



# *Cruel Insensibility Without Authority*

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## ***Cruel Insensibility and an Ethics Without Authority***

### **Abstract:**

This article considers the phenomenon of being insensible to animal cruelty, and how such insensibility relates to human transgressions of the planet. I consider the visualization of animal culls that appeared upon the emergence of the coronavirus pandemic. The spectacular wasting of animal life, I argue, discloses the economic logic by which humanity secures itself as a sovereign species. Such a logic and its visuality are not only underpinned by a broader necropolitical paradigm, moreover, they co-constitute a primal scene that *enables* the liquidation of animal life to the point of extinction. Following the evolutionary biologist Rob Wallace, I consider animal culls in relation to the phenomenon of virus dumping, a systemic perturbation of forest ecologies preceded by the influx of capital in agricultural markets that results in the release and rapid evolution of viruses. I therefore recapitulate the relationship between animal cruelty and the economy of planet wasting that subtends it. In this vein, I consider how the visuality of animal cruelty is predicated on a banal violence. Yet, drawing from Hannah Arendt, I call for

an ethics without authority, a version of the *Sensus Communis* by which we might witness cruelty from within the depths of planetary transgressions.

**Keywords:**

Animal cruelty, representation, primal scene, virus dumping, *sensus communis*

What would it mean to put our trust in the efficacy of violence? In her article on the aesthetics of loss, Kathryn Yusoff (2012: 578–92) considers the difference between the loss of representable others and the loss of those who are unrepresentable. Drawing on Judith Butler’s (2004) proposal that grief become a resource for politics, particularly in overturning the distinction between those who are grievable and those who are not, Yusoff questions the terms by which extinction is represented. Such terms define the possibilities of experiencing and expressing the loss of biodiversity not merely as an imperative of planetary politics, but also for a deepening of geophilosophical ethics. She suggests that we only see the surface appearance of extinction because our distribution of the sensible is trained toward the beauty of nonhuman animals. In our image of biodiversity, we do not see our own implicit representational violence, nor the specific acts of violence that lead to the extermination of the animal kingdom. She poses the question, “Why is it that we trust in the efficacy of beauty (non-human charisma, animal magnetism, vibrant matter, the ‘wild’ poetic moment), but do not yet want to trust in the efficacy of violence?” (Ibid.: 587).

In what follows I would like to take up Yusoff’s challenge in order to consider how such a trust might ease us out of a necroaesthetic condition. For I would suggest that it is not merely the case that we turn away from the totalizing violence of species extinctions, but that we have inadvertently developed a taste for it as part and parcel of a sadistic form of critical judgment. Such “taste” is a sedimentation of what Achille Mbembe (2019) describes as a necropolitical paradigm. But as a tautological form bound up in this paradigm, extinction and animal abuse more broadly can be exposed for what they are: nothing short of acts that bring reflexive pleasures in the spectacle of mass abuse and death as means of distinguishing and defining a privileged form of human life.

Yusoff (2012: 580) suggests that species extinctions are a form of banal violence stemming from a deep negligence. While this is certainly true, it may also be the case that such negligence is a defining characteristic of the ideal of privilege that has been borne

out through the history of colonial violence. I therefore consider the extent to which we are in a moment of reversing such negligence and discovering an ethics from the depths of our violence. Might we look at extinction with a view to experiencing the fullness of its implications, not merely for the nonhuman others who are extinguished, but of the totalizing deprivation effected by their loss? Perhaps our transgressions of the earth and its manifold beings might be recuperated as an ethics. In other words, I would suggest not so much that we trust our violence, but rather that our violence is a fundamental transgression that might occasion a call to resist animal killing. To argue this is to suggest that transgression is, disturbingly, the origin of a geophilosophical ethics.

### **Gross Negligence as an Economic Necessity**

In November 2020, nearly a year into the global coronavirus pandemic, Danish authorities announced that they would be “culling” their populations of farmed mink; as many as seventeen million animals. The mink were gassed and then buried in mass graves in the countryside. When the order for the cull was given by the prime minister, politicians and scientists spoke to the rationale for such squander, while corporate heads spoke to the devastation such measures would have for the thriving fur industry. Within weeks, other European countries that farmed mink followed suit. A mutation of the coronavirus had been found to be evolving in mink farms. While purportedly the coronavirus “came from” a wild animal, it was transmissible to mink from humans and could evolve rapidly and unpredictably under factory farm conditions. One mutation called Cluster 5 had been transmitted from humans to mink and then returned to humans (Murray 2020). Such interspecies transmissions exponentially increase the risk of both higher levels of contagion and of the virus becoming more deadly. While farmers were compensated for the loss, as Tage Pederson, the chairman of the trade body Copenhagen Fur commented, the effects of the cull marked the permanent closure and liquidation of the fur industry (Ibid.).

The factory farm, where the mass killing of animals takes place, is not merely a site affected by the coronavirus pandemic; it is a primal scene of its origin. Indeed, factory farms have originated many other highly volatile viral outbreaks such as avian flu virus (H1N5) (Davis 2005). Moreover, this primal scene has been obscured by the biopolitical spectacle that shaped the discourse of the pandemic to revolve around human health and the risk of death (and especially the value of some human lives over others) rather than to be conceptualized

as a planetary event. Despite ample research from evolutionary biologists that shows how the factory farming of animals is the seat of dangerous pathogens that *regularly* threaten to reach pandemic proportions, when the coronavirus did indeed appear and spread across the world within weeks, the origin of the virus seemed to have been infinitely deferred by a deluge of conflicting information that pointed to wet markets in China (with pangolins and bats as the guilty culprits), or laboratories in China (in the vein of a Trumpist scapegoating mentality). Sinophobia abounded. Bats were captured and culled, and in certain cases — in Peru and Indonesia — their roosts were targeted for burning (Wu 2020).

One source of confusion appears to have been a sudden lapse in the differentiation between wild animals and farmed animals. Both, it seemed, were newly threatening to humans. The lapse also begged the question: Is the threat that of a new zoonotic agent or could that agent be brought under control by the existing economy of animal management? Either way, the human world had been invaded, and killing animals appears to have been the reasonable course of action to regulate the situation. But how do these losses — economic, animal, and human — relate to the extinction event that we were already undergoing before the coronavirus came into visibility? How can we read the loss of lives and money in relation to the loss of biodiversity? These are the questions arising from Yussuff's provocation that while we are sensitized to some nonhuman animal losses, there are multitudes to whom we are insensible. This insensibility is founded on a normative violence that a priori erases the possibility of those lives mattering as lives. Insensibility is also, therefore, a form of negligence, a failure to see those lives as lives because of the a priori violence that binds the living — whose right to life is defended — to those whose lives are lost to visibility and consideration altogether.

I would argue further, however, that in thinking of human and nonhuman animals together as a community constituted by losses that are joined by violence, it matters also what kind of violence is at play. For negligence itself as the underpinning of banal violence (following from Hannah Arendt's conceptualization of the "banality of evil"), is not merely a gap in consciousness but rather, as Arendt (2005) shows, it is a negative concept that negates wilfully by its very refusal of thinking. The force of negligence appears as a conspicuous recession from the discourse of reason by which decision-making takes place. Negligence is a function of following the law, then eschewing responsibility from that same law with which one was abiding. We might consider further that the economy proper is the

very zone of negligence that generates the conditions of possibility of banal violence. For, as Judith Butler (2010: 159) suggests, even Arendt's (1963) account of collective judgment in the face of banal violence, which conceives of the political sphere as a joining of people in a just social organization, is predicated on the occlusion of its economic life. Indeed, Butler argues, the performative effort by which Arendt imagines a more complete condemnation of Eichmann's banal violence (to create a hypothetical global plurality that could act as a community of judgment), requires the economic to be suppressed in order to construct an idealized form of linguistic and political agency. Yet, Butler questions, how can we think a social bond without understanding how the basic materials of life are exchanged, how basic needs are addressed or fail to be addressed? Likewise, we must wonder how nonhuman animals are prefigured economically in such a way that they become politically invisible, even in the midst of a spectacle of mass animal death and extinction. We must examine how the economy is not only negligent of animals, but how it profits from such negligence; even the negligence of extinction. For, Butler continues, the economy is constituted as a singular and monolithic sphere precisely by the processes and practices that produce the effect of its knowability as defined and unified as such.

Following from Butler's reflection, I am suggesting not only that the economy profits from negligence (such a reflection is nothing new), but that the economy deploys the logic of human supremacy and a reflexive pleasure in such supremacy in order to define itself. As John Law (2008) argues, the culling of animals to control viral outbreaks is a blunt technological instrument that relies on simplistic definitions of the common good and cover over localized human-animal relationships. The display of controlling the coronavirus by killing millions of animals, albeit farm animals, not only performs the logic of an animal enslavement regime in which they are ushered through existence in acts of captivity, bodily brutality, and death, it actualizes an assemblage that violates the planet so profoundly it cannot but be thought of except as a pornography of biopolitics. In intimating that what is at stake is human pleasure in animal misery — sadism — I am referring both to the media spectacle that accompanies animal culling (but not daily slaughterhouse deaths) and to the fact that this spectacle appears precisely at the moment when the boundaries of the human have been rendered precarious by its own restricted economy of life. Animal culling appears as the triumph of the human over the unruly animal kingdom against which it seeks to distinguish itself. The squandering of the mink does not fulfill a sexual desire, *per se*, but rather is an effect

that fulfills the economic drive underlying the biopolitical regime and its continued struggle for human supremacy.

In situating the factory farm as a primal scene of origin, I draw from Rodolphe Gasché's (2012: 130) argument that the primal scene for Freud is an intermediary reality. It is neither exclusively material nor imaginary — neither subjective nor objective — but a third psychically-charged reality. The primal scenes in Freud, whether of parental intercourse, seduction by an adult, or threat of castration, operate as fantasies that enable autoeroticism (Freud 1953). But, Gasché argues, as experience, the primal scene functions as both individual experience and as a phylogenetic inheritance from prehistory. The experience of the primal scene is nevertheless predicated on a gap between the individual and the transcendental structure that actualizes in and through the fantasy. Thus, the question of origin — the insensible as such — is the primary object of the fantasy. And the fantasy itself is the imagined, but nonetheless real experience of a concealed origin (and experience of origin as reality).

I am suggesting not only that the factory farm is an origin of the pandemic in an objective sense, but also that the scenes of animal culling that accompanied the coronavirus pandemic are telling fantasies of its origin. Both factory farm and its spectacular visibility upon the emergence of the coronavirus expose its origin and the fantasy by which it is structurally enabled by the biopolitical regime. The factory farm as primal scene is *par excellence* an experience of the real economic drive behind the transgressive violence by humans toward nonhuman animals. The scenes of the mink cull are biopolitical fantasies that enable and originate viral outbreak. They are not just epidemiological ground zeros (though they are that too), but their specular appearance in the media also activates the reorigination of human sovereignty. The images are sadistic in that while they may appear to condemn that squander, they nevertheless lubricate the economy of sacrifice and misery that drives its epistemic underpinning.

### **Virus Dumping, Economic Violation, and the Necrotic Effect**

My suggestion that a biopolitical fantasy founds the bodily abuse and death of animals is indebted to Achille Mbembe's (2003; 2019) account of necropolitics. For Mbembe, Foucault's theorization of biopolitics opens the door to consider the unaccounted-for history and contemporary reality that the management of life is more ac-

curately conceived as a securitization and promotion of privileged white life through the torture of racialized slaves at sites of hard labor and war. In his account of necropolitics, not only does the intimate tie between race, slavery, and the disposability of lives become clear, but so too does the necropolitical drive at play in sites such as plantations, concentration camps, genocides, and terrorism begin to take shape. For example, he argues that the plantation is both a politico-juridical structure and a space in which death itself is wielded on the body of the slave as a continuous threat and presence of the power of the sovereign and the economy of the master-slave relation. The slave is alive but is always kept in a state of injury, in a “phantom-life world of horrors and intense cruelty and profanity [...] Violence, here becomes an element in manners, like whipping or taking of the slave’s life itself [...] Slave life, in many ways, is a form of death-in-life...” (Mbembe 2003: 21).

From Mbembe’s reading of the spaces in which death becomes a presence within life through the cruel treatment of animals we might extrapolate that the factory farm is another prime site at which the necropolitical regime unfolds. It is from this perspective that philosopher and activist Syl Ko argues that the category of “the animal” is in and of itself rooted in a racist and colonial categorization of living beings that justifies the exploitation, violation and elimination of non-white humans and nonhuman animals (Syl Ko 2017: 11). Racialization and animalization have therefore become axiomatic instruments of the biopolitical regime. In keeping with the idea that the factory farm is not merely a site of necropolitics, but is a primal scene, I am suggesting that there is an efficacy to the screening of animal culls that actualizes animal death in human life as an integral part of necropolitics. It is not merely the case that animals are abused and killed, then, but that the screening of their mass death serves as an affirmation of human authority – the position of mastery over the animal – while at the same time effecting the infinite recession of the reason for their deaths. A sadistic tautology is at play: the cull of the animals is the culmination of a totalizing violation of animal life. This totalizing violation is then embedded in the affirmation of human supremacy, which enables the killing in perpetuity as a transgression without reserve.

But what if we were to recuperate the economic logic from its disappearance into a sadistic morass, and to ask again what is the origin of the coronavirus pandemic? In no uncertain terms, evolutionary biologist Rob Wallace (2020) argues that every viral outbreak is preceded by an influx of capital. For decades, Wallace and his researchers have been charting the paradigmatic economic logic

behind the outbreak of viruses and other pathogens such as avian flu virus, the swine flu (H1N1), Ebola, SARS, and the novel coronavirus. Wallace's assessment comes from studying viruses not as discrete microorganisms that are implicitly dangerous to humans, but rather as beings whose evolutionary trajectories are best understood in the context of forest ecologies, which, when perturbed by farming monopolies, result in contagions that are difficult to gauge within the current spatiotemporal parameters of representation that are predetermined by capitalist economic schemas. In other words, the economic causes of viral outbreaks are frequently obscured by their biological effects on humans.

Central to Wallace's analysis is the concept of virus dumping, a technique of bioeconomic warfare used by multinational agribusinesses to colonize developing countries. Virus dumping occurs when a multinational agribusiness dumps grain or other farm goods into another country's market (Wallace 2016). When borders are open, such corporations can legally dump goods in that other country and offer competitive pricing below production costs. While it appears that the corporation will take a loss, ultimately commodity dumping is a preliminary manoeuvre to recuperate profit by outselling the competition, collapsing all competing businesses and creating a monopoly. For example, from the 1990s until 2005, in large part due to the North American Free Trade Association, major goods such as corn, soybeans, wheat, rice, cotton, beef, pork, and poultry were dumped in Mexico, creating an increase in the gap between the cost of an item and pricing from 12 percent to 38 percent, and costing Mexican producers about 6.6 billion dollars in production costs (Ibid.: 113). The multinationals such as Smithfield Foods dumped major agriculture commodities related to pork farming, thus priming Mexico as a pork producer that would supply the U. S. But these agricultural monopolies also produced side effects: a series of factory farm-based pathogens that thrive from the genetic homogeneity of mass reproduced factory farm animals coupled with the uniform industrial spaces of the farm itself. As Wallace charts, the dumping of agriculture commodities on the market is tantamount to virus dumping in those countries that are being targeted by a monopoly.

As an example of virus dumping, Wallace considers the 2009 outbreak of swine flu (H1N1), the first strain of its kind to reach pandemic proportions in forty years. While Mexico's pork industry was the source of H1N1, it was tracked to Smithfield Food's subsidiary, Granjas Carroll. The area had been seized for grain and hog imports through a cheap commodity ploy, and consequently it was primed for



a virus dump that left it financially and environmentally devastated. To add insult to injury, such bioeconomic warfare has almost no consequences for multinational agribusiness. In fact, corporations can prosper when influenza strains emerge from their own operations because they spread out to any remaining competition, and the corporation can skirt economic punishments with the horizontal integration of surrounding farms. Small operations often suffer catastrophically in the face of virus outbreaks because they cannot afford the cost of the available virus prevention plans for their animals. Legal accountability and moral responsibility is elided by the sheer capaciousness of the possibilities of economic growth.

The concept of virus dumping captures how the global economy obscures a shared condition of embodiment between human and nonhuman animals, and that this shared condition makes us all prey to agricultural monopolies. The causal connection between capitalist parlay and viral outbreak is rendered invisible while the global vectors of viral contagion are visualized exclusively through the lens of microbiology, pharmaceutical corporations, and a global health crisis. But viruses are more than discrete organisms and global pandemics are not “natural.” Viruses and their ecologies are awoken and perturbed by the movement of capital.

Factory farming collapses the barriers between forests and urban areas and provides the perfect conditions for the infiltration of pathogens. Viruses originate in forested hinterlands and are released into the food supply chain when those hinterlands are razed for massive farms and plantations. For example, the corporate seizure of land in Nigeria for rubber plantations by Firestone eliminated the forest ecology that held Ebola in a symbiotic relationship with humans (Mitman 2021). But the Ebola pathogen and its effects were treated in isolation from the forest complexity that slowed its evolution and rendered it largely inconsequential to humans. Likewise, the coronavirus evolved at lightning speed not merely because of its transmissibility across animals and its high levels of contagion, but because it could travel unencumbered from Chinese farms, to the wet market, to the airport (Wallace 2020).

Wallace and his research team discovered that the forest ecology balances the evolution of viruses with a stochastic differential: a level of “noise” (Wallace 2016: 332–33). If the stochastic differential is below a certain level, a virus can have a sudden population explosion. But if forest noise is above a certain level, it frustrates the virus’s attempt to find “susceptibles,” vectors that foster its reproduction and evolution. Forest noise cloaks possible viral pathways so that pathogens simply burn out on their own. Thus, Wallace

argues, “The formalism [of the stochastic differential] implies that under certain conditions the forest acts as its own epidemiological protection and we risk the next deadly pandemic when we destroy that capacity. When the forest’s functional noise is stripped out, the epidemiological consequences are explosive” (Ibid: 333).

Once the market has been mobilized by the corporation and land has been mobilized for farming, the epidemiological protection of forest noise is eliminated, and viral outbreaks ensue. Such outbreaks are expensive, and the costs must be born by the countries that have been mobilized by the market. The corporate dumping of agricultural commodities onto the market leads to virus dumping and the enforcement of dependencies on pharmaceutical corporations, if not a pharmacological paradigm tout court. The circuitry of capital and its necrotic effects — from deforestation, to animal farm outbreaks, a deadly pandemic, and animal culls — is not only closed, but is also denied. The origin of viral outbreaks remains invisible, while legal accountability and moral responsibility recede into the realm of impossible thoughts.

In March 2020 in the heart of the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic, but before the cull of the mink in Denmark, a video that dated back to 2011 started to recirculate on social media: millions of pigs were being buried alive in South Korea. The pigs were being poured by dump truck into mass graves lined with plastic and then covered in dirt by bulldozers. The video and headlines had appeared after an outbreak of foot and mouth disease (FMD), a pathogen that was so difficult to control that it took South Korea three years before it was declared FMD-free, and even then it started to suffer another outbreak only two months later (Murray 2021). While it is impossible to set the horror of such a scene aside, it is nevertheless within range to pose the question: Why did this necropolitical scene reappear in the throws of the coronavirus pandemic and as a prelude to the mink culls and surely other mass animal deaths as well? For this scene appears to function in the imaginary in such a way as to *replay and enable* the sadistic relationship between humans and animals rather than to incite resistance, change, or even inquire as to the chain of events that might lead to the squander. Instead, the logic of such a shocking scene appears to confirm that despite the pandemic — because of the pandemic — we are violent enough, diligent enough, taking any and all measures possible to securitize humans and restore us to order and health. That an original economic violence may have instigated the spread of a planetary necrosis is concealed in a public mourning over the economic loss. The pigs themselves are cursed into invisibility as the sacrifice on which the economic loss can be felt.

## Ethics Without Authority

To return to the question regarding the aesthetics of loss, Yusoff asks: “Why are we deaf to the speech that has no listener?” (2012: 589). It is not because our senses fail us, she argues, but rather that banal violence creates an ontological configuration outside of human social worlds that would otherwise demand relations of care. Yusoff therefore posits that banal violence, by virtue of its very indiscriminateness, condemns its object into insensibility, foreclosing an originary encounter by which an ethics might be forged. Banal violence banalizes. But I would suggest further that insofar as this is true, economic parlay such as the kind that leads to virus dumping *disguises* itself in banal violence. It propels animals and ecologies outside of human sociality while nevertheless liquidating them in the service of an autonomous “humanity.” Its deployment of banal violence is therefore, paradoxically, anticipated and executed with technical, or perhaps more accurately, algorithmic precision. It is therefore not banal at all but willful, though this will is displaced and difficult to locate. Perhaps capitalism has always disguised itself in this willful banality; perhaps the disguise is its paradoxical origin.

The sight of animal culls as a primal scene of extinction points toward a host of entities that have been driven into insensibility: the animals themselves, but also the laborers who have been challenged forth to carry out the cull, pathogen spillovers, forest noise, biodiverse environments. Further, the primal scene appears to neutralize any thought that it is in and of itself an exposure to human cruelty. It is not just that beings have been driven into insensibility, then but that relations and experiences have as well. That cruelty as such has been deployed as an instrument of capitalism appears as an autojustification of what we see. The economy of the image — that the image is formulated within a ruthless economy — anesthetizes the viewer to its cruel support. Thus, while we might be looking at a scene of willful banal violence, we do not experience its wilfulness, only its givenness as a “necessary” evil.

The experience of cruelty as such is thus also driven into insensibility — almost. While any relief from cruelty, even numbness, may be welcome (especially at a time when, in the throws of a pandemic, the human death toll was rising exponentially), if our senses are dulled to animal misery, this dullness itself might at least be the indication of a thinking about those condemned to insensibility, including we cruel humans ourselves. I am suggesting, then, that we consider how to recuperate a sensibility and a thinking of cruelty. For while it seems that cruelty belongs to the relations that define

and conserve sites of private property and commodity manufacture — the privileged master-slave relationship as Mbembe (2003) argues — necropolitics drive at this regime’s limit experiences, exploding into war, siege, missile attacks, and suicide bombing. It is for this reason Georges Bataille (1985 [1933]) rethinks the master-slave dialectic in terms of the relationship between predator and prey, and the economy that binds them together as such. For Bataille, our inherent animality vitalizes the master-slave dialectic. It also propels these polarities into perpetual engagement and reversal in a restaging of the capitalist economy as an insatiable sadistic hunger for the consumption of life, which becomes a planetary force (Boetzkes 2021). If cruelty is a manifest planetary predicament, then it is this very concealed intentionality that must be taken hold of.

Michael Marder suggests that we find the courage to admit to our unity with the violated earth, an earth that has never been because it has yet to be thought: one that has been “fracked, disembowelled and filled with our garbage, even as we are filled with them” (2020: 74). To admit to this unity, however, we must also learn to trust our violence, for it is only by coming to grips with the history of cruelty to which we are insensate that such a love could possibly ensue. As Marder argues, this unity with the violated earth not only stems from a unity of love and knowledge of the other as a moral love but is rather precipitated by the passage of that love to ethical life. Here it becomes crucial to consider the relationship between transgression and ethics, indeed transgression as the event that *occasions* the possibility of ethical reflection. Thus, Allan Stoekl (2007: 254) proposes that to consider human waste behavior through the terms of Bataille’s dialectics, it becomes possible if not imperative to distinguish between versions of excess that are on a planetary scale and that guarantee the survival of the species, and those that entail a blindness to the real role of wasting. Such a refusal of the true role of wasting in maintaining the planet’s carrying capacity ultimately threatens human survival and the survival of the planet. Ethics is the surprising discovery of this difference from the heart of this refusal to acknowledge the transgression of human wasting from from within the midst. To love the violated earth would be to see our negligence of that violation, and the cruelty of that negligence.

As Butler (2004: 156) points out, when Arendt rewrites the Eichmann trial with a view to taking hold of the reasoning for his condemnation to death — to convene a heterogeneous “we” by which to judge — she does so to neutralize the judgment from becoming a gesture of violence that would consolidate Israel as a nation-state. Arendt refutes the use of the scene of legal decision for the pur-

poses of nation-building by re-enacting the judgment as it would be reasoned by a generous plurality. The plurality would more fully dispel the inherent violence at the basis of the nation-state. Such an organization would break the possibility of the repetition of state violence by reasoning a form of justice in and through the expenditure of the sociopolitical origin of the crime. In this vein we might ask what organization, what form of plurality, might judge the cruel economy that is expanding by virus dumping and its related necrosis? For it is not only the case that being insensate to the miseries and extinctions of animals inhibits an ethical life with the violated earth. The insensate condition dooms us to the repetition of economic logic because it prohibits recognition of the transgression of the earth on which it is founded. The condemnation of this deprivation of sense, then, does not require any disciplinary knowledge. Indeed, it does not need to be reasoned at all. Rather, in a variation of Arendt's fiction of judgment, we might convene an alternative *Sensus Communis*, an organization that experiences the violation of the earth as violation, the cruelty as cruelty. This organization must not be economic, nor bound to the knowledge or culture industries of that economy. It would organize sense unbound from such authorities. Instead, it would recognize a common origin of human sensibility with those same animals whose bodies are being ushered through the necropolitical machinations of abuse and death. Its reasoning would therefore accept animal suffering as integral to its form of judgment, and condemn on the basis of that commonality. Such an organization of the senses would not only trust its violence, then; it would understand that this trust is the basis of a planetary ethics without authority.

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