As Max Horkheimer wrote sixty years ago,

Modern insensitivity to nature is indeed only a variation of the pragmatic attitude that is typical of Western Civilization as a whole. Only the forms are different. The early trapper saw in the prairies and mountains only the prospect of good hunting; the modern businessman sees in the landscape an opportunity for the display of cigarette posters. The fate of animals in our world is symbolized by an item printed in the newspapers of a few years ago. It reported that landings of planes in Africa were often hampered by herds of elephants and other beasts. Animals are considered simply as obstructers of traffic.¹

The Frankfurt School in general and Horkheimer in particular connects these observations to a “speculative theory of reason,” according to which he claimed that ever since the re-installment of modern rationality in the 18th Century, all entities have ceased to be acknowledged for their intrinsic value. He claimed, that is, that entities are no longer viewed as worthwhile and significant in their own right, but instead, simply as objects of dispositional power that are thus evaluated on the basis of instrumental reason, i.e., on the basis of their practical value for “some other thing.” In this way, what started as a project of realizing genuine (philosophical) reason and value in our world finally turned towards itself, with the dawn of modern rationality. The (misguided) emancipation of reason from nature, as Horkheimer argues, turned into the *rational and organized oppression of nature*, which, since human beings are a part of nature, forced human reason to turn against itself, and in so doing reveal itself as a most dangerous and destructive substance. Indeed, in its very attempt to liberate itself from nature, reason became the destructive force that guides the history of the Western world, the monstrous effects of which we bear witness to regularly. Not surprisingly, “this principle of domination,” as Horkheimer (and Adorno) put their bold claim, “has become the idol to which everything is sacrificed.”²

what Max Horkheimer noticed in 1946, shortly after WWII, while facing what the European (left and right) intelligentsia diagnosed as the failure of Western Civilization as a whole, seems, still, to be true, even sixty years after Horkheimer published this diagnosis in his Eclipse of Reason.

As most of the recent literature in environmental philosophy, animal rights, eco-philosophy, and animal welfare has uncovered and repeatedly pointed out – though usually without explicit reference to the overall speculative and idealist background that rules Horkheimer’s philosophy of history – our current practices of relating ourselves (1) to our “natural” selves, (2) to the natural environment, and (3) to non-human animals, imply a whole range of destructive tendencies, which are not only visible in our eating practices, in our agriculture and food production, and in our industrialized way of treating non-human animals, but also in our linguistic practices, in our mentalities, and in our overall attitudes towards life, death, and meaning. Accordingly, what almost all authors working in these fields uniquely propose and attempt to do is to re-think precisely these relations: they try to re-conceive our relations to ourselves, to the environment, and to “the other,” where this latter category includes non-human animal others. Moreover, fully aware that these problems are not merely local or regional problems, but global ones, these thinkers acknowledge that a proper diagnosis and treatment must consider all aspects of life, including, especially, history, culture, society, and politics. Consequently, we find in all academic fields – from agricultural technology and bio-engineering to the social sciences, psychology, and even literature – a wealth of critical reflections on these pressing topics, about which even the most skeptical thinkers and early cultural critics (such as Horkheimer) would have been pleasantly surprised if they were alive today.

In this connection, the philosophical literature on animal rights, animal welfare, and ecological philosophy has literally exploded during the last three decades. Almost every university library has made space for special sections on environmental philosophy (broadly construed), and new texts are being produced regularly. Given this fact, it is rather astonishing that philosophers who work in various classical Continental traditions, such as German Idealism, Marxism, Existentialism, Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, and (Post)Structuralism, have struggled to position themselves forcefully within this scholarly space, wherein their contributions lag behind those that are rooted in other traditions, particularly the Anglo-American Analytic tradition. For although things look different in the field of environmental philosophy, to which the phenomenological tradition has contributed significantly, in relation to the general literature on non-human animals, we find only a handful of publications that are primarily written from an explicitly European or Continental perspective. The editors and contributors to this Volume acknowledge this lag, and hope to “make up for lost time” (so to speak).

Interestingly, the main reason for the lack of phenomenological contributions to the literature on the non-human animal is – paradoxically – also
likely to account for the wealth of phenomenological considerations of nature and environment. The reason has to do with what we find in the canonical and classical authors working in this tradition: whereas authors working in other contexts and traditions do not seem to be focally interested in framing their analyses in relation to their historical-cultural-social-natural environments, classical European authors routinely – as a matter of course – attempt to think through contemporary questions from a point of view that is defined by and carried out in terms of its relation to their traditions and, thus, their environments. For example, as Husserl famously put it in his Crisis, understanding ourselves in our contemporary being just means to “reflect back” on the tradition that we have inherited, and to see our place in relation to nature, culture, and world.\(^5\) Furthermore, according to Heidegger, philosophical practice requires an Abbau – a destruction – of the history of philosophy, precisely because of its refusal to acknowledge its dependence on world.\(^6\) Even Foucault went so far as to define the “ontology of ourselves” and the question of what and who we are as an archaeological and genealogical project, which could therefore not be adequately addressed without proper analyses of nature and environment.\(^7\) And the list of European thinkers who advance similar claims and structure their analyses accordingly, is much longer, of course.

Notwithstanding the significant achievements concerning these “environmental themes,” such attentive concern did not often spill over into explicit considerations of the non-human animal or of the human-animal relation. For, whereas most of the classical authors did not offer central analyses of non-human animals or of the underlying ontological presuppositions that tend to guide our assumptions when thinking about the distinction between the human and the animal,\(^8\) all phenomenological authors reflected intensively on our relation to the overall environment and nature; indeed, the phenomenological tradition from Husserl on developed new notions of nature, perhaps most notable amongst them, Husserl’s and Heidegger’s reflections on the surrounding world and Husserl’s and Merleau-Ponty’s reflections on the intersubjective constitution of nature. These critical examinations were then picked up in the 70s by left thinkers both in the United States and on the Continent, probably because of their connection to the Marxist tradition.\(^9\) Finally, the concept and rich analyses of the “lived Body,” especially as it was first developed by Husserl and further developed by Merleau-Ponty, is probably the ground-breaking discovery of phenomenology that ultimately led to a full rejection of Cartesian epistemology, the latter of which provided the foundation for the modern conception of rationality and nature, as it was criticized by Horkheimer (and others). However, in contradistinction to the many focused efforts to rethink the general concept of nature and environment, which (as we pointed out) was historically grounded in the tradition of European thought, the project of rethinking our relation to the non-human animal seems to require a more autonomous and historically independent development of ideas, thoughts, and arguments. This volume is an attempt to
contribute to this project, the contemporary significance of which should not be underestimated.

In this connection, virtually all phenomenologists have helped develop alternatives to the sharp subject-object distinctions that underlie almost every philosophical theory up to the 20th Century, many of which still determine the leading epistemological theories of contemporary philosophy, especially within the Anglo-American tradition. Perhaps the most visible effect of the development of these alternatives may be seen in the terms “world” and “worldhood,” particularly as they were explicated by Heidegger in his analysis of worldhood. Heidegger’s analysis lays bare a unique feature of what phenomenologists call “world,” which is worthwhile to mention in this context: the fundamental definition and essence of world on all levels, which necessarily includes nature, culture, and history, is shared and communal. In addition to the introduction of the “lived Body,” the communality and publicity of world – even, or especially, nature – is the second revolution that occurred within phenomenology at the beginning of the last century. In this connection, Husserl went so far as to claim that the very objectivity of “things out there” in the spatio-temporal world is intersubjectively constituted. “The other Ego,” as he writes in his Cartesian Meditations, “makes constitutionally possible a new infinite domain of what is ‘other’: an Objective Nature and a whole Objective world, to which all other Egos and myself belong.” Consequently, if animal others are also “Egos,” which simply means that they have a unified, experienced perspective on the world, then we must come to the conclusion that humans and animals not only partially or “accidentally” live alongside each other; rather, we fundamentally share with each other the objectivity of what we call “world.” Put simply, to live in a world that is “there” for everyone – including non-human animals – intentionally implies and presupposes “a community of Egos existing with each other and for each other.” Undoubtedly, most commentators of Husserl’s phenomenology have overlooked this radical “trans-species” spirit of Husserl’s thought in the 5th Cartesian Meditation.

This volume should be seen in the light of this innovative and, it might be said, revolutionary spirit. All of the volume’s contributors, though from diverse backgrounds, try to make (more) sense of what it means to share a world with others, and in so doing, they attempt to discover what it means to be with non-human animals and to exist for non-human animals.

The authors writing in this volume locate themselves within the phenomenological movement in a broad sense, offering reflections from a number of phenomenological perspectives, including: from a Heideggerian perspective (Kuperus), from an anthropological-philosophical perspective (Oele), and from a Foucaultian perspective (Carlson). In addition, they reflect on marginalized topics, such as empirical psychology (Ruonakoski, Lohmar) and literature (Mensch). Still further, in addition to reflecting ontologically on the question of the non-human animal by criticizing human exceptionalism (Toadvine), the ethical dimension of this question is exemplarily
addressed by thinking through the notions of intentionality and empathy (Brown, Painter). As a result, this volume goes beyond the traditional scope of phenomenology, as developed by Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty. For, rather than exclusively developing the classics (though this is also done), the authors in this volume are united in their attempts to expand the limits of phenomenological philosophy, especially since they recognize what we pointed out above, namely, that phenomenological contributions to the urgently important contemporary debate regarding non-human animals is lagging behind contributions from other traditions. With this in mind, the contributions are divided into four sets of reflections: [1] Section One: Phenomenology, Ontology, and Anthropology, deals with anthropological considerations from a phenomenological standpoint. The editors of this volume consider this an important set of reflections, since in opposition to the German discourse of the 20th Century, philosophical anthropology has not (yet) become prominent in the Anglo-American world.13 [2] Section Two: Phenomenology, Psychology, and Language, is concerned with the connection between phenomenological philosophy and the empirical sciences, particularly phenomenology’s connection to psychology, whereas [3] Section Three: Phenomenology and Ethics, moves beyond the descriptive level, wherein attempts to properly describe the non-human animal are done within the context of offering prescriptive and normative analyses of the human-non-human animal relation. Here, the development of an ethical perspective from a phenomenological point of view is acknowledged as a most pressing issue, and, at the same time, as a uniquely difficult task, especially given that (so far) the phenomenological tradition tends to approach philosophical problems on an ontological or a descriptive basis and not from an ethical standpoint. Finally, [4] Section Four: At the Margins of Phenomenology, goes beyond the core of phenomenology by presenting considerations on “disabled otherness” from a Foucauldian perspective and on “alterity” from a literary and theological perspective.

I. Phenomenology, Ontology, and Anthropology

Gerard Kuperus (University of San Francisco), in his contribution Attunement, Deprivation, and Drive: Heidegger and Animality, elucidates Heidegger’s analysis of non-human animals and his thesis about their “world-poverty.” He argues that Heidegger’s analysis of the poverty of the non-human animal is central for his understanding of the distinction between human and animal, since it rests upon his non-traditional claim that whereas animals are deprived of attunement and moods, and thus deprived of full “worldhood,” humans are defined precisely in terms of these phenomena. According to Heidegger, the non-human animal world is somehow “closed” while the human world is “open,” which is evidenced most especially by Dasein’s experience of “profound boredom.” As Kuperus shows, profound boredom,
while seemingly akin to the animal’s poverty in world, constitutes, paradoxically, Dasein’s fundamental attunement, according to which Dasein finds its richest possibilities for existence, insofar as it can distance and free itself from its general mindless captivation in the world. Since this possibility is not available for the non-human animal, he is forced to remain captivated and absorbed by his drives and instincts, whereas humans can distance themselves from their environment and therewith create new possibilities for themselves, including a form of appreciating and “being with” animals.

Marjolein Oele (University of San Francisco) covers both traditional and new ground in her contribution, *Being Beyond: Aristotle’s and Plessner’s Accounts of Animal Responsiveness*. As acknowledged above, the German tradition in philosophical anthropology is not well known in Anglo-American debates; fortunately, Oele’s essay is a step towards changing this situation. Following her elucidation of Aristotle’s account of touching, she examines Helmuth Plessner’s philosophy of biology, focusing on his understanding of “responsiveness” and its relevance for the contemporary debate. As Oele argues, in contradistinction to other approaches to non-human animals, which do not pay serious attention to the robust manner in which animals live in their environments, she shows that organisms not only react to their environments in a very specific sense, but they respond to it. With the support of Aristotle’s interpretation of touching and Plessner’s theory of organisms, Oele develops a general conception of the “responsiveness of life,” which is most impressive. However, According to Oele, while it turns out that Aristotle employed highly sophisticated notions of self-reflexivity and self-affection, which he attributed to all living beings, he ultimately failed to solve the problem of the “localization” of this “touching” and “responsiveness;” for, according to Aristotle, as touching and responsiveness do not seem to belong to a special sense-organ, though they must be conceived as somewhere “inside” the animal body, they nonetheless may not be associated with any particular organ of sensibility. This obstacle, which renders it difficult to understand this essential feature of the animal body, according to Oele, is overcome by Plessner’s notion of “positionality,” which he (Plessner) characterizes as the relation between a living organism and its environment. In this way, although Plessner may be said to “improve upon” Aristotle’s account of the responsiveness of the animal body, by solving (and perhaps eliminating) the “localization” problem, both Aristotle and Plessner seem to converge in their (non-Cartesian) assumption that the animal body is “non-localized” in a spatio-temporal sense, due to the fact of its inner reflexivity and its transitive nature. As Oele shows, animal bodies, thus, have extremely rich modes of being in nature.

Ted Toadvine (University of Oregon), in his essay *How Not to be a Jellyfish: Human Exceptionalism and the Ontology of Reflection*, begins his considerations of “human exceptionalism” by pointing out that we have yet to find a philosophical solution to recent attempts in philosophy to break down the metaphysical thesis that there is a difference in kind between human and
non-human animals. By drawing from Heidegger, Scheler, and Agamben, Toadvine argues that the “animal-human distinction goes to the heart of the phenomenological method.” As Toadvine points out, the human being seems to be the only entity that can ask for truth, which includes the request for truth regarding the distinction between human and non-human animals. Consequently, as Toadvine shows, we need to reconsider the phenomenological method itself, since this will make appropriate investigations of the non-human animal possible, and in this way allow us to avoid charges of human exceptionalism, according to which the claim is advanced that the human species is the final, most unique, and best product of evolution (or creation). According to Toadvine, the most promising ideas on this matter come from Merleau-Ponty, who radically tries – at least in his later work – to overcome all ontological distinctions and, even, to disconnect reflection from exclusive humanness, thereby reintegrating the concept of reflection into being itself. Indeed, as Toadvine (paraphrasing Merleau-Ponty) puts it, “animality and humanity are given only together,… such that we cannot draw a sharp ontological boundary between human and nonhuman animals nor arrange their relations hierarchically.”

II. Phenomenology, Psychology, and Language

Dieter Lohmar (University of Cologne), in his essay How Do Primates Think? Phenomenological Analyses of Non-language Systems of Representation in Higher Primates and Humans, argues against traditional philosophical claims (such as Kant’s), which maintain that non-human animals are unable to refer mentally to objects that are not immediately present. Indeed, Lohmar rejects, on phenomenological grounds, the prejudice that non-human animals are unable to think, arguing that thinking, understood as the representation of something absent (Lohmar here follows Husserl’s sixth Logical Investigation), ultimately must be ascribed to all primates, and not just to humans (who are members of the primate group, Lohmar reminds us). In addition, his discussion and extensive use of empirical research shows that almost all other activities that philosophers have traditionally used for distinguishing human and non-human animals, such as various modes of communication, deception, tool use, production and transportation, as well as social cooperation, also fail to establish any significant distinction between primate groups. The same holds true for “object permanence,” which refers to the thesis that an individual is able to have an idea of an enduring object even when the object itself is not immediately present, and for the representation of future events, both of which are evidenced by a mass of animal research that establishes their capacities to perform these acts. The most central claim of Lohmar’s overview targets our traditional view of the centrality of language for operating with metaphysical distinctions. In this connection, Lohmar claims that language is not the primary system of representation, as was (and still is) traditionally thought, since it sits “on top” of other representational
systems, including the faculty of emotion, of imagination, and of \textit{phantasmata}, all of which are faculties that humans and other primates regularly employ. Interestingly, though Husserl himself did not spend much time explicitly treating this theme, Lohmar’s central thesis finds its ground (and confirmation) in Husserl’s genetic phenomenology. Lohmar gives further force to his thesis by analyzing daydreams, which he characterizes as an “old mode of thinking” that has been around for all of “thinking history.” This “old mode of thinking” involves “scenically imagining” objects (including characters of persons) that are immediately absent and not represented via language, and is engaged in by all primates, according to Lohmar.

Erika Ruonakoski (University of Helsinki) also deals with psychological themes in her contribution, \textit{Phenomenology and the Study of Animal Behavior}. In her essay, Ruonakoski argues that there can in fact be a genuine dialogue between phenomenology and the study of animal behavior, primarily inasmuch as it can be a helpful tool for investigating and clarifying the relationship between the scientist and the research subject. Using the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, Ruonakoski establishes that no matter how abstract, highly theoretical, and scientific our research into animal behavior might be, it is nevertheless the case that the human experience of the animal is the necessary point of departure for our investigations, and that, if properly acknowledged and appreciated, it can serve as a “gradual awakening” to the different-but-similar modes of being of the non-human animal, on the basis of which the animal’s world can be viewed as the human world too, wherein meaningful behavior—both animal and human—is constituted and witnessed. In addition, Ruonakoski argues that phenomenology can likewise benefit from the discoveries of theorists working in other traditions, such as the hard and soft sciences, given that their empirical findings can challenge the phenomenologist’s ontological presuppositions, thereby offering ever new possibilities for understanding the non-human animal, as well as the human-animal relation. Finally, then, Ruonakoski shows that phenomenological and non-phenomenological researchers can be co-beneficiaries of a very productive relationship, the consequences of which are improved studies of, as well as increased possibilities for, meaningful communication between humans and animals.

III. Phenomenology and Ethics

Charles Brown (Emporia State University), in his paper \textit{The Intentionality and Animal Heritage of Moral Experience: What We Can Learn from Dogs about Moral Theory}, argues that a phenomenological conception of the intrinsic rationality of moral experience can help us to overcome the traditional overly rationalistic framework with which we typically operate in our culture. Brown focuses on a new conception of the self, which allows us to integrate emotion, particularity, and animality into moral philosophy. Intentionality is the central bridge that, according to Brown, can lead us to appreciate the \textit{intrinsic} moral dimension that characterizes relationships
between humans and animals. In this connection, Brown argues that humans share with non-human animals an emotional world within which animal others care about the same things that humans care about, as he illustrates with reference to his canine companion, Lily. We are, in Brown’s words, “co-witnessing” each other. In addition to showing the strength of phenomenology in comparison to traditional “monistic” and overly rationalistic conceptions of morality, Brown’s contribution can also be taken as a sort of “corrective” to the discipline of phenomenology, insofar as phenomenological analyses have traditionally neglected the natural sciences, especially Darwinian biology, which Brown successfully incorporates into his own insightful analysis of the moral world and of the way in which both human and non-human animals participate in this world on the basis of a “proto” moral openness to the world.

Corinne Painter (Washtenaw Community College), in her essay Appropriating the Philosophies of Edmund Husserl and Edith Stein: Animal Psyche, Empathy, and Moral Subjectivity, joins Brown in his attempt to consider the ethical aspects of the investigation of non-human animal nature, by examining the central role that empathy plays in the human-animal relation. With the help of Edmund Husserl and Edith Stein, Painter argues that the “animal other” is reached through the experience of empathy, which, she maintains, can ultimately lead to an ethics of care that crosses species boundaries. As she points out, Husserl characterized what he referred to as the “person-alistic attitude” as a mode within which we encounter others – including non-human animal others – through care and concern. Most centrally, using Stein’s phenomenological description of empathy, she shows that the concept of empathy is misunderstood if it is conceived as a form of “feeling one with the other” or as a (possible) result of specific act; rather, empathy, she argues, has an a priori status and should be conceived as the very condition of being related to others, including animal others. In this way, she shows that empathy does not rely upon our ability to overcome the difference between the one who empathizes (the “empathizing agent”) and the one who is the subject-object of empathy (the “empathizing patient”); rather, as Painter argues, it preserves the foreignness of the other in her otherness. Drawing upon this understanding of the phenomenon, empathy successfully captures the undeniable access we have to the foreign subjectivity of the animal other, with whom we share meaningful relationships and experiences, even while appreciating the foreignness that characterizes these relations. On this basis, she shows that there is a sort of “moral kinship” between animals and humans, which, if respected, provides the appropriate phenomenological ground for an ethics that respects all moral subjects.

**IV. At the Margins of Phenomenology**

Licia Carlson (Harvard University) pushes the ethical perspective of the human-non-human animal relation to a still new dimension. In her essay, The Human as Just An Other Animal: Madness, Disability and Foucault’s
Bestiary, from the standpoint of a linguistic phenomenology, Carlson analyses how the concept of “being human” not only functions as a rule of exclusion (in the Foucaultian sense) in regard to non-human animal others, but also implies a general rule of exclusion that defines our relation to “disabled” human others. The conflict at issue here, according to Carlson, appears between these two exclusions and may be expressed in the following question: “How does challenging the associations between the cognitively disabled and non-human animals obscure or deny our animal nature and perpetuate negative views about non-human animals?” In order to provide an appropriate answer, Carlson turns her attention to Foucault’s early work on madness, since we can find there a new way of looking at the distinction between what is traditionally conceived as human and what is typically held as not human. Carlson contends that Foucault’s work can serve as the basis for a genuinely critical examination of often oppressive forms of treatment for various “others” – human and non-human – that fail to properly respect these others in their particularity.

Finally, James Mensch (Saint Francis Xavier University), through the reading of a contemporary novel, explores the link between phenomenological analysis and literature in his contribution The Intertwining of Incommensurables: Yann Martel’s Life of Pi. In his essay, Mensch examines the connection between two seemingly opposed “alterities” that, paradoxically, define human beings: their animality and their divinity. By investigating the two very different accounts that Pi tells in his attempt to explain how he comes to be the sole survivor of a shipwreck (his entire family as well as the ship’s crew are killed), Mensch launches into a detailed elucidation of the novel’s main character, “Richard Parker” (Pi), who, during his time on the ship, takes on the character of a tiger, thereby displaying his animal nature, but who, at the same time, tries to deny his animal nature by placing himself above animals. In this way, Richard Parker (Pi) comes to see that humans are really the most dangerous animal, refusing to accept their own animality, while also refusing to see their divinity, both of which are central aspects of human identity. Although we usually separate “humanness” from animality and divinity, as Mensch points out, “both the animal and the divine show themselves in the madness that moves life in strange but saving ways, the very madness without which no species would survive.”

Though the authors contributing to this volume (as we earlier acknowledged) come from diverse backgrounds (due to the fact that phenomenology itself is a pluralistic endeavor), and display different focal interests in their contributions, they all claim that a redefinition of our being-in-the-world is needed in the contemporary discourse, and that this requires a reconsideration of our being with and our being for others, particularly non-human animal others; for only then may we establish a world that is worth living for every living being. The sharp distinction that we have grown all too comfortable making between “human” and “not-human” – in large measure thanks to the tradition of Western philosophy – is to be reexamined and possibly overcome, according to these authors, and this is precisely what they have attempted to do, each in their own
way, in their essays. What this means for us today might be expressed in these beautiful yet chilling words of Jacques Derrida: “The animal looks at us, and we are naked before it. Thinking perhaps begins there.”

Notes

2. Ibid., 105.
3. For an especially strong overview of phenomenological considerations of environmental philosophy, see: Eco-Phenomenology: Back to the Earth Itself, eds. Ted Toadvine, & Charles S. Brown (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003). In addition, check the impressive list of titles in SUNY’s series on environmental philosophy.
8. This is with the notable exception of a handful of philosophers working in the European tradition who did reflect (in some way) on animals. For an overview of these thinkers’ reflections on the animal theme, see the essays collected in Calarco & Atterton, eds., Animal Philosophy [full citation information given in note 4]. This volume, of course, hopes to participate in this new and fresh project.
9. A connection to the Marxist tradition can be seen by attending to Marx’s thematization of the relation between human beings and nature (though, as contemporary scholars will tell us, his analysis was speciesist).
11. Ibid., p. 107.
12. Such a “mistake” would probably not be made by the authors contributing to this volume.
13. The most prominent thinkers within this tradition are Max Scheler, Helmuth Plessner, Hans Jonas, and Arnbold Gehlen.