

## THE UNREASONABLE ANIMAL

*What makes the animal more than man?*<sup>1\*</sup>

### The knowledge of transience

Why do we consider the animal unreasonable? And what does unreasonability mean? Stupidity? Disability? The knowledge of being less?

The term “unreasonable animal” can be found in the Bible, carrying fundamentally two meanings. The first indicates the ignorant being without a brain – in this sense, even a child can be considered unreasonable or foolish. The second refers to the vulnerability to instincts: The Scripture deems those beings bestial, which wallow in filth and dirt and regard sin as a pleasure. These definitions are apt to establish the sacrificial hierarchy of Judeo-Christian culture, in which unreasonable animals, that is, ignorant corporeally vulnerable beings, are below the human race, which is considered superior. In philosophy, there has long been an attempt to define the concept of man in relation to the animal – along the lines of *animal rationale*.

But the concept of unreasonable animal can also be approached from another – also biblical – perspective. Being unreasonable can be deduced from being without a cause allowing the interpretation that the term stands for an animal that knows nothing of its own mortality and simply has no reason to reflect on life.

As we know, the Lord God, upon man’s expulsion from the Garden of Eden, made it clear that man must live his life as a finite being – in the shadow of the knowledge of his death. Death is a burden that God has interconnected with thinking. In the *Book of Genesis*, the first human couple is forbidden to eat from the tree of knowledge, “lest you die”. The serpent persuades them to disobey with these words: “You will surely not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will

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be like God, knowing good and evil.” After Adam and Eve eat from the tree, first, they are struck by their own vulnerability and figurative nakedness as they realize that knowledge is primarily an experience of shame for them. In addition, God imposes the following burdens on them: the woman bears physical pain (the torments of pregnancy and childbirth), and the insatiable lust that goes with it; the man has to face the anguish of work. But the greatest punishment of all is the transience they must face together. “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever” – the Lord says. These are the words God used to drive the first couple out of the Garden of Eden and to cut them off from the trees of life, as cherubs and fiery swords were placed in front of the entrance.<sup>2</sup>

Fulfilling the promise of the serpent, man became similar to God – he knows good and bad, he can think. But there is a fundamental difference: man does not have the capacity for eternity. The punishment for the act of betraying the word of God (imposed on ourselves) is the greatest burden one can carry: knowing that we do not live forever. Although pregnancy, the agony of labour, and “the sweat of one’s brow” might feel excessive, in some way, it is always bearable and can be overcome. But the certainty of death is rooted deeper: all problems, all thoughts stem from it. This is not fear, as we are not dreading it unceasingly, even though it is present at every moment. Rather, consent to the final outcome. And only in borderline situations, when the body or soul is hurt and we feel pain, do we begin to “yowl” – just like the animal, which only at the last moment realises that its life is coming to an end.

In fact, the most important difference between *human* and *animal knowledge* is that man’s ability to grasp the meaning of imminent death is not only limited to the moments of “yowling,” but his whole life is spent in the certainty of this. While it is not a rational and arguable knowledge of death, it is knowledge, nonetheless. A big question is what kind of knowledge. Perhaps, we might call it fear, even more so instinct, which incessantly compels man armed with *divine knowledge* to face the end and, accordingly, to live wisely. To consider everything, to think constantly, to set goals for himself, to chase the rabbit endlessly for as long as possible (as Pascal wrote). If we know that our time is finite, we can hardly waste even a minute of it, since that is *folly*. Every moment we let out of our hands is *folly*. All thoughts that we do not control and do not measure against our ultimate knowledge of death is *folly*.

The perception that the vulgar time we experience in everyday life passes irreversibly, originates from the knowledge of another time: the temporality that allows us to glimpse into the eternal. As a matter of fact, in the narrative of expulsion, everything is said about the essential aspects of man’s existence, the knowledge of transience being the most *inevitable*. The knowledge of transience can only be expressed from the perspective of eternity. We can glimpse into the time of eternity because we carry the clock of the Garden of Eden, of which we were inhabitants and from which we were driven out.

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<sup>2</sup> *Teremtés könyve 3*. Budapest, Szent István Társulat. Az Apostoli Szentszék Könyvkiadója, 2008.

The reason we know that time is passing is because we can measure the passing minutes of vulgar time against the eternity of the Garden of Eden. As if that invisible dangling thread, which leads all the way to the garden of eternity, connects us – the one-time and fallible human body and the self-entrenched human mind. That is why we see into infinity (or as Emmanuel Lévinas put it: we possess the “Idea of Infinity”), while experiencing our finiteness through transience. It is the incessant journey between the two temporalities that makes us anxious and desperate, which feelings we experience at every moment – even if we have no idea about it. The recognition of vulgar time, which the animal is therefore hardly capable of, represents both the knowledge of transience and futility, and the urge to think and reflect on life.

## More: spirituality

What would happen if man renounced this reflection? Can one do that? Can the image of man resting on the primacy of the spirit be deconstructed? Can one be deprived from the privileges attached to the ability to think?

In the European philosophical tradition, we have seen countless efforts to distance human existence from animal qualities. Here, I present only one “struggle”, namely the attempt of a 20<sup>th</sup> century thinker whose resistance to the animal can be considered symptomatic.

The ghost of the animal is present almost all the way through Martin Heidegger’s oeuvre.<sup>3</sup> Already in *Being and Time*, we can observe the definite ontological distinction that he assumes between man and animal. He describes man as *Dasein* in order to lift him out of the perspective of animality, while removing him from both the psychological and the traditional metaphysical approach. According to Heidegger, only *Dasein* is capable of self-understanding, and just as Being cannot be revealed to thing- and tool-like beings, it cannot be revealed to animals either.

In *The Basic concepts of metaphysics* he is somewhat more tolerant when he claims that the animal is “world poor” [*weltarm*], because, although it has a world, it has no relation or access to it. For it does not have the skills that are given to the “always already there”: it cannot ask about its own existence, therefore, Being cannot be addressed by it.<sup>4</sup> Later, his war with the animal becomes more radical, on the pages of *Introduction to Metaphysics*, he discards the possibility of the animal having possession of the world. He sees the essence of animality here in the fact that it is not of the spirit: “The world is always

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3 See: Mihály VAJDA: *Heidegger és az állat kísértete*. In: M. VAJDA: *Nem az örökkévalóságnak*. Osiris, Budapest, 1996. 268-283.; also: Jacques DERRIDA: *A Szellemről*. Translated by: Angyalosi Gergely és Babarczy Eszter. Osiris–Gond, Budapest, különösen: 67.

4 See: Martin HEIDEGGER: *A metafizika alapfogalmai*. Translated by: Aradi László and Olay Csaba. Osiris, Budapest, 2004.

spiritual. The animal has no world, nor any environment.”<sup>5</sup> In a later lecture, he puts it like this: “No animal has a hand, [...] and a hand never originates from a paw.”<sup>6</sup>

In *Letter on Humanism*, however, he again talks about the fact that the animal may have an environment, but this environment is not the same as the world, and more importantly, the animal, because it has no language, is unable to question the meaning of Being, and therefore is unable to place itself into the clearance of Being (Lichtung des Seins). Here, he no longer distinguishes man simply from the animal, but also declares that man is closest to God: “It might seem as though the essence of the divine is closer to us than this strangely impenetrable character of living beings.”<sup>7</sup> What makes man more than merely human, in other words, a rational creature, is that he is “more essential in terms of his essence”. Essentialness means the ability to reach the “truth of being”. All this, however, is accompanied by the essential humbleness of the “shepherd”: here, man is no longer assumed to be the lord of beings, but he is seen as the shepherd of being.<sup>8</sup> The shepherd does not dominate being, when he reaches the truth of being, his wealth or possessions do not grow by any means, but he becomes simply “the neighbour of being”: he watches over it, takes care of it (“Sorge nimble das Sein”). But even if the shepherd of being does not become the master of existence, his privilege still endures among the other beings.

Peter Sloterdijk interprets the definition of the man-animal relation in the Letter on Humanism in the following way: “man is differentiated from animals in ontology, not in species or genus, so he cannot under any circumstances be considered an animal with a cultural or metaphysical surplus.” With the ontological difference, Heidegger seems to be moving beyond the traditional humanist attitude.”<sup>9</sup> The late essays further reflect on the thesis of the Shepherd of Being; the ghost of the animal no longer becomes explicit. As we know, his writings at an old age had a stimulating effect on later eco-philosophies too.<sup>10</sup> Several members of the deep ecology movement unfolding in America saw the possibility of achieving an authentic relationship with our environment in Heidegger’s idea of “letting-presence”.<sup>11</sup> These thinkers also base their ethical positions on the ontological difference between human and non-human: man is able to take responsibility for nature and non-human beings precisely because he is not a biologically but a spiritually and ontologically defined being. For Zimmerman, for instance, letting-presence is a thought that corresponds to the Heideggerian guarding: man does not impose his preconceived notions on be-

5 M. HEIDEGGER: *Bevezetés a metafizikába*. Translated by: Mihály Vajda. Ikon, Bp., 1995. (15. §) 23.

6 M. HEIDEGGER: *Parmenides*. Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1982.

7 M. HEIDEGGER: *Letter on Humanism*. In: [http://pacificinstitute.org/pdf/Letter\\_on\\_%20Humanism.pdf](http://pacificinstitute.org/pdf/Letter_on_%20Humanism.pdf). Translated by Frank A. Capuzzi

8 M. HEIDEGGER: *Letter on Humanism*.

9 Peter SLOTERDIJK: *Az emberkert szabályai. Válasz a humanizmusról írott levélre – az elmaui beszéd*. Translated by: Major Enikő. Vulgo, 2000/3–4–5., 444.

10 See: Péter Bence Marosán: *Sorsközösségben a természettel. Az ökofilozófia és ökoetika heideggeriánus megalapozási kísérletei*. Liget, 2017/7. In: <http://ligetmuhely.com/liget/sorskozossegben-a-termeszettel/> Letöltés ideje: 2017. augusztus 25.

11 See: Hans Jonas: *The Gnostic Religion*. Beacon Press, Boston, 1972.; also: Bill Devall – George Sessions: *Deep Ecology. Living as if Nature Mattered*. Gibbs M. Smith, Inc., Salt Lake City, 1985.; and: Michael E. Zimmerman: *Contesting Earth’s Future. Radical Ecology and Postmodernity*. University of California Press, California, 1994.

ings, but allows those particular differences to appear, non-human beings to express their independence, their need for autonomy.<sup>12</sup> Frank Schalow specifically bases his responsibility ethics attitude towards nature on the Heideggerian view of man's radical difference from animals.<sup>13</sup> According to him, freedom fundamentally distinguishes us from animals and nature as a whole. He believes that by ascribing rights to animals, we are enforcing an anthropocentric perspective, trying to impose on them anthropomorphic categories that are alien to their existence, by which we set a trap for them. He, too, considers the Heideggerian "letting-presence" to be ethically acceptable; the application of the anthropomorphic idea of freedom in relation to animals is inauthentic. It is only the man who is free to take responsibility for himself and nature – this freedom allows him to "watch over" his "fellow beings". (Let us add in parentheses: ultimately, biblical revelation also defines the difference between man and animal in this freedom; but there is a price for man's freedom: finiteness. And the difference defined in finiteness has consequences.)

It is not the purpose of this essay to debate these deep ecological positions. Two questions, however, seem necessary, but they are also aimed more at the Heideggerian theory itself. First: why is the shepherd called on to guard the animals? Does the notion of the shepherd not include the implicit meaning along which it is necessary to assume that he is more than the animal? Second: who is the shepherd supposed to guard? Even if the poetic formulations of the Letter on Humanism skilfully avoid the trap of associating the image of the shepherd with the image of the herd, it is still obvious: the shepherd guards the truth of being only in a metaphorical sense, in a literal sense he is looking after a *herd of animals*. In this implicit sense, the earlier Heideggerian positions on wordlessness and "being world poor" continue to haunt. We could oppose this with the definition of "pastor" in Christian church discourses: there, the "pastor" (the shepherd) guards a flock of people. However, with the metaphorical expression of pastor, we perform and repeat the sublimation gesture the same way, by which we transform, purify, and elevate the corporeal-animal qualities into the spiritual realm. When you think about it, the pastor must first and foremost ensure that man is not guided by sinful, bodily, and animalistic impulses, but by spiritual ones. The exact meaning of pastoral discipline, a wide array of issues, was explored the most profoundly by Michel Foucault in his book *Discipline and Punish*. What matters to us is that the shepherd must discipline beings who are inferior to him with an added physicality, being more vulnerable to their instincts, but most importantly, lacking spiritual quality.

When Heidegger talks about the animal's "poverty in world" and "lack of world", he also attributes "sadness" to it. The description of this is surprising because sadness is, in fact, a human emotion,

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<sup>12</sup> See: M. E. Zimmerman: *Heidegger és a mélyökológia kapcsolatának újragondolása*. In: Lányi András – Jávor Benedek (ed.): *Környezet és etika. Szöveggyűjtemény*. L'Harmattan, Bp., 2005. 236–271.

<sup>13</sup> See: Frank Schalow: *Ki szól az állatok nevében? Heidegger és az állatok jólétének kérdése*. In: Lányi A. – Jávor B. (ed.): *Környezet és etika...* 349–362.

a condition that can only be understood from the perspective of human culture. Proceeding down this path, we can continue the line of thought that we have started: the animal is sad because it is such a man that is deprived of its entry into the human world. It is deprived of not only speech and, with it, the truth, but above all death, and facing its own existence. But shouldn't we reverse this claim? Should we rather say that man is a sad animal because he is deprived of immediacy, of a world imbued with life?

However, to claim for a man to be a creature related to the animal, is dangerous.<sup>14</sup> Heidegger refuses to even take this into account: he rejects life as an authentic way of accessing man's essential means of existence, authentic access being meant exclusively by the understanding of existence (the understanding of being by the "always already there" [*Dasein*]). Life is, of course, present in the "always already there", since "always already there" is being in the world [*In-der Welt-sein*], and life is manifested in the world – but not accessible for "always already there".<sup>15</sup> If we accept that man can be considered more than the animal because he has a Spirit and because he can possess the world that is considered spiritual; then from the aspect of life it should finally be understood that man can be considered less than the animal, since he does not have life, while the animal is able to possess it in its entirety.

According to Michel Henry's radical phrase, "there is no life present in the world".<sup>16</sup> There is clearly no life in biology as an analytical science, since biology deals with objects, inanimate things. But spiritual sciences are also incapable of capturing life in their world, defined by their own conditions, because, through methodological abstractions, they necessarily and always encounter the problem of the world's externalness. Life from the "inside of life" disappears as soon as we look at it. There is no use in having a fundamental and unwavering certainty about life itself, our living nature, our breathing body, which is more or less similar to that of animals, if the reflection, the philosophy based on the principle of self-excursion, cannot deal with it. The animal has access to what is isolated from us, beings existent as "always already there", because its access is based not on reflection, but on experience, coincidence, completeness.

From the point of view of animal-problems, we are compelled to realise: when Heidegger assumes that man is more than the animal through Spirit, he remains in the humanist paradigm. Thinkers within the humanist paradigm constantly try to define man against the animal's disabilities – as Derrida puts it in a conversation, "the animal will never be either a subject or a *Dasein*. It doesn't have an unconscious either (Freud), nor a relation to the other as other, any more than there is an animal face (Levinas)."<sup>17</sup>

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14 Agamben refers to something similar to that of the living nature, under the notion of homo sacer, the biopolitical subject. At the same time, to the mere life of being human and the biopolitical body, he assigns the subordination to the sphere of politics. See: Giorgio Agamben: *Homo Sacer*. Translated by: Daniel Heller-Roesen. Zone Books, New York, 1999. 11.

15 See: Martin Heidegger: *Lét és idő*. Translated by: M. VAJDA and others. Osiris, Bp., 2001. 10. §, 63–69.

16 Michel Henry: *Az élő test*. Translated by: Sutyák Tibor. *Vulgo* 2003/3. 3–17.

17 See: J. DERRIDA: „*Jól enni márpedig muszáj*”, *avagy a szubjektumszámítás. Beszélgetés – Jean-Luc Nancyval*. Translated by: Gángó Gábor. In: KIS Attila Atilla – KOVÁCS Sándor s. k. – ODORICS Ferenc (ed.): *Testes könyvn II*. Ictus, Szeged, 1997. 307.

We can even consider the disability defined by Bataille: the animal is not capable of transgression or eroticism – but more about that later.

If we are to move beyond this paradigm, it is imperative to ask: is the animal really poorer than man? Should we not assume the opposite? Should we not say that the animal, by its direct access to life in the world, is – in fact: more? Man is separated from the world because he carries an inherent hiatus that he seeks to fill through the many reflexive doings and acts embodying the gestures of faith, language, speech, the ability to question things, comprehension, and bridging. But the distance manifested in the hiatus cannot be eliminated. The hiatus, which can be described as both indirect and discontinuous, can be regarded as the material disability of man. It is precisely upon this disability, this lesser existence, that man built the spiritual world, which we call culture.

## **Less: flesh sacrifice and culture**

Yet we claim to be “cheerful, laughing” creatures compared to the “sad” animals – since we are at the top of the hierarchy between beings. We have established this hierarchy with both religion and philosophy. In salvation history, man is a child of God who achieves the Father’s wish in Christ. Man, as such, is not a mere living being who, along with the evanescent transition, perishes like an animal. The essence of man (his *humanitas*) in this religious-philosophical construct lies in the metaphysical movement, the ascension: man is always capable of *being more* than his mundane self. Humanity first developed into an aspiration during the Roman Republic, when it suddenly became necessary for *homo humanus* to distance itself from *homo barbarus*, who, as we know, was a man living according to animal instincts. As Christianity advanced, the bestial urges and actions of the man, portrayed as the child of God, became untenable. Although the humane man wanted to escape the spectre of himself: the animal, the theories of humanism could not escape the dimension of animality: the definition of the essence of man was always constructed in relation to animal existence. In order for man to establish himself as an exalted, that is, superior being, he had to subdue the animal – sacrificing it to create his own identity. This sacrifice is not necessarily criminal. Because it is not meant only physically – as an actual execution, and as the delivery of meat into the stomach. The flesh sacrifice, and even more so the violence inherent in the act of sacrifice, takes place in a symbolic sense too: it introduces hierarchy and sacrifice between people.

If man defines himself as a living being, a living body, or downright flesh (which is, by the way, attempted in phenomenology), he then defines his existence twofold in threat. First, because the body is vulnerable and mortal. Second, because man as flesh is potential food (just like other animals). In his existence, it is all about his own “meat”. In a carnivorous culture, in addition to violence, the basic expe-

rience of threat is also encoded, man among humans is constantly threatened by the horror of victimisation. The members of a carnivorous culture are actually protected from each other by laws engraved in stone – in such a culture, morality becomes paramount. In the *Ten Commandments*, we read: “Thou shalt not kill” – and this always refers to the neighbour. But who is the neighbour? Who can be considered a full citizen of the carnivorous culture? Well, the animal is not a neighbour, even if we anthropomorphise and domesticate it... In fact, Emmanuel Lévinas’ philosophy proves this the most emblematically, in which ethics became the basis of ontology, and in which the only non-religious but philosophical imperative, “Thou shalt not kill”, can manifest directly in the face – except that the animal has no face in this theory of responsibility ethics!

So, we are cheerful and laughing superior beings – or we could be if we did not have to constantly worry about our living nature, threat, and mortality. What kind of identity and what kind of culture is it that is necessitated by the punishment of death? Sigmund Freud’s philosophical concept reveals that violence is both a genesis and a product of human culture. And we can add to this that violence is the other side of the knowledge that has given us the knowledge of death, a knowledge similar to that of gods. But death should only be suspected by those who are truly like the gods, existing eternally. From this point of view, man is an unfortunate being who feels like God himself, and on this he bases himself in a culture that subjugates everything and everyone, however, he is most handicapped in his divinity: the loss and absence of eternity does not simply make him a sad being, but a downright traumatised animal.

Freud in *Civilisation and its Discontents* equates cultural development with the process of the individual’s libido development. His hypothesis is that both focus on instinctive sublimation. And although the dissatisfaction of instincts provokes a sense of hostility, man is nevertheless willing to give up his instincts to “take advantage” of culture, which can also curb the aggressive tendency among people. Culture with a regulatory role can most effectively limit aggressive instincts by creating – as the most basic cultural endeavour – the command of love: *Love your neighbour as yourself!* The idea of love is not a mere moral law: it can be equated with one of the fundamental self-aspirations, libidinous instincts. Narcissistic libido through love and affection, whenever it seeks satisfaction in the world outside of itself in the other person, aims at the object of desire. Freud points out that object instincts that emerge from a feeling of love as erotic urges are closely related to non-libidinous power instincts. He deduces the death instinct, as the other fundamental force against life instinct, from power instincts. While the life instinct of Eros maintains the “living substance” and unity, death instinct strives to eliminate these units and “reduce them to their original inorganic state”. Part of the death instinct works silently within us to eliminate the self, the other part turns against the outside world, and emerges as aggression and destruction.<sup>18</sup>

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18 See: Sigmund FREUD: *Rossz közérzet a kultúrában*. Translated by: LINCZÉNYI Adorján. Kossuth, Bp., 1992.



In the wake of Freud, Bataille, among others, drew attention to the fact that in crime emerges a feeling of passion that is present in eroticism, and which comes from transgression – transgression can be described as the “dissolution” from the rationality and discipline of the human spirit. In Bataille’s interpretation, this also includes the sense of power, triggered by the rapture of destroying another person or a mere object. Bataille sees not simply the excitement caused by crossing the boundaries as essential to violent and erotic acts, but what they really mean: the possibility to access existence. He believes that man, who is separated from his natural and inherent state by culture, can return to “continuity” through transgressive acts: “The transition from the normal state to that of erotic desire presupposes a partial dissolution of the person as he exists in the realm of discontinuity.”<sup>19</sup> But this dissolution inevitably takes place through aggression, which, nevertheless, is “tamed” into transgression in acts of love (but also in the rites of religion and in the states of artistic creation).

Bataille makes an important distinction between animal and human: “The eroticism of humans differs from animal sexuality precisely in the fact that it puts inner life in question. *In human consciousness eroticism is that within man which calls his being into question.*”<sup>20</sup> Moreover, he adds that it is, in fact, along eroticism that human sexuality separates from that of the animal, which he considers “primitive”, probably because it lacks the rapture of transgression. However, and this is my remark, it is by no means a condition for which the animal should be condemned! After all, the animal does not need the kind of aggression – not the one required for the survival of species but the transgressive type– that characterises man, because it does not need to break out of the non-continuous existence: its world is based on continuity.

But let us now return to Freud, who claims that the death instinct can explain the man’s innate tendency towards Wrong too, which, in a religious context, is derived from Evil as opposed to the goodness of God! The assumption of death instinct allows us not to seek the Devil behind human evil, offering an exemption from the responsibility of evil deeds, but to realise: man is evil simply because he is human: aggressive tendency is “an *original, self-subsisting instinctual disposition in man*”. *According to Freud, this tendency finds its strongest obstacle in culture. Culture can contradict the impulses of death instinct by serving Eros himself through the command of love, and binding together human beings into “families, then tribes, races, nations, into one great unity, that of humanity.” But, Freud continues, the program of this libidinous interconnection of human masses is confronted by the natural instinct of human aggression, which is the descendant and main embodiment of the death instinct. What we call cultural development is actually the result of a struggle between the two instincts: “the struggle of the human species for existence.”*

*But what does human mean here as a substance? And is culture an organic consequence of being*

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19 George BATAILLE: *Az erotika*. Translated by: Dusnoki Katalin. Nagyvilág, Budapest, 2001. 19.

20 G. BATAILLE: *Az erotika*... 33.

*human, or could animals use it too in order to control their instincts? And how do we understand the concept of species? In the Darwinian sense? Although Freud raises the question of why animals do not engage in such cultural struggle, he cuts it short: "Oh, we don't know." Albeit he mentions that there are animal species at a high level of sociality (the division of social functions, division of labour, and moreover, restrictions on individualities), but he also asserts that the manifestations of the death instinct cannot be observed in them. Why not? More specifically: why can't this be asked? Freud refrains from determining the difference between man and animal in terms of culture and aggression. His hypothesis is solely about man.*

But we will leave Freud's theory behind here. We will not further analyse what methods man, who uses culture as a tool, has developed to suppress his death instinct and the resulting destructive impulses; or that by placing it in the soul, introjecting aggression, how he made it the basis of guilt, how he turned against himself. In this, the superior self, as a conscience, serves a "cultural need": it expresses its aggression towards his instinctive self. Freud discusses at length how the phenomenon of the original sin, inherited from generation to generation, emerges from the accumulating sense of guilt, and how the cultural development of mankind reaches the point from which it longs to be redeemed from the original sin. In conclusion, all we highlight from this theory is that it is the perpetual guilt that creates the culture of malaise. On the one hand, the elimination of instincts by culture brings to life the state of unhappiness, since the subject of culture organised into the community is determined by altruism, which can be contrasted with egoism, and the renunciation of individual pursuits of happiness. On the other hand, the accumulation of repression has resulted in the peaceful eras of human history being interrupted over and over again by bloody periods in which aggression takes excessive and uncontrollable forms.

## **Completeness and proximity**

In addition to analysing human quality, it is reasonable to ask the question: what is on the other side, the animal's side? This question is answered by Konrad Lorenz, among others.

In his book on aggression, Lorenz argues with Freud's theory, which he examines from the perspective of the animal, not the man. His critique aims at the foundation of Freud's theory, when he seeks to prove that aggression is not derived from the death instinct: "the aggression whose effects are often equated with the death instinct is like any other and equally suitable for the preservation of the life

and the species under natural conditions.”<sup>21</sup> Lorenz adds that for man, who “changed his environment through his creative power too quickly,” not only his instinct for aggression can have devastating consequences, but other instincts as well.

Lorenz, studying similar phenomena in the animal kingdom, points out that aggressive behaviour has three basic, interrelated species survival functions: “the distribution of animals of any one species over the available area [...], selection by rival struggle, and caring for offspring”.<sup>22</sup> However, these motivations that result in a real physical struggle have nothing to do with the kind of aggression that we consider human. Because aggression in animals, even if directed against fellow species, is not detrimental to that species, on the contrary, it facilitates better selection and survival. Lorenz points out that phenomena similar to what we know as human aggression can be observed in more advanced animal species, where the role of individual learning and experience increases as opposed to inherited behaviours. With the general progression of evolution, the selection pressure of social coexistence and the ability to learn determine the direction of better development. We can, therefore, say this: where some kind of cultural development starts, aggression appears – or in other words: aggression is converted into a destructive instinct by culture.

Although Lorenz is determined to deny the psychoanalytic thinker’s claims, he actually agrees with them. After all, Freud acknowledges that culture as a regulator limits the effects of the pleasure principle, suppresses one’s aspirations for happiness, and creates malaise through repression. They both see the problematic role of culture, even if they do not make the statement that culture is more likely to bring aggression to life than to protect from it. And there is no contradiction between the statements of the two thinkers in a philosophical sense, that is, in the sense of the ontological definition of man. Because, by disputing the operation of the death instinct from the animal, Lorenz does not deny that in the very first moments of cultural organisation, it does not function in man. Moreover, Lorenz himself identifies aggression as destructive, meaningless, and brutal forms of conduct (among others) against fellow species in the animal kingdom where cultural development begins. Also, Lorenz’s theory can be incorporated into the philosophical tradition of humanism, thus into the paradigm of sacrificial hierarchy – which, of course, is not surprising in the case of a thinker who believes in the Darwinian evolution theory. The main difference is that Lorenz sees culture as a spiritual evolution parallel to genetic evolution and, in the wake of Oswald Spengler, perceives it as a living system that is subject to change, aging, destruction. He argues that culture, like living organisms, is a delicate system of equilibrium, which, if

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21 Konrad LORENZ: *On Aggression*. In:

<https://books.google.hu/books?id=rIVK7wuY3kIC&pg=PA35&lpg=PA35&dq=the+distribution+of+animals+of+any+one+species+over+the+available+area+lorenz&source=bl&ots=bV8dMZoKk0&sig=ACfU3U3O60dG-Cpu5Df3WrauUKI7S4LAj5g&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewi8kPy2z-PpAhWkxIUKHSI8C9kQ6AEwAHoECAgQAQ#v=one-page&q=the%20distribution%20of%20animals%20of%20any%20one%20species%20over%20the%20available%20area%20lorenz&f=false> 7.

22 K. LORENZ: *On Aggression*...

thrown off balance, can lead to diseases.<sup>23</sup>

Even if we do not regard culture itself as the overthrow of the equilibrium state, we are compelled to recognise that man is the kind of being who, through culture, has developed a particular human instinct: aggression, which is distorted because it does not serve his survival instinct. We could say that to this extent, man is less than an animal living without the limitations of culture. We could also put it this way: man is a sick animal who inherently carries with him the knowledge of not only death, but also of his own “poor” nature based on a lack of self. And this transforms him, that is, us humans, into beings cut off from continuity and alienated from ourselves. In contrast, the unreasonable animal is a kind of being who lives in complete symbiosis with the world around it.

What would it mean to consider the animal closer to God than man, if we did not deny it the possibility of a direct relationship with God? If we did so, we would be forced to move into the paradigm that leads us out of the illusion of the romantic concept of *humanitas*, because the hierarchy between beings is not determined by the degree of ability to know (rationality, reflexivity, spiritual being). Rejecting the compulsion to conform to the sacrificial hierarchy would mean rejecting the human ideal of the Judeo-Christian culture. Not only the rejection that man, who was created in His image, could have a relationship with God, but also the rejection that man was destined to rule – or to put it mildly: guard - over the animal and nature.

One of the most obscure passages in the *Book of Genesis*, in fact, concerns the status of the animal. The animal, in the second version of the creation story, is the companion of man: “»It is *not good* for the *man to be alone*. I will make a helper suitable for him. « Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens” (Genesis 2:18). And only after man finds this companion unsuitable, Eve is created from Adam’s rib. What can it mean that God intended the animal, created the same way from dust, to be a suitable companion? And why is it not suitable? Indeed, this companion is still there for man – even if the history of expulsion lacks the definition of the role and substance of the animal. But it is precisely this ambiguity that points to the missing meaning stronger than the spoken word.

The animal, who, together with man, will surely be driven out from the Garden of Eden, will not be afflicted with the consciousness of transience, in him, the clock of eternity continues to tick. That is where its unreasonableness lies, which means uninterruptedness and completeness. Unreasonableness can be perceived as an ontological surplus by which the animal can be considered closer to God than man. Accepting the unreasonable animal as a companion can not only help man to understand his own creation from dust and the inherent timeliness, but it is through the animal that may help him get closer to God – even if it is no longer possible to return to the order of continuity.

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23 See: K. LORENZ: *Ember voltunk hanyatlása*. Translated by: ifj. Kőrös László. Cartaphilus, Bp., 2002. 55–82.

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