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Edited by
Susanne C. Knittel and Zachary J. Goldberg

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Perpetrators, Animals, and Animality

Kári Driscoll

Introduction: Border Control

In late 2015, the journal *Totalitarismus und Demokratie* published an article entitled "Der deutsch-deutsche Schäferhund—Ein Beitrag zur Gewaltgeschichte des Jahrhunderts der Extreme" [*The East and West German Shepherd: A Contribution to the History of Violence in the Century of Extremes*], which presented a series of revelations about the employment of dogs by border police in East and West Germany between 1961 and 1989.[1] Drawing on previously unexamined archival sources, the author, Christiane Schulte, claimed that the first victim of the Berlin Wall had not been a human but rather a police dog named Rex, and furthermore that the German shepherds used by the border police on both sides of the Wall had been direct descendants of those deployed by the Nazis at Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen. The same, moreover, was true of dogs used by the border police in present-day Germany. The article thus traced a continuity of biopolitical violence, of which these dogs were both perpetrators and victims, from the Third Reich to the Cold War and right through to the migrant crisis which had reached its height in the summer of 2015.

If this sounds a little too good to be true, that's because it was. On February 15, 2016, "Schulte" (not her real name) and various unnamed co-authors revealed that the article had been an elaborate hoax: the archival sources detailing the pedigree of the dogs as well as the identities of the canine victims of the Berlin Wall had been fictitious, and the exaggerated claims of the piece had been intended as a parody of the emerging field of animal studies (or human–animal studies), which they characterize as the latest academic fad, full of empty rhetoric and absurd theories about nonhuman "agency." The incident was a source of great embarrassment to the journal, which promptly withdrew the article, and the ensuing scandal has had reverberations in the academic world beyond Germany, sparking a debate about the state of political and academic discourse and the relevance and legitimacy of fields such as animal studies for the study of history, biopolitics, totalitarianism, and genocide.

As usual, the hoax reveals more about its perpetrators than it does about the object of their scorn. The argument they present against animal studies is both spurious and disingenuous and is based on a number of unexamined assumptions as well as a willful misrepresentation of the aims of the field. This becomes abundantly clear in the conclusion to their 2016 exposé where they express their horror at the thought that animal studies "may soon make inroads into

comparative genocide studies." It is one thing, they opine, to study human–animal relations and to "denounce cruelty to animals," but this must not come at the cost of a concept of "society" that is separate from "nature," since, they argue, "as soon as the distinction between natural and cultural history is abolished, it becomes impossible to distinguish the racism of the transatlantic slave trade from the 'speciesism' of an industrial pig farm" (Schulte et al. 2016a, n.p.; my translation). There are several basic problems with this argument, starting with the rather surprising implication that industrialized slaughter belongs to "natural history"! Much like the dogs they write about in their article, Schulte and co. are preoccupied with the policing of boundaries, both epistemological and ontological. This extends to disciplinary boundaries as well: earlier in the same piece, the authors criticize the field of animal studies for approaching the question of the animal in the language of philosophy and sociology (i.e., with reference to "agency," rather than remaining within the "proper" confines of biology and zoology). By the same token, the comparative study of totalitarianism and genocide is likewise suspect because of its interdisciplinary approach to structures of violence and injustice, which in the authors' view serves as a license for moral and political relativism (Schulte et al. 2016b, 143).

The main problem, however, is the authors' appeal to a rigid distinction between nature ("natural history") and (human) culture. Their ultimate worry seems to be that blurring this boundary will make it impossible to draw distinctions between different forms of violence and that everything will blend together in a sea of false equivalence. Their position thus buys into a zero-sum logic whereby recognizing speciesism (which they tellingly put in scare quotes) as a form of violence with political and ethical implications would be to relativize and hence diminish the violence of slavery or genocide. To be sure, it is of course vital that we be able to distinguish between different forms of violence perpetrated against different groups, but the solution cannot be to fall back on a reified nature/culture binary that is irreducibly problematic and has been untenable at least since Lévi-Strauss (1969; cf. Derrida 1978). Far from being a universal and transhistorical given, the dichotomy between nature and culture is a comparatively recent and specifically Western notion (Soper 1995; Descola 2013), which, moreover, is complicit in the very violence the authors claim to denounce, since it was in large part this dichotomy, coupled with the rhetoric of human exceptionalism and mastery over "nature," that served as the justification of colonialism, slavery, and "scientific" racism in the first place (Spiegel 1988; Wynter 1994; Huggan and Tiffin 2010; Smith 2015; Boisseron 2018).

Rather than simply dismissing this hoax as a misguided and ultimately reactionary gesture—though it is that[2]—I propose that we take it seriously as an object lesson on the importance of the question of the animal and the discourse of species for the understanding of genocide and political mass violence. Schulte's intervention, I argue, is in fact precisely what it claims to be, namely a "contribution to the history of violence"—not only in the way the authors themselves perpetuate a tradition of epistemic violence by insisting upon a nature/culture boundary which has historically been used to disenfranchise and oppress others, but also because, contrary to the authors' stated intentions, the article itself actually *does* make a fairly convincing case for why attention to the entanglements of humans and nonhumans in systems of oppression can yield new insights into processes of perpetration, injustice, and political violence. The hoaxers' own characterization of their deception makes it seem as though all of the sources were made up and transparently absurd, and this is a narrative that was largely perpetuated by the media response to the scandal. In actual fact, however, the majority of the texts cited are genuine, just as the historical continuities between the Nazi concentration camps and their subsequent reuse by the Soviet occupying forces and later by the GDR are well documented, as is the deployment of

dogs at these sites. Thus, even if the genealogical evidence for a direct family *relation* was fictitious, there is no denying that there is a "family resemblance" between these dogs and the sites of (bio)political violence where they were in active service.[3]

The bulk of the article draws extensively on Marie-Luise Scherer's classic 1994 reportage *Die Hundegrenze* [*The Dog Border*], which is based on interviews and journalistic investigations into the use and function of dogs along the inner-German border. One of the security installations along the death strip was a series of dog runs (*Hundelaufanlagen*), consisting of steel cables fitted with a metal ring to which the dogs' leashes were secured. In this way, each dog could patrol a section of the wall unsupervised. As Scherer explains, in order to prevent the dogs from attacking each other, a stop was placed at either end of each cable. As a result, between each dog run there was a gap of at least half a meter, which afforded a window of opportunity for potential human escapees. In the 2015 article, "Schulte" writes:

> The border fortifications can thus be described as a biopolitical paradox, characterized by the mutually incompatible uncertainty principles of two systems of control: the control of animals and that of humans.
>
> *(2015, 330; my translation)*

Notwithstanding the authors' stated opinion that the concept of animal "agency" is so much fashionable nonsense, the gap in the totalitarian control mechanism they describe here simply *is* the product, or rather the effect, of the guard dogs' agency and the regime's efforts to curb it. Hence, in this instance, they are absolutely right to say that paying attention to the entanglement of humans and nonhumans in systems of oppression reveals the "limits of the total" (ibid.). Unfortunately, however, because they take it for granted that what they are writing is nonsense, the authors fail to draw the logical conclusion from this insight, namely that their own efforts to police the human–animal border are likewise doomed to fail. A key insight of animal studies is that this border is not singular, universal, indivisible, and insurmountable, but rather porous and internally incoherent, defined by ruptures, gaps, and inconsistencies. It is, as Jacques Derrida writes, a "plural and repeatedly folded frontier," which, moreover, "has a history" (2008, 30–31), something Schulte and co. also choose to ignore. The normative categories of "Man" and "Animal" are not stable ontological givens, but rather discursive formations that have been historically produced and continue to be strategically enforced. Contrary to the hoaxers' assertions, the aim of animal studies is precisely *not* to abolish or wish away the human–animal distinction, but rather to complicate and "thicken" it, to multiply its differences and discontinuities, in order to show how the limit is not "single and indivisible" but rather multiple, fractured, and folded in on itself in complex and often contradictory ways, not the least of which is the fact that this border serves not only to separate "what calls *itself* man" from "what *he* calls the animal" (Derrida 2008, 40), but also to separate "the animal" within the human. The human–animal border is thus in an important sense an "inner" border as well, the enforcement and transgression of which is fraught with biopolitical and ethical consequences.

The "question of the animal," Derrida insists, is "not one question among others," but rather

> represents the limit upon which all the great questions are formed and determined, as well as all the concepts that attempt to delimit what is "proper to man," the essence

> and future of humanity, ethics, politics, law, "human rights," "crimes against humanity," "genocide," etc.
>
> *(Derrida and Roudinesco 2004, 63)*

Hence, it is a question that a field such as Perpetrator Studies must take seriously. In what follows I will consider the entanglements of the question of the animal with the question of the perpetrator with the aim of moving beyond the unexamined anthropocentrism that has characterized much of the research in Perpetrator Studies. My basic contention is that the forms of political and collective violence with which the field is concerned have always been a multispecies affair, both figuratively *and* literally. Therefore, in order to be able to arrive at a richer and more nuanced understanding of its own fundamental questions—such as "who or what is a perpetrator?" and "what do genocides kill?"—Perpetrator Studies must adopt a more-than-human frame of reference. I will proceed in three stages: First, I will revisit the question of "dehumanization" in order to consider how the language of animality haunts the discourse of genocide in the metaphorical or symbolic representation of both victims and perpetrators and how this figurative use of animals and animality both invites and forecloses comparisons to the treatment of actual nonhuman animals. I will then explore the concept of genocide itself and the extent to which it can and should be applied to the extermination of nonhumans (e.g., in the case of the near-eradication of the North American buffalo in the nineteenth century and in the context of the currently unfolding sixth mass extinction). Finally, I will consider the extent to which animals can be considered perpetrators and not just victims of political and genocidal violence. Here I will revisit the question of nonhuman agency, with particular reference to the role of dogs as agents of (bio)political violence.

Animals as Victims, Victims as Animals

In *Minima Moralia*, Theodor W. Adorno notes that public "indignation over cruelty diminishes in proportion as the victims are less like normal readers." This, he says, tells us at least as much about these observers as it does about the victims:

> The constantly encountered assertion that savages, blacks, Japanese are like animals, monkeys for example, is the key to the pogrom. The possibility of pogroms is decided in the moment when the gaze of a fatally-wounded animal falls on a human being. The defiance with which he repels this gaze—"after all, it's only an animal"—reappears irresistibly in cruelties done to human beings, the perpetrators having again and again to reassure themselves that it is "only an animal," because they could never fully believe this, even of animals.
>
> *(Adorno 2005, 105)*

These observations serve as a powerful reminder not only that the mechanisms of "othering" and racialization are closely interwoven with the discourse of species, but also that this process of "animalization" affects not only other humans but *also* animals, who, in other words, must themselves be "animalized" in order for their deaths to be of no concern. Such animalization, then, is not simply "natural" or universal but rather culturally and historically specific. Adorno frames this logic of animalization (dehumanization) in terms of an ethics and a politics of recognition. The failure to recognize the other as similar to oneself is predicated on a refusal to return the other's gaze. This refusal in turn stems from an unconscious fear of being recognized as familiar by the other and is ultimately grounded in a disavowal of one's *own* animality. Yet because of this disavowal, as Adorno goes on to emphasize, the image of

Man that emerges and serves as the normative standard against which others (human and nonhuman) are judged is in fact fundamentally skewed and can only be upheld by repeated recourse to biopolitical violence, whereby those traits and behaviors that do not fit Man's flattering self-image as rational, civilized, and elevated above "mere" animal desires and needs are continually repressed, externalized, and projected onto others who must then be either "corrected" or eliminated in order to preserve this image of Man.[4]

Such violence sometimes manifests itself in physical acts, but for the most part it is systemic and epistemic, bound up with particular dynamics of power/knowledge that determine who or what "counts" as human and therefore deserves (legal, moral, conceptual) recognition. A familiar, and indeed understandable, response to dehumanizing violence is to reassert the humanity of the target group by insisting that they are *not* animals. The problem with such reaffirmations of "humanity" and human dignity, however, is that they leave uninterrogated the logic underlying dehumanization, which is the *a priori* distinction of the moral, political, and ethical significance of human life as opposed to nonhuman life. A cornerstone of the tradition of Western humanism, as animal studies doyen Cary Wolfe emphasizes, is

> the tacit agreement that the full transcendence of the "human" requires the sacrifice of the "animal" and the animalistic, which in turn makes possible a symbolic economy in which we can engage in what Derrida will call a "noncriminal putting to death" of other *humans* as well by marking *them* as animal.
>
> *(Wolfe 2003, 6; cf. Derrida 1995, 278)*

In other words, the logic of dehumanization which countenances the exploitation and killing of individuals and groups by representing them as animals hinges entirely on the prior assumption that the lives of animals don't matter purely and simply because they are not human. This also explains why the language of animality perennially haunts the discourse surrounding genocide and biopolitical violence, both in the rhetoric of the perpetrators (who like to cast their victims as insects or vermin) and in the descriptions after the fact of the perpetrators as "beasts" or, alternatively, "butchers" and the victims as "lambs to the slaughter," an so on.[5] At the same time, this logic of human exceptionalism also informs the injunctions *against* drawing comparisons between violence done to humans and violence done to animals. The discomfort elicited by such comparisons is of course understandable, given the associations they inevitably evoke with the history of racist discrimination and marginalization and given the pervasiveness of violence against animals in all cultures, but the refusal to entertain the parallel is ultimately beholden to the same anthropocentrism and the willful turning away from the gaze of the animal that Adorno describes.[6]

There are clear and well-documented continuities between modern technologies of animal control and slaughter and the development of the *univers concentrationnaire*.[7] Indeed, this is what makes the commonplace that "the Jews died like cattle" plausible in the first place. Nevertheless, the converse assertion, that "cattle die like Jews," remains controversial (cf. Coetzee 1999; Pick 2011). This comparison is of course one that animal rights activists have frequently made, perhaps most notoriously PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) in their 2003 campaign "Holocaust on Your Plate," which juxtaposed iconic images of emaciated concentration camp prisoners with pictures of battery hens and piles of human corpses with piles of animal carcasses along with statistics of the number of animals killed annually in the US. As Angi Buettner (2011) observes in her nuanced discussion of this campaign, the "Holocaust on Your Plate" relies on the status of the Holocaust as

a master trope for industrial mass murder, which, for better or worse, has made it the point of comparison for other genocides and mass atrocities. In this way, such comparisons participate in a broader cultural dynamic that Michael Rothberg refers to as "multidirectional memory." In his 2009 book of that name, Rothberg examines the intersections of the memory of the Holocaust and the memory of slavery and colonialism in public and cultural discourse. He is particularly concerned to show how the conception of memory and commemoration as a competition for the scarce resources of space, money, attention, and recognition is counterproductive and even harmful in that it tends to work against solidarity and "the creation of new communal and political identities" (2009, 11). Building on Rothberg's work in her book *Unthinking Mastery*, decolonial scholar Julietta Singh compellingly argues that "extending the concept of multidirectional memory to include the mass torture of animals can enable new conversations between Holocaust, postcolonial, literary, and animal studies rather than confirming a competitive hierarchy among them" (2018, 145). Such an approach can help us to move beyond the sort of zero-sum logic that informs the "Schulte" hoax and towards a multidirectional or intersectional model that is open to comparisons and parallels that may at first appear "unseemly" (Rothberg 2009, 17), but that thinks about such intersections as productive, especially if they challenge our own preconceptions about who or what merits ethical consideration and critical attention.

What Do Genocides Kill?

At base, the "animal turn" presents a corrective to the disregard for the question of the animal that has characterized scholarship especially in the humanities and social sciences. In so doing, it poses a challenge to fundamental assumptions regarding the "proper" object of disciplinary concern and knowledge production. When it comes to the intersection of Perpetrator Studies and Animal Studies, a case in point would be the concept of genocide. Within Genocide Studies, the nature and constitution of the *genos* is a matter of ongoing debate. In an article entitled "What Do Genocides Kill?" Christopher Powell describes it as an "essentially contested concept," adding that different definitions of *genos* "presume different theories about the nature of social life" (2007, 529–530). He distinguishes between a "liberal" and a "post-liberal" conception, where the former imagines society to be the sum total of the individuals that make it up, whereas the latter conceives of it as more than the sum of its parts. On this view, "genocide is the killing or destruction of that 'something more,' and we need to specify just what that 'something more' is to define 'genocide' rigorously" (528; cf. Card 2003). This characterization of the *genos* helpfully leaves space for a notion of social life that is not limited to the human. Nevertheless, the field of Genocide Studies remains largely anthropocentric in its articulation. In his recent book *Redefining Genocide*, for instance, Damien Short powerfully links the concept of genocide to colonialism and environmental devastation. He insists that genocide has an "inherently colonial character" and as such cannot be regarded merely as synonymous with "mass murder." Moreover, he writes, the crime of genocide is specifically cultural in nature: "it destroys a human cultural grouping, a '*genos*'" (2016, 3). Important as Short's intervention is, this delimitation of *genos* to the human is questionable, particularly in light of the strong link that he makes between genocide and settler colonialism. As Indigenous scholar and filmmaker Tasha Hubbard argues, for instance, the near-eradication of the North American buffalo (bison) in the nineteenth century—numbers went from tens of millions to just a few hundred by century's end—constitutes a genocide, not only, as others have argued, because it was seen as a means to the ultimate displacement and eradication of the native populations, but also because within

Plains Indigenous cultures, the buffalo are regarded as "First People"—ancestors, relatives, and teachers—and hence form part of the *genos*. "According to Indigenous ways of knowing," Hubbard writes, "humans do not hold exclusive title to personhood, and therefore neither to genocide" (2014, 295). From this perspective, to insist that genocide applies only to humans is to impose Euro-American categories in a way that perpetuates the legacy of colonial violence at an epistemic level: "Genocide and denial of genocide work in conjunction, and the buffalo genocide is no exception" (299).[8]

Moreover, the buffalo themselves had a social structure and a cultural life, including practices of mourning for the dead, that were catastrophically disrupted by settler colonial violence.[9] Hence, while various scholars have proposed concepts such as "ecocide" (Zierler 2011) and "speciocide" (Mazis 2008) to describe the large-scale destruction of animal populations and ecosystems by humans, such concepts are in fact superfluous within a framework that does not restrict the concepts of personhood, culture, or society to human beings. In other words, as Audra Mitchell argues in reference to Hubbard, "the systematic destruction of the buffalo is not *like* genocide, nor is it *exclusively* a tool for carrying out genocide against human peoples. It *is* genocide in its own right" (2017, n.p.). By the same token, Mitchell continues, what Western scientists refer to as the "sixth mass extinction event" is more properly understood not as "an unfortunate, unintended consequence of desirable 'human' activities" such as urban and scientific development, global economic growth, and international trade, but rather as a series of genocides perpetrated, often quite deliberately, by Western governments and corporations in the context of (neo-)colonial expansionism and resource extraction. The massive scale of the currently unfolding loss of biodiversity requires careful attention to the macroscopic causes and effects, including especially its implication in global capital flows. Furthermore, it should serve as a stark reminder that one cannot separate human "society" from nonhuman "nature"; the two are fundamentally and irreducibly entangled. These entanglements, however, are not homogeneous or universal but rather culturally, geographically, and historically specific. Hence, as multispecies ethnographer Thom van Dooren writes, in reality "there is no single 'extinction' phenomenon. Rather, in each case there is a distinct unraveling of ways of life, a distinctive loss and set of changes and challenges that require situated and case-specific attention" (2016, 7). Drawing on perspectives from Holocaust Studies, van Dooren emphasizes the importance of bearing witness to these unravelings and of telling the story of these vanishing species "in a way that significantly *implicates* us—causally, perhaps emotionally, and certainly ethically" (4). Implication, here, has a dual significance, referring, on the one hand, to the responsibility we as humans bear for species extinction, and, on the other, to the various complex ways in which the human–animal relationship is articulated in multispecies communities or *genea*.

Van Dooren's emphasis on the need for "situated and case-specific attention" resonates with Christopher Powell's definition of *genos* as a relational formation. Such a definition of *genos*, Powell writes, requires "an empirical understanding of how [social] identities have functioned historically to connect people through practical relations that foster a shared sense of self." "Ironically," he continues, "the study of genocide can contribute to this investigation: because genocide attacks the processes by which [social] figurations exist, [it] in a sense expose[s] those processes and reveal[s] their importance" (2007, 544). As we have seen, genocidal processes radically unmoor the category of the human. Hence, a multispecies Perpetrator Studies can help understand how "human" and "animal" are constructed and deconstructed as subject positions within the dualistic logic of biopolitics, and in turn grant us a richer and more nuanced understanding of the processes involved in the perpetration and aftermath of (bio)political mass violence.

Animals as Perpetrators

As the buffalo genocide illustrates, "the historical horror of settler colonization has always been a multispecies endeavor" (Taschereau Mamers 2019, 12). This applies not only to the *victims* of colonial violence but also to its *agents*. As Alfred Crosby notes in his pathbreaking history of the biological expansion of Europe, settlers did not arrive as individual immigrants but "as part of a grunting, lowing, neighing, crowing, chirping, snarling, buzzing, self-replicating and world-altering avalanche" (2004, 194; quoted in Swart 2007). European settlers brought with them an array of animals, from domestic animals and livestock to vermin and microbes, which played a crucial role in the colonial project. Sheep, for instance, "were deployed as agents for the expansion of white settlement" in the Americas and in Australia, contributing to the displacement of indigenous populations "and the transformation of the endemic ecosystem" (Armstrong 2016, 97; cf. Melville 1997). The ubiquitous use of the European honey bee (*apis mellifera*) for the pollination of crops around the world is another example of how nonhumans are enlisted in the destruction of ecosystems and the Indigenous cultures that depend on them (McHugh 2019). In other cases, native species such as elephants were conscripted in the colonial exploitation of resources and extraction of capital (Saha 2017). In all of these examples, the respective species are implicated in (bio)political processes because of their particular characteristics and abilities. No doubt whatever guilt or responsibility these animals bear for these processes is only "by association," yet those processes could not have taken place in this way without their involvement. Clearly, it is inadequate, therefore, to conceive of them as purely passive objects or "tools" in the hands of human actors. Instead, scholars in animal and environmental studies have increasingly sought to elaborate a theory of agency that is not limited to human actions and hence not synonymous with traditional humanist concepts such as intentionality or "free will."

Historical geographer Philip Howell (2018) distinguishes between three different ways in which animal agency has been theorized: "ascribed," "agonistic," and "assembled." The first brackets the question of whether animals *actually have* agency in some ontological or metaphysical sense and asks how agency (or quasi-personhood) has been *ascribed* to nonhuman animals by individuals and groups in different cultures and at different times. In the case of the status of buffalo as "First People" within Indigenous cultures, for instance, the relevant question is not "Yes, but are they *really* people?"; nor is it particularly helpful (or feasible) to ask whether the buffalo think of *themselves* as people. Another salient example of "ascribed" agency is the history of animal trials. As Howell writes,

> even if we do not accept at face value the notion that priests, lawmakers and laypeople endowed pigs, dogs, horses, oxen, cats, fish, even swarms of insects, with moral agency and responsibility, the historical fact that culpability for crimes and sins could in some circumstances be extended to nonhumans is striking, and deserves our attention as historians of attitudes if not necessarily of the animals themselves.
>
> *(2018, 203)*[10]

Howell's second category, "agonistic" agency, describes a conception of agency as a form of resistance or recalcitrance and pays less attention to the way animals are perceived by humans than to the actions of the animals themselves and their (historical) effects. A proponent of this view is Fahim Amir, who proposes that we "conceive of animals as agents of political resistance" rather than focusing only on their vulnerability and our responsibilities toward them as "moral patients."[11] "The entire apparatus of fences, cages, enclosures, surveillance and

monitoring systems," he writes, "is a response to the monstrous agency of animals, and a confirmation of the world-forming power of that agency" (Amir 2018, 15; my translation).

The third category Howell identifies is "assembled agency," which is also sometimes referred to as "relational" (Roscher 2018) or "distributive" (Bennett 2010) agency. Rather than being the property of this or that individual, agency by this definition is instead an emergent effect of the interaction between various agents. Perhaps the clearest example Howell discusses is guide dogs for the blind, where "the agency of the (disabled) human is dependent in large part upon the agency of the animal" (2018, 208) and vice versa. In this instance, it is difficult to argue that the dog's agency "is no more significant than that of a cane or a stick" (ibid.). The dog and the human form an agential assemblage based on reciprocal training and communication, and their agency is both greater and qualitatively different than it would be for either party independently. The same, of course, is true of police and military dogs as well as other service animals employed by states in conflict situations.

Conclusion: The Dog Border Revisited

In conclusion, let us revisit the question of the "dog border," which may serve as an illustration of both "agonistic" and "assembled" agency. The aforementioned "gap" between the dog runs is a perfect example of the former. In an effort to limit the agency of the human population, the East German regime enlists the help of dogs, whose own agency must similarly be curtailed, first by means of the leash and second by means of the gaps, which in turn produces the unintended side effect of allowing room for human agency. In her 2015 article, Schulte describes this as a "biopolitical paradox" resulting from the incommensurability of two systems of control. In fact, however, the paradox is an intrinsic feature of *one* system, namely of biopolitics, which, as theorized by Giorgio Agamben, functions via the "inclusive exclusion" of animal life (*zoē*) within political life (*bíos*) (1998, 5–8). The "dog border" is thus a sort of literal manifestation of the logic of biopolitics, whereby the gap in the totality of its control represents the "zone of indeterminacy" between *zoē* and *bíos*, "the place of a ceaselessly updated decision in which the caesurae and their rearticulation are always dislocated and displaced anew" (Agamben 2004, 38). This no man's land represents the site where biopolitical subjectivity is produced (i.e., it is here that the recognition of the "human" is decided). A byproduct of this process is a form of life that is excluded from the privileges of political sovereignty but is nevertheless subject to biopolitical violence—"noncriminal putting to death"—or what Agamben calls *bare life*. At a theoretical level, the unilateral ascription of agency to humans and its converse denial to animals is itself an iteration of this "inclusive exclusion," and as such a further example of the way conceptual border policing is complicit in the system of biopolitics it supposedly critiques.

With respect to "assembled" agency, we might read the dog runs themselves in terms of what in Perpetrator Studies is referred to as the "scope for action" (in German, "*Handlungsraum*") available to individuals implicated in systems and processes of political violence (see Herkommer 2008; Bajohr 2016). It is by now commonly accepted that responsibility for and complicity in acts of perpetration cannot be assessed purely on the basis of intention but must take into account an individual's *Handlungsraum*, which is nothing other than the capacity for agency within a given sociopolitical system and historical situation. Which is to say: even in humans, agency is always contingent and only ever expressed in relation to a given set of circumstances, many of which will be beyond the individual's control. Moreover, the theory of *Handlungsräume* reveals agency to be distributed unequally among participants or actors in a system of relations. There is no inherent reason to treat these participants

self-evidently as human, least of all with respect to situations in which their "humanity" is precisely what is at stake—be it a concentration camp, a slave plantation, a civil rights demonstration, or in Abu Ghraib.[12] Moreover, the routine involvement of *actual* animals, such as police dogs, in the perpetration of "dehumanizing" violence should at the very least serve as a reminder that the opposition between human and animal is never simply binary and that its enforcement can never be politically neutral. It is for this reason above all that Perpetrator Studies cannot afford to ignore the question of the animal.

Notes

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1 The title, arguably the cleverest aspect of the entire enterprise, is a pun on the "deutsch-deutsche Grenze," or inner-German border between the GDR (East Germany) and the Federal Republic (West Germany), and "deutscher Schäferhund" or German Shepherd (Alsatian).

2 Essentially, the hoax is a latter-day rehashing of the Sokal hoax, which had likewise sought to lampoon the idea of nonhuman agency some twenty years previously. Moreover, as historical geographer Philip Howell notes, the hoax also recalls a "fake" article published in the *Journal of Social History* in 1974, which had asserted, satirically as it turned out, the "full historical power" of domestic animals. "Given the passage of time," Howell writes, it is "almost exponentially dispiriting to see the same gesture trotted out" by Schulte and co. (Howell 2018, 197). Evidently, the very concept of nonhuman agency is sufficiently traumatic to trigger a sort of "repetition compulsion" among those for whom "agency" must remain synonymous with "intentionality" and "free will" and hence the prerogative of the rational human(ist) subject.

3 On the role of guard dogs at Nazi concentration camps, see Perz (1996), Möhring (2011), and Tindol (2013). One might also note here the nontrivial parallels between the history of dog breeding and the history of racist and eugenicist thinking. Thus, Dominick LaCapra notes that "kennel clubs, along with similar breed registries for other species, may be among the last bastions of unexamined racism, reproducing, vis-à-vis other animals, barriers and attitudes that have been challenged with respect to humans" (2009, 155; cf. Sax 2000; Skabelund 2008; Roscher 2016).

4 The mechanism Adorno is describing here corresponds to that which Giorgio Agamben will later refer to as the "anthropological machine," a discursive apparatus whereby a concept of "the human" is continually produced by means of an "inclusive exclusion" of "the animal" (2004, 33–38). For a discussion of the anthropological machine, see Calarco (2008, 79–102) and Pettman (2011, 1–36).

5 On the rhetoric of animalization in antisemitism, see Geller (2018) and Urban (2018).

6 That being said, going back to Adorno's observation about the lack of concern among "normal" (white, middle-class) audiences elicited by the suffering and death of people of color, it is important to acknowledge that concern for animal suffering can indeed at times serve as a screen that permits people to "look away" from crimes in which they may themselves be implicated but which they would rather not think about (cf. Arseneault 2013; Salih 2014). This also applies to the hypocrisy of labeling culturally specific practices relating to animals as "barbaric" (e.g., halal slaughter, the consumption of dog meat, etc.) while simultaneously tacitly condoning the unfathomable suffering of animals on factory farms and in biomedical laboratories in the West (cf. Huggan and Tiffin 2010, 135–38).

7 See, for example, Bauman (1989), Sax (2000), Patterson (2002), Netz (2004), and Shukin (2009).

8 One very illuminating example of how colonial biopolitical violence disrupts more-than-human communities is the so-called Mountie Sled Dog Massacre of the 1950s and '60s, in which the Canadian government led a campaign to eradicate the *qimmiit*, Inuit sled dogs, who had traditionally been an integral part of Inuit culture and identity (see McHugh 2019, 122–154).

9 See Hubbard (2014) and King (2013, 134–144). The same is true of other species whose lifeways have been disrupted by poaching, culling, and habitat loss through human expansion. A particularly striking example of the effects of such social disruption is the epidemic of inter-species violence

perpetrated by juvenile elephants in South Africa against rhinoceroses. In her 2009 book *Elephants on the Edge*, psychologist G.A. Bradshaw argues that the elephants' behavior was a symptom of post-traumatic stress resulting from the collapse of familial and societal relations upon which elephant culture depends. Bradshaw deliberately refers to the acts as *violence*, a term usually reserved for human beings, in order to underscore its social and psychological dimensions and to trouble the human–animal binary. In that context, she also refers to the war documented by Jane Goodall between two rival communities of chimpanzees in Gombe National Park, Tanzania, in the 1970s (see Goodall 1990, 98–111). "Despite a desire by many other scientists to discredit her on the grounds of anthropomorphic projection," Bradshaw writes, "species parallels were marked. Chimpanzees were observed engaging in multiple, systematic gang- or group-led killings, infanticide, and finally the eradication of one clan by the other (what one might call, in the case of humans, ethnic cleansing)" (2009, 40). Evidently, Bradshaw is wary of transposing the vocabulary of genocide onto violence between nonhumans. Nevertheless, the occurrence of coordinated intercommunity killings among chimpanzees should at the very least serve to complicate negative assertions of human exceptionalism regarding the "distinctively human" nature of "victimization, torture, or genocide" (LaCapra 2009, 156).

10 The criminal prosecution and capital punishment of animals is generally associated with the European middle ages (Evans 1906; Dinzelbacher 2002; Srivastava 2007; Sykes 2011), but in fact continued well into the twentieth century, for instance in the case of the elephant Topsy executed by electrocution at Coney Island 1903 and whose death was captured on film by Thomas Edison (Doane 2002, 140–171; Stallwood 2018), and of "Murderous Mary," another Asian elephant hanged in Tennessee in 1916 (Oliver 2013, 166–187).

11 On the distinction between "moral agents" and "moral patients," see Cavalieri (2001, 28–31) and Wolfe (2010, 2013).

12 For a particularly insightful analysis of Abu Ghraib in relation to the production of biopolitical subjectivity, see Boggs (2013, 41–76).

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