

Introduction

Tranimalities in the Age of Trans Life*

EVA HAYWARD and JAMI WEINSTEIN

Abstract This introduction puts into conversation two seemingly divergent analytics: transgender studies and animal studies. It asks: How does the prefixial nature of *trans*—across, into, and through: a prepositional force—further transfigure the “animal turn”? If the animal turn has recharged inquiry into difference and ethics, what happens to these magnetic pulls when they are *transformed*, *transacted*, or *transduced* by trans studies? Taking as a central logic that transgender subjects have never been fully human—consider how the indeterminate pronoun “it” has been used to name transgenders—the introduction posits how a trans heuristic allows us to better understand the limits of “the human” as a biopolitical tool for privileging a few so as to de-, in-, nonhumanize the many. Trans exposes what is at stake in these prefixial maneuvers, what is materialized and dematerialized, what is made livable and unlivable, killable and un-killable.

Keywords trans*, animal, biopolitics, humanism, difference, ethics

It has long been argued that humanism has reached a breaking point and no longer possesses critical purchase, if ever it did; as Donna Haraway (2008: 1) suggests, “We have never been human.” This debate notwithstanding, humanism seems not to have advanced our understanding of what it means to be “human,” especially if the humans we are theorizing do not fit neatly into well-known, privileged categories. Humanism delineates a normative standard of legibility by which all others are read, measured, controlled, disciplined, and assigned to fixed and hierarchical social statuses (Chaudhuri and Hughes 2014; Chen 2012; Lippit 2000; Haraway 1989). This administration of norms is the justificatory axle through which violent practices of exclusion, discrimination, and oppression are meted (Shukin 2009; Ahuja 2009; MacCormack 2008; Giffney and Hird 2008). Because so many among us have been excluded from the elite status of being considered fully human in the restricted and universal sense that humanism has articulated, researchers across a multitude of disciplines continue to unpack the underlying frameworks that provide for the standardizing force privileging the

anthro-ontological humanist human over all others (Weheliye 2014; Kirksey and Helmreich 2010; Chen 2010; Weil 2010; Hansen 2008). And this is one area in which transgender/trans* theory, too, can make a significant intervention.

New questions have emerged from the heuristic of trans: How does the prefixial nature of *trans*—across, into, and through: a prepositional force—further transfigure the “animal turn”? If the animal turn has recharged inquiry into difference and ethics, what happens to these magnetic pulls when they are *transformed*, *transacted*, or *transduced*? A turn is cause to move, a difference in position, a change in nature: the animal turn has enabled creatures to migrate from the margins to the center of theoretical interrogatives. As “bare life” (*zoe*), animals were cordoned off from *bios* (the good or proper life), but current movements work to give animals political life (Agamben 1998). A similar claim can be made for transgender or trans* lives. As *Time* proclaimed in a recent cover story (Steinmetz 2014), we are living in a “transgender tipping point.” Out of diagnosed, medicalized, and pathologized bare life, trans matters have become legible and social. Even the indeterminate pronoun *it*—which so many of us bore as a mark of our inhumanity, our sexual indifference—has been upended by a politics of pronouns (see Butler 1993; Stryker 1994). Just as Jacques Derrida (2008) resists the idea of *the animal* as a generic and insists on the particularities of *animals*, so too might we subject *transgender* to our own demands for a proliferative specification and speciation, enacted in the typographical register through the conceptual operations signified by an asterisk. *Trans** foregrounds and intensifies the prehensile, prefixial nature of *trans-* and implies a suffixial space of attachment that is simultaneously generalizable and abstract yet its function can be enacted only when taken up by particular objects (though never any one object in particular): trans* is thus more than *and* equal to one.

Geopolitical trauma is the landscape through which trans* and animals meet. These habitats are neither the apocalyptic vistas of ecological destruction nor the quaint harbors of biocultural hope. Trans* meets animals not in the ‘posthuman’ moment or in the ‘Anthropocene’—terms that have come to define academic cliques that are often immured from the extremes of this dying planet—but in a time of *trans*life* (see Haraway 2008; Weheliye 2014). The sticky tentacularity of “*” signals not the primacy of “the human” (as both posthuman and Anthropocene inadvertently reassert in their efforts to trouble human dominion) but the *eventualization* of life. If trans* is ontological, it is that insofar as it is the movement that produces beingness. In other words, trans* is not a thing or being, it is rather the processes through which thingness and beingness are constituted. In its prefixial state, trans* is prepositionally oriented—marking the *with*, *through*, *of*, *in*, and *across* that make life possible. Trans*life works purposefully

crabwise to ontological claims; trans* can be ontological to the extent that it is the movement across precisely *vitality* itself.

In this way, trans* is more akin to Donna Haraway's prepositional "becoming with" than Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's rhizomatic "becoming." Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 27) write, "The tree imposes the verb 'to be,' but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, 'and . . . and . . . and.'" In what first appears like a glossing of Deleuze and Guattari, Haraway (2008) offers a keen insight into the syntactical problem of *and* raised to the power of *n*. "If we appreciate the foolishness of human exceptionalism," Haraway writes in *When Species Meet*, "then we know that becoming is always becoming with—in a contact zone where the outcome, where who is in the world, is at stake" (244). For Haraway, "becoming with" is a double operation: in the first, she is foreplacing the energetic or expressive capacity of *with*, its provocation of involvement; secondly, it is a materialization (a specificity) in which *with* capacitates excitation to fold materiality over itself to become more and other. It is not that Haraway dismisses Deleuze and Guattari's intervention, but, as she famously did with "material semiotics" (an effort to thicken Charles Peirce's referential sign) (see Haraway 1989), she places the emphasis on with-ness as way to reinvigorate attention to materiality but also matter's contingent force. As such, this prepositional form of becoming takes into account the intersectional demands of the assemblage (Puar 2011). Trans* is both movement and the force of materialization that may become matter, but only prepositionally so. In Katie King's contribution to this issue, she describes how "labor is revealed and opened by trans; trans is literally the material of its transing. . . . Trans does for animals what few epistemological engines have done: it enables them (us) to be understood as the very processes of mattering."

This is not merely an abstraction of trans*, but describes the political conditions of trans*life. As Laverne Cox (2013) has written, "At the heart of the fight for trans justice is a level of stigma so intense and pervasive that trans folks are often told we don't exist—that we're really just the gender we were assigned at birth." Terrible violence is directed at the non-existing, the never having existed (see Salamon 2010; Najimabadi 2006; Stone 2006; Prosser 2006). This is what makes the turn to ontology so potentially death-dealing, but also revealing. That trans is agitation, operation, locomotion, localization, and action underscores how trans* troubles ontologized states. This is not a new insight, and yet, what innovates this prepositional maneuver is the agglutinating asterisk and prefixial nature of trans that always materializes prepositional movements: it is *moving mattering*. As such, trans* is not *not* ontological but is rather the expressive force *between, with, and of* that enables the asterisk to stick to particular materializations. This articulation of trans* is instanced, for example, by Marcia Ochoa's (2008) term "*loca*-lizations," which is used specifically to denominate the

Venezuelan *loca* as a particular kind of fab(ulation), diva-ness, and transwomanhood, while also situating *locas* in particular locales within globalizing and transnationalizing forces. Trans* is similarly a localization that foregrounds specificity while emphasizing the processes of its materialization; trans* is the expressive provocation, the ontologizing movement itself.

The asterisk, a diminutive astral symbol miming a starfish's limby reach, follows *trans* and attaches to it, attaches it to something else, a spiky allergenic pollen soliciting immunological mobilizations, a viral latching-on to membranous surfaces of words. Trans* is meant, in part, to break open the category of transgender, transwoman, or transman. It is recognized as "an effort" (after all, an asterisk can suggest emphasis, which is perhaps also affective) to include all noncisgender identities. The * is a paratactic: it denotes a database search, it designates multiplication, it can be a disclaimer indexing the fine print, it indicates pseudonyms or names that have been changed, and, in computer code, asterisks around a word will embolden it. The multipointed asterisk is fingery; it both points and touches. If *trans* was not understood, in at least one of its modes, as "always already" relational, working and playing parasitically at the level of language, thought, and ideology, then the * repurposes, displaces, renames, replicates, and intensifies terms, adding yet more texture, increased vitalization.

If the asterisk starfishes *trans*, literally making *trans* a radiated reach—a reach through yet another reach, a fold within a fold—it also speaks to how trans* is animated, vestibulated, speciated, and profligated. The asterisk makes many philosophical points; it is a sensuous node, a composite of affects and percepts that reminds us that speciation is always a cultivated response. The *OED* tells us that a species is an "emission or emanation from outward things."¹ Bodies are not direct products of or reactions to environments but rather manifest sensed, improvisational relationships within the conditions of an organism's emergence (Hayward 2010b: 593). Might we then say that asterism is both an intensification and placeholder, both an absence and a site of radical proliferation? Consider, for instance, the seemingly ubiquitous transsexual phrase, "trapped in the wrong body." It might indeed describe the experiential quality of felt disembodiment—functioning as the reentrenchment of true and untrue bodies, of coherence against incoherent, and of other oppositional logics—but let us remember, *trap* also means mouth, or mode of utterance; it is the "O" curve of lips and throat that makes sounds phonic and names the apprehension of becoming bodily. A trap, in weaving, is also a break in the threads, an unraveling, loosening, unwinding that opens up space. When we think of spider webs, trap is a silk net, a sticky mesh that registers sensation. For the spider, its trap is its nearby-ness, its where-ness, its with-ness (Hayward 2010a). How, then, might we hear the phrase "trapped in the wrong body" as less about authenticity than about textures

of spacetime? As less about fixity and normativity and more about prefixial movements?

Susan Stryker (1994: 242) gave us a warning long ago that transsexuals, in their capacity to be monstrous, arise, like Frankenstein's creature, from the operating tables of their (re)birth as "something more, and something other" than their medical service providers may have intended or imagined; this moving mattering of trans* to become *more* and *other* is necessarily predicated on *with* and *of*. What we might call *trans*differing* finds an emphatic echo, a shared refrain, in what Carla Freccero (2014) calls "animal theory." Animal theory, she writes, "displaces humanism, de-normativizes subjectivity, and turns us toward not difference but differences, one of the most emphatic of Derrida's lessons having been the impossibility of a reference to 'the' animal in favor of singular, differential, abyssal relations" (105). Derrida (2008: 12) asked us to consider "what happens to the fraternity of brothers when an animal enters the scene." In relating to the alterity of animals, Derrida begins to answer his own question by implicating sexual difference: "Animals are welcomed . . . on the threshold of sexual difference. More precisely of sexual differences" (36). Playing against Luce Irigaray's (1985) *This Sex Which Is Not One*, Freccero (2014: 113) reads Derrida's inscription of species differences through sexual differences as "sex that is not one, a sexual difference that is not one either, but many, or more than one." In Derrida's (2008: 20) reading for "animals" against substitutability of "the animal"—marking "animals" as absolute alterity and singularity—he articulates how naming is "a foreshadowing of mourning because it seems to me that every case of naming involves announcing a death to come in the surviving of a ghost, the longevity of a name that survives whoever carries that name." Naming serves to trace "an existence that refuses to be conceptualized . . . and a mortal existence, the moment that it has a name, its name survives it" (9–11). By announcing animals as such—and remember that in this text he is referring to his cat, to her, not just any cat—he is also unavoidably marking their otherness, their sexual difference(s).

Conjoining trans* theory and animal theory, we can problematize the conjunctivitis of "and . . . and . . . and" that is always aiming toward an ontological state, the drive for suffixial endpoints. If the plurality of animal, as Derrida insists, also pluralizes sexual difference, then we find that trans* has always already been a speciating technology. This also exposes one of the feminist roadblocks regarding the attribution of nonontological status to transgender phenomena, an argument that sees all life as an ordering of two (i.e., male and female). Elizabeth Grosz (2010: 109), for example, writes, "However queer, transgendered, and ethnically identified one might be, one comes from a man and a woman, one remains a man or a woman, even in the case of gender-reassignment or the chemical and surgical transformation of one sex into the appearance of another." For Grosz, the

transsexual is not an ontological order, but merely an alteration within the constraints of binary sexual difference, an iterative identificatory gesture with regard to the ontological order of male and female difference, which, she argues, is of an order unto itself. In thus arguing, Grosz advocates for a feminist renunciation of identity and its various politics, proposing instead to reinvest in the materiality of sexual difference—what she has called the return of the real Real. Sidestepping for the moment whatever motivates Grosz's persistent refusal to accept or acknowledge the reality of transsexual/transgender identificatory claims, might not error enter her argument to the extent that she reduces *transgender* to the suffixial *-gender* and neglects *trans** as prefixial capacitation for movement? Can we not concede that gender is a sociopolitical taxonomizing ontologically distinct from, if inextricably entwined with, enfolded mattering? Is there not a way to work nearby to this problem of *trans** ontology, to work *paratactically*, one might say, without foreclosing the possibility of *trans** as an ontologizing capacitation? What happens when we place the emphasis on *trans**'s prepositionality? *Trans**life is not lived merely in or through an abstracted or dematerialized prepositionality but rather precisely through the concatenating force of prefixial, prepositional operations on suffixiated assemblages of spacetime-matterings of a different order—that which it becomes-with. If, for Grosz, *trans** lacks ontology, perhaps this is because *trans** is movement, excitation, and intensification, or a motor of internal instability that drives self-overcoming, unpredictability, and irreducible multiplicity (Weinstein 2010) rather than beingness or thingness.

Just as *trans** intervenes in the normative operations of sexual difference and ontology (e.g., Prosser 2006; Hayward 2010a, 2010b; Salamon 2010; Weinstein 2011, 2012), animal difference announces a radically singular Other marked by sexual differences (Weaver 2014; Kelley 2014; Weinstein 2011, 2012; Kelley and Hayward 2010; Kier 2010; Franklin 2006). It is this coextensive interplay of *trans** and animals that prompts us to think them through the figuration of *tranimalities*. *Animalities* gestures to the affective and perceptual registers of animals, not just to their physical, behavioral, or instinctive qualities. That is to say, animalities are sensuous materialities, composites of affects and percepts. Coupled with the prepositional prefix *trans-*, *tranimalities* is a double orientation: animalities are specificities but remain thresholds of emergence. *Tranimalities* is murmuration, schooling, and swarming. The provisional particular is always already folding into an emergent ensemble. *Tranimalities* puts emphasis on *trans* as a provocation (the condition of an encounter, a meeting), and *-animalities* as individuations that prompt sensuous intra- and interchange, which may then become provocations. *Tranimalities* does not strive to provide yet another critique of humanism simply by adding *trans** insights into the mix or as yet another vector in intersectional critique. The abundance of theoretical interventions against humanism's

investment in regulating and controlling sex/gender/sexuality has already made considerable headway on this front (Chen and Luciano, 2015; Steinbock, Szczygielska, and Wagner, forthcoming; Gruen and Weil 2012; Chen 2012; Giffney and Hird 2008). Instead, *tranimalities* wishes to focus on trans-infused apprehensions and engagements with the expansive world of possibility opened up by non-anthropocentric perspectives. In curating this special issue, we aim to attend to how *tranimalities* entangle and enmesh trans* and animals in a generative (if also corrosive) tension leading to alternate ways of envisioning futures of embodiment, aesthetics, biopolitics, climates, and ethics. In this sense, we see *tranimalities* under the guise of critical life studies—a departure from the academic branding practices that constrain thought by regurgitating essentialisms and naive (in)differences. It is instead a mode of thinking that strikes at the heart of the dilemma that contemporary critical theory has been circling around, namely, the negotiation of the human, its residues, a priori configurations, the persistence of humanism in structures of thought, and the figure of trans* life as a constitutive focus for ethicopolitical and onto-epistemological questions. And so do the essays in this special issue, “*Tranimalities*.”

All the essays that constitute this issue take up productive trans-pollinations among human, animal, sex, and gender. While cuts and division of any kind among these original and powerful contributions could only be antithetical to their very arguments, in broad strokes, we can say that half the pieces bring the theoretical juncture of trans, feminist, queer, and posthuman theories and critical animal studies to bear on the issue of sexual difference, indifference, and humanism. These theoretical explorations interrogate topics such as species panic, the animal symbolic, and the relation between difference and indifference from a trans perspective. They do so in order to demonstrate the extent to which *tranimals* have the transformative power to interrupt humanism and its sexually differentiated legacy by challenging the boundaries between, and existence of, differentiated, essential kinds.

The other half of the essays, in more concrete moves, reveal the precise ways that trans practices uncover the crossroads and interplay between humans and animals, erroneously differentiated—turning their gazes to beavers, dog training in *Second Life*, and animal drag to flesh out various humanimal transings. In these *tranimalic* explorations, the erosion of hegemonic differences in sex, human-animal, and nature-culture is witnessed in specific encounters. This division among the essays is tenuous, however. For, connections among them, like the prefixal *trans** itself, cut across, into, and through this tentatively constructed boundary, as much as each essay itself strives to slice up a multiplicity of humanistic differentiations and stitch them back together in novel, sometimes indifferent, ways.

Turning to them in order, then, we start with Camille Nurka's "Animal Techne: Transing Posthumanism," which interrogates the challenges to "the human" posed by the intersection of trans, feminist, and posthuman studies. In their respective ways, Nurka claims, each of these studies historicizes the human while offering more robust, nondualistic theories of human/animal, human/nonhuman, sex/gender, hetero/homo, man/woman, mind/body, and natural/unnatural. While cautious of the potential pitfalls associated with the decenterings and destabilizations flagged by a range of trans scholars, she argues for the potential of both trans and posthuman theory to effect a convincing transformation away from the standard binary humanist positions. Nurka locates the origin of the construction of the human in sexual difference. This is what she calls "the animal symbolic," which has a dual and paradoxical logic of entangling and demarcating humanity and animality—it both equates women with animals and men with humans and deploys the notion of "animal nature" rhetorically in sociobiological arguments that bolster male dominance in human civil society. Using transgender and posthumanist theory and the history of philosophy to unravel the underpinnings of humanism that make the notions of sex and human inextricable, Nurka concludes, "The animal symbolic supports dimorphic, heterosexualized sexual difference and its attendant inequalities. The duality of the animal symbolic, in which we find either a rupture or continuity between the human and the animal, reveals certain truths about what is 'human,' which always seem to spring inexorably back to sex."

Nurka's argument resonates with Claire Colebrook's in her "What Is It Like to Be a Human?," in which sexual difference and its origins in the problematic of difference as the constitutive condition of the subject come under fire via a profound reversal of our understanding of difference and indifference. She offers that "before individual differences there is individuating indifference." Taking her cues from post-Heideggerian philosophy, Colebrook argues that "a trans-individuating body threatens the doxa of difference" by exposing the extent to which "difference might always be eroded by indifference, by the nonmeaning of indistinction." *Transitive indifference*, her concept that transforms the self/other pairing beyond the demands of recognition and relation, locates a solution for the problem that all-too-often animal difference serves to secure human sameness, and similarly responds to the ontological conundrum haunting certain feminist theories of difference. No longer is the self fortified through the other, whatever predicate we might ascribe to that other. Ontological difference serves only to erect man as the being for whom "the world is nothing more than the arena whereby he recognizes his proper difference," which to Colebrook amounts to little more than the rejection of indifferent difference, or prepersonal singularities—the potentialities *to differ* that are not yet stabilized into the categories of an

individual. The mistake theorists have made, according to Colebrook, is not to admit that “all we have is the utterly alien, the random and indifferent differences *from which* we assume that there must have been some properly expressive and self-differentiating life.”

In “Species Panic: Human Continuums, Trans Andys, and Cyberotic Triangles in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*,” David Huebert focuses on what he calls *species panic*. Originating in the concept of the homosexual panic defense, it signifies the coupling of an anxiety experienced when one’s species status is under threat with the associated fear of trans-species desire. Using Philip K. Dick’s novel, Huebert underscores the species panic faced when mediating the legacies and essentialist structures of the human against threats to its assumed autonomy and future existence. Arguing Dick’s novel as a triad of human, animal, and android sexuality—androids being both a species and the “exemplars of trans embodiment”—Huebert submits that the plot dramatizes a queer inter-species desire that dislocates concepts of the body, normative sexuality, and the human. For, humans, androids, and electric and “genuine” animals, as Colebrook would argue, refuse the drama of radical distance and difference, are not as individuated as accepted logic would dictate. As such, relations between them are conditioned by transitivity. This, according to Huebert, implies that “they occupy shifting positions on a series of spectrums, where human, animal, and machine bleed into one another.” Setting up a distinction between “genuine” and “inauthentic” life, the novel allows only the former to retain the exclusive right of gendered pronouns (instead of the “it” ascribed to artificial animals and androids). Sexual differentiation thus comes on the back of difference and autonomy in general and flies in the face of indifference or the condition of possibility of the subject. And, as sexual difference is the buttress of what it means to be human, and threats are ever present, it leaves us in a perpetual species panic.

Nicole Seymour’s essay “Alligator Earrings and the Fishhook in the Face: Tragicomedy, Transcorporeality, and Animal Drag” explores the investment in affective human/animal interconnectivity, as it is performed via animal drag in the corpus of *Jackass* and *Wildboyz*. Seymour argues that the performances in these films and series elicit affective responses—empathy—from the viewer “along with” the performer, including “feeling with” the performers *as animals*. She highlights that “it is not that nonhuman morphology is simply placed on the human body. Rather, animality is viscerally, painfully, and transformatively *encountered or enacted by the human body*, initiating for the performers what Mel Y. Chen has called ‘slides down the animacy hierarchy.’” Gesturing toward various interconnected trans-(species) corporealities performed in these texts, and evoking nuanced and unexpected readings of alleged homosexual and trans* panic (resonating with Huebert), Seymour aims to overturn the mainstream and

queer theoretical depiction of these performances as merely instantiations of a white, cis- male, masculine privilege. Instead, she argues that *Jackass* and *Wildboyz* are unlikely examples of Karen Barad's "ethics of mattering" emerging from trans-, or intersectional and interdependent, connections of human and non-human life *always already taking place* on bodies.

With the transitivity of artificial animals, android transings, and human-animal-machine spectrums as background, we can approach Katie King's exploration of the praxes of distributed being, cognition, and sensation in attunements across "trans" becomings through her experiences with training an artificially intelligent "dog" agent in the online virtual world Second Life. In her "My Distributed TRANimalitieS @ sltranimal.blogspot.com," King blends *transdisciplinarity*—a "self-adaptive complexity . . . foreground[ing] the transduction of knowledge as it passes *across* and *between* the interpretive and methodological planes of composing knowledge"—with *TRANimals*, a coemergent practice of interweaving and extricating human and nonhuman companions in a productive affective vibration of co-, inter-, and trans-embodiment, learning, and thought. The inter- or trans-action of learning and playing in immersive space, both of which begin and end in a predifferentiated state, is the condition of speciation and what King calls "distributed being and cognition." Far from arguing for some form of ontological fixity or essentialist autonomy, *TRANimals* (like *transdisciplinarity*) are the exposed and *transparent* conditions of possibility, "the sensuous refrains through which becomings and assemblages happen" in the inextricable intertwining of significant otherness in First and Second Life. As such, the *TRANimals* assemblage that is Katie King, Katie Fenstalker (avatar), and Sau (AI dog) thus becomes in that schema the condition for the emergence of trans* life with its attendant mammalian attachment rooted in distributed being/cognition/sensation—an individuating indifference, a *transgenre*, visible only through a trans* lens.

Marking the trending notion of the Anthropocene as just another iteration of the expansionist logic of manifest destiny, Cleo Woelfle-Erskine and July Cole, in their essay "Transfiguring the Anthropocene: Stochastic Reimaginings of Human-Beaver Worlds," pick up the thread of shifting, transing, relational, humanimal materialities from the perspective of the beaver. Their investment in the transgressive nature of trans* leads them to emphasize stochasticity, or, as they say, the "indeterminacy" and "randomness that can emerge from complex systems." Like the technoscientific practices enfolded into the fixes proposed by the Anthropocene's underlying manifest destiny, the natureculture of human-beaver (water-salmon-trees-soil-microbes-fungi) collaboration can form stochastic assemblages of "becoming *with* and *of* the (watershed) body," which can lead,

they argue, to transformations of (water-beaver-human) bodies and (interspecies) worlds. Dams act as symbolic boundaries, as cuts (agential as in Barad, or trans* as in Hayward)—concealing and unconcealing, natural and artificial, destructive and restorative—that both interrupt and innovate flows and movements, and modify landscapes and bodies (human, beaver, water). Beavers as unstable trans* positions—as fur bearers, erosion-control tools, and environmental engineers—enact transings in and from their bodies, perform crossings, and create tranimalic forces for “reconfigur[ing] networks of interspecies relations” that enable a nonanthropocentric vision of life. This vision, the authors claim, is subsequently poised “to contest universalizing and disembodied tendencies within dominant Anthropocene narratives.”

Building on the themes of *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*, Mel Y. Chen starts the discussion with *TSQ* from *animacies*, a term designed “to unwind the ever shapeshifting and mutually constitutive factors of ‘race,’ ‘class,’ ‘sexuality,’ and ‘disability’ beyond their habitual and sometimes hackneyed deployments” in the service of an emergent politics oriented toward the “constant enfolding of matterings.” From those already transdisciplinary, transformative beginnings—transing theory beyond intersectionality rhetorics and toward assemblage—Chen weaves us through the connection of their work to trans* and animal studies and the potential for a “tranimal turn,” which Chen suggests could be called *transplantimalities*. This investment in this latter potential, Chen argues, is important to the extent to which it might “yield some important articulations of species, gender, human, and transness in ways that allow environmental studies, animal studies, and transgender studies to account more deeply for their sometimes implicitly mutually enacted politics.” This investment has certainly proved worthy, as is visible in the essays collected in this special issue. Not content to stop with these already insightful and mind-bending theoretical shifts, Chen leaves us with a final provocation and catalyst for future research—a phenomenon they call “going cosmic.” “Cosmicness,” Chen explains, is the “enactment of a large-scale fantasy . . . that not only templatically erases the integrality of intrahuman difference but also misses its projective role . . . in the very growth of cosmic discourses.”

And it is there that “Tranimalities” ends, in what seems to be the same place it began. Though this is a revised vision of our original multiple starting points—repetition of difference not sameness, or perhaps indifference?—in which we are faced anew with a productive and vibrant *mélange* of trans* and animalic swerves that spiral us further away from the totalizing and universalizing discourses of Humanism that elide and exclude some and admit only a few. Taken together, intertwined in their multiple material tranimacies, the collection of essays in this special issue serves as an antihumanist bricolage of tranimalic

provocations, a transing, a *moving mattering* that both compresses (localizes) and amplifies (expands) trans* theory—across, into, and through. By presenting innovative (pre)ontological refigurations that aim toward different indifferences, and conceptualizing transitivity as the precondition for ontology, we reveal revised understandings of legibility and of nonnormative, nonhuman ethical matterings. Not simply satisfied with felling the anthro-ontological universals figuring the exclusion of many from the elite status of human, the combined force of these essays propels the intersection of trans*, posthuman, feminist, and queer theories and critical animal studies toward a critical reenvisioning of life—opening up new paths, charting new territory, exploding well-worn frameworks, and reconstructing our understandings of bodies and worlds into irreducible transanimalic assemblages.

Eva Hayward is an assistant professor in gender and women's studies at the University of Arizona. Her research focuses on aesthetics, environmental and science studies, and trans* theory. She has recently published articles in *Cultural Anthropology*, *Parallax*, *WSQ*, and *Women and Performance*. Her book *SymbioSeas*, on underwater representations and trans-species "mediations," is forthcoming from Penn State University Press.

Jami Weinstein is an associate professor of gender studies at Linköping University where she is also the director of the Critical Life Studies Research Group. Weinstein has published "Transgenres and the Plane of Gender Imperceptibility" (in *Undutiful Daughters*, 2012); "Transgenres and the Plane of Language, Species, and Evolution" (*Lambda Nordica*, 2011); and "A Requiem to Sexual Difference: A Response to Luciana Parisi's 'Event and Evolution'" (*Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 2010), among others. She is currently finalizing her first monograph, "Vital Ontologies." Weinstein has coedited, with Claire Colebrook, *Deleuze and Gender* (2008), *Inhuman Rites Posthumous Life* (forthcoming), and "Anthropocene Feminism," special issue of *philoSOPHIA* (forthcoming). She is also the series editor of *The Critical Life Studies Book Series* (with Colebrook and Myra Hird).

Note

1. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "species," accessed February 5, 2015, www.oed.com.

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