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Abstract

If we accept that at least some kinds of nonhuman animals are persons, a variety of paradoxes emerge in our ethical relations with them, involving apparently unavoidable disrespect of their personhood. We aim to show that these paradoxes are legitimate but can be illuminatingly resolved in the light of an adequate understanding of the nature of persons. Drawing on recent Western, Daoist, and Zen Buddhist thought, we argue that personhood is already paradoxical in the same way as these aspects of our ethical relations with nonhuman animals, and in fact is the source of their paradoxical character. In both contexts, depth and shallowness turn out to be internal to or crucial parts of each other, with logically anomalous consequences. We try to show that the character of this paradoxical relation between depth and shallowness in the nature of personhood involves a crucial inflection in the case of nonhuman animal persons that allows us to make sense of and resolve these ethical paradoxes.

Keywords: animals, personhood, animal ethics, depth, shallowness.

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The Nature of Persons and Our Ethical Relations with Nonhuman Animals

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If we accept that at least some kinds of nonhuman animals are persons, a variety of paradoxes emerge in our ethical relations with them. These paradoxes seem to put us in an ethical trap in which we unavoidably demean and patronize nonhuman animals in the very acts of attempting to respect their personhood. We will try to show that these paradoxes are legitimate, but that they can be resolved in the light of an adequate understanding of the nature of persons. In addition, we shall try to show that this understanding and the resolution it affords illuminates human personhood as well as some of what we can learn from nonhuman animals about our own nature and lives.

Clearly, the form of harm we address here is not at all one of the more brutal kinds of injustices that nonhuman animals suffer and that require much more urgent attention. But it is still meaningful and important in its own right. Analogously, we certainly take patronizing disrespect of humans very seriously as an issue of injustice and oppression. In addition, since our interventions on behalf of nonhuman animals depend on the legitimacy of our thinking and speaking for them, it is very important that these actions emerge from relations to nonhuman animals that do not involve fundamentally disrespecting and disregarding their reality. If at least some nonhuman animals are persons, then, respect for their personhood is one of the elements depended on by legitimate action on their behalf in any form and at any level of urgency. As a result, the ethical paradoxes of personhood we discuss here are not only meaningful in their own

right, but also play a fundamental role in establishing legitimate approaches to the more urgent ethical and political issues that concern nonhuman animals.

Against this kind of project, it is of course widely held that conceiving nonhuman animals as persons is not legitimate because it arbitrarily anthropomorphizes them, and this both falsifies nonhuman animals and does them no favors. In that view, consequently, this is not a conception we should work with anyway. There is good reason for that view; as Wittgenstein trenchantly notes (although, it is true, without having the particular issue of personhood in mind), ‘If a lion could talk, we could not understand him’ (1958, 223). For different, purely pragmatic reasons, Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka (2011), for example, argue categorically that “talk of personhood starts us down the wrong path . . . Rather, we believe that respecting inviolability is, first and foremost, a process of intersubjective recognition” (30). And James Hart (1999) asks, more generally, about the “biotic community”: “How are we to understand this community? Is it a community of quasi-persons?”; and he comments that “it is the hesitation to simplify matters that accounts in great part for the rich complexity of contemporary discussions within eco-philosophy” (187).

In the light of the view that nonhuman animal personhood is not a legitimate conception, the paradoxes of personhood we address and the ethical problem they present do not legitimately arise. But part of our point in this essay is that when theorists develop and assess these kinds of view of nonhuman animal personhood, we typically do not have a clear enough view of what personhood is. The establishment of this view, then, in fact depends on the kind of exploration we undertake here. Consequently, while this assessment is not part of our project in this paper, our exploration of personhood and its relevance to nonhuman animals, rather than being ruled

out by this view, should instead be helpful to that assessment of whether it is legitimate to attribute personhood to nonhuman animals.

We aim to show that these paradoxes do genuinely emerge in our ethical relations with nonhuman animals insofar as they are persons, but that these paradoxes are understandable and can be resolved in the light of an adequate understanding of the nature of persons. This understanding and resolution are illuminating for human personhood and life too.

We draw both on Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Ortega y Gasset, Plessner, and Gaita in recent Western philosophy and on some of the insights that recur within and are shared between Daoist and Zen Buddhist thought. On the basis of these insights, we argue that the nature of persons is already paradoxical in the same way as these aspects of our ethical relations with nonhuman animals, and in fact is the source of their paradoxical character. This common paradox involves a peculiarity of the relation between depth and shallowness. In these contexts, depth and shallowness turn out to be internal to (or, in other words, in important ways crucial parts of) each other, with logically anomalous consequences. As a result, we argue, an adequate understanding of personhood offers resources for understanding and consequently for resolving those paradoxes. Conversely, the emergence of these paradoxes in our relations with other animals helps us to identify the general character of personhood more clearly than we otherwise might.

In particular, with respect to resolving the paradoxes, we try to show that the character of this relation between depth and shallowness in the nature of personhood involves a crucial inflection in the case of nonhuman animal persons that allows us to make sense of these paradoxical aspects of our ethical relations with them.¹

¹ A different version of this point about the relation between depth and shallowness is sketched in Barris (2008), in connection with our loving bonds with other animals.

We should clarify that in arguing for a difference in personhood between human and nonhuman animals we are not homogenizing all nonhuman animal persons, and consequently reproducing the “abyssal rupture” which Derrida (2008) argues that our categories institute between human animals and nonhuman animals. Actually, there certainly is a sense in which we are reproducing that rupture. It is at the heart of Derrida’s thought that we cannot avoid the effectivity of binary opposites such as “rupture” and “no rupture” by selecting and siding with one over the other. Consequently, simply identifying nonhuman animals, even to say we harm them collectively in certain ways or even, as Derrida is well aware, to say we should not identify them at all, repeats that “abyssal divide.” Anyone who discusses how humans treat nonhuman animals collectively in any way, then, necessarily reproduces this problem. But our argument that personhood has certain features which work one way in human animals and another in nonhuman animals does not reproduce the problem beyond this sense in which all talk of nonhuman animals necessarily does so.

To be clear, too, we are not making a point about nonhuman animal being in general in contrast with human being. We are not even making a point about a contrast between these two groups with respect to personhood as such in general, but only with respect to a particular and very limited aspect of personhood. What is more, we argue that many humans share this particular aspect with nonhuman animals. Groups can, however, have features which simply do distinguish them from all other groups without saying anything else about those groups. For example, humans uniquely inhabit a certain type or range of language with enormously consequential effects. For one instance, this essay, as something to be read, is and can only be addressed to human animals. But identifying and working with this particular difference is not to

participate in instituting it. The same is true of working with the particular difference in personhood we will discuss.

As we have noted, this discussion does necessarily involve working with and so reproducing a problematic, more fundamental kind of “rupture.” But that rupture, being unavoidable, can for its part only be addressed through participation in the problem.

For the same reasons, our thesis does not make any statement or implication about the many possible differences with respect to personhood between different kinds of nonhuman animals. We are only making a point about a particular and very limited aspect of personhood. Analogously, Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011) point out with respect to the extension of invariant rights to nonhuman animals for which they and others argue, that “even within the category of human beings, many rights are differentially allocated on the basis of capacities and relationships.” That is, “equal inviolability is compatible with variations in a wide range of other . . . rights” (22). Accordingly, that Donaldson and Kymlicka also argue for a “group-differentiated conception of human-animal justice” does “not diminish the significance of these universal rights” (40). Fundamental relevant differences between sub-groups and between individuals do not preclude general statements about the larger group that apply to all of them.

Our initial approach will be analogous to that of Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011), who argue for animal rights partly on the basis that “domesticated animals are capable of forming relations with humans that allow them to manifest a subjective good, to cooperate, and to participate—in short, to be citizens” (105). Along these lines of being guided by “intersubjective recognition” (30), we shall, for our purposes, restrict ourselves to arguing that some kinds of nonhuman animals are persons at the very least in the sense that they are capable of relating to and participating in bonds with human beings specifically as persons. In that respect, they

themselves clearly have something of what we understand by personhood. As Cynthia Willett (2014), too, argues of elephant communities, for example, “Elephant social networks establish more than mere analogies between human and elephant societies. Webs of sentience and discourse entwine the two species in the biosocial ethos of common ancestors and shared habitats” (5). Willett makes this argument in the course of a wonderful account of many dimensions of sociality, ethical commitment, and appreciation both within and across animal species. Our own point, of course, is limited only to one specific aspect of personhood.

To approach nonhuman animal personhood via human personhood in this way is not to say that humans are the measure of worth. First, as we have noted, it is not clear that being a person is estimable at all in this context. Second, the concern with nonhuman animal personhood among animal students and activists is precisely to establish that nonhuman animals call for the same respect we accord to humans because they are persons just as we are. The concept of personhood with which this concern works is the human one we are already familiar with. And it is appropriately so. Working with this familiar concept does not imply that humans are the measure of personhood, but that the concept of personhood is that measure. It says that the concept we ought to attribute to nonhuman animals is the same concept we already attribute to human animals.

We shall try to justify this minimal sense of nonhuman animal personhood. But in any event, all the disagreements among animal students and activists notwithstanding, the idea that at least some kinds of nonhuman animals are persons, whether only in this minimal sense or more fully, is sufficiently widely held or considered for an exploration of its consequences to be worthwhile even without trying to justify it in its own right. Our main focus will therefore be on

explaining and defending the view of the nature of persons that we have in mind, and on showing how this view makes sense of and helps to negotiate the relevant paradoxes.

Our discussion will turn on the contrast between depth and shallowness of awareness. In what follows, we take depth of awareness partly to involve self-reflection or meta-reflection in the sense, for example, of reflection on the adequacy of our awareness to its objects or of our fidelity to the deliverances of our awareness. This reflective distance is also what allows a considering awareness of our attitudes towards the objects of our awareness (up to and including our attitudes to our lives and the world in general), and of the appropriateness or otherwise of these attitudes. For example, it allows critical or appreciative recognition of the significance of the objects of our awareness, and with this recognition it allows such attitudes as respect or disrespect towards others and shame at failing to live up to the standards appropriate to a relationship or to a situation.

By contrast, superficiality of awareness takes its objects and itself unreflectively for granted. A superficially aware being may, for example, like or dislike what it is aware of, and appreciate or be critical of that object in that sense, but the issue of the adequacy of its attitude to its object, and with that issue the nature and significance of the object in its own right, are not part of its conceptual range. We shall also argue, however, that, in important respects, depth of awareness involves the specific absence of reflection, and that this conflict in the character of depth expresses the paradox in the nature of persons which structures our ethical relations with some other animals.

We shall argue that nonhuman animals are more limited than human animals with respect to their capacity for reflection but that, because of the paradox in question, their awareness is consequently correspondingly deeper than that of humans.²

Our discussion is not at odds, then, with views such as Willett's (2014), that "experience occurs not primarily through the cognitive and linguistic capacities that set humans apart from other animals but through bodily and sensory immersion in a partly shared world" (12). Reflection is not necessarily primary in experience or even always in personhood and its depth, but we argue that it is in some form or modulation nonetheless essential to personhood and its depth. Willett herself in fact rejects, for example, the "recurring binary of emotion versus reason" (15), and she argues that "key" to her "critical pragmatic approach is the role of affect-laden, but not necessarily irrational or noncognitive, attunement for the clusters or communal associations that compose a biosocial network" (12).

While the resources of both Eastern and Western thought on which we draw illuminate the nature of the paradox that we argue characterizes personhood, in the relevant strands of Eastern thought this paradox is often developed in a way that offers detailed insight into the relation between human and nonhuman animal personhood. Consequently, in the final section of the paper, as we turn to what this paradox allows us to learn from nonhuman animals about human nature and life, it is these resources of Eastern thought that will offer the most help.

² In connection with nonhuman animals' more limited capacity for reflection, Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011), for example, point out that "Domesticated animals may not *reflect* on the good, but they *have* a good—interests, preferences, desires—and an ability to act, or communicate, in order to achieve their good" (112).

1. Paradoxes in Our Ethical Relations with Nonhuman Animals

Among the paradoxes we have in mind are the following. First, if we take depth of awareness to involve self-reflection or meta-reflection, then nonhuman animals clearly are not capable of the kind of depth of awareness that humans have. (To avoid confusion, let us note that this is not our final view: we shall also argue the opposite shortly, as the other side of the paradox in question.) Nonhuman animals do not engage in metaphysical or existential speculation about the nature of reality or worry about their place in it. They do not agonize, say, over whether they are living worthwhile lives or whether they are morally adequate. As Raimond Gaita argues, ‘only human beings can reflect on what happens to them, and take an attitude to what happens to them because of such reflection. An animal can suffer, but it cannot curse the day it was born . . . The problems of life’s meaning cannot arise for an animal’ (2004, 117). (This is not a matter of what may happen, unknown to us, in other animals’ private minds. As Wittgenstein argues, there is a host of behaviors and social interactions that go along with such “private” exercises of mind, and these are patently absent in the case of nonhuman animals.)

In contrast with the view we defend here, Gaita makes this point to argue that there are no respects in which nonhuman animals can have depth that is fully equivalent to ours. Yet at least in some respects many nonhuman animals are also clearly capable of the same kind of depth of serious attachment and of meaningful appreciation and fellowship as our own. They trust, adore, feel abandoned, and grieve (again, with the kinds of behaviors and interactions that go along with that “private” experience). It seems plain to see that nonhuman animals are as deeply, if more simply, affected by these feelings as we are. It seems clear, for example, that they can appreciate their human person as irreplaceable and unfathomably precious, or that they can be devastated by the loss of their human person. It is very difficult to argue that this is

anthropomorphizing on our part. Their conduct in the relevant situations is a detailed and varied match for deep reactions of this kind, and it seems very forced to try to construe this match as really the result of a kind of coincidental surface parallel.

To elaborate this point for a moment, this kind of construal in fact seems largely to proceed either on the basis of sheer assumption about how nonhuman animal conduct can reasonably be interpreted (the assumption is given privilege as a basis for interpreting the evidence) or by relying on exceedingly outdated views of nonhuman animal emotions, especially regarding mammals. This construal typically does not consider or take into account the growing general shift in conceptualization of animal life or the growing mountain of relevant observational evidence. Examples include the altruism and sexual play of bonobos, their political games and infighting, and gorillas engaging in heroic acts of kindness (De Waal 1989, 1996). Frighteningly, one also recognizes a level of personhood (even if an unpleasant one) in some acts of violence by orca, dolphins, or chimpanzees (De Waal 1989; Patterson *et al.* 1998). There is an impressive array of evidence that, across a range from noble to dastardly, nonhuman animals feel and think in ways that respect or disrespect their own and others' personhood.

There are probably degrees in how far one can pursue these values and similarities. The case is relatively easy for mammals, especially ones with whom humans have significant interactions (such as dogs, cats, and horses), and with wild animals who have been the subjects of specialized (often life-long) studies, including great apes, some monkeys, wolves, large felines, bears, elephants, dolphins and other cetaceans (De Waal 1984, 1989, 1996; Griffin 1992; Hearne 2007; Masson 1995; Massumi 2014). The point needs more careful articulation concerning birds, but Gaita (2005) and bird lovers report that depth of attachment, fondness, and also longing and grief are common to them as well. Even reptile enthusiasts can readily articulate

how a snake or lizard behaves quite differently when lovingly handled and consistently socialized than when left to itself or in a cage or the wild.

What is more, these deep kinds of feelings and reactions which nonhuman animals clearly have are not simply separable from straightforwardly cognitive awareness. As Wittgenstein, for example, notes, and as Hearne (2007) argues specifically in connection with dogs and horses, these kinds of emotional reactions are inextricably intertwined with the cognitive and interactional details of the form of life in which they occur and outside of whose context they lack the conditions to occur. For instance, these feelings necessarily involve awareness of what it is that one is attached to: in this case, a person, with everything that goes along with, for example, trustworthiness, companionship, preciousness, and irreplaceability. This kind of emotional awareness also has a great deal in common with depth of cognitive awareness. Among other things, it distinguishes another from oneself and in that respect involves self-awareness, and it registers the contribution the other makes to the quality of one's life as a whole, which is a kind of existential or metaphysical awareness. (For a detailed and wide-ranging argument that all animals (up to and including earthworms) are capable of abstraction and therefore of a kind of reflection, see Massumi 2014.)

Nonhuman animals, then, seem not to have anything like the general depth of awareness we have, and yet also seem capable of the kinds of appreciative attachments that exhibit a version of or something substantially in common with that depth of awareness.

A second paradox that results from accepting that nonhuman animals are persons is that, while they need to be taken seriously as beings worthy of nurture and not to be harmed, we cannot consult them or consider their viewpoint on much of what we do to treat them well. To

this extent, we seem not to take their personhood seriously. Steven Laycock (1999), for example, articulates the difficulty:

Busy imposing our own views, speaking for the animate Other, we are not genuinely open, receptive. And it is no excuse to complain that . . . we must speak for the Other because the animate Other cannot speak for itself . . . The legitimization of human paternalism reduces the question of animal subjectivity to trivial decidability . . . And our openness to the animate Other is thereby foreclosed. (279-80)

A third paradox is that, if we accept that nonhuman animals are persons, they need to be respected accordingly, and yet, instead of giving them their own voice, we have to reflect for them on their behalf, not, in this case, simply because we cannot consult them, but because they are not capable of the relevant kind of reflection. This again suggests the kind of condescension that disrespects their personhood.

It is true in this connection that, in the human context, we have developed a conception of “dependent agency,” or agency “exercised in and through relations with particular others” who are trusted and “who have the skills and knowledge needed to recognize and assist the expression of agency” (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011, 104). But the same paradoxes arise in these human cases too. If the account we give of human-nonhuman animal relations succeeds, it should therefore offer helpful insight into this human-human kind of case as well.

2. The Nature of Persons

These paradoxes are characterized by a conflict between understanding and treating some nonhuman animals seriously, deeply, and authentically, on the one hand, and, on the other, superficially and in a trivializing way because without the obligation to engage thoughtfully with

their perspective. We propose, however, that this conflict arises in these cases because the nature of persons in general is itself characterized by a structural conflict between depth and superficiality. Consequently, as we will try to show, the corresponding conception of the nature of persons offers resources for understanding and resolving this conflict in the case of our ethical relations with nonhuman animals.

Our point of departure is that, as, for example, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Ortega y Gasset, Plessner, and various strands of thought within the Daoist and Zen traditions argue in different ways, the nature of persons, insofar as they are beings with self-awareness, is in a fundamental sense divided against itself. In fact, it is so much so that it is partly constituted by being what it is not. Why they might think so is intuitively graspable in a general way in the intimate relation that both Heidegger and some strands within Daoism, for instance, understand to exist between Being and Nothing, where what each of these terms means *is* in part what the other means. More simply, reflection on oneself presupposes some kind of distance from oneself; and if it is truly one's *self* that one is reflecting on, then the entity doing the reflecting, and so being at a distance, is the very same entity that it is at a distance from.

In Wittgenstein this characterization of personhood is only implicit and very indirectly suggested. As it happens, it is also expressed in propositions that he insists are nonsense; but this is nonetheless nonsense that he considers worth expressing prior to dismissing it. That is, it has a role to play as a rung in the ladder to insight. (For a defence of the legitimacy of this reliance on 'what cannot be said' and so of the kind of reading of the early Wittgenstein that follows here, against both objections of incoherence and, for example, the 'resolute reading' proposed by interpreters like Diamond 1991, see Barris 2012.) As Wittgenstein notes, his nonsensical propositions must be 'used . . . as steps—to climb up beyond them' and so to 'see the world

aright' (1961, 74, no.6.54). In this case, he argues that 'the sense of the world must lie outside the world,' since 'all that happens and is the case [that is, everything in the world] is accidental' or, in other words, has no particular value or meaning. Consequently 'what makes it non-accidental cannot lie *within* the world' (71, no. 6.41, our insertion). And he applies this to the human will: 'If the good or bad exercise of the will does alter the world, it can alter only the limits of the world . . . not what can be expressed by means of language' (72, no. 6.43). In other words, some of what most fundamentally characterizes us as persons falls outside everything that can be said about us.

In Heidegger the idea is more explicit. Heidegger argues that temporality provides the structure of human being or 'Dasein's primordial and authentic Being-a-whole' (1962, 380), since it provides the structure of being in general, and he argues that it is part of this structure that the present is constituted by the past and future. That is, there is no isolated present moment; instead, the present itself is already characterized by concern for the future and by building on the past, that is, by what is outside the present. As a result, 'temporality is the primordial "outside-of-itself" in and for itself' (377). Consequently, human being, which temporality structures, is also 'outside of itself.'

Henry Johnstone makes a comment that helps to situate this idea more concretely. He points out that philosophers necessarily conceive contradictory all-embracing standpoints simultaneously, and he notes that the fundamental self-transcendence for which Heidegger argues is what allows a self to do this. As he puts it, this self-transcendence 'is a characteristic of a being which in its being is what it is not, and is not what it is. The responsible philosophical thinker,' for example, in being committed to an all-embracing conception of reality, 'is both totally immersed in his point of view [since it is all-embracing] and not totally immersed in it

[since he or she is also aware of another such view]—and thus his being as a responsible thinker consists in his being what he is not and not being what he is’ (1978, 121, our insertions).

Similarly and even more directly, Ortega y Gasset argues that because we shape our current lives with respect to a future whose character is in turn partly decided by our own current choices and actions, our existence consists, in part, in our inventing what we currently are. In other words, it consists partly in our not already being what we nonetheless currently are. A being which has a life not merely in the biological sense, but in the way that is characterized and shaped by reflective consciousness, ‘is a project as such, something which is not yet but aspires to be.’ Consequently, this kind of being is ‘an entity whose being consists not in what it is already, but in what it is not yet, a being that consists in not-yet-being’ (1961, 112).

Helmuth Plessner connects this idea that persons are essentially divided from themselves specifically with their character of being self-reflective. He argues that humans are self-divided in that they both *are* their bodies and yet are able to reflect on their bodies from a perspective beyond them (1970, 35). As a result, what it is to be a human being is to be ‘a relation of himself to himself’ (35), a being which is ‘eccentric’ to herself and her life (36). This self-relation is a relation between ‘two mutually exclusive orders’ (36), one in which her bodily self is the unique center of her perspective, and one in which she is aware of her body (and with it, Plessner notes, her consciousness) as simply one object or phenomenon among others. In other words, Plessner argues, her nature involves ‘an actual break’ in her ‘way of existing’ (32). Plessner, however, emphasizes the body as the object of our self-reflection, while we argue that reflection or awareness is equally eccentric in relation to itself, and also to the concepts or meanings that partly constitute its substance. (Plessner also argues for a sharp contrast between human and

nonhuman animals with respect to self-reflection, a view to which it is part of our aim here to offer an alternative.)

Before we turn to Daoism and Zen Buddhism, we need to give some historical context for what we are drawing from these traditions. The traditions of Daoism and Zen Buddhism are historically connected. But, like the various traditions of Western philosophy, and even the interpretations of the individual Western philosophers we have discussed, each of these traditions nonetheless itself consists in both many profoundly divergent and conflicting lines of thought and insight and also many profoundly conflicting interpretations of even the most basic doctrines expressed within each of these strands. As we have with Western thought, we shall take up only very selected insights among those expressed within and shared between these traditions, and then too we shall offer a particular line of interpretation of these insights that is largely our own. We shall, however, try to show that this interpretation is fairly clearly supported by the classic texts as well as by explicators of these selected insights, even situated in different historical periods. Any account we or anyone else gives of these insights will inevitably conflict sharply with the many existing alternative and defensible accounts. Our goal, however, is not to provide a definitive interpretation of these elements and strands of Daoism and Zen, but to show that these traditions offer resources that support the sense of our thesis and offer help in clarifying and developing its insights. Our presentation is certainly very selective; but it should be enough to show that there is good warrant for drawing on some of the resources within these traditions for support and help in pursuing our thesis.

Unlike the Western insights on which we have drawn, these strands or resources of thought are not located especially in particular authors or periods but emerge as insights that recur throughout both of these traditions. For the East Asian specialists who might be following

our argument, we are referring here, with respect to Daoism, to the texts and milieu of early philosophical Daoism (pre-Common Era) and their shared concepts. With respect to Zen (Chan), we are referring to these same concepts as they were inherited and transformed in Medieval Buddhism, especially in artistic and narrative traditions, for example in fable, story-telling, and Koan traditions. We also draw on the echoes of these concepts that inform contemporary Zen. These concepts include the Buddhist concepts of *suññatā/sūnyatā* (emptiness) and *anattā/anātman* (not self, no fixed essence), and the Daoist concepts *pū* (uncut wood; natural) and *zírán* (of itself so, natural), *wú wéi* (not acting, without effort), and the metaphors and images that these traditions use to illustrate these concepts.

We should clarify that it is not our purpose to say that the *Dao De Jing* or *Zhuangzi* or, for example, Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka school (or later use of its thought by Chan/Zen) are making the argument we present here, but rather that the arguments and illustrations that they do make for their own purposes nonetheless also contain the insights that help us to illustrate and develop something like the paradoxical sense of personhood we are exploring here.

It is worth saying, however, that because, as we argue, the paradoxical structure we develop here is genuinely expressed in these Daoist and Zen insights, and because this structure is not generally recognized by interpreters of these insights, we do believe that it allows a more accurate understanding of these texts than their interpreters often present. For example, while one common view of concepts of this type is that they are esoteric and mystical in a way that puts them beyond expression in language, we would argue that this is a misunderstanding of Western interpreters guided by the limitations of Western conceptions of sense and its possibilities. (We would argue that there are also similar misunderstandings in interpretations within these traditions themselves; as our own traditions make abundantly evident, self-

misunderstanding within a tradition is just as possible as misunderstanding by outsiders.) Instead, we would suggest that these concepts are not limited to being exclusively mystical in this way (although they certainly may have fundamental mystical resonances in addition to their articulable logic), but instead are paradoxical in systematically articulable and practically applicable ways, some of which we are exploring in our argument. We will return to this example of mystical ineffability and offer some more specific justification for our view of it in section 4.

Turning to Daoism and Zen Buddhism, then, there are strands in both traditions which take as a basis that mutually exclusive opposites structure each other and, in particular, structure the nature of human beings. As a result, for these lines of thought, the paradox of personhood that we have described is a central problem of human existence. In Cleary's translation, the *Dao De Jing*, for instance, states as a fundamental principle that 'being and non-being produce each other/ difficulty and ease complement [create] each other/ long and short shape each other' (1993, 9; see also Lin 2006, *Dao De Jing* 2). And this has consequences for human characteristics and conduct: in Lin's translation, 'Therefore, sages desire not to desire/ . . . They learn to unlearn/ . . . To assist the nature of all things/ Without daring to meddle [or contrive]' (2006, *Dao De Jing* 64; see also Cleary 1993, 48f.). Buddhism, for its part, traditionally sees human beings as a kind of constellation of forces (*skandha*) that inter-exist (*pratitya samutpada*) and simultaneously arise together with all other objects and forces, including those that oppose and negate them.

As these lines of thought in both traditions point out, if, for example, we fight a tendency in ourselves or in a situation, our very act of fighting it will end up reinstating or even reinforcing it elsewhere. If we fight aggression, we are ourselves in that act aggressive, and if we

oppose weakness, we implicitly acknowledge our own vulnerability which motivates us to try to eliminate it. Conversely, if we actively endorse a tendency in ourselves or in a situation, we turn out also to have instated its opposite: for instance, if we endorse aggression, we are in peaceable harmony with aggression itself.

Just as for the Western thinkers on whom we have drawn, for these lines of thought in Daoism and Buddhism the *what is* and *what is not* (and other opposites, polarities, and negations) are, at the most fundamental level of thought and reality, interdependent. They include each other and cause each other: they produce each other, reveal each other, and support each other. Each characteristic of reality, then, includes in itself the characteristics it excludes. Consequently, reality, including the reality of persons, is ultimately structured by not being what it is.

Further, a central opposition often expressed in these traditions is that between reflection and lived spontaneity, and it has the same paradoxical structure as the other oppositions. As we will illustrate shortly, for these strands in both Daoism and Zen, the unreflective everyday life we typically lead is a false life, unfaithful to our true nature; but the reflection that this seems to call for in turn also falsifies our reality, since taking thought interferes with our simply being what we are and living in the reality of the moment, undistorted by our idiosyncratic and necessarily inadequate conceptions. The problem, then, is not simply to recognize and live in accordance with what we are, but to recognize precisely that we are not what we are, and to live in accordance with that self-incongruity. Both lived spontaneity on its own and reflection on its own are too self-consistent to express the non-self-coincident reality. A Daoist and Zen solution is to reflect so as to recognize our essential non-self-coincidence, and since this includes the non-self-coincidence of that reflection itself, it puts us in a place where the logic of the paradox takes

over our reflective activity. As a result, we, as reflective beings, ourselves become the paradox, and in consequence are at once a lived spontaneity and a reflection that takes a distance from that spontaneity, each of these partly *as* the other.

As the *Dao De Jing* expresses this, ‘To know unconsciously is best./ To presume to know what you don’t is sick/ Only by recognizing the sickness of sickness/ Is it possible not to be sick’ (Cleary 1993, 55). (Lin 2006 suggests flaw and fault, where Cleary reads ‘sick.’) As the first aphorism of the text explains, even ‘The Way, *as such*, cannot be called *the way*’ (translation by Ruff): even the Way or Dao of Daoism itself is not the same as itself, and so must be followed partly by not being followed at all. The result is that the life which accords with our nature—and which could not be more bafflingly unrecognizable from the perspective of our unreflectively, naturally lived lives—is characterized by such images as ‘sitting and forgetting,’ the ‘watercourse way’ (following the Daoist ‘way’ is like water running down hill), the ‘uncarved block’ (a nature that has not been ‘meddled with’), or a life like that of nonhuman animals, trees, or stones. But of course water, blocks, nonhuman animals, trees, and stones do not need to follow a discipline in order to be what they are or live their kind of lives. And, as we noted, the life of ‘sitting and forgetting’ is so different from what we ordinarily think of and experience as our unreflectively, naturally lived lives as to be unrecognizable from that perspective. Unlike nonhuman animals and stones, then, we need to work enormously hard to become like these beings to which that very work itself and even our own type of being is entirely irrelevant.

Similarly, Buddhist mindfulness practices consist in disciplined, self-conscious exercises of being dull, not meddling, or mindfully sweeping a floor, in order to produce a transformation in which the person lives out these behaviors by not reflecting on them. But as Zen Master Shunryu Suzuki warns, in keeping with a central and very old teaching tradition in Zen

Buddhism, ‘To develop . . . clear . . . judgment, it is important to give up, or to be ready to give up everything, including your understanding of the teaching and your knowledge of Buddhism When you are trying to give up everything, you haven’t given up everything yet’ (2002, 117). Or, again, if ‘you stick to giving up ego-centered practice’ then ‘you stick to ego . . . True egolessness . . . is not just egolessness. It also includes ego practice, but at the same time it is the practice of egolessness that is beyond ego or egolessness’ (86).

In this spirit, Zen tradition records a story of a Zen calligraphy master, Kosen, writing the words, ‘The First Principle.’ The story says that the master wrote the words over and over again, but was consistently criticized by one of his students.

‘That is not good,’ he told Kosen after the first effort.

‘How is that one?’

‘Poor. Worse than before,’ pronounced the pupil.

Kosen patiently wrote one sheet after another until eighty-four First Principles had accumulated, still without the approval of the pupil.

Then, when the young man stepped outside for a few moments, Kosen thought: ‘now is my chance to escape his keen eye,’ and he wrote hurriedly, with a mind free from distraction: ‘The First Principle.’

‘A masterpiece,’ pronounced the pupil. (Reps and Senzaki 1985, 39)

In the light of Suzuki’s comments, we should note that the failures to get away from self-consciousness that precede the success here are part of the story of that success, in that they are part of how it came about. It is also not an accident that the student is teaching the teacher (we are what we are not!), and that this lesson concerns ‘the first principle.’

In the next section, we shall draw on these insights from various Western and Eastern thinkers and lines of thought to clarify the structure of the paradoxes we are concerned with. This clarified structure will then allow us, in the final section, to show how these insights allow a resolution of the paradoxes and the ethical problems they pose.

3. The Structure of the Paradox of Personhood: The Interplay of Depth and Superficiality

As one result of the noncoincidence of this kind of self-reflective being with itself, what is authentic or deep or to be taken seriously in such a being—that is, what is genuinely and importantly true of it—*is* partly what does not coincide with it, what that authenticity or depth excludes. Consequently, what is deep in such a being *is* partly what is unreflectively indifferent to its truth, or what is shallow and trivializing. This kind of being, the being of persons, then, is already inherently characterized by the same kind of paradoxical conflict between depth and trivializing superficiality that we have noted in our relations with nonhuman animal persons.

This suggests, in turn, that the kinds of paradoxical conflicts we have identified in our relations with nonhuman animals also occur in our relations with other humans and ourselves. So, for example, a doctor may need to treat a person as a physical object in order to diagnose and heal the person without being distracted and overwhelmed by the personal significance of what she is doing. We shall argue, however, that there is a difference in the nature of this self-incongruity in nonhuman animal persons that makes these paradoxes sharper, and so also easier to see, in the case of our relations with nonhuman animals.

Before we turn to nonhuman animals, however, we need to clarify one more aspect of the relation between depth and shallowness in the light of the insights we have noted in these various Western and Eastern traditions. We have described depth as a distance from our awareness and our attitudes. But it is also true that reflection on its own is really a failure to engage in our lives. This is one of the outstanding lessons of *Hamlet* (III.1.83-88.):

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
 And enterprises of great pitch and moment
 With this regard their currents turn awry
 And lose the name of action.

As Gaita argues, while deep, serious ethical engagement with others involves a form of thoughtfulness, this is not the thoughtfulness of discursive, propositional reflection, still less meta-propositional reflection, but of spontaneously appropriate responses rooted in the informed experience that has become built into who we are. What is more, these are responses that are themselves actually part of our grasp of the situation, for without these responses, taking place immediately upon our encounter with the relevant situations, we have already failed both to grasp the ethical issue and to engage others with the seriousness that belongs to ethical understanding and conduct (2004, e.g. 164ff). If, for example, we have to consider whether it is right to save the drowning child before us, we have already failed to respond morally to the reality of the situation. And if we do already believe it is right but solely on the basis of prior reasoning, detached from our immediate response in action, we have still missed the moral reality, which, Gaita argues, requires our concerned presence, not impersonal arguments. It is

clear, for instance, that the mother who recognizes the irreplaceable preciousness of her child only because she has reasoned it out from general principles is lacking something essential to that recognition. Achieving moral awareness, Gaita argues, or in other words achieving depth and seriousness of awareness and conduct, at least in moral contexts, involves an engagement of our person, and not reflective reasoning. It does involve thoughtful awareness, but awareness that is already part of the make-up of who we spontaneously are, awareness that is already expressed simply in our being.

Now, we argued above that depth in general consists at least partly in self-reflectiveness or the kind of distance from our own awareness that allows evaluation of that awareness. We have now argued exactly the opposite, that at least in some contexts depth is a matter precisely not of self-reflectiveness but of finding ourselves already engaged, already having made the relevant evaluations. We have argued too, however, that personhood is non-self-coincident to the extent of including what it constitutively excludes, and consequently that part of personal depth itself is in fact shallowness. As a result, if self-reflectiveness is depth, then shallow unreflectiveness is in fact part of depth too—and, what is more, is part of self-reflectiveness itself.

Putting all of this together, it suggests that, while depth involves a self-reflective structure, part of this structure is the kind of unreflective engagement Gaita emphasizes. Conversely, while ‘pale’ self-reflectiveness is what allows depth of consideration, on its own and without the shallowness that is the other side of depth it is in fact a form of shallowness.

To say this more concretely, as we have argued and as Gaita himself emphasizes, on the one hand, a being that is not capable of reflective distance from itself could not have the kinds of awareness of others in which, according to Gaita, moral response consists: awareness of those

others as beings in their own right, uniquely distinct from others and ourselves, to which our conduct can be appropriate or inappropriate. On the other hand, however, that reflective distance is also not enough, and to be deep in the sense Gaita argues, this kind of awareness, we suggest, also needs to have become sedimented within us so as to constitute our spontaneous, unreflective responsiveness, what Gaita calls our moral sensibility.

Reflective awareness, while essential to depth, is, when taken entirely on its own or exclusively in its own right, part of what depth excludes. Putting this the other way round, depth requires a dimension or elements of what it also excludes: unreflective superficiality.

The same idea emerges if we look at depth independently of the conception of personhood as non-self-coincident, and instead purely on the basis of the conception of depth as self- or meta-reflection. If depth involves self-reflection, then the reflective level considered in turn in its own right cannot be characterized as deep, since it is not yet itself reflected upon. It is itself only the reflection on the first order level, and not on itself. In order for the level of reflective thought to be deep, we would need to reflect on it itself in turn. This leads either to an infinite regress or to a switch back to the first-order level, in the light of whose standards we would then evaluate the reflective level. Gaita's argument exemplifies the latter. In either case, depth turns out not to be located at a particular level, but at the view of that level from elsewhere. Consequently, if depth is self-reflection or meta-reflection, then, while the first order level on its own, without reflection, is shallow, the reflective level that provides depth is, on its own, also shallow. Depth on its own and shallowness on its own are both forms of shallowness. Depth, then, on either the reflective or the unreflective levels, requires, as part of its own reflective and so non-self-coincident structure, elements of distance even from itself or, in other words, elements of what is not itself: it needs to comprise both depth and unreflective superficiality.

Even given this paradoxical, non-self-coincident structure of personhood with respect to its depth, however, we do not have to think of ourselves as, because of that contradictory structure, necessarily always being as false to ourselves as we are true. There is still a sense in which we can meaningfully be said to be deeply true to ourselves. For example, we do say, and we mean something by it, that someone is behaving out of character, or that we should be ourselves in certain situations, or that we are what we are. In the context of this paradoxical structure of personhood, we suggest that achieving truth to who we are means that our self-reflective activity successfully identifies and accepts our spontaneous, unreflective character and activity, and, further, that it also recognizes and accepts and so is true to the inescapable incongruity between itself and the unreflective aspect of ourselves. Alternatively expressed, it accepts and so is true to the incongruity between itself and that part of itself that it excludes.

This acknowledgement and harmony cannot be simple or complete, since the incongruity is essential to the very nature of what is being recognized and accepted. But, first, the very paradox of the incongruity helps to move beyond that incongruity. The problem is that this is an incongruity of reflection with itself, and therefore inescapable when reflection occurs; but then this means that it is not a conflict between two unconnected and unconnectable things, but precisely a conflict of reflection with *itself*. It is part of the paradox that the incongruity is already an aspect of a unity. In accepting the spontaneous elements of ourselves, then, we engage in or exercise the unified side of the paradox, and in accepting the incongruity itself, we also coincide, as it were, with our own non-self-coincidence. As a result, a unity is expressed which is nonetheless true to both sides of the paradox.

Second, these mutually exclusive characteristics of depth need not always or even often be simultaneously relevant and so actively interfere with each other. Consequently, there is a

sense in which they can make uninterfered-with room for each other. Further, there are degrees to which they can do so.

We suggest that when they make room for each other to a sufficient extent, and when they also make room for their non-self-congruity, we are then living out, as it were, the essential gist of ourselves.

We suggest that this complex structure of spontaneity and considering or evaluative reflection is at issue when we speak of being ourselves or even of not being able to help being ourselves. There is no simple spontaneity in personhood, in people living or acting as persons (in contrast, say, with undergoing physiological events such as reflexes). But there is, we have argued, a spontaneous, uninterfered-with coordination of spontaneity and unspontaneous, considering reflection.

According to what both these Eastern and Western lines of thought argue with respect to the paradoxical character of human life, awareness, and personhood, then, we have to recognize, reflectively, the shallowness of our spontaneous lives, and then in turn recognize, reflectively, the shallowness of our deeply reflective lives, so that this further reflection can recognize the self-undermining logical inadequacy of the whole process and abandon all of its terms and their opposites—including the consequent equally self-undermining logical inadequacy of this last part of the process, that of abandoning the process and its terms! It is helpful to recall the calligraphy master here, whose failures to get away from self-consciousness were part of how his success came about. This recognition then returns us to a more completely unreflective spontaneity, one that does not even choose between spontaneity and reflectiveness.

In short, we need to achieve simply being ourselves. But because we are reflective and so non-self-coincident beings, in our case achieving (not being yet) and simply already being are

the same thing. Our failure adequately to undertake being who we are is part of our successfully being who we are.

With all of this in mind, we now turn to the personhood of nonhuman animals and our ethical relations with them.

4. The Nature of Nonhuman Animal Persons and Our Ethical Relations with Them

As we have noted, even if it is fully accepted that nonhuman animals are persons, it is clear that they do not have the extent of self-reflective capacity that humans have. They are not able to stand with widely consistent relevance at the kind of meta-distance from themselves which typically belongs to humans. Yet it also seems clear that some nonhuman animals are capable of deep, authentic, serious relations with humans, and, as we have argued, this presupposes an awareness which has a great deal in common with the depth that belongs to that meta-awareness. This suggests that these nonhuman animals have depth in something more like the sense that Gaita identifies through his conception of nonreflective sensibility. But even with respect to that nonreflective aspect of depth, their lack of reflection can only be relative. As we have discussed, depth that does not include superficiality or reflective distance in at least some respect is not depth at all; and the superficiality which is part of the depth of awareness is precisely reflective distance taken on its own. And we have noted that nonhuman animals can have the kind of relations with humans that presuppose not only depth in the sense of a serious taking account of a human person, but also presuppose an awareness that has a great deal in common specifically with deep, straightforwardly cognitive self-awareness or self-reflectiveness. Nonhuman animal persons are not, then, as it were, simply and without perspective immersed in living out their being.

But it remains true that, relative to human persons, the self-reflectiveness of nonhuman animal persons is very limited. Perhaps we can describe it as mostly inactive, implicit, or as entering into the structure of nonhuman animal awareness in a fundamentally static way, where human self-reflectiveness, by contrast, structures our awareness in an active, explicit, and potentially deeply transformative way. So, for example, human self-reflectiveness removes us from our actual circumstances with sufficient distance and definiteness to think, as in an example of Wittgenstein's, in terms of 'the day after tomorrow' (1958, 174e), as nonhuman animals evidently cannot do. (Wittgenstein writes, 'A dog believes his master is at the door. But can he also believe his master will come the day after tomorrow?')

Now, in humans, the development of our capacity for self-reflection also has the consequence Hamlet laments, that our reflective activity can become detached from much of our spontaneity and lived experience, in the senses both that it no longer registers it accurately and that it is motivated not to acknowledge it. Since depth consists in a unity of reflection and unreflective spontaneity, this detachment means that both our reflective activity and our lived spontaneity have then, to the extent of that detachment, lost their character as elements of depth.

Further, although, as we have argued, self-reflection and lived spontaneity as dimensions of depth are in fact parts of each other, it is specifically the activity of self-reflection that brings about this detachment and so the change to shallowness. We might therefore say that self-reflectiveness is the part of depth that allows it to become mere shallowness. To modify an earlier statement, while depth involves a self-reflective structure, taken entirely on its own or in its own right the 'pale' self-reflectiveness that allows depth of consideration is something like the merely shallow part of depth.

In nonhuman animal persons, by contrast, we have suggested that self-reflectiveness enters into the structure of their awareness as a more or less static part. Consequently, it cannot and does not become detached from their lived spontaneity in the way human self-reflectiveness can. Nonhuman animal persons, then, constitutionally live out depth as the settled coordination of self-reflection and spontaneity we have argued depth truly is.

This suggests that what limits nonhuman animals in this context is not in fact lack of depth, but lack of what we have argued is distance from depth—or, in other words, lack of superficiality. They are missing that developed dimension of reflectiveness which can make it mere shallowness.

But, as we have also argued, depth of awareness is partly constituted by superficiality and more specifically by self-distance, so that depth on its own is again a form of shallowness. More precisely, depth is a form of shallowness to the degree that we engage it without as fully engaging the shallowness that is its complement. Consequently, nonhuman animal persons are more purely deep than humans, but exactly because of that they are also more shallow. Or, putting this the other way round, they fail to be as deep by being more purely and exclusively deep. This, in fact, squares exactly with the animal imagery that recurs in Daoism and Zen and what it points to as involved in becoming true to ourselves. We will return to this at the end of the paper.

There is a stereotype of nonhuman animals as immersed or caught up in being, as more ‘natural’ than humans. (Heidegger, for example, takes this stereotype for granted in contrasting nonhuman animal and human awareness. This aspect of his account has been the focus of ongoing criticism in recent decades; see, for instance, MacIntyre 1999, chapter 5.) Our argument is that this stereotype is true, but in the more complex form we have outlined, in which the

‘nature’ or ‘being’ of self-reflective entities itself is not simply self-coincident. In this context, to be natural is partly to make room for and so to live out one’s non-self-coincidence or, that is, one’s partly not having one’s own nature (one’s non-naturalness).

All of this is not to say that nonhuman animals cannot be shallower or deeper than each other, or deeper in different respects and on different occasions. It only means that they can only be so with a more limited range of degree and respects than human persons can.

The paradoxes we have noted in our ethical relations with nonhuman animal persons each involve a conflict between understanding and treating animals seriously, deeply, and authentically, on the one hand, and superficially and in a trivializing way on the other. On the conception of personhood that we propose, however, in each case both modes of understanding and treatment make sense without detracting from the sense of the other, and as a result without involving disrespect to the personhood of nonhuman animals. In each case, we appropriately treat nonhuman animal persons less deeply, because they are less deep in the relevant respects. They are unable to reflect with the kind of cognitive depth which will maintain a conversation that communicates in articulated detail or which will protect their interests in a human environment. But precisely because they are less deep in these respects they are more purely deep. So, for example, precisely because of their more limited self-reflection, they live out more fully what Gaita refers to as a deep person’s presence to others.

As a result, our treatment of them as less deep in these respects need not condescend, since, in the light of this paradox, it can be based on their fully acknowledged depth, in that in this context it acknowledges and so responds to this depth in the very acts that disregard it.

By way of parallel, we do not disrespect or condescend to children by responding to what they do not yet have the means to articulate and identify in their own experience. We can speak

on their behalf as they cannot, and we can even do so in their presence and to them, in a way that takes up and fully respects their autonomy of concern and thought.

We suggest that the same paradox occurs in both contexts, and consequently the same ethical adequacy of the paradox holds in both cases.

That nonhuman animal persons' relative lack of reflection and articulacy does not in many fundamental respects mean their lesser depth is shown further by the ways in which we can learn profoundly from nonhuman animals. There is also a very illuminating parallel in this respect between these kinds of lessons and what we will discuss below is the frequent Zen and Daoist procedure of showing rather than saying.

Vicki Hearne notes that in training dogs to track, she has no access to the phenomenon of the scent trail the dog is working with, so that when she commands the dog to 'find it' the question arises,

how can the 'find' of the command refer to anything when I can't know the activity the verb expresses? How can the 'it' possibly have a referent . . . How, that is can I ever know whether I am right or wrong to correct the dog, praise her, feel satisfied or not with the efforts of the day, and so on? (2007, 96-7)

She points out, along Wittgensteinian lines, that meanings occur and are learned as elements of the activities in which they play a role, and more broadly in the context of a form of life in which those activities in turn have their sense. Consequently, she learns the meanings relevant to the activity in which she trains a dog by participating with the dog in that activity and other, connected ones. In this process, her conceptual range expands to include, if only to some degree, what is salient for the dog in that activity, but what was entirely inaccessible in the terms of her conceptual resources prior to the dog's participation.

In order to teach these meanings to her, the dog did not have to know them reflectively, in a way that is separate from the activity itself: ‘with Belle I am learning something that is not something she knew ahead of time’ (93). For ‘In tracking, it is only in the dog’s answering illuminations that you know whether you have said anything at all, or what you have said, and if the dog doesn’t answer, then that is that, for the moment at least, for language’ (106).

In many ways, the Daoist and Zen traditions are often somewhat more like the dog in this story than the trainer. They often show their meanings through indirectly communicative paradoxes, aphorisms, and poetic images, not through discursive speech. The Zen interpretive traditions often repeat this method, but with a little more articulation.

While, however, both traditions often say that ‘truth cannot be told,’ both nonetheless do also *say* (or write) a lot that saying cannot say what is most important. In this way, according to the logic of the strands of these traditions that we have discussed, they are showing that saying can succeed, provided it recognizes that it cannot succeed. That is, by showing this about saying, they are making room for the non-self-congruence of saying (and showing) itself. And by doing this, in turn, they are presenting the possibility of living in truth to that non-self-congruence. Differently expressed, they are giving access to the non-self-congruence of reflective meaning, and so to the non-reflective aspect of reflective meaning itself.

Consequently, too, as we noted earlier with respect to Zen and Daoist teaching, these statements are not simply pointing to what is ineffable and so truly beyond meaning and reflection altogether. If that were the case, what was said would have no meaningful content for us at all, and so could do no showing.

While a dog or a horse teaches us about tracking or riding, Daoism and Zen teach us the fundamentals (or the ‘first principles’) of being human. But as we have just argued, even in their

reflective communications the type of activity these traditions employ to do so is precisely the type of indirectly and interactively communicative activity nonhuman animals live out in participating in meaning- and insight-generating activities with us. That is, despite nonhuman animals' relative lack of articulacy and reflection, the way in which they can teach us—not simply what we can learn from them but what they actively participate in directing us to learn—occurs in the same medium and at the same fundamental level of granting access to meaning as lessons that are as deep as it gets.

To the extent that nonhuman animal persons are not only less deep but also more deep than we are, then, the specific lessons we can learn from them can include insights about the deepest issues.

Among these insights, as the Daoist and Zen traditions recognize, are what it means to be a human being, and how to live more truly in keeping with our own reality. A cat through its adoration and contempt, a dog through its cooperation and loving team spirit, a horse with its knowing stance, or a chimpanzee in its politics are instructive to us about our shared forms of life. And they are all the *more* so because of the profound gaps of understanding between us. These unavoidably striking and thoroughgoing gaps help us to notice our own most deeply taken-for-granted conceptual orderings of things. In doing so, they allow and provoke us to consider these, our 'first principles', and so come to understand them better. And the encounter with these thoroughgoing gaps also helps us to expand our conceptual and appreciative reach in ways we could not achieve on our own.

More particularly than this, however, as Daoism and Zen often insist, nonhuman animal persons model for us how to be fully and properly human. They make evident to us that dimension of our own depth which our depth is inherently not, and which is consequently hardest

for us to keep in mind and to own in our activity: our simple being who we are, even in our inherent failure to be who we are. As we have argued, this does not mean that nonhuman animal persons teach us to be simply and innocently ourselves, in the sentimental New Age sense. Since neither we nor they are simply what we or they are, this means, instead, that they teach us to be, like them, simply and innocently creatures that are crucially not simply and so not innocently themselves. Of course, we must be not simply ourselves in the more actively reflective way in which we humans are not simply ourselves. That is, we *can* be simple and innocent, but, for example, *in* acknowledging and so making room for the ways in which we are constitutionally not innocent. In doing so, we own and consequently can live as capably responsible for our distorted and gratuitously self-serving and harmful aspects, rather than distorting or denying them and rather than, as we sometimes do, incoherently condemning their very existence.

Daoism and Zen also often insist we should be like trees, blocks, and stones. We can take this as an indication of the reality of these as partly non-self-coincident too. As we noted, many strands of both traditions argue that mutually exclusive characteristics are interdependent in the structure of *all* things. We suggest that this gives a clue, too, about what these traditions might mean when, as they sometimes and famously do, they say consciousness is everywhere, in contrast with what it might mean on the basis of our relatively unreflective concept of consciousness as simply what it is. Here, the consciousness that is everywhere is itself also and equally not consciousness at all: and that aspect of it too, then, is in the same everywhere.

In the light of a more properly reflective understanding of personhood, then, to recognize nonhuman animal persons' lack of reflective depth and to relate to them accordingly is not to disrespect and patronize them. Instead, it is to grasp something of what is to be deeply

appreciated about them. It is also to grasp and so be able to live more fully and successfully something of the complexity of what it is to be a human being.

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