

Biting the Philosopher's Hand: Other People's Dogs, Other Responses

Martin Wallen

O Bounce! O rare! Dear friend, why would you die,
When you had bones enough, and me close by?

—A variation on the final couplet
written by Alexander Pope, 10 April
1744.

In season one of the HBO series, *The Leftovers*, one of the main characters, Kevin, is bitten on the hand by a dog he had tried to rescue from a mysterious, cud-chewing character, Dean, who has been hunting down dogs to shoot them. Dean has already said to Kevin about his slaughter, “they’re no longer our dogs.” Counted as one of the “prodigal sons” who find their way “home” in the season finale, the vicious dog questions—through his incessant barking, running off, then “returning”—the categories that frame modern relations between humans and dogs. Would “our” dogs bite the hand rescuing them? Would “our” dogs, run away? When they stop being “ours,” what or who are they? And can they really come home? These questions carry the weight of 200 years of human-canine relations, for during that time in the West dogs have been subjected to laws and breeding programs that all but guarantee a relationship will adhere to a predictable course. These questions are among those I wish to turn from in order to open other possibilities for engagements, and to do so, I shall have to lay bare the discursive history confining us to such questions.

In the eighteenth century, the British Parliament sought to regulate the canine population by imposing a Dog Tax aimed at restricting dog ownership. The gentry, who had a growing interest in keeping packs of the newly created breed of foxhound, were allowed to keep their kennels full, since hunting served social and aesthetic functions important to the Parliamentarians.¹ The lower and middle classes were limited to a single dog, since these people were considered incapable of caring for their animals sufficiently (or to care too much, so that they would take food from their children to feed their dog). An overt intention of the Dog Tax was to have people kill any dogs they could not afford to pay taxes on. Untaxed dogs were then illegal, and (at least in theory) unwanted—they were no longer “ours.”

At this same time, the first modern dog breeds began to be created following the practices developed by the men who created the foxhound and the modern breeds of cows and sheep.² These new breeds transformed the relations between humans and dogs, as dogs were organized into new categories that subsequently developed narratives of breed origin in a particular region and associated with particular—always “traditional” and indigenously pastoral—activities, like hunting, herding, or guarding the homestead. The generally spurious breed histories have ever since facilitated the relations Western humans have with dogs by connecting canine responsiveness to the supposed original activity and region, so that a Westie, for example, is not merely a wide-eyed and cheery little dog but a devoted ratter with characteristically Scottish qualities of loyalty, ferocity, and stubbornness, and the ability to look good in plaid.

Apart from the breed dogs, and indeed apart even from the pre-breed “types,” “races,” or “nations” of canines deemed useful, trainable, or friendly, are curs. These are not simply mongrels or mutts,

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which are usually described in terms of mixed breed. Henry Somerset, the Tenth Duke of Beaufort, defines a cur as “Any dog other than a hound,” and, he says, “Even the champion at Crufts would be so-called if it made an appearance in the hunting field.”³ The sweeping identification of all canines except the foxhound as curs comes from the singularity of interest his Lordship has in hunting: the only canine he cares to have a relationship with will contribute to the one activity of chasing foxes, and, as he says, “It has been well known for generations . . . a cur-dog will ruin scent and often hounds will never pick up the line again.”⁴ Like his sporting ancestors in the eighteenth century who fashioned both the laws to eliminate unwanted dogs and the first pedigrees legally identifying desirable dogs, the Duke can only think of non-hounds as interruptions of his good sport. But at the same time, Beaufort’s definition adheres to the mode of differentiating “our” dogs, or good dogs, from those that are no longer, or never have been, never *could* be “ours.” In one of the earliest catalogues of modern dog breeds, the *Cynographia Britannica* of 1805, Sydenham Edwards identifies the cur by “his restless manner, shuffling gait, incessant barking, vagabond appearance.”⁵ Almost two centuries apart, both these accounts of curs depict them as being intrusive and suspicious—the “vagabonds” shuffling restlessly about, guiltily awaiting the chance to interrupt meaningful activities, like hunting, with their uncontrolled, and meaningless, barking. These are the dogs that have no place in a town like Mapleton—where Chief of Police Kevin Garvey has taken one vicious, restless, and incessantly barking dog from a mail box, hoping to make it his by tying the dog to the back porch; when Chief Kevin’s brooding EMO daughter cuts the rope, the unnamed dog—who had bitten Kevin on being rescued from the mail box—runs away.⁶ It is this response of a dog that has no place—that *wants* no place—that interests me, for much of the contemporary discussion of human-animal relations has revolved around the meeting of gazes, epitomized by Derrida’s tactless little cat staring at the philosopher emerging from the shower. This is the experience Derrida describes as “being seen seen,” and it has become the paradigm of the white male human finding his privileged comprehensive vision interrupted as he is made the object of another’s deprivileging vision.⁷ This experience condenses what Derrida discusses in several contexts as the response to the call of the other. As paradigm, the scene has confirmed that animals have the power to live inwardly and to respond caringly to an outer world, and to answer the question, can they suffer.

These powers, these abilities, this responsiveness I take as established fact. The question, then, is how best to respond to a response that comes otherwise than how I might expect, that might not follow the paradigm sufficiently to allow me to say so simply, “I recognize your capacity to suffer, and I care.” This paradigm, as pivotal as it has been for discussions on human-animal relations, has become the programmatic guide that now drowns out other possibilities.

I would thus like to extend Derrida’s thinking on the animal response, therefore, not so much through another rehearsal of the paradigm of the gaze, recounting seeing a dog seeing me, or even providing stirring accounts of a dog and me working or playing together, but rather by considering the challenge of a dog turning away, ignoring me, or running off, choosing to attend to a world apart from me, in other words, refusing to be “my” dog, or recognizable to me, refusing, we might say, to be a philosophical dog, of the Kantian breed or any other.⁸ Our dogs have been made too calculable through the categorical economy of breed: as Derrida states in *The Beast and the Sovereign* “the category is a signature of *bêtise*”—that bestial idiocy of which only the human species is capable.⁹

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And so, rehearsing the paradigmatic interruption of my privileged gaze by seeing a lab see me would too easily perpetuate the idiocy of calling on a dog's loyalty to display my well-known love of dogs. In seeing a poodle or pomeranian see me, I see what has been pre-determined to affirm my still-privileged gaze and even my self-congratulatory responsiveness; I am anything but othered, and only see an "other" already defined within comfortably recognizable bounds. I can answer a shih tzu, or Chihuahua without bothering too much with that messy alterity, since their breed names and histories—in other words, their faces—assure me of what their response will be and that my response is just as it should be, for these dogs bear the signature of two hundred years of canine categorization. These dogs are "ours," even when they're riding in another person's car, or walking into another person's bathroom. Now, I admit to a certain ignorance in the developments in human-feline relations over the past two centuries; but I do think that the *certainty* with which Derrida can say that his cat "is an existence that refuses to be conceptualized" does not carry over so easily to dogs, who bear their history of breed distinctions as the faces we have literally shaped into pre-determined responses of loyalty, cuteness, and affirmation of our concern.¹⁰ To be seen by an existence beyond a category supporting my narcissism requires a face whose history I cannot recite in advance—perhaps a face that refuses to be a face. A canine refusal to be conceptualized was mostly pre-empted by the eighteenth-century Parliamentarians who allowed only certain dogs to be seen—those with pedigreed biographies—and by the breeders who ensured that when seen those dogs would look back with approval of our offers of responsiveness. Canine alterity thus differs from feline alterity as much as it does from avian, arachnid, cephalopod alterities; and, most problematically, it differs in having been domesticated into a fully legible representation of the phratrocentric friendship in which my friend is remarkably like me after all.

The possibility of being "seen seen" by a modern dog, therefore, must allow the chance of a different surprise than that over a capacity to respond; it must allow for the disappointing possibility of seeing a dog choosing not to see me, to leave in order to engage in a world in which humans are poor in the Heideggerian sense, to interrupt or ruin—currishly—my prepared responsiveness. That is the possibility of a dog having seen me before I see him, of already having determined that I did not merit his response once I did notice him. My answer to the call of his otherness might then be met in turn by the dog running off with other dogs, or by himself, or perhaps biting the hand with which I opened his mail box to meet his gaze. All of these possibilities challenge my attempt to be responsive to a dog I don't know, who would never be taxable as belonging to me, and who would certainly never run with a pack that has borne my noble name for ten generations—a dog, perhaps, like the old fellow Alexander Pope refers to as a "houseless" cur.¹¹

By starting from the point where an unhoued dog has already chosen to turn away, I hope to open a non-narratable, non-descriptive possibility of engaging a dog with whom I might have been friends. Any attempt I would make to describe this engagement is overwhelmed by *my* canine world poverty, an impoverishment that is generally masked behind the breed narratives that consistently gather dogs into historical functions in my world, making them eternally loyal to me and my family, as well as to their infinitely repeatable face. A houseless cur will stay outside any narrative I could construct from analogies—those conditional similitudes that have dogs looking at me *as if* they wanted nothing more than to be liked by me and *as if* their world were very like mine, though filled with ranker smells, louder noises, and dreams of chasing the cat out of the bathroom. If this cur

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does enter my narrative, it would be only to interrupt, ruining whatever line I might be following, and refusing my offer to follow him. The unhistorical, un-narratable, illegal cur who, in turning away, looks nothing like the pedigreed hounds in my kennel or in the shows at Crufts or Westminster, makes any engagement we might have had based on relatedness—even the most openly constructed and provisional, such as the shared joy of sport¹²—into an experience of exclusion, specifically *my* exclusion from any acceptance of what I had understood the right response to a call “from a wholly other origin” (AA 13). This point is where I hope to engage with the contingency overhanging any relation between separate, unreplicable, non-categorical beings.

Had the dog I wanted to befriend shown me a face, my response would have begun too, too easily with the preamble, “we are friends so long as you’re my dog, so long as you remain tethered to the biography I’ve written for you.” Precluding such a conditionality for our likeness, this houseless cur leaves me suspended in the moment Derrida refers to as the “perhaps,” the moment of expectation of a future that is undecidable and unreliable, the event of what may happen, or not.¹³ This moment calls out the undecidability of the cur’s world—if she does engage in such Heideggerian gathering, or if she instead interrupts, breaks up such worlds—and the decision that I am not the one she had expected, and even the possibility that she, unlike me, had not expected or sought any one. This “perhaps” to which I have responded carries the possibility that this cur’s call was for me *not* to expect a friendship, *not* to recognize her in any way that would lead to a shared knowledge or understanding, but instead to anticipate that she will run away to a world apart from me, to which I have no access, that she will never be my dog, or even *our* dog, a member of the economy framed by breed expectations.

Late in his examination of friendship, Derrida says that “The crucial experience of the *perhaps* imposed by the undecidable . . . is not a moment to be exceeded, forgotten, or suppressed” (PF 219). When the houseless cur turns away, my offer becomes fraught with the unexpected possibility, perhaps, of instigating a vicious bite on my hand, perhaps directed not solely at me but at the Heideggerian *Geschlecht* of handed philosophers, as well as Levinasians who allow a dog only to serve the categorical imperative of recognizing their humanity. When this cur turns away, I am left with the failure of my gesture, facing the imperative to find a non-categorical question to ask.

Beginning with the question of whether animals dream, Derrida poses a long list of analogous questions that rehearse the traditional pursuit of finding “what is proper to the animal” by determining whether animals plurally replicate what has been determined to be proper to the human. As long as our questions adhere to the generic form of asking if a dog is a human, or is at all *like* a human, our answers will invariably express the self-congratulatory sadness of not having our dog shake our hand, look us in the eye and saying in a friendly tone, “I strive to be like you.” The traditional genre of questions we ask our animals burdens them with the requirement of presenting a legible face. Finally Derrida asks, “How can the gamut of questions on the being of what would be proper to the animal be changed?” (AA 63). The great challenge of opening new possibilities of questions about dogs has been forestalled by breed discourse. Such discourse promises to allow for canine differences, variability, but—as I have shown—only within taxonomized limits. Modern dogs may be different from one another, as a Doberman differs from a retriever, but these differences reinforce the calculability of breed itself. Breed supplants one category—dog—for another

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strengthened with sub-categories that allows for more detailed narratives of origins that fill a lack, thereafter orienting our friendship into a recognizability cast as sympathy or “co-shaping.”

Perhaps the gamut of questions we have been asking about animals changes in the experience of a cur refusing her face, refusing to be recognized as a loyal friend. Perhaps a new possibility of questions can be raised when these old ones lose their value in a cur’s tacit rejection of the autobiography I had already written for her. In several contexts, Derrida suggests that a non-categorical acceptance of the other’s address takes place *prior* to any reference to loyalty, or *prior* to any recognition of a face, or any enforcement of an economy of friendship. The responsive acceptance he refers to would occur in the surprise that cannot be anticipated. Thus, in “Eating Well,” he says that “there neither can be nor ever should be any concept adequate to what we call responsibility.”¹⁴ This responsive surprise occurs, as “that yes-yes that answers before even being able to formulate a question,” a question such as who are you, or who are we.¹⁵ Such a responsive surprise would also take place before the question of what kind of dog you are. Before a tail can be seen to wag, or teeth seen to be bared, before I can recognize you as Sheltie, Sealy, or Pug, lies the moment when that responsiveness happens. And that means it takes place *prior* to any possible formulation of sympathetic connectivity. In fact this is the responsive surprise that precedes either question or answer, just as it precedes the deictic pointing of stating, that is a dog.

In the final chapter of *The Animal that Therefore I Am*, Derrida refers, through Heidegger’s text, *On the Essence of Ground*, to an account of a nonapophantic moment that isn’t declarative, enunciative, “which doesn’t show anything, which in a certain way ‘doesn’t say anything’” (AA 157). Derrida connects this moment with the performativity of prayer, of which he asks in *The Beast and the Sovereign*, “is there not some implicit prayer in every address to the other? And is there not an implicit address to the other in every statement, however constative it look. . .?” This performatively implicit address works as a “listen to me, I say to you.”¹⁶ In this performative moment when nothing is being pointed to or made present or vivid through description, Derrida suggests, one could possibly engage in the mute non-signification of non-recognition. The offer or prayer, Derrida says, “must remain unilateral and dissymmetrical. Whether or not the other answers, in one way or another, no mutuality, no harmony, no agreement can or must reduce the infinite disproportion” (PF 220). This cur, to whom I have offered a responsive recognition, turns away, and in doing so responds indirectly. Before my offered face, the cur performs a trope of responsive non-apophansis, less tainted by religious flirtation than prayer, but, like any catachresis, subject to misapprehension as unresponsiveness, or incapacity, or inappropriateness. It performatively turns any similitude, hope or expectation of a relation, into dis-similitude and dis-proportion. And, as a turn from an offer—even an offer that had yet to express anything—this cur’s response might be heard—appropriately or inappropriately—*as though* it were an offer in turn, perhaps, of a friendship of a sort I have yet to imagine. To hear what is *like* an offer of something that might be *like* a friendship in a gesture that could also indicate a refusal of any friendship could take a step into the “abyssal difference” that Derrida insists divides humans and animals.

This difference is not abyssal simply in precluding all engagement, for breeds ensure legible friendships between humans and dogs, even allowing humans to read themselves as looking like their dogs. I insist that even the most caring breed relation is categorical, and thus spans the abyss of

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difference by legibly and predictably troping the category of breed into a *representation* of uniqueness, surprise, the perhaps. This spanning does make for engagements, caring relations between us humans and *our* dogs; but it does so only by obscuring the abyss beneath variations on the trope of prosopopoeia, to turn difference into a foundational recognition. A relation with one of “our” breed dogs works *as though* there were an engagement of differences, *as though* it were unique and unreproducible without having to consider the chance of not being the one to choose whose face may be seen.

The difference encountered when the houseless cur turns away is not just that of alterity, of the vanishing trace; it is abyssal in that any condition on which to ground a similitude has been refused. And I would suggest that this difference goes deeper than the traditional limit Derrida refers to as a “frontier,” even when he qualifies it by saying it “no longer forms a single indivisible line,” and that as a “rupture” it “doesn’t describe two edges” (AA 31). The abyss opened by the houseless cur turning away does not rear up as a fenced barrier between me and the cur, so that “frontiers” or linear limits lose as much meaning as the categories of breed. This is not merely the “rupture” between man and animal, which man requires in order to define himself as man, and the history of which has managed to flatter its author. This is the abyss of houselessness, the *Ungrund*, in which two existences have nothing between them. Any ground of legibility, loyalty, recognition, narratable history, and anything that can be shared—or even imposed—falls away in that moment of the uncertain turn. And there, what looks *as though* it were a rejection, and yet is *perhaps* similar to a responsive offer in return (a similitude of a responsive offer made on condition of not leading to a relation), hangs illegibly, in the indeterminacy between the cur’s world in which I am poor and my world from which the cur has already turned.

The houseless cur has ruined the line that might have framed any gathering by responding with her defacializing turn. Unable to address her, I am left suspended in the moment of inarticulacy, of having nothing to offer her, to call her by, or to call out to her, to entice her to me. This moment arises even apart from the “perhaps” of the friend turning into the enemy, for the cur was never either friend or enemy to begin with, but merely a cur, houseless, not mine, ours, or anyone’s. And unlike Dean, I am not going to shoot a dog for being a cur; but unlike Kevin, I am not going to bring her home either. The moment arises when this cur, who had stood close enough perhaps to bite my hand, turns from my reach or the sound of my call or the focus of my gaze without caring whether I am a Kantian, a resurrected hero, or a cynic.

For the duration of this moment, in the space of wordlessness, this cur—whose gender I do not know—and I houselessly stand without any orientation that would bring us together. Her turn, which I have read so far *as though* it were the troping of a non-apophantic response to a non-apophantic call or prayer, could in fact be the refusal of response, and the refusal of me, impoverished and outside its curish world. Having turned away from the appeal to share my world, he holds his world aloof and impenetrable, leaving me without the names to call someone who has turned away from friendship but not necessarily in enmity. In referring to this dog as “cur,” or even “dog,” I am admittedly pointing and describing, but not to some relatable or categorical quality from which I might build her, his, its biography: not only am I not able to ask, “whose dog are you?” I am also stymied from asking, “who are you?” The inability to ask that question, or that series of

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questions, hinges on the turn from my offer of friendship or at least sympathy; for, in turning away, this cur has made me bear the failure of language, even one that attempts to put a non-language to work. This is the failure of the ability, the faculty, defining the category of “human.” A non-apophantic plea, which addresses someone in a response rather than describing them, might have sustained the “perhaps” of a non-“phratrocentric” relationship (PF 278), of a relation ungathered into a category, perhaps the category of uncategorizable, the category of curs, but only to prepare for this linguistic and categorial collapse. This faceless response to the undeclared interrogation does not show anything, but—as Derrida suggests over and over in passages on non-apophantic moments—it might, perhaps, *do* something.

In pursuing his hypothesis that a non-economic friendship opened through a dissymmetrical offer (PF 220) would be “perhaps of the order neither of the common nor of its opposite,” Derrida says further that it would also not be something like “a community without community,” for “the aporia requiring the unceasing neutralization of one predicate by another,” such as relation without relatedness, “calls on significations altogether different from those of the part shared or held in common” (PF 298). *What*, then would these altogether different significations be? Pray tell, sir, *who* are they?

But it is precisely these “whats” and “whos” that repeatedly implicate me in the genre of questions that demand to be answered with a face. A call for altogether different signification arises in and occurs as the abyssal event—which has already passed—and for which no category is ever adequate: how, Derrida asks in what we might hear as an effort to change “the gamut of questions,” “can you name an event?” (PF 66). Without making the autodeictic gesture of saying, “I,” the dog turning away shows herself “capable of doing it,” as Derrida says in yet another context, and thus affirming “its *responsibility*, its power to respond, to answer for itself, before others and before the law” (AA 93). Confronted by a cur’s responsibility to itself, and disappointed that this cur would prefer her own company to mine, I have to hear the possibility of other faculties well beyond my capacity to sympathize with her.

As Derrida asserts toward the end of the longest chapter in *The Animal that Therefore I Am*, humans depriving animals of the power and right to respond also deprive them of “the right of non-response that is accorded to the human face by means of privacy or in death” (AA 112). Such deprivation of the right to privacy again pinpoints the need for changing the gamut of questions we ask about animals and that we ask to animals; such habitual deprivation receives its greatest challenge in the abyssal event. Perhaps, then, we could change the gamut of questions by dispensing first with all the variations of interrogatory, “whose dog are you?”, all those questions that anticipate a certain kind of response, and that have already imposed a recognizable face on a dog. Perhaps the gamut of questions might begin not with what I ask, but with the appeal contained in a dog’s refusal to answer. If that refusal can be taken as something other than its traditional indication of lack or inability—an indication of being a non-human—then the most responsible questions would have to begin with respect, with the wish not to intrude. The anthropocentric view is that dogs have no private life because they perform acts in humans’ public that humans would rather keep private. This view allows for only a narrow view of privacy, and ignores the fact that humans often perform acts in front of dogs that dogs might prefer they kept private. To allow not only that a dog can

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suffer and feel joy, but that she can do so in private opens a gamut of questions that I can yet only formulate crudely and provisionally. If a dog turns her face away, the questions I need to learn to ask would begin with the acknowledgment that I have already violated her privacy by wanting to recognize her as a breed, as a dog, within a friendship I understand to be just so. I would have to give up the assumption that her joy can only be complete if I have a share in it. The change I would hope for, then, would be in the direction of the questioning: instead of asking, do you respond to my call, or even, how should I respond to your call—since both of these look for the “fraternal friendship” that Derrida says Levinas limits himself to (AA 106)—one would ask for neither similitude nor conditionality that would require audible, visible, tactile, olfactory, or spiritual presentation. And one would allow oneself to be questioned, allow one’s right to question to be questioned, which would require much more attentiveness than we have hitherto given to our friends. Such attentiveness would perhaps look to the quietness of a friendship in which two beings run together for a time, diverge, and possibly re-converge without passing over old ground, and without anticipating the ground to come. Perhaps the call for altogether different significations offers the chance for a response without a face, without the need to search for categorical alignments that create similitudes out of tortured conditionality. Perhaps such a call—not very prayerful, by no means heroic—would allow a dog not to show herself as hound or spaniel or cur, and to refuse to see me. A call for altogether different signification arises in and as an abyssal event, for which no category or paradigm is ever adequate, and which can never be replicated. Without making the autodeictic gesture of saying, “I,” the dog turning away shows himself capable of affirming his *responsibility*, his power to respond, to answer for himself (AA 93). The old gamut of questions still revolves around that of whether animals possess a human-like faculty of responsiveness expressed in a legible face. Perhaps, then, one gamut of different questions can begin with that of the canine answer that we have yet to hear: the cur ruining the line of preconceived categories, its incessant barking interrupting the questions that I thought I knew how to ask.

Martin Wallen has published three books, on the compulsive self-identification of Romanticism, on modern disease, and on vermin. His current project—approaching its terminus—asks what it means for a dog to die. In the future he will write on the formlessness of aqueous aesthetics.

Notes

¹ Two recent histories provide a good account of the Dog Tax: Ingrid H. Tague, “Eighteenth-Century English Debates on a Dog Tax,” *The Historical Journal* 51 (2008): 901-20, and Lynn Festa, “Person, Animal, Thing: The 1796 Dog Tax and the Right to Superfluous Things,” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 33 (2009): 1-44.

² My own account of the creation of the foxhound can be found in “Foxhounds, Curs, and the Dawn of Breeding: The Discourse of Modern Human-Canine Relations,” *Cultural Critique* 79 (2011): 125-151.

³ Henry Hugh Arthur FitzRoy Somerset, Duke of Beaufort, *Foxhunting* (London: David and Charles, 1980), 209.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁵ Sydenham Edwards, *Cynographia Britannica: Consisting of Coloured Engravings of the Various Breeds of Dogs*

existing in Great Britain; drawn from the Life, with Observations on their Properties and Uses (London: 1805) art., “Drover’s Dog or Cur”; only the first eight pages of this work are paginated.

⁶ This dog reinforces the rejection of Kevin’s friendship in the finale to the second season. After Kevin returns from the dead—a feat placing him alongside ancient heroes like Orpheus, Herakles, and Jesus, all of whom became objects of cult worship, even though they made the journey only once and Kevin does it twice—he takes the dog out of the kennel in hopes of rejoining his family, somewhat extended at this point. Unimpressed by Kevin’s doubly heroic resurrection, the dog insouciantly runs off. By way of punctuating Kevin’s lack of appeal to the dog, he runs away from them in Texas.

⁷ The racial associations of the paradigm extend back *at least* as far as Sartre’s opening to “Black Orpheus”: “When you removed the gag that was keeping these black mouths shut, what were you hoping for? That they would sing your praises? . . . Here are black men standing, looking at us, and I hope that you—like me—will feel the shock of being seen” (in Jean-Paul Sartre, *What is Literature and Other Essays*, NT [Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1988] 291).

⁸ As the premier philosopher of categories, Kant played a key role in making race—the analogue to breed—meaningful. We should thus remember that his aesthetic theory holds more than a slight connection to the institutionalization of racial categories as a guide to the recognition of a face, whether in interpersonal relations, inter-species relations, or in the grand trope of prosopopoeia.

⁹ Jacques Derrida, *The Beast and the Sovereign*, trans. Geoffery Bennington, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 1:161.

¹⁰ Jacques Derrida, *The Animal that Therefore I Am*, trans. David Willis (New York: Fordham UP, 2008), 9. References to all the chapters of this book will hereafter be cited in the text with the abbreviation AA.

¹¹ The reference is to the aged and neglected Argus dying upon seeing the disguised Ulysses after 20 years, though this is not in the full translation Pope did of Homer’s epic in the 1720s, but in an early letter of 1709, which he calls his “Discourse of Dogs,” in Alexander Pope, *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, 5 vols., ed., George Sherburn (Oxford: The Clarendon P, 1956), 1: 73. It is also worth noting that Pope, a great lover of dogs, worked within an aesthetics that has been rendered almost incomprehensible by the vision-based system of Kant and Hegel, so that his references to canine friends, as well as to the natural landscape, need no face.

¹² Such joy, and the assertion that it is equally shared provides the basis on which Donna Haraway constructs her narcissistic account of asking questions of a dog she acquired just to ensure she would receive such pleasure as her answer. See *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 214-46.

¹³ Jacques Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*, trans. George Collins (New York: Verso, 2005), 29-30. References to this book will hereafter be cited in the text with the abbreviation PF.

¹⁴ Jacques Derrida, “Eating Well,” in *Who Comes after the Subject?* Eds. Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy (New York: Routledge, 1991), 108.

¹⁵ Derrida, “Eating Well,” 100.

¹⁶ Derrida, *Beast and the Sovereign 2*: 217 and n.

with people or other dogs; this trait is sometimes labelled "extroversion". Responsiveness to training is related to such behaviours as working with people, learning quickly in new situations, and playfulness. This trait is also labelled "problem solving", "willingness to work", "trainability", and "cooperative". Aggression is characterised by biting, growling, and snapping at people or other dogs. Aggressive behaviour is sometimes divided into subcategories on the basis of the cause of the aggression or of the target of aggressive behaviour.

Dog Bites and Other Injuries: A Dog Owner's Legal Defenses. When a dog hurts someone, its owner might be able to avoid legal responsibility based on the victim's actions. By Mary Randolph, J.D. Dog owners are usually responsible when their pets bite people or hurt them another way (such as by knocking them over or chasing them). This rule usually applies when dogs hurt veterinarians and other people who work with animals "like vets" assistants, groomers, pet sitters, and kennel operators "because they take the risk of dog bites and other injuries as part of the job. However, courts don't all agree whether dog owners can use the assumption-of-risk defense when they've been sued under a state's dog-bite law.

The artist and philosopher Deborah J. Haynes, in her wonderful book *Art Lessons: Meditations on the Creative Life*, recommends choosing a philosopher to think with. It doesn't really matter which philosopher, or what counts as a philosopher to you, just choose someone that can help you create a useful internal dialogue in your mind about your life and the role of writing in it. When you engage in dialogue with your chosen philosopher, the question becomes: How can you build a philosophical base in developing a coherent approach to how and why you write? Haynes says, "Philosophy can be esoteric. Many people do not like the philosopher. Always trying to find people to prove them wrong. Some people get rubbed the wrong way. But in reality they are just trying to find that person that can show them up mentally. This allows them to think more on a subject and improve their own understanding of something that they are curious about. In a constant state of learning. Always willing to listen. They love a challenge and loathe the simpleton. To be a philosopher is to carry the burden of the mistakes of the world. To sink under that burden that can never be cast away. But they do this willingly."