An issue for non-conceptualists, as framed by Crary, is how experience can justify a conceptual belief. This further makes the abstraction requirement seem implausible for her.

Changes of aspect in which Wittgenstein holds that “genuinely [seeing] something new” (53) shows that interpretation is viewed as integral to perception rather than a result of tacking on a concept to perceived content (52). In this way concepts permeate non-inferential perception. Drawing on Wittgenstein, she endorses the value of doing away with an abstraction ideal, since we are unsure of what would concretely constitute it anyways. This in turn would allow us to say that objectivity admits some subjective features which in turn hold authoritative ground about the way the world is (58). This is her notion of a wider form of objectivity which would take “at least some subjective qualities [to] count as objective. . .[and] at least some of these affect-related qualities” (58). She then goes on to defend such a wider objectivity and the idea that psychological categories are irreducibly ethical. Her externalist view of mind in conjunction with her Wittgensteinian viewpoint, enable her to argue for her wider objectivity and to argue for a more flexible conception of rational understanding that brings animals into the ethical fold. Albeit, ambiguously so. This in turn is supposed to allow us to see that objectivity admits some subjective features which in turn hold objective ground about the way the world is (58). By linking concepts to meaningful understanding, and their use to the organization of one’s environment (through kind discrimination and associational learning) with motivation for action, she posits that animals can engage with their environment normatively by having certain kinds of things matter to them in virtue of featuring in their ethically irreducible concepts (107). Through

this they may exhibit “partial forms of freedom” (12). Though it’s not her central claim, and therefore remains unsubstantiated, Crary does not shy away from suggesting that therefore animal life might be open to moral assessment.

The importance of this move should not be overlooked for it brings to light a much more interesting presupposition. Though more will be said on the parallels between Singer’s and Crary’s argument, by tacking onto *understanding* as her central relevant feature (rather than sentience, identity of self over time, or supposedly something typically thought of as more concrete), Crary is implicitly exercising a very specific kind of observation. Namely that for “agents” to create meaning in their life, to embark on mattering matter, they must allegedly achieve some distance from their environment. They must be able to see themselves as a thing that is not like those other kinds of things, and use those other kinds of things, their distinctiveness, their opposition, in building up anything that may resemble a sense of self (even if that sense of self does not reach the level of awareness where one can declare “I am x”). To be engaged in the world, a part that acts on it, one must also stand apart from it. One must be able to hone and direct their attention to certain kinds of things, regardless of whether or not they are able to list reasons as such. One defines oneself by what one perceives themselves not to be like. Without this separation, this kind of distancing, the view is, I suppose, that the world appears as an amalgam of in some way ambiguous objects that the being is, to put it crudely, just a part of the mix. At the very least, it would do away with the basis that makes it plausible to speak of intentions, reasons and actions, to have kinds of things that one’s responses are geared towards. Granting animals understanding is supposed to also grant a kind of awareness of determinate entities in their environment, that is presumably out of the picture in ‘instinctive’ responses.

Understanding allows for a kind of greater determinacy, and the view seems to be that without this there would be insufficient cause for acting on anything. This way of arguing, as Crary does, is not exactly imaginative. It presumes a kind of normatively standard way of how a human reasons into the world and then sprinkles that to other animals just as McDowell does. Yet surely, the difference between discrimination and meaning is not so small! I, for one, can discriminate a lot of things, that doesn't inherently make them meaningful.

What is peculiar on this view is the suggestion that taxonomic distinctions as they appear to us are always empirically accurate. I will draw on Yoon's *Naming Nature*, to showcase some evidence that this is not quite so. When Yoon was pursuing her graduate studies in evolutionary biology, she was smacked with the debates between evolutionary biologists and cladists. Cladists had apparently stormed in and declared that they intended to do away with fish, and moths, and zebras (Yoon 10). The problem, with fish for example, was that although "fish" were (and are) a very intuitive way of grouping animals, they did not come about from one evolutionary ancestor. The class of 'fish', if one adhered to Darwinian principles, was as arbitrary as throwing all animals in the same group because of how loud they are, or because they had the same colored stripe.

When someone decides to embark on the mission of classifying, apart from looking at your problem animal, you need to look at other organisms which have descended from that common ancestor and then you need to settle on features you deem relevant for inclusion. That is, in asking what other creatures descended from that common ancestor one stumbles upon many non-fishy things. Broaden the circle too wide and everything gets thrown in the mix--lizards, and tigers, and bears--and soon the categories lose the functional purpose they were

first intended to have, the group of ‘fish’ is no longer sufficiently fishy (Yoon, 10). So cladists had declared that the right way one should go about categorizing is to strictly adhere to only the direct descendents of an organism in a clade, “the various kinds of fish--the heroic salmon, the friendly minnows, the lunch-worthy tuna--were all still very much in existence, they reassured everyone. But fish as a distinct and cohesive group, the cladists said, were not ” (Yoon 7). Fish as a group were declared scientifically dead (Yoon 10).

On the other side of things Yoon noted that Kohler’s takete-maluma study had shown that the majority of participants said “takete” fit better with an angular shape and “maluma” with rounded shapes (Yoon 134). Brent Berlin had read fifty pairs of animal names taken from the language of the Huambisa of the Peruvian rain forest, with each pair consisting of a fish and a bird name. Within a sample of one hundred students, they were on average able to identify 58% correctly--a much too high statistic given the sample size (Yoon 134). Robert Langacker’s empathy hierarchy has similarly shown that the animacy attributions one makes are surprisingly stable across linguistic groups (Chen 29). Children, on the other hand, exhibit all kinds of animacy slippages (Chen 29). Meanwhile psychologists have found that certain brain-damaged hospital patients lose the ability to classify living beings, though often still having the capacity to categorize inanimate objects (Yoon 12).

Yoon further noted that well-versed New Guinea naturalist tribesmen identified a huge bird as a mammal, “Filipino headhunters appeared to conceive of orchids as human body parts, explaining to a bewildered anthropologist that here grow the thumbs, there the elbows” (11). Carl Linnaeus, crowned father of taxonomy, had classed bats as “mice with wings” (then later as primates, the hippopotamus identified by him as a rodent though it was more commonly

viewed as a pig-horse (Sax 37), and he fully believed in the existence of mermaids near Brazil (Yoon 36). Many others still held onto the beliefs of “multiheaded hydras, part man-part ape beasts, human-faced fish, and camelopardalis (supposedly the offspring of a camel and a panther) and trees that bore living geese as their fruit” (36), and when so many new, unimaginable, species were being discovered, why shouldn’t they have?

Through her text it becomes clear that our species distinctions are *far* from accurate, and many of the ways in which we classify the living world in virtue of our common sense relates significantly to how we make meaning through our senses, how we conceptualize sounds for example, and very little to do with actual empirically accurate distinctions. Further it forces us to question her reliance on visual discriminations, when one could imagine that conceptions contributing to sound localization would be of a very different kind than visual localization. When one would perhaps, imagine, that if we were the kind of creatures more reliant on sound than sight that the *content* of our concepts would be of a different kind than the content of concepts that rely on vision. In this sense it is somewhat confusing for Crary to make such broadly sweeping claims. In this way it seems that she still endorses a kind of essentialism with regards to how she conceives of a self with respect to its environment. Furthermore, where would the concepts begin? In identifying direction? In parsing sound into phonemes? At the level of receptors receiving auditory stimuli (which would be below the level of awareness but surely contributes to perception)?

What is so confusing about Crary is that insofar as she grants animals agency, by endorsing a more flexible notion of conceptuality that is exhibited in the most basic of discriminations, she doesn’t say much about what she thinks the connection between concepts

and meaningfulness are. Just because I have a concept of something, doesn't mean that I have to find it meaningful. I have lots of concepts, concepts of trash cans, and concepts of rugs, and concepts of dogs, and persons, and elephants, and tables. It isn't as though my ability to discriminate is immediately, and so obviously, what makes any of those things meaningful to me.

To the extent that she does this, one could view her as making animals into partial persons in a quite strange and contentious way. Assuming we can accept that us, humans, have different degrees of consciousness and varying degrees of awareness, we can also think that us, humans, have various degrees of what we like to think of as agency. For example, we could consider the classic case of blindsight, which is when individuals can respond to stimuli without being aware of the stimuli. To the extent that the individual responds to the stimuli we can, most likely, assume that it would feature in some aspect of the content of their perception. However, to the extent that the individual is not *aware* of the stimuli one would need to assume that it doesn't feature in the concepts of their perception. Yet since the being still responds to the stimuli, it would be strange to say that they do not have the ability to discriminate. So one of my issues is that Crary simply trivializes the distance that exists between conceptuality and discrimination where one is not too sure what to make of it. It is unclear how, content that is below the level of awareness, and so presumably, nonconceptual, can contribute to the content of perception that is conceptual.

Furthermore, like McDowell who presupposes the property of the person, it's unclear what is to be made of the personal/subpersonal as it stands in relation to the response (thought)/reaction (instinct) or the thought/desire situations we have. That is to say that where

McDowell takes his battle to be against naturalistic law, Crary takes her battle to be against instinct, which is basically the same sort of idea. What isn't thought is whether there can be a way for the "subpersonal" to be personal. So she thinks the issue is something of the sort that one can think of animals as machines or packages of instinct that have no meaning because they are viewed as agential, they are viewed as *subpersonal* in the kind of way that parallels, perhaps, that we humans think about *our* "subpersonal" (unconscious, unawareness, so on).

Firstly, the separation between consciousness and unconsciousness is difficult enough for several books, and it's not clear how concepts like "awareness" or "attention" are supposed to overlap with how something comes into conscious perception. Secondly, to the extent that she does not grapple with this sufficiently (there's no reason one could not hold ethical views about animals and disability without necessarily appealing to naïve realism), she also does not grapple with why she thinks agency has to be connected to understanding that hinges on accurate discernment, that is to say, she doesn't grapple, in the most crude sense, with the idea that agency and determinism need not be opposed. To think this way, one needs to not think of bodies as secure. Or, to put it in other terms, she doesn't think enough about what she makes of being unaware and why she thinks *that* is the problem she needs to address in order for animals and people with disabilities to be seen as living meaningful lives.

This line of argument just doesn't make sense, and it doesn't make sense in the same way McDowell's argument doesn't. Insofar as she inherits this, she also presupposes, despite her intentions, a narrow version of thought and value. That is to say, she assumes that the person(al) lies in awareness and this is contingent to the presupposition that thought is not material, it is



contingent to the presupposition that what you value is directly a function of how accurately you discern or discriminate, how you deem.

It's this kind of strange essentialism, about containment that actually makes her argument stand fairly close to Singer's (perhaps Regan's cups of subjects as well). Firstly, however, it is important to note how Singer's form of argument differs from Crary's and the kinds of implications it binds him to. The claims which allow Crary to show how individuals with cognitive disability, those experiencing senility, and pre-linguistic infants warrant moral responses, particularly one's relevant to human dignity, are the same claims that enable her to grant a form of agency to non-human animals. In its most rudimentary form the central claims are as follows:

1. Folk psychological concepts (ordinary talk/thought, responsiveness) is irreducible to any kind of materialist underpinning and grants us access to something objective about objects in the world and the reactions they elicit.
2. Concepts pervade every level of perception and make things matter in turn affording certain forms of action.
3. Due to this connection between concepts intrinsic to perceptual discriminations, which occur in virtue of using universals, and the idea that one's perceptual experience motivates certain forms of response, there's something objective about what a kind of life finds meaningful that is connected to a direct link she draws between how it parses its environment into things and how those things come to matter.
4. This form of meaning then relies on discrimination.

5. Taken together, it is this framing of understanding (hinging on subjectivity and the rejection of an abstraction requirement) as that which parses the world into normative features, which allows Crary to grant animals “partial forms of freedom” (120) rather than being viewed as packages of instinct. In some respects, the form of argument enables her to push against a view of something like animality being sanctioned off to the realm of instinct, irrationality, lack of agency and ergo lack of meaning.

The central difference between Crary and Singer is that where Singer thinks the essential property is located in individual bodies where he does not take species to be essential, Crary locates the relevant essential property at the body of the species. Singer’s argument in *Animal Liberation*, is not all that structurally different. There are tentatively four levels to his form of argument. One has to do with the observations, written in a sort of journalistic narrative form, that he makes about animal cruelty in the laboratory as well as in the factory farm. These consist of a prolific assortment of research on farming and laboratory practices as well as various policies regarding animals.

The second level, in part derivative from the first, has to do with his chosen verbs and human-animal analogies which simultaneously supply fuel for the more standardly argumentative/theoretical moments of his work and reflect the seeming predispositions he admits to concerning what makes one most disposed to belief and, by similar measure, what something like objective rationality entails. A few examples of such verb use are; “every bird yields”, or with regards to the pecking order of chickens which he describes as “a show of force” (97), “a chicken bullied others” (102), “plucked and dressed bodies of the chickens” (105), “will gnaw”

(105), “the growers think of getting rid of male chicks as we think of putting out the trash” (108), “bathe in the dust” (113), “basic instincts thwarted” (115), “squack, cackle and cluck as they scramble over” (114), “huddle” (117), “inmates trample” (117), “romp around the fields” (113), “roaming the hills” (137) the examples could go on and on but you get the idea. Disgust is Singer’s tactic or form, and I think this is made almost most explicit when he writes “this amazing proviso testifies to the relative *strength of desires that emanates from the stomach* and those that are based on compassion in a country that has a reputation for kindness to animals [emphasis added]” (111). Crary will later be shown to use a similar sort of technique, but you could say Singer exploits disgust as much as it is his feat. He takes your pleasure away and what we are provided with are pictures, sketches, aesthetic encounters of a sort. We get the feel of the thing even if we don’t know who or what the subjects are.

The third level would be the moments of more “standard” argumentation which is that of his preference utilitarianism (you measure out everyone’s preferences and choose an action based on which sum total would result in most personal preference fulfillment). A possible fourth level would be moments of reflection when he appeals to something like an intuitive hunch and compassion in his preface, only to deny that such feeling can gain entry into a rational objectivity. It’s possible that regarding the preface, he allows this as it is not technically located in the crux of his argument. Although, that alone is strange.

This is evident in both Singer and Regan, and these emotionally charged, “unobjective”, portions could be seen as having the worth of a presentiment or an afterthought--bitter but ultimately inconclusive, hence their marginal locations in the books. The readers need to be reminded apparently that they are humans and not contracts, cups, or properties. Singer may

have even missed those “ladies who are dotty about cats” (219) that he wouldn’t go on dates with while he handed out pamphlets on animal welfare--the business of a true viking warrior.

Singer prefaces his book by acknowledging that the revealing of animal abuse videos and the disgust it has elicited has suggested that it’s “ignorance” and not “indifference” that has kept institutional animal abuse in place (Singer 10). Not only does Singer grant authority to, at the very least, the feeling of disgust in the moral world but he goes on to say that it’s “ideas and compassion” which have often resulted in systemic change with regards to animals (12). He says something similar with regards to the sense of “horror” (94) a child may feel towards what “atrocities” “otherwise civilized people” could do in “Roman gladiatorial arenas or the eighteenth-century slave trade” (94). Fast track to his last chapter and he seemingly backpedals on his earlier faith, openly declaring that “sympathy” and “good-heartedness alone” are insufficient for responding ethically. Singer writes, “I have argued for it, appealing to reason rather than emotion or sentiment. I have chosen this path, not because I am unaware of the importance of kind feelings and sentiments of respect toward other creatures, but because reason is more universal and compelling in its appeal” (243).

This is the strangest sort of thing, because, what exactly makes appealing to disgust a feat of reason? What makes disgust authoritative and not dotty? Then it seems the idea is something along the lines of; we rational people with all our ideas need to get to a point where we no longer feel disgust, but that we are also “ignorant” in avoiding what is disgusting. These marginal musings, while brief, are surely confusing. That is to say, if one appeals to disgust in Singer’s sort of way, while effective, should really have one question what about disgust, or ugliness, is objective? This should especially be asked since, by his language, he personifies animals

exalting them to the level of the human. For example he writes, “hens, like humans in concentration camps, will cling tenaciously to life under the most miserable conditions” (117). Or, once more for effect, “unlike the murderer who gets a special meal before being hanged, the condemned hens may get no food at all” (119). Singer’s way with words is strange because insofar as reading the text is a disgust-eliciting endeavor, he profits just as much off of disgust as he does off of its twin ugliness. Yet, just as I will show with some of Crary’s examples, ugliness is as much an elicitor of felt withdrawal as it is of wonder. It is something one marvels at.

Then we have Regan’s *The Case for Animal Rights*. In his last chapter he admits to having dared to let himself get a little carried away, “It was as if--and I know this will sound strange, but I’ll risk it anyhow--it was as if I ceased to be the book’s author. Words, sentences, paragraphs, whole pages came, from where, I did not know. . . This was exhilarating” (13). He goes on in a similar impassioned manner, claiming a state not unlike intoxication for what he deems the best parts of his work. For example, “I had lost control over where the book was going. For all intents and purposes, I was just along for the ride. Which is why I think the most original parts of *The Case*. . . I have to shake my head in wonder, still unable to understand how it all happened” (12).

Philosophy could well benefit from some levity. I’ll leave these here dear reader, if you ever venture to embark on this somber text you can at the very least delight in an image of a not entirely clear headed, and four hundred seventy four pages later, apparently still confused, philosopher. Regan then goes on to provide an impassioned speech on how it’s very possible there is not “a single word of truth” and that it is “logically distinct from what motivates us to think it” (Regan 15), which is a fact apparently every philosopher obviously understands (15).

After mentioning that no one would want to hear his autobiography, he dramatically lists off how many animals are slaughtered annually, “some fifteen hundred every second” (15). To our surprise, we are then immediately met with the gift of an apparently sullied Regan defending his character against all those evil and conniving villains trying to “silence [his] voice by sully[ing] [his] character”, philosophers may rest easy, though, it’s not their rationality that’s contributed to his “besmirchment” (15). Thou darest not speak of the salty philosopher!

Regan then does something most peculiar. In trying to justify his skepticism, he admits with perplexity that yes it does seem somewhat of a “mystery. . .[to that] unified psychological presence to the world” (16). What seems clear to him is that humans and nonhuman beings have basic rights to respectful treatment and this he says, is his intuition. Intuitions, however, are an “ambiguous concept, and a troublesome one no matter how it is understood” (17) and what we need to do is “cooly, rationally, impartially, with conceptual clarity” think things through a little more. That is, we need to become computer processors and absorb information, which is then to be “reflectively” sifted through, as philosophers, lest we give way to our “gut responses” like all those ordinary beasts. To spell out the incoherence more blatantly, Regan essentially says that we have certain moral intuitions, and those are a bit of a mystery, and the way to go about gaining clarity is to think through principles “by how well they conform with our reflective intuitions” (19). This, he hopes will either be successful or at the very least “should lead us to understand how elusive moral knowledge is” (19). To recap, this picture tells us two things. One, that there’s something elusive and mysterious in how we occupy the world, and parsing through principles will help demystify things, sober us up a little bit. However, he concludes, because of how “idealistic” these criterion based theories are, alas we just may never know. Two, insofar as he

gives his rather emotionally charged intuitions authority, his account can be read as not entirely “objective.”

That being said, what I am most interested in is the way Singer and Regan focus on the gut, as something associated with disgust, ugliness, intuition and deception. Singer also paradoxically finds it simultaneously authoritative and deceptive. Crary focuses on disgusts other side, pleasure--beauty, love, adoration. All three philosophers, to some extent, use this and none of them try to explain why pleasure/disgust, or beauty (or belovedness)/disgust should be something we listen to. It’s also unclear what makes the two different, other than being two sides of the normative/transgressive coin. Perhaps disgust or ugliness elicits a sort of withdrawal whereas pleasure elicits a sort of pulling in, although both would still, in some sense seemingly have an aspect of exaltation.

Returning to the comparison between Crary and Singer, Crary similarly relies on journalistic narrative form but she does not take on the voice of her examples. Instead the examples are drawn from fiction and memoiristic writing on affectionate relationships with dogs and caring for someone with a disability. So her virtue or vice is that she uses pleasure instead of disgust. She also alongside Singer, has this appeal to compassion that she inherits from Diamond (although as noted she does not inherit irreducible concepts in her sense). Yet, strangely, this “compassion”, as will be further discussed, this adoration, adorability, pleasure, is really what gets in the way of her taking up the topic of disability, animality, and alterity in a more radical sense. Crary also flattens the human-animal comparative field, she is simply more generous (too generous) about this, and I tend to think this has something to do with her pleasure. I’m not quite sure what it is, and it certainly escapes the scope of this already lengthy work, but there is

certainly something interesting to be said about this strange intersection of ethics, aesthetics, authority of voice and containment or contamination.

Long story short, to the extent that Crary thinks the problem with Singer and Regan is their focus on essential properties and their neglect of a species norm, to the extent that she inherits McDowell's fallacy, so too she does not grapple with this question of unruly sentiments and desires, the question of pleasure and adoration, and she does not recognize that her argument is fairly similar to the moral individualists that she is contesting. This, as will be later shown, precludes her from facing the unruly reality of animality, alterity, and disability.

Returning to a concern noted earlier, to the extent that Crary doesn't grapple with McDowell's fallacy, to the extent that she she doesn't grapple with the distance between discrimination and value, to the extent that she flattens out the human-animal analogy, so too she makes some strange extrapolations from Wittgenstein's account of numerosity (to do away with the abstraction requirement) while trying to be empirically accurate in McDowell's sense. While she endorses Wittgenstein in saying we must appeal to subjective aspects in order to come to understand that a human has understanding of the material through their expressive behavior, I do not see how this is supposed to clearly translate to animals. Despret, for instance, has noted in *The Body We Care For* that in the case of clever Hans, the counting horse, Pfungst found that "as soon as the questioner gives a problem to the horse, he involuntarily bends his head and trunk slightly forward (to look at the foot that was supposed to begin the tapping" (Despret 113). Whenever the appropriate amount of taps were achieved, the tension of the questioner was released and their head would move slightly upward (113). Despret's point was that the horse



had learned what was desired of it in terms of how its body should respond to the body of the questioner, extrapolating from signals learned when being trained (113).

Humans do not learn abstract algebra because they read body signals. That makes no sense. For example, there are prolific debates in psychology about the extent to which animals can represent something in its absence. These debates are really interesting, because they have to do with the question of whether gesture precedes language or the other way around--quite a difficult chicken and egg situation. Philosophers perhaps are wary to appeal to evolutionary arguments, but insofar as psychologists must study these aspects in the context of evolution they are, I believe, repeatedly faced with some inherently philosophical questions, and repeatedly forced to question the Darwinian principle. The difficulty of these are not given their worth by Cray. As I will go to show, this chicken-egg problem, Cray makes too quick of an assumption about and neglects the depth of the most contentious of psychological debates, when using Wittgenstein's numerosity example as sufficient to flatten the comparative field between humans and animals.

To begin, Shettleworth had indicated two general theories about the evolution of language (Shettleworth 2010). Her article addressed the question of how successful one can be in endorsing Darwin's view that cognition only differs by degree rather than kind. Experiments may have variable differences in how effectual and generalizable their findings are, based on, for example what population of humans one uses and questions of how laboratory studies can speak to chimpanzees outside of the laboratory. Pointing, has only been observed four times in the wild, so to speak. There is approximately one publication about this by Hobaiter et al. on their research in Budongo, Uganda. Yet how does one determine what gestures are the relevant one's,

when, that is exactly the chicken-egg problem at hand? What parts of the body are to be your relevant material? This is exactly what Crary takes for granted, when appealing to Wittgenstein's example of what is a human activity.

The difficulty with studying language, is that while chimpanzees have been shown to learn it almost exclusively in the laboratory, they do not do so without human intervention, and they rarely exhibit pointing behaviors (and not language in the standard sense) on their own, in their environment. To the extent that this has occurred in the laboratory scientists are faced with exactly the same kind of problem Despret has pointed out with regards to Hans. Are they picking up on some other stimulus? Or are they really specifying their concepts? What is the *gap* between gesture and language? Is pointing, indicating, signing simply an extension of your hand, does your finger have to be involved, or can it be viewed as any extension of your body? What about chimpanzee hand clasps? Then as Hobaiter et al. has written, "if wild apes can point, then it becomes a problem to explain why they (virtually) never do" (83). Yet it seems, we humans, do not extend our body arbitrarily, we take up space in a particular kind of fashion, just like we also do not appeal to all of our senses equally. So, is it a matter of concepts or motivation?

The cases that have been found of pointing in the chimpanzees natural environment, as found by Hobaiter et al., have been in instances of various forms of presumed social constraint where the chimpanzees were all juveniles trying (desiring?) to attain food from a *raphia fanifera* tree. Camera at hand, Hobaiter witnessed a five year old female chimpanzee approach him, and then proceed to point "with her left hand, palm down, fingers extended toward either Catherine Hobaiter or the camera" (Hobaiter et al., 2014). The remaining three cases witnessed were all by the same individual, so in reality, there have been two individuals that have been seen to point. In

this case the chimpanzee was a five year old who was trying to get food from the tree from which an alpha, his younger brother and mother were eating. This chimpanzee began by approaching the tree, looking back and forth between the tree and her mother, her mother approached, she again receded to her mother before attempting to approach the tree once more, repeated the same pointing gesture, the alpha moved, she shrieked and then the family that was near the tree left.

The differences I will spell out between these two theories are important. Psychologists who do this kind of work implicitly acknowledge the question Derrida took issue with which is how do we account for the differences without presuming that language is the ultimate difference? Shuttleworth points out that with regards to the “cognitive niche” hypothesis proposed by Clark which suggests that “language and thought coevolved, ratcheting each other up as language created a new ‘cognitive niche’ . . .this viewpoint still assumes that a key difference between present-day humans and apes is language, and not everyone agrees” (557).

The difficulty is how language were to have evolved if the conceptual framework was not already there (Shuttleworth 556). There are two theories she points out that are in contention, one by Tomasello and another by Povinelli. The difference between the two theories is that Tomasello’s is domain specific, it views language just like any other material tool, except here the tools are modules of interaction such as spatial memory, tool use, or eye gaze (557). Shuttleworth further cites research by Hermann et al. (2007), which showed that “children did substantially better on tests of social cognition. The species difference was most marked in the tests of imitation, which many of the apes failed altogether, but it was found in the other tests of social cognition as well” (558). On the other hand, Povinelli’s hypothesis suggests that it is a

domain general capacity. Povinelli's study, unlike Tomasello's did not *provide* the tools or objects for measuring sociality, Povinelli studies instead had chimpanzees "choose effective tools on the basis of perceptible cues but showed no evidence of the sort of reasoning about unobservable causes that could help them with new tools or situations" (Shuttleworth 558).

This brings us to the next point Shuttleworth made, which are the two proposed theories of language in contention. Tomasello proposed the "cultural intelligence" thesis while Povinelli proposed the "relational reinterpretation hypothesis" (558). The former hypothesizes that apes are simply less motivated to develop language. Although Povinelli framed this in terms of humans being more driven to cooperative forms of engagement, this could be read in conjunction with Vygotsky's theory, which implicitly suggests bodily restraint, and as a result social restraint, as central to the development of language. Tomasello, on the other hand, proposes that what humans can do is "reinterpret perceptual (or first-order) relationships in terms of higher-order relationships" (558). On this view they argued that aspects such as teaching, planning and so forth are "confined to narrow domains and highly specific cues" (558), which implies that only humans can engage in reinterpretation, and that language is not necessary for concept possession in humans.

Crary completely overrides these debates. More helpful questions may be, are concepts necessary for language? What kind of concept is necessary to represent something in its absence? How different is the kind of content across different concepts? Is, as noted in the debates above, concept possession module relative or is it a domain general capacity? Is it a question of motivation? Yet to the extent that she leaves this unaddressed, so too her equivocation of discrimination and concept possession to what's meaningful remains quite questionable.

So if in some cases the virtue of empathy, could be identifying similarities and therefore asking new forms of questions one may have possibly not considered otherwise, it is also the case that empathy could be seen as the awareness of the Cartesian hierarchy of sense in relation to how we think of bodily extension and meaningful extension. Both are a question of the resources we have to come into contact with what is so other and outside our concepts. We do not think of our senses as equal and any obviousness we prescribe to in our talk of personhood is a function of this. Yet insofar as we seem to have this idea that thinking about senses (“instinct”) means thinking about what’s meaningless or somehow constrictive, so we usually don’t think about this idea at all. The body is as much of a map as that of an environment, a country, a continent, a whole geography. How we think of ourselves as standing apart from the environment, how we extend ourselves towards objects, how we take up space, how we mark differences whether folk taxonomically or through our proclivity for making dispositional attributions as noted by Nisbett and Wilson (Nisbett and Wilson 126), is a result of the fact that we are heavily visual creatures. We are not smell creatures, we are not hearing creatures, we are precisely vision creatures. We think in terms of vision, we think in terms of what we see. All those other questions, about thought, cannot be separated from this. All of that, “I desire”, “I dream”, “I think therefore”, Crary’s repetitive “bringing into view” is vision. As Chen noted, something of this sort could be said of sign language in deaf populations, how language and grammar seem to sprout from bodily extension, from communication as a material venture (Chen 54).

Most in a population do not consciously, perceptibly resort to thinking things like I know where I am in space, I know where I am because I can hear the reverberations of my voice

against this wall, I know it is a smaller room. This is the echo that indicates density, heaviness. Even to say things like “I know where I am” is confused because it once again it connects thought with observable discrimination.

You can conceive of your surround, distance, and temporality without this though, and I would imagine, one could conceive of themselves in terms of distance and temporality through sound, that does not entail this kind of McDowellian conceptuality that Crary endorses. In such a view, there’s nothing at all clear from what would make a response different from a reaction. On one hand, your conceptualizations bring meaning but they might be so different from what colors human conceptualizations. On such a view any talk of this is an “agent” and over here we have a “patient” is so incomprehensibly empty. Same could be said of her “partial forms of freedom” (Crary 120). You are an agent because you are responding and you are following, and you might have some idea of space, of motion, of shape and form. Perhaps things like weight and density are more important to you than scent, or the air a dog might follow. There isn’t anything objective that I can prove about this, except perhaps with the help of a fiction writer, though even that will be in terms of vision. Yet us humans, with all our ‘patient’ talk (our horrible handling of disability is I think a part of this), cannot conceive of concepts that do not primarily rely on vision. So we might say that this creature of sound and surround, of melodies that fold together, of weight, of density, of gravity, we might say it acts on instinct.

As mentioned, her battle is as confusing as McDowell’s. Where McDowell cannot escape the presupposition of language as the fundamental difference and core of agency, he thinks okay, I’m going to say that my empirical beliefs about the environment can be right and I can preserve what is special about my agency (as a person) if I argue that perceptions must be conceptual to

justify beliefs derived from what I, a person, experience. Crary expresses confusion, why does McDowell not expand this to all animals! All his tools are right there! Then she expands this feature to bring “all animate creatures inside ethics” (Crary 12). Not only does it leave unclear whether coral reefs and sea cucumbers are allegedly equally inside ethics (and here I cannot see how any of her talk that goes “that coral reef is definitely acting on its courage” can possibly be accurate), but the battle she chooses is with *understanding* as it is connected with expressivity and accurate discrimination. Not only is it questionable what exactly makes our discernment of an “animal” apart from an “organism” accurate (for example a coral reef is an animal comprised of polyps, but an algae isn’t just one thing, and it can be made up of prokaryotic and eukaryotic cells, yet we tend to think of them in a similar way), but focusing on object discrimination also ignores a whole plethora of *human* disorders that precisely affect discrimination. For example, here we could think of our agnosias, the inability to process certain stimuli. Or, to be more specific, if one has a case of prosopagnosia and cannot identify faces how would one tell what’s meaningful to that person from their behavior? Maybe they aren’t good with names, or maybe they are just a tad antisocial.

Patient is a word that implies that falling out of time is unforgivable, a word that exalts the agents *patience* at the patient out of time, it is something that is both shown in our grammar and is evident in how we think of pathology and illness. It is a word that goes to show the very limits of how we find meaning. Perhaps it’s true as the saying goes, “out of sight and out of mind.” To not consider this at all is to make the Cartesian mistake, and this is exactly Derrida’s point, and it is a point that has been noted by psychologists even if not explicitly.

It is precisely a result of the Cartesian mistake that while Crary thinks she's somehow expanding the domain of thought, while she thinks she is bringing disability and animality and all those other wonderful ways of being alive into the ethical fold, she is operating on the most constrained view of thought. It is a function of this that she cannot escape her adorable arguments and consider the unruliness of the disabled body, consider the reality of living with a disability, consider how your senses fracture. It is a function of this because she focuses on the observable world as a person of vision, because she inherits McDowell's naturalism which is so astounded by how one could feel a sense of agency when one looks at the world of empirical law. It is a function of this that she misses Diamond's central message about how concepts are irreducible. Diamond isn't interested in the skeptic's challenge, for the same reason I am not, and this is not because I am not interested in science. It is a question that precedes disciplinary specialty, and it is a question of that mysterious thing of "what matters to us", of the "I desire" that has not yet established consequence. It is also a question of on what grounds we get to say that once we have established disciplinary accuracy (an economic statistic or a scientific fact) that this is somehow supposed to be objectively authoritative with regards to what should matter to human life.

There is such an evident inclination to conceptualize matters, ignorantly so, as contained and not contained. Something similar could be said of all of Singer's talk of the "struggle" (how are we to think of the individual if we do not think of the individual struggle! The fighter! The warrior!) and all of Regan's little cups of subjects-of-a-life. The reality of disability is facing that this is just not so. That there is no *real* reason an instinct is supposed to be a bad thing. Crary



misses this, because she thinks that's what her fight is against. There is no clear distinction between an instinct and a desire. It is perhaps because of this that such philosophy struggles.

Before moving on to my final argumentative hump, it is worth briefly pausing to review the central bare bones points I've suggested thus far. I began with a comparison of Derrida and Descartes. Here I emphasized that that while Descartes applies logical relations (which he attributes with that godly perfection) to animals, this not only makes them into "machines" but it idealizes them. It idealizes them precisely because the God that serves as the finality for Descartes must, in order to actually do that job, be infinite and impossible. Since laws of order are relegated from this infinite and impossible god onto the animals, so too the animals becomes infinite and immortal. They become monuments, they become sculptures, they become abstract. Their finitude is denied of them. On this account, we can see Descartes' as imagining that what is most important to a human is their most clear and obvious sense. This is a relationship he entirely imaginatively establishes, on this view that which is most integral to a person is that which they are least likely to imagine away. In this way, his "I think" is really an "I desire." Then I moved on to Derrida, and I noted that while there are salient similarities between the two, Derrida attempts to confront the abyss between the guilty and exalted, the lesser than and the idealized. Here I drew on his analysis of Genesis as well as his idea of displacement as necessary for discernment. Then I looked at Derrida, and I suggested that implicit in his text is a similar acknowledgment of Diamonds--it is of the imaginative work implicit to understand but also of even the limits of such conceptually bound imaginations. Derrida moves beyond a discourse of blame and forgiveness.

Through this comparison I had hoped to draw a parallel between that mysterious and hungry “I desire” to its secured, accurate and disciplined epistemic end. This I had compared to something like the distance between a child and an adult, or the distance between Crary’s adoration and the bodies with disabilities she wants to account for. To be more frank, I meant to say something like the following. There is one point and this consists of the unbounded, whimsical, and fantastical dreamworld of the child. Then there is the business of taming the child’s sentiments, of teaching the child proper behavior, of cultivating the child’s curiosity and of having the child put forth their curiosity towards a world it wants to hear from. As the child gets better at this, gets better at being tame perhaps, they also get better at being accurate. So then at the other end of this indefinitely long string we can imagine a specificity, perhaps we could think of this as human, the educated animal, or simply the educated human. My suggestion was that to the extent that one considers the specificity to hold greater authority with regards to what should matter to human life, *that* is an imagined relationship with regards to how one stands to that point on the string. Same applies for how one stands in relation to that first kind of point. After this debate I also took note of the Nature Faker debates, and the debates between moral individualists and sorts of special relationsists (so to speak). My suggestion was that these debates had all inherited a particular kind of Cartesian burden that equated objectivity, (both regarding the world as well as one regarding human matters) with an anxiety about emotion and sentiment.

Then I went on to illustrate the McDowell and Dreyfus debate, particularly with my eye on pointing out the shortcoming with McDowell’s naturalistic argument. My central claim was that he presumed the very property of personhood that he initially set out to account for and in

doing so he trivialized both what one were to make of “instinct” and what one were to make of “agency.” Next I showed that it is Crary’s inheritance of McDowell’s fallacy that does her a disservice and distances her from Diamond. With regards to this I provided some examples of contentious debates in psychology about whether animals can represent something in its absence and suggested that insofar as she did not consider the depth of these debates, her broad sweeping claims about concept possession (where she does not even identify whether she thinks the *kind* of content is the same across concepts or across species, etc.) are tenuous at best. Further I showed how Crary’s argument shares quite significant similarities with Singer’s. I also argued that to the extent that Singer and Regan’s hearts are in the margins, to the extent that they have no qualms taking away your pleasure, reaching into your gut and showing you what a monster you may be, so too, Crary profits off of the other side of this sentiment. Crary profits off of making her examples into dolls. It’s strange that she does not read into the texts any more, that she simply points to it and goes “and from this we have learned” before essentially paraphrasing the message as being objectively ethically irreducible and empirically correct. Lastly I pointed out a series of confusions that I could not surpass with regards to her discussion of awareness versus “lack of awareness” where what such lack amounted to was what I put into question.

My most crucial suggestion, through drawing on Descartes and Derrida, was that what makes a being worthy is not a function of how one is bound to the life they have been given to lead. It is not respective to whether that being is on the earlier or the later more knotted, more secure side of that string. It is not a function of their mastery, is it not a function of willful persistence, it is not a result of disciplinary accuracy. There is nothing that stands in what we can come to know of the world, from the cell, to the species, to the cosmos, no matter how finitely,

how precisely, no matter how skilled our hands may become at manipulating it, that will be able to authoritatively speak to what should matter to us as human beings, what our consequences should authoritatively be. This is because what the story of these two solitary gentlemen tells us is, is that whether it's Descartes' "I think" or Derrida's "I desire" the authority one grants to one stage of the journey over another as being determinate of consequence is an imagined authority. It is imagined in Diamond's irreducibly ethical sense. It is then also by that measure that to respond as Diamond and Crary do in that morally imaginative sort of way, we need to idealize reality in order to secure an object for our responses to land on, or to follow. The following discussion will look at how the innocence of the child becomes invoked across several of these arguments and the narratives about forgiveness they portray.

## ***All That's Kitschy is Divine***

We are faced with the following problem. Rationality cannot be tarried by emotion because insofar as rationality seeks to find what's universal, and emotions are supposedly all too subjective, the two cannot commingle. We also have, a different sort of problem (though this will not be one I will try to answer), and this is a problem of whether the emotive self is something inherently expressible (through language and/or concepts) or if it harbors a bit more of the aesthetic or theatrical. In this discussion I will draw attention to instances in Regan, Singer, Diamond and Crary with how they appeal to either a childlike innocence or a kind of childlike adoration to secure their arguments. This, I believe, is what stands in the way of their grappling with the (extra)ordinary.

Singer and Regan think of the violent and the disgusting as an extraordinary rather than a very ordinary, perhaps even *boring* part of many people's everyday lives. Their consideration of mundanity is only in the context of the violator, not the violated. The monsters they make of human cruelty against animals in all their speciesist talk is a function of this. The innocence they prescribe animals is derivative. Singer and Regan also think that the ordinary--sentimentality, the ability to be moved, a rich emotional life, and so forth--is just too human to fit into a convincing philosophical theory. This is not to say that we should not treat animals better, this is simply to say that for all their disdain for "ordinary" matters of human life, their arguments have quite an extraordinary ring to it.

Diamond and Crary, though vastly different in their views, still have a similar problem. In what follows I am interested in how this problem persists across these diverse texts, what it's doing in an argument about animals, and tracing the insufficiency of its response. Specifically I

am interested in how the trope of the innocent child appears in all of these arguments, what is at stake, what we fear to lose if we call the child guilty or even monstrous.

Insofar as Regan and Singer try to prescribe an explanation for what is forgivable they commit themselves to a brain in a vat view of the rational ideal. I will examine the possibility of this ideal, and what it means to lay an objective claim. In turn I will argue that it is not possible to lay an objective claim in things that matter to human life without having emotional resonances. If one takes on the illusion of this possibility, they will be making forgiveness a matter of having something to prove.

After I present what I see as the innocence problem, I will then show, on the other hand their simultaneous trust problem--specifically with regards to Crary's fictions and Singer's disgust. I will argue that one cannot simultaneously maintain their view of things, and not be pedantic about forgiveness. To be a pedant about forgiveness is to become the monsters that they seem to be fighting.

Crary thinks that the shortcoming of the moral individualist, the faulty argumentation that results in the reading out of people with cognitive disability from the human sphere of moral concern is their essentialism pertaining to properties found in individuals without concern for a species norm. Yet it's not clear why we should think of properties in that way. To be more clear, she thinks that the moral individualist's mistake is that they think the species norm is as arbitrary as any other feature based collective oppression such racism, sexism and so forth. So instead she goes and she moves this property up to the level of species. What she does not realize is that the stickiness arises from the obsession with accurate discernment, with authoritative empirical facts, with tying the bodying with such facts. With tying *value* to such facts. It is this feature that

makes her argument stand so close to their. It has been the focus on expanding the cup. Crary's shortcoming, as will be shown, is a shortcoming of the imagination.

In what follows, I would like to draw parallels between how Singer, Regan, Diamond, and Crary invoke the image of the adorable, innocent child--perhaps the only creature whose animality is viewed as secure, appropriate, and normative by all developmental standards in the modern world--to underline their arguments. There is a kind of implicit violence present in the image of adoration that percolates these texts--in the dogs, the Christmas Carol, the image of a gun wielding child, Singer's exalting hope that the children of the future will be as struck by the horror of animals as he himself is. Although these images take up a limited portion of each of these texts, they have a key role to play in securing their arguments a home. In turn, I would like to consider why such arguments struggle with comprehending adorable monstrosity. However, before doing so there is something else to be noted. To the extent that such arguments in ethics go, one could say that what generally ties them is taking up the question of what is deserving of what appropriate response. In this sense it's concerned with both properties relevant to a bounded being, as well as, to flip the term, what is proper to that beings sociality. Some might focus on individual properties that escape species or higher form specificity, as Singer or Regan do. These tend to beastialize disability. Others might focus on bringing species into view by drawing what is "special" about human relations, this would include theorists like Kittay, Crary, and Diamond. However, all of them grapple with the placing of sentiment, and it is this sentiment which will be important to us.

Insofar as children are excused for harboring improper sentiments, and perhaps awkward social habits, they are granted, what Fricker calls the gift of forgiveness in conjunction with their

generally lower social status and ergo lower authoritativeness. They are also quite adorable--it's difficult not to grant them their innocence. Further, lucky for us, and as Crary (by means of Cavell's example) points out, we can generally rely on the course of 'normal' development to take care of animacy slippages (Crary 112), and we can rely on this to take care of other things--childlike sentimentality, imaginary friends, etc. Rambunctious disruptive children grow into somewhat functional adults with somewhat proper sentiments. So then we can imagine this kind of picture. A child is furious at their grown up and draws them as a monster, proceeds to show it to them with the intent to hurt them, the grown up laughs and finds it *just adorable*. All in good faith, perhaps this child was just annoyed at having had a toy confiscated or something of that sort. No need for seriousness. Another case of the same sort. Suppose the grown up does not fulfill their role responsibilities and in fact puts the child at risk. Now consider if this child harbored an intent to humiliate the adult, to hurt the adult, and, for instance, drew them as a monster. The child then proceeds to show it to the grown up who laughs and finds it *just adorable*. There is a violence endemic to this and it is inseparable from the general kind of way we think about childhood, those who hold epistemic authority, and the general kind of way we think about accurate knowledge. However, this sort of negation of the child's voice is *also* contingent on the child's aesthetic, on the child's cutesyness. I would like to consider animal encounters as a form of gift-giving that are rife with emotional ambivalence and ambiguity.

Philosophy seems to struggle with imagining an adorable monster. Perhaps part of this is that we do not normally think of "nature" as "adorable," Descartes' and McDowell' surely do not, they are very dramatic in this sense. Something similar could be said of Singer and Regan, they have a problem with kitschiness, with those dotty ladies, they are in a way, very high-brow



about it all. For all of their grotesque examples and for counting up, ordering and re-ordering, what is *true* suffering, (here one can envision the art critic's cries *where's the pain, where's the substance!*), like true philosophers of the grandiose, they, have a problem with any sort of kooky aesthetic that does not harbor nature's warrior-like grandiosity. Perhaps it's worth returning to a prior musing, of the aesthetic that colors Singer's verbage and the peculiar authority Crary holds the authors she draws from to. If Singer capitalizes on disgust, on, ugliness perhaps, it's not as though Crary capitalizes on pleasure through beauty, no, she capitalizes on pleasure through *kitschiness*. The dogs are adorable, the recounting of Bayley's life with Murdoch as she lives with Alzheimer's in her old age is heartbreaking but darling, the whole situation of her saying how Pierce shows us that caring for a disabled dog can be "significant and deeply satisfying," (Crary 154) this is not just the invocation of nature's monstrous yet sublime beauty, it's *kitschy*. Yet there's also a worry about sounding kitschy. This is no more than a small suggestion, yet it does seem that for all of Regan and Singer's clear scorn for ordinary matters of the living (*who would want to read MY autobiography?! Regan exclaimed*), for their disregard for appealing to sympathy or compassion, this, is a problem of the kitschy. And what is it about the "will to resist" (Singer 117)? This aesthetic to me, or rather the fascination that can pervade both beauty and ugliness is of particular interest in conjunction with my aforementioned suggestion about a possible need to idealize reality in order to have a moral response to an object in reality.

I find a particular interest in this question raised earlier, this question of an adorable monster, this question of how passivity meets explosive unconstrained agency meets strange borderland aesthetic of the inarticulable. Coetzee's work is of course, wonderful and made by a talented author, but it is only mysterious, fascinating, or extraordinary to the extent that it deals

with circumstances otherwise very ordinary. It should also be noted that Coetzee acknowledges the existence of adorable monstrosity and does not tie this to worth. This is evident in *The Lives of Animals* when Costello is horrified by her friends and families meat-eating habits, yet admits that when she looks in their faces she only sees kindness (Coetzee 69). This is evident in *Disgrace* when Lucy chooses to bear the child of her rapist, when she refuses her father's condescension in tying goodness to origin, in pressing her on how she can live with bearing monstrosity (Coetzee 198). For example, look at this passage:

“I have taken care of it. I have taken every reasonable care short of what you are hinting at. But I am not having an abortion. That is something I am not prepared to go through again.”

“I didn't know you felt that way. You never told me you did not believe in abortion. Why should there be a question of abortion anyway? I thought you took Ovral.”

“This has nothing to do with belief. And I never said I took Ovral.”

“You could have told me earlier. Why did you keep it from me?”

“Because I couldn't face one of your eruptions. David, I can't run my life according to whether or not you like what I do. Not any more. You behave as if everything I do is part of the story of your life. You are the main character, I am a minor character who doesn't make an appearance until halfway through. Well, contrary to what you think, people are not divided into major and minor” (198).

Then a few paragraphs later:

“Lucy called them--rapists cum taxgatherers roaming the area, attacking women, indulging their violent pleasures. Well, Lucy was wrong. They were not raping, they

were mating. . . Already he is calling it *the child* when it is no more than a worm in his daughter's womb. What kind of child can seed like that give life to, seed driven into the woman not in love but in hatred, mixed chaotically, meant to soil her, to mark her, like a dog's urine?" (199)

I tend to think that Coetzee's fascination in working at the brink of philosophy and fiction has something to do with this trope, has something to do with recognizing that "tropes" are not just abstractions. That implicit in this is a dedicated refusal to tie worth to any origin, to refuse to make such a reality into something coherently theoretical. He refuses such coherentism.

Crary could not have been more off-base in her reading of *Disgrace*. Crary writes "Because he sees the dead dogs as individuals who are irrevocably cut off from all the goods of life, he looks upon their bodies as having a kind of "honor" in virtue of which they merit respectful treatment" (Crary 156). Crary wants to avoid abstraction by suggesting that this "helps us to see things about dead dogs' bodies that are really there" (156). So then she says, let's move away from dogs, and think of what it would take to apply this to all animals (157). After this she claims that this would entail applying a presumably imagined "lens of conceptions of what matters in the--typical--lives of members of their life forms enables us to bring empirically more clearly into focus than is otherwise possible" (Crary 157).

Such an interpretation is somewhat strange in my view. The entire novel is about shame, it's not about empiricism. The entire novel is about the idea that something like forgiveness, is always so personal and subjective. It's about the fact that interpersonal relations are rife with ambiguity and that the moral world, the world that we as people live in, is not a world of law. David doesn't think he sees something *accurate* in the dog, he doesn't stand there recollecting

imagery of all his dog experiences and then going ah yes from this I deduce that this dog must have cared about these things. The hurt David exhibits, the fact that the putting down of dogs becomes more and more difficult, it has nothing to do with empirical accuracy. It has to do with him slowly coming to realize the reality of an end we must all meet. That the value of a being has nothing to do with what that being can or cannot do. *This* is why it becomes harder and harder for him to put down dogs. If anything, it is his own “empiricist” inclinations that get in the way of him understanding Lucy, he can’t make coherent sense of her decisions when he simultaneously thinks of her as *his* precious daughter (“property”), when he simultaneously thinks of the havoc that was wrought by their assailants (on their property), and the idea that she would bear the child (presumably her “property”). He can’t conceive of this because he thinks of it as a matter of clear coherent thinking. He thinks of it as a matter of properties.

On the other hand, when in *The Lives of Animals*, Costello rejects the president's defense of her vegetarianism writing “I have a great respect for it. . .as a way of life” (Coetzee 43), and then when Costello points out that she’s wearing leather shoes (43), this is a point about guilt and exaltation. This is a point about how the reality of living is not a question of admirability. It is not a question about what kind of person you are, or what kind of thing a person is in comparison to what kind of thing an animal is. In Costello’s refusal, much like in Lucy’s refusal to listen to her father’s admonitions, in her refusal to equate her child not yet born with the monstrosity from which it arose, Coetzee is making a point about the incomprehensibility of adorable monstrosity, and it is an incomprehensibility that is real.

When Coetzee was invited to the Tannerman lectures and accused of not being authoritative enough, of not spelling out his views enough, of not claiming authority or of

somehow being dishonest, this says something peculiar about philosophers. Perhaps this is because it may think of reasoning, to use the words of Bruns, as “the *body of strength*” (Bruns 705). This is the point Cary Wolfe made when claiming the thesis that “anything that challenges the human/animal divide (particularly anthropocentrism & speciesism) simultaneously forces us to reconsider how we actually do philosophy and on what grounds it can become involved in these difficult questions of how to co-occupy a planet with other animals” (Wolfe 8).

Why would philosophy struggle with adorable monstrosity? And to the extent that perhaps literature might be more at ease to take this up, would this simply be a feat of aesthetics as something captured visually yet rendered inexpressible, or somehow incomprehensible?

Philosophy’s mistake is when it only thinks in terms of cups, forms, or whatever and what it can hold. To the extent that it thinks of a trope, or a figure, as an abstraction, its view of abstraction is tainted by the Cartesian “I think”, by the neglect of addressing the impossible and infinite passivity that underwrites it. In turn, to the extent that it thinks in this kind of way, and conducts and restricts its voice to this kind of form, it fails to grapple with alterity. It fails to grapple with alterity because it cannot see the negative space of underground as monu(mentality), because it struggles to accept that which is utterly meaningless, ‘pathetic’, despondent can also create and be what is valuable. It struggles with pathos. In what it thinks an argument should look like and in what it thinks this typical sort of argument reveals.

So first, let’s return to Singer, Regan, Crary and Diamond and how they each appeal to the adorable child. In this portion, I will first illustrate moments across Singer, Regan, Crary and Diamond where the adorable child appears and how it is appealed to. After this I will consider Derrida’s discussion on forgiveness and transgression in conjunction with Fricker’s thought on

forgiveness as a form of gift-giving and will further draw upon some first hand accounts of disability in Chen's work. After I do so I will make my final suggestion which is that to the extent that philosophy may concern itself with its cups, its boundaries, and its pouring in and pouring out of value, to the extent that it is anxious about properly placed sentiment, it will not be able to more radically take up its own questions pertaining to alterity. I will also suggest that if the difference between Descartes and Derrida is, at some level, a difference of form when grappling with the same problem, a distinctly human problem, then one should consider the playfulness and uncertainty that colors Derrida as a gift of acknowledging all the inconsistencies and incoherences that color an impossible life we have been given. The difference between Descartes and Derrida, is that Descartes tries to account for his wonder at the monstrosity of nature's law but further makes sculptures out of those he pins into perfection, or perhaps like butterflies pinned down for exhibition. Derrida tries to enter the realm of the in-between that exists between exaltation and exactitude, he writes "between this relation to the self (this Self, this ipseity) and the *I* of the "I think," there is, it would seem, an abyss" (Derrida 50). It is in conversation with what is impossible to comprehend with clarity, to comprehend without entering an incomprehensible madness, "Madness: "We're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad." I no longer know how to respond, or even to respond to the question that compels me or asks me who I am (following) or after whom I am (following), but am so as I am running. . . " (Derrida 10). Just as the similarity between Derrida and Descartes is their very difference, so too I will suggest that allowing our moral responses to enter into that strange abyss is a form of gift-giving.

For Singer the child plays two roles. In one way, the child could be viewed as independent, and it is independent insofar as it is unconstrained and unaccountable for anything

but its nature. We see this for example, when Singer criticizes those non-vegetarian parents for not having the backbone to “let their children learn the full story” for the seemingly petty reason that it may make family meals awkward (215). This is to say something like, insofar as the child is your property, it is your responsibility how the property that is your child places itself amongst the properties of the world. To the extent that your child lacks understanding, and to the extent that this child is yours, you are responsible for having this child not commit, what I, Singer, deem a crime you, the parent, have. That is, on my understanding, he wants to connect “monstrosity” to origin where the parent becomes responsible for not exposing the child to horrors [x,y,z]. If they do not involve themselves in such exposure they are on, on Singer’s view, to blame for not bringing a crime into view they knew existed. Something similar can be seen when he writes, “How can people who are not sadists spend their working days driving monkeys into lifelong depression. . .or turning cats into drug addicts? How can they then remove their white coats, wash their hands, and go home to dinner with their families” (Singer 69).

In this story, we can think the child as, in a way, inheriting a kind of sin that the parent is expected to repent for until the child can inherit the blame. At the same time he then claims to want to move past the “picture of the world of animals as a bloody scene of combat” and instead consider animals with the same gravity, and tragedy as we feel concerning a human mother who loses her child (223). When Singer appeals to “our treatment of young children. . .who do not have the mental capacities to understand the nature of moral choice” (225), or in another instance when he appeals to the horror of “our children’s children” at what is done in laboratories as the same as what was done in “Roman gladiatorial arenas or the eighteenth-century slave trade” (94), a same sort of sentiment could be seen. You, a property of the world, are responsible for the

unvirtuous behavior of other properties of the world who are your neighbors. Or another instance, “it is often right to include within the sphere of equal consideration beings who are not themselves capable of making moral choices implied by our treatment of young children and other humans who, for one reason or another, do not have the mental capacity to understand the nature of moral choice. As Bentham might have said, the point is not whether they can choose, but whether they can suffer” (22). This quote, I think, makes this sort of view most clear. You the child, who has no thought but might at some point, should either be forced to face the horrors of past sins and learn from them, or, if you do not develop thought, suffer for them. It is quite transcendental in this way.

Then we have Regan’s sort of picture, which isn’t too far off from Singer’s. Regan divides his subjects into agents and patient where agents can enter into contractual agreements, patients cannot (273). All subjects-of-a-life are defined by a list of characteristics such as “perception, memory. . . psychophysical identity over time” (243). This flattening out of group membership as being potentially morally relevant to capacities is what gets him into a contradiction by which he wants to preserve the need to act on behalf of the cognitively disabled, children, and other “moral patients” while upholding the stance that one should not intervene in predation cycles. Since Regan, more or less, views humans as contracts he also views a punishment as something that deprives a human of their rights as proportionate harm in return for the harm they committed. This proportionate harm could then be viewed as degrees of blameworthiness. What is interesting then, is that while he had already provided an endorsement of self-preservational acts of defense (his discussion on “shields” (Regan 291)), he goes on to consider a case of a gun-wielding child.



When he confronts a case of a gun-wielding child, falling under his category of moral patients, he focuses on distinguishing acting to restrain the child from having that act be viewed as a punishment. Though one may object that a being cannot be innocent if they cannot be guilty, Regan responds by claiming that our conception of innocence extends past the notion of moral agents, and instead should be tied to beings who can experience injustice. He writes, “the inability of human moral patients to do anything that *merits* treatment prima facie violative of their rights. . . what this shows is that, unlike human moral agents, *they cannot be anything but innocent*” (295). This image, not unlike Singer’s, is strangely sacrificial. On this view, the child is simultaneously deemed as not accountable due to lacking the proper kind of understanding, and idealized in order to provide a graceful death.

That is, I the child threatening your life, am separated from the monstrosities I commit but am also separated from the monstrosities you may have committed. This is what makes this kind of account slightly different from Singer’s, although generally the same memo. The child is deemed as not “blameworthy” only to the extent that the child is viewed as a partial person. This child is both less than human because they are held not accountable as a function of their lack of understanding, and simultaneously, more than human because its innocence surpasses its finitude. Just like Descartes’ and his natural monsters of law and reason, so too Regan kills the child, exalts the child, and in his exaltation stops himself from feeling shame, or any ambivalence particular to the situation.

Then we have Diamond. Diamond wants to draw a distinction between how a moral philosopher as opposed to Dickens would conceive of “Scrooge’s change of heart” (42). On her account, Kant may respect himself as a rational animal, and insofar as this is the grounds he

imagines respecting himself, so too he extends his generosity for the child “out of respect for the child’s humanity . . . respect (that is) for the child’s rationality where that respect is inseparable from the Kantian Scrooge’s respect for himself as a rational being, his understanding of himself as being capable of both imposing and of obeying the moral law” (42). With regards to Dickens’ Scrooge, she says he would begin from “the fundamental understanding of Scrooge is as our fellow in having a human life to lead” (43). The virtue of Diamond, the very virtue Crary misses, is that Diamond wants to show how across Kant, Baier’s, Rorty’s and Dickens’ narratives are different sort of imaginative conceptions which inform the place from which their arguments begin. Instead, Diamond says, the concept of a human being is important for a moral imagination, and this concept cannot be tied to any distinct property, and she puts no limits on how one imagines a fellowship. It is because of this that she writes “To treat the notion of *human beings* as important in moral thought, as I have, is not to treat animals as outside the boundaries of moral concern, because it is not any kind of attempt to determine the limits of moral concern” (59).

In *Eating Meat and Eating People* she then goes on to argue that it is not out of the person’s interest that we do not eat them, for we do not eat people even if they had died by accident, or had their limbs amputated (467). She writes, “Now if we do not eat people who are already dead and also do not kill people for food, it is at least *prima facie* plausible that our reasons in the two cases might be related” (467). So then Diamond goes on to discuss how it’s most feasible to converse about a certain action as being morally wrong when you can distinguish what kind of action it is. However, she says, there are certain actions that inform our ability to distinguish what kind it is, such as for example our name-giving practices (469). It is

because of this that I only loosely critique her with the notion that we do in fact eat limbs, engage in cannibalism and so forth. This is because for Diamond, the torturers would not view the tortured as people, but as vermin and through the activity of torturing them would have to sever the imaginative ways by which they related to themselves. For her, a pet would be like a partial person, and a pet that you've named and raised would have a significance acquired through the activity of raising it that would not match the significance of some random dog fifty miles away to that same dog owner.

Diamond notes the very thing that Crary misses, which is the activity that enables the humanization or dehumanization of another. It is found in our difficulty with justifying certain ways of feeling with certain ways of responding (473). This is why she notes, "they do not, that is, want to move from concern for people to concern for four-legged people or feathered people--to beings who deserve that concern only because we think of them as having a little person inside" (472). We should then return to Diamond's appeal to childhood, her noting the distance between a child who asks an adult why something horrible is committed and the who adult cannot answer, the hurt doubled by the lack of understanding (46). We can imagine then, that the wonder she attributes to the child is an unspecifiable imagination, an imagination not concerned with coherent accuracy.

To return to an opening consideration, this, is a particularly Derridean kind of observation. We can imagine something like this. I, the child, with all of my animacy slippages, have so much less of a limit on what I can imagine and with whom. I do not understand the horrible things you do with you kill animals or fellow humans, why does one do these things? Here we have a particular kind of Cartesian observation. Perhaps even in some ways, in line with

Singer and Regan. The child whose imagination is ungoverned by discipline, wants the adult who has grown into their pants of formality to give them a reason. The adult may then recognize that any reason they give will not match the incoherence of the child's imaginative world, doubling the hurt of where our coherent beliefs fail us, doubling the hurt found in the limits of asking the world to tell us our consequences. In other words, we can imagine the child's world as the impossible that underwrites the Cartesian narrative in order to make things possible. The geometer forming spheres though he can find no perfect one's in nature. In turn, we can imagine the adult as Descartes himself, securing the world in a logic of reason. The discourse that happens between the child and the adult is a Derridean kind of displacement. When the child, the dependent, asks the adult for a reason, it is asking the knower of order, systems, and law to justify the impossible beauty, and cruelty, hilarity, and deception that colors the disordered world of the child. The adult comes to realize there is no coherent way to do this, that the very irony of adorable monstrosity, is the very pain of a limited articulation, of a self that is not defined by formal logic but is rather defined by confronting what is impossible and allowing value to still exist in its sight.

In what follows, I will endorse this view of Diamond's and consider the adorability that colors Crary's arguments. I will, drawing from Diamond, Nussbaum, Fricker, and Derrida, suggest that insofar as forgiveness is always so personal, and is always in some ways, an ambiguous gift, so too we may think of certain moral responses to beings in all their weird peculiarity as a kind of gift giving.

Crary is somewhat of a different case, yet the issue I will exemplify with her is that in her focus on empirical naturalization, she still inscripts a norm of authoritative expressivity where all

else, the non-expressive, the lesser-expressive, the differently expressive, must only stand in relation to that norm. Her refusal to grapple with difficulty, her reliance on adoration, is in some ways an exaltation of authority, of the authorships authority, it is a show of the limits of her imagination to go beyond that, and endemic to this is an exaltation of coherency, which in turn precludes her from seriously thinking about alterity.

Crary's examples--the adored dog, the adored child (or the once adored but then *neglected* child who we must still find a way to adore), the adored partner and so forth--all grant authority to adoring the adorable. It is deflective in a way that's just too easy. Crary, like many others, is so taken up with thought, with proving the empirical reality of it, she attests to this herself writing, "My point is that bringing a human being, however well or poorly endowed mentally, into empirical focus in ethics is inseparable from seeing her as meriting various forms of respect and attention" (Crary 150). This is her most central mistake. My point, on the other hand, is that any ethics that takes this way of arguing, this obsession with empiricism, with Reality, this way of "respecting" cannot face the realities of other ways of being. This includes animal lives and lives with disabilities. It cannot face these seriously, because it is serious about being empiricist, it's serious about believing there's somehow a clean answer between what's worthy, clean, tidy, and what's blameworthy. It's serious because it neglects the ambivalences present in living with disability, it's serious because it's dedicated to parsing things apart, to being entirely "rationally" objective. It's serious because it thinks it can avoid the ambivalences that form such a real fabric of our ordinary existence, and insofar as a philosophy wants to theorize the ordinary into some extraordinary theoretical law, as Singer, Regan, and Crary do, so too it will be accused of abstraction. This ambivalence is inseparable from the kind of

ambivalence present in forgiveness that Fricker spelled out, this ambivalence is inseparable from the emotional ambivalence present in confrontation and withdrawal, in trust and mistrust, in taking risks and acting on good faith. When you live with a disability, you are not just one thing, you are not just one person. This is true of most people, disability simply marks the stark contrast in a way that you cannot help but face the confusion.

The strangeness of such an approach has been noted by Bruns who wrote, the paradox of being human is that only human beings are capable of transgressing the boundaries that determine what they are; moreover, these transgressions are not (just) accidents--moments of weakness or failure of spirit--but in fact take the form of a festive return to nature, that is, to the border or originary scene of self-creation (Bruns 708).

Crary's problem then, is a Cartesian sort of problem, it is securing the certainty of a body by objectifying it and in turn exalting it into an infinite and impossible innocence. This innocence is incomprehensible because the notion of forgiveness, of confession, of who the disabled body should address itself to is incomprehensible. Inherent in this, "we can all get along and flourish wonderfully if we just can see things the *empirically accurate way*" is a refusal to grapple with what is uncomfortable, as though *that* is what it were to be "unnatural." To not enter this abyss is only to infuse it with a violent silence, and this silence has an emotional, and affective reality for all who exist in its ambiguous neverlands. We will start with instances, which were briefly alluded to before, where she deflects from her own imagined questions.

So let's return to a more explicit consideration of some of Crary's examples. Though there is not enough space to go through each one by one, they are all of a similar sort of genre. I will begin by giving a brief preliminary overview of the central examples that her lengthy

footnotes then cushion. One of her examples is Daniel Keyes' *Flowers for Algernon* which is a fictional text about how the main character, Charlie, is chosen "for a experimental surgical procedure to increase intelligence" (137). He acquires typical intelligence, the effects are temporary and he then exhibits a mental decline and faces an eventual death (137). The part about this that matters to Crary is that pre-surgery Charlie was used as a crutch for a crude sort of joke such as saying one "pulled a Charlie Gordon" in reference to when an able-bodied person "did something stupid" (Crary 137), or that is did something, perhaps, on accident. This is a crude joke we are all too familiar with, and it is a joke that ties worth to properly bounded origin. To being "properly" within oneself. Crary is also interested in this story to the extent that pre-surgical Charlie was claimed by his sister to have "made sexual advances" (138) towards her who in turn "threatened violence" (138), until Charlie's father took his son and left the house.

Here we find something really peculiar with Crary, no more than in her misinterpretation of what is most obvious in Coetzee. What is strange is the authority she grants the main character of *fiction*. What is even more strange is that she treats the main character as though he were the author of a non-existent autobiography deriding his family for what they did. Which is clearly not the case and even *that* could imaginatively be put into question. Crary's takeaway is, in her words, "within the novel, it is made clear that at the time Charlie didn't understand what was going on and felt only afraid" (138). Instead of considering, imaginatively, this fear as a fear in the face of a moment most incomprehensible, Crary decides to consider this empirically. Crary decides "to contemplate this family drama, through post-surgical Charlie's eyes, in a manner informed by a sense of the human importance of relationships of trust" (138). Once again, this is beyond me. This is beyond me because, what such a scenario paints is the malleability, the

fallibility, the very difficulty of something like trust and mistrust. When the father takes Charlie out of the house it is as much an effort to restore cohesion within the family as it is to get Charlie away from his sister's violent threats. Crary writes that "we are invited to see his younger self as wronged in a way that isn't merely a function of emotional harm suffered at the time., and also isn't merely a function of later consequences that he is capable of registering, and that is aggravated by his inability to understand and protest the wrong" (138). With her talk of protest, I cannot help but bring forth the image of Singer's talk of the "will to resist" (119), the resounding echo of where is the warrior! The fighter! The gladiator!

The other fictional text she draws from is Carver's short story *So Much Water So Close to Home*. In this story, a group of men finds the body of a dead woman in a stream, pulls it ashore and tie a nylon cord to hold her in place, then skimper off (147). Then another character, Claire, comes to hear about the story which horrifies her into facing the silencing around injustices that she has come to know in her own life. The non-fictional texts she draws from include a memoir by Adams and Berube on life with their children who have Down's and advocating for educational resources (141), Bayley's memoir about his marriage to Murdoch and her progressive Alzheimer's (143), and a memoir by Jessica Pierce about her extremely sick dog Ody and how "deeply satisfying" she found to provide her dog palliative care (154), deriding anyone who does not follow this line of thought as "callous" (154). As you can most likely see at this point, all of her examples grant a strange authority to literature in general where she cannot imagine beyond what is explicitly accounted for, and they all hinge on a kind of desperation to hold on to what is beloved.



Next, to make the issue clear, I will look at two considerations she placed in her footnotes and the way by which she deflected from grappling with them. In one footnote Crary considers the authoritativeness of using domesticated dogs to extrapolate for all animals. She writes, “it may seem reasonable to protest a study of dogs in ethics on the ground that the dog is an *unnatural* life-form. Dogs are indeed ‘unnatural’ in that they are the products of processes of domestication that to a significant extent involved selective breeding geared toward human objectives. But it is possible to distinguish questions about the process and aims of domestication from questions about what dogs are like” (Crary 151). A similar sort of objection was raised in yet another footnote by Fitzpatrick and Kaposy, who asked her to consider cases of disability that may be less “gentle and sociable,” such as that of Phineas Gage (Crary 142). She similarly deflected from this inquiry. She attested that this was because she did not know enough about Phineas Gage’s life, though surely, one need not be an expert in disability related biographies to have pushed this question further. The question here isn’t even about what kind-typical traits are, or what we can objectively learn from fiction as opposed to nonfiction and so forth.

Yet again, with regards to the question of dogs, she claims that were she to have considered examples of “erratic and vicious” (154) dogs with cognitive disabilities, it would have made no difference to her conception (154). So to return to Fitzpatrick and Kaposy, the question they *were* asking was how can one account for what is most uncomfortable about disability if one trust to be a matter of morally empirical objectivity, and if, as Crary claimed, “it may seem far-fetched to represent as meriting respectful treatment even those animals who threaten human beings with, e.g., painful scratches or bites, exposure to serious diseases, or even dismemberment and death” (150). How is it that she can hold that all humans and animals are

inside ethics, hold that respect may be overridden in the face of discomfort, and put Charlie's father at complete blame, when the question of blame and forgiveness are simply impossibly difficult in such circumstances? How can one make this into a matter of empirical objectivity? That was their question.

Something similar could be said of how she handled her own imagined counterargument in the first footnote that was mentioned. She imagines the opponent challenging her by inquiring how a dog, which has been domesticated by us and is therefore "unnatural" (151) can be used as an authoritative example to extrapolate to all animals. She answers this by generally saying something like, well, sure we have domesticated dogs, and sure this has exposed them to new diseases, but dependency is an inextricable part of the human social matrix, so why should a history of domestication preclude one from making ethical extrapolations from the realities that color the relationship in the present. It would have been helpful for her to provide a list of what she associated with being "natural" and "unnatural." Is disease natural? Are vaccines natural? *Is dependency natural? Why is dependency natural?*

Absolutely everything that has and could ever possibly happen, everything that has and could ever come into existence, everything that has and could possibly be experienced could be called both natural and unnatural. What *is* of interest, is that insofar as Crary is interested in points of origin, she is also interested in tying origins to innocence. Her argument is very *adorable*, and I do not mean this by way of condescension, for it is peculiar and important indeed, why this should be so much the case across so many philosophical literatures. Such arguments shepherd in the image of a secure household, of an innocent child raised, and groomed, and cultivated well, the image of a landscaper making sure that all the fallen leaves

have been picked off from the stones lining a freshly trimmed hedge, of Alice asking “Would you tell me why you are painting those roses” with Five and Seven awkwardly looking at Two who quietly responds “Why the fact is, you see, Miss, this here ought to have been a *red* rose-tree, and we put a white one in by mistake; and if the Queen was to find out, we should all have our heads cut off” (Carroll 114).

The question in the dog scenario was rather this. If your direct realist views of species distinctions stands, let’s consider the fact that wolves and dogs are of the same species and how this would impact your line of thought. If your argue for the transparency of expressive behavior and simultaneously link this expressive behavior (and what one determines as meaningful) to a species norm, how exactly do you account for the fact that a wolf may not automatically be your best friend without withholding your “respect” for wolves? Furthermore, if human domestication of dogs brought about what we now know of dogs, and if this intervention also made dogs more susceptible to illnesses, then even if the dogs learned to cope, what are we to make of your pleasure in this relationship? What are we to make of ethical extrapolations made from pleasant relationships you implicitly curated and then generalize to unpleasant relationships? If a dog, at least in the US, is “man’s best friend,” if a dog is seen as precious because it gives their human so much affection and attention, when the human was the one who laid out the circumstance, what are we to make of our own and the dogs pleasure, value, and satisfaction? What judgments are we to make about how we place our sentiments? If we love a dog, idealize a dog precisely because it somewhat idealizes us, and it idealizes us because we have tamed it, is there anything to tell us the ethics of how and where our intimacies should be? Is there some kind of origin for this reasoning? The concept at stake was how we think about the authority of what guides our

pleasant interactions when the pleasantness of those interactions depends on something we've tamed.

To the extent that these arguments, both of moral individualist and species relationists, are concerned with this question of how metaphysics and concepts come apart or come together in conjunction with a question of how to ascertain an appropriate response with regards to those sliding scales, they are also concerned with what makes certain kinds of sentiments, affects, and ways of feeling appropriate. That is, they are concerned with what would be considered transgressive, inappropriate, *or* blameworthy. Or to put it in another way, they are, to some extent, interested in various grounds that comprise what is humanly normative. Then once this work is done, special relationists may bring, for example, people with disability into the human fold while also lifting up animals. For Diamond this means metaphysical irreducible concepts and imaginative moral flexibility. For Crary this means expanding what is considered a metaphysical agent by appeal to concepts and "thought" in a broader version of intellect. For Kittay this means rejecting comparatively tenuous thought experiments, such as thinking of superchimps in conjunction with a human with disability having never known one of the former.

The strange thing about reading Crary is that it seems to make the preciousness of things like friendship and forgiveness a matter of empirical law. How could this be possible? If, for example, your friend with schizophrenia were to have an episode where they did try to kill you, are you to so automatically to read them out of the realm of your concern? Like the irritating fleas she alludes to? Would you blame someone else for having restrained them? Once the episode passes and say this person is informed of what happened, perhaps horrified at what

happened, would you still so easily distribute blame and forgiveness? Would you still proclaim, how dare that good friend of theirs restrain them?

It is this sort of, habit if we shall call it that, that Nussbaum critiques in her *Compassion: Human and the Animal*, and it is a similar sort of idea Fricker gets at in *Ambivalence about Forgiveness*. Essentially, Nussbaum argued that dogs might be better than people at being compassionate. This was because on her account, human compassion hinges on a “judgment of seriousness”, “judgment of non-fault” (Nussbaum 145), and a “eudaimonistic judgment” (147). The first she defines as that which “the person who feels the emotion thinks that someone else is suffering in some way that is important and non-trivial” (Nussbaum 145). The second she sees as not a binding condition but claims that we are limited in our sense of compassion “if we think the person’s predicament chosen or self-inflicted” (146). Insofar as we *are* compassionate in conjunction with our judgment of fault, this is usually targeted towards the situation rather than the person (147). The third is that of eudaimonistic judgment, and this is what determines that a being is someone who matters in the life of the emotion possessor (147). If an emotional response is evoked, this is at least minimally indicative that whatever evoked it bears some relevance to the person who possesses the evoked emotion.

There is no reason that judgment of fault is always supposed to be an easily objective or accurate matter. Similarly, in *Ambivalence About Forgiveness*, Fricker noted how notions pertaining to forgiveness go from a purist idealization to a pessimistic skepticism (1). Instead, she argues for the mechanism of forgiveness that contributes to viewing it with both “admiration and suspicion” (2). Her basic argument is that because “Gifted Forgiveness” functions proleptically where the forgiver implicitly assumes a certain future outcome, as a measure of

good faith, and simultaneously “[forswears]. . .blame-fleeing” it also undercuts further conversation. This may result in, as in cases of the forgiver being of a higher social status, a form of manipulation (25). Or, on the other hand, it may result in the unsuccessful forswearing of those blame-feelings resulting in a kind of self-deception (26). Since the virtues and the vices of forgiveness entail the same mechanism, she endorses the maintenance of ambivalence concerning this phenomena.

When Crary is read, in conjunction with Nussbaum and Fricker, her tone of adoration and exaltation becomes ever more clear. Insofar as we enter into different kinds of situations, we also choose different kinds of intimacies. The valences of these intimacies are often regulative, they both are defined by the environment and define the general ethos of the environment. Transgressing these standards is awkward and unusual, possibly even blameworthy. However, if someone explains that this person has this kind of disability, that takes away from the blameworthiness; this is the point mentioned earlier that Nussbaum makes. The forgiveness is contingent on not viewing the act as a transgression, and the act is not viewed as a transgression because the person(al) is erased from the situation; all you see is the situation. Nussbaum noted that “even when we do feel compassion for people whom we also blame, the compassion and the blame typically address different phases or aspects of the person’s situation” (Nussbaum 147). We blame the situation (the disability), and we exalt the individual (the person). Chen has also noted how abjectness and exaltation tend to be two sides of the same coin (220). Exaltation, however, has to do with something like the image of “graceful suffering”, “graceful death”, or some picture of higher goodness/purity achieved through self-sacrifice.

***The Personal Is Not Natural, The Personal Is Not Specifiable, The Personal Is Not an Exam(ple)***

Today I have so much to do,  
I must kill memory once and for all,  
I must turn my soul to stone —  
I must learn to live again.

—Akhmatova, Requiem

Here I believe it would be helpful to consider an example posed by Chen on their experiences with mercury poisoning and how “inanimate things take on a greater, holistic importance” (Chen 202). They write “immunity’s fictivity and attachment’s impermanence; life sustains even--or especially--in this kind of silence, this kind of pause, this dis-ability. The heart pumps blood; the mind, even when it says ‘I can’t think,’ has reflected where and how it *is*. Communion is possible in spite of, or even because of, this fact” (202). They recall “grunt[ing] a facsimile of greeting” to their lover upon her return home, lying on the couch and jerking away from her, being unable to fully speak to her, and knowing that “she tolerates this because she understands deeply how *I am toxic*” (202, emphasis added). Crary considers how when they are going through such a period objects are essentially all the same. They wonder how unforgivable it is to have treated their girlfriend like their couch, and their couch like their girlfriend (202). Yet it seems, as Chen notes, that such a question is only comprehensible, and only possible to pose when one has regained their human sociality (202).

It does seem quite strange, they note, that even as one loses their sense of identity as the “mercurial, erethic, emotionally labile human moves toward quicksilver becomes it” they think “How could it do this to me? And yet in that instant, the ‘me’ that speaks is not the ‘me’ before I was affected it” (203). I think it’s this sort of thing Derrida wants to get at, illustrated in

autobiographical form, when he questions the presumed *obligation* we have to present ourselves as “sincerely” and how that conflicts with who that sincerity is geared towards, or to use Crary’s words, who holds another in their identity (Crary 144).

The issue is of presenting such sincerity while not denying and violating one’s own ambiguous and mysterious sense of self. When the ‘self’ becomes detached from its secure authorship, when it becomes removed from the realm of what’s observable, and what is authoritatively justifiable, it becomes ambivalent whether this new way of feeling should be attributed to oneself. It both is and is not what you think yourself to be. It is ambivalent and ambiguous and rightly so. From this point, we can then begin to see how connecting what is in view to being objectively authoritative, how “naturalizing” the subject, hinders one from confronting the reality of other ways of being, paradoxical ironies, ironies that *exactly relate to the conceptions of “rational/emotional”* that bind one’s experience. These ironies are also those that relate to the difficulty of conceptions such as “natural/unnatural”, or “objective/subjective” and so on.

To return to the question of the “objective” subject, (in Crary’s view the empirical subject, though this could also be conceived of as “objective” insofar as it is rational), this notion precludes one from considering these other elusive aspects with what Nussbaum calls the judgment of seriousness (Chen 147). Since the “judgment of seriousness” hinges on what is observable, (therefore potentially empirical, discoverable, excavated, found, confirmed), therefore rational therefore objective, so too it writes those other emotional and affective components as “irrational”, “unnatural”, “not objective”, “not true”, “not real”. This however is deceitful both for the one taking up the naturalistic, empirical view of things and is also negligent



in assuming that there's something so simple, clear and obvious in what resources the agent gone viral appeals to in order to have an integrative schematic of who they are. There is a reality to both disability and animality that coincides (whether rightfully so or not is a separate question) with our conceptions surrounding awkwardness, atemporality, things out of time and out of place.

Derrida had written that “autobiography becomes confession when the discourse on the self does not dissociate truth from an avowal, thus from a fault, an evil, an ill” (21). Speaking with regards to the naming in Genesis, he wanted to draw our attention to how compassion for the animal (or for any other kind of being in general), hinges on a sort of declarative voice, declarative assignment, of naming as a form of assigning one the possibility of death, of naming bringing forth the kind of melancholic awareness of the death of oneself as oneself, yet of the necessity of naming in order to put into the effect the possibility of seeing, of being surprised. Moreover, this was an idea about the necessity of displacement for discernment. He writes,

God doesn't yet know what he really wants: this is the finitude of a God who doesn't know what he wants with respect to the animal, that is to say, with respect to the life of the living as such, a God who sees something coming without seeing it coming, a God who will say “*I am that I am*” without knowing what he is going to see when a poet enters the scene to give his name to living things (Derrida 17).

Endemic to this is a kind of sadness, the kind of sadness that is experienced in appropriating what you are by what you have been named, by becoming aware of what is not contained or accounted for in declaring what you are deemed to be and in growing into what you are declared as, and how you learn to declare yourself as (20). This is also inherently a point

about how social structures influence what we deem as being authoritative. Derrida seems to be getting at this idea that for one to “come into view” (to use the concept Crary most appeals to) one needs to respond on the grounds that have been made available to them. One needs to step into this declarative way of being seen, “[claim] in a single stroke *his property*” (20) entailing a kind of sacrifice of what one might otherwise be. It is to only be seen as authoritative when you match the posture of your opponents, when you are not Singer’s “kindly ladies who are dotty about cats” (215). It’s the sacrifice entailed in *serious business*. It’s possible this is why Crary thinks she must appeal to empirical business, perhaps this stems from an awareness of the limits of the conceptual and linguistic shining light, and perhaps she thinks nature has more of a voice than us authors.

Derrida’s next consideration has to do with what entails truth, authenticity, and the question of for whom truth would be addressed. He considers the time frame after Adam “called out the animals’ names [but] before the fall” (21). Part of his thought here is that it is difficult to speak of oneself, to give testimony (with authority), to declare anything to be any sort of way, to know where your trust or sentiments should lie, when whatever you say, or take up, doesn’t rely on a narrative of shame and exaltation. It’s just a simple “I am what I am”, “it is what it is”, “we are what we are” it’s McDowell and Crary’s “the natural is unnatural is natural.” Something is only true as long as there is something else to justify it; “autobiography becomes confession when the discourse on the self does not dissociate truth from an avowal, thus from a fault, an evil, an ill” (21). Yet as long as it is a justification, it is also an exhortation, that actions done otherwise, that coming into being otherwise but not into view, is transgressive, abjected, delocalized. Once you’ve transgressed in such a way, since you’ve acted on a “you” that wasn’t

the “you” you were initially deemed to be, the you on display, even if this “you” you took on without much hesitation, it’s unclear who the you that you are not, the you unjustified and incoherent, is supposed to ask forgiveness from; “why *would one owe . . . truth?* Why would it belong to the essence of truth to be due, and nude? And therefore confessed?” (Derrida 21). This could really be viewed simply as a claim about the fragmentation of identity in general. I think Kafka makes a similar kind of point in *A Report to the Academy*.

Derrida’s point is then partially that anything that presents itself as sincerity only does so by its function on insincerity. It is only “sincere” insofar as it works by negation and exclusion. It is a point about how producing knowledge, truth and so forth, relies on a kind of repression or negation. One is owed or indebted only insofar as one is productive, as there is something produced to be indebted to.

Crary’s whole issue with imagining beyond the literal scope of her texts, is also her neglect in realizing that what makes her examples effective, not unlike Singer’s, is the empathetic intersubjectivity they elicit. Thus it seems relevant to briefly note that her examples (whether it be one of dogs or human relations) tend to hinge on commonsense care to what is most immediately known and what is most obviously horrific in the face of human and animal finitude. Her examples are successful because they evoke emotional responses to instances that threaten the goods available to one’s life in which these goods hinge on the importance of special, personal relationships rather than one’s derived from an individual’s capabilities. That is, they are not effective because they are accurate, nor are they effective because they reflect some empirical species norm. They are effective because they remind you that the goods of one’s life has nothing to do with the value of a life.

These images elicit a sort of vulnerability, they cultivate a “feeling of solidarity in mysterious origin and uncertain fate: this binds us to each other” (Diamond 55). I am less certain that this would be as effective if the reader had a heart of stone. So then we return to Nussbaum’s compassion. She wants to argue against the idea that beings have compassion for those they deem as more aligned with their own life possibilities as being a *necessary* condition for compassion (Nussbaum 147). The grounds she does this on is by arguing that animals exhibit a lesser “displacement of feeling” (150). That is to say because they can’t form the thought ““This person is moaning and groaning, but the plight is not really serious”” (151). In other words, because the animal may exhibit a lesser judgment of fault, the animal is also less likely to withdraw from holding the other as a being that matters to them. They are less likely to withhold their eudaimonistic judgment. Then we are faced with a different sort of question. To the extent that Nussbaum's compassion hinges on how much someone matters (and therefore to what extent they elicit emotion) in another’s life, as well as a judgment of non-fault,

I would like to suggest the following possibility. I claimed that we must, to some effect, idealize reality in order to have an object to morally respond to. In order to encounter alterity we must to some extent confront the inexpressible in one’s reality. Here I would like to suggest that some encounters with otherness are forms of gift-giving, as rife with ambivalence as Fricker’s forgiveness, and in its generosity existing at the brink of detachment in Nussbaum’s sense. That is existing at the brink of what is serious and what is kitsch.

Initially, I must admit, the difference between literature and philosophy seems so obvious. Literature faces experiences, it is cultural, historical and not too concerned with universalisms. That is okay, philosopher's needn’t be either. Yet the more one returns to these

examples, Singer's way with disgust, Crary's way with adoration, Singer and Regan's withdrawal from the *kitschy* it is not quite clear what one should think the business of moral philosophy is.

To provide a brief recap. I began by illustrating three debates, the one between Derrida and Descartes, the Nature Faker debates, and the debates between Singer, Regan, Crary and Diamond. I suggested that throughout these debates a certain kind of Cartesian anxiety about appealing to emotion or sentiment was inherited. Next I illustrated a problem of presumed personhood in McDowell's naturalism, which Crary then goes on to inherit. After this I illustrated the difficulty of straddling Diamond's ethically irreducible metaphysic and McDowell's empiricism with all of his accurate facts. I argued that it is her inheritance of such an empiricism that perhaps aligns her closer to her very opposition in structure and in emotive tactic. Then I considered the way in which Descartes erases the finitude of his subjects exactly by placing them under the empirical law of nature derived from an originary and therefore infinite God. This thought was then considered alongside Derrida's suggestion that thought may be no more than a habit, or a kind of response to one of our central desires. By discussing Crary alongside Descartes and Derrida I suggested that in order to have an imaginatively moral responsiveness of the kind she claims to put forth, one needs to idealize reality so that all of the details that comprise various objects and kinds do not elicit a nit-picky pulling apart of the moral response one had, which could instead act to its detriment. In the same line of thought, I further suggested that though a desire may develop into a secured, accurate, and predictable system, this system would only be authoritative in our application of it to the world, and not in the world's application of it to us.

Lastly, I looked at how the trope of the innocent child appeared across these literatures. I suggested that to the extent that Regan and Singer inherit the Cartesian burden, they also inherit a sort of transcendental tone that is made most evident in the child examples considered. Something similar could be said of Crary. I suggested that these kinds of universalizations cannot seriously grapple with question of adorable monstrosity because they refuse to face what is impossible and particular to each human life and make matters such as forgiveness into a question of law. I suggested that encounters with alterity be considered as a kind of gift-giving.

## ***The Autobiographical is Philosophical***

I do not know how to write this without writing about what I most immediately know. If that means I do not know how to write philosophically, so be it, I will take the charge. The educated animal, the domesticated animal, the childhood innocence meant to be the saving grace of where naturalism stood, I do not know what this means. I do not know what it means to hold another in their identity as Crary thinks is so clear, rather than a feat of a forgiving and committed affection with all of the ambivalences that arise. I do not know what this means because I do not have almost half of my memory, I do not know what it means to think that what is good, what is meaningful, what is accurate is obtained from how I behave or express myself. I do not understand this. What I know is that my first memory is of dying, of a heartbeat that ruptures as the AED sent shocks through my tiny body. The beginning of my autobiographical life is seeing myself outside my body, the beginning of my autobiographical life is one only met at the end of most. What I know is fifteen years of temporal lobe epilepsy, what I know is the history of an absent father, and a mother unfit to parent. What I know is losing my memory, of forgetting how to read a ruler in the art class I was once marked as showing “talent.” What I know is aphasia, of losing my language in class. What I know are teachers who have not allowed me to leave before I finished a quiz, presuming the doctors note that said I could only be in school for two hours that week, as I slowly regained my memory after six months of absence, was a lie. What I know is the shock of the educated authority asking me why I could not finish a simple problem set when I used to be “so good.” Why I could not read a ruler. Why I could not form words. Why I forgot how numoristy works. *How could it happen? She used to be so smart! What a pity,* they said as they continued to stare expecting an answer. I do not know how to

explain that speaking still feels impossible. What are you to make of my visible behavior?

Perhaps she's shy, perhaps she's lazy, perhaps she didn't do her readings, perhaps she doesn't find school meaningful. One must learn to speak up, one must learn to declare!

It's quite peculiar that, upon losing it, my name, my tag, my identification, the first instinct or desire (aren't they one and the same?) within me was to go out and trace the world's outline. As if, within its circumference I were to find myself a category to own—for me alone to occupy—and stake out this piece of universe as if it were made particularly for me and as if it would tell me what to make (of myself). It's quite peculiar that upon hearing my family's calls for me to stay, to have breakfast with them on a day before their awareness that my ahistorical being was no deception, I was filled with mistrust as if to say (strange how when untethered from a history that tells you what to say, one still finds the desire to say)—who are you to tell me who I am! Hearts were broken, and coffees were spilled, but learn again I did. Every day, I learned to read faces that expected me to remember, every day, I felt ashamed to have forgotten and to have been unable to answer. Now I wonder what my reclaimed intellect has offered me and whether I'm that much better for once more having it. When I was taken off my medication, in the middle of celebration (in which I grieved the loss of my fellow imagined 'hallucinated' creatures) my doctor notified me there is a twenty-five percent chance of recurrence in adulthood. Twenty-five percent. That is, 18.3% higher than Yale's acceptance rate, 7.2% less than Bard's, and right about the same as Vassar's. I think about this every day.

I do not know what it means to allow another to hold you in your identity when the others around you are not as affectionate. I refuse to believe that what is meaningful has to be empirically specifiable. I refuse to believe I have to be one thing, use one voice, choose what I



deem essential about me. I refuse to believe that a child born to monstrosity cannot be good. I refuse to believe a person untethered to origin cannot be good. I do not have a choice, I must refuse this to exist. I refuse to have philosophers take this from me on account of insufficient evidence, I refuse to believe I must be a genre.

Roughly ten entire years of my life were marked by hallucinations of the most magical and magnificent sort, creatures perhaps only an artist or a mythologist could think of. I would tell those rational, educated, scientific sort of grown ups about my friends, trying to make up stories about visuals that did not speak, about how special they were in my heart. These grown ups, rational animals, told me it was pathological, it wasn't real, I was ill. They would tell me this as if they thought it was just a matter of science, as if telling me that it was scientifically "unreal" should have deemed my affections meaningless. Yet these creatures of mine, were so much more tender than those who were meant to speak of what was virtuous in me. These creatures taught me moral living like no course in philosophy ever will.

What I know is that your speech and smell will go first, your vision second, your bodily motion third, and your hearing, oh your hearing, that will wait around for a long, long time. All you take to be precious to a person, all you deprive animals of, you will be stripped of as well. You see, hearing is your most passive sense, it is the only sense you cannot extend yourself with. And I assure you, with utmost certainty, that the time will come when you will be rendered mute, you will become nature listening and you will learn it has been listening all along. But then will come the peace, and it is a peace I cannot describe, and you will still be listening, you will be given your vision back no longer felt centered in your body though coming from it and this will

arrive as a gift to the hunger of the living. So be careful that your virtues don't eat you up.

Blindness is not only the loss of vision, there is so much more to keep in sight.

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