



Plus d'un gros bêta – Big Phalanger & Big Man

Review Article

Thomas R. Barker

Abstract. – This is a review of Jacques Derrida's "The Beast and the Sovereign." It is written in such a way as to consider the essentials of Derrida's twenty-three seminars in relation to some of the major features of its own argument and some features of the ethnography of the Ai'i Barai of the Wawaga Valley (Upper Kumusi River Valley) in Oro Province, PNG. Generalized problems for consideration were largely those constituting "region." The original fieldwork on which the ethnography was based was carried out from 1973 to end 1974, 1990 and 1992–93. [*Melanesia, New Guinea, Ai'i Barai people, Derrida, indigenous cognitive systems*]

Thomas R. Barker, PhD, has taught anthropology at the University of Toronto and the University of Western Ontario, Departments of Anthropology. – He has done anthropological research in the Northern Region of Burkina Faso, Northern Region of Ghana, Oro, and the East New Britain Provinces of Papua New Guinea. He has worked on development projects in Burkina-Faso, Northern Region of Ghana, Southern Africa, East New Britain Island, and the high montane zone of the Oro Province. His continuing interests are the Northern Region of Ghana, the Ateker of Uganda-Kenya-Sudan-Ethiopia, and the ancient Papuan systems of the old "Northern District." – For publications, see Ref. Cited.

Introduction

"It is therefore the game of the world that must be first thought; before attempting to understand all the forms of the world in play" (Derrida 1976). The ancient Papuan pools of water (*a'a*), the "deeps" of rivers, that mirror (and those reflections) "wraps around" the mortals, sky, earth, and divinities. They gather, "flexibly, bending to the mirror play" (v. II: 187).¹ Derrida insists that "... the play of the world is at stake here ..." (v. II: 186), that, "[t]his being-gathered of the play of the world ..." (v. II: 187) is

the first unity of earth, sky, mortals, and divinities. These four *Welten*; it "worldifies".²

"Bêtise is the Proper of Mankind" (v. I: 242)

In several manuscripts and publications (Barker 1976, 1979, 2006, 2013, 2014a, b), I have attempted to begin to provide some form to the word "region", *regio* (from L. *regere*, to rule). It is decided that one invariably also "orients" oneself "on the basis of a given region of the world ..." (v. II: 85). This region, here, is one which is inclusive of animals and man and plants,

[i]s it because of the regions of the world, with their specific fauna, because of the geographical and ethological areas in which this fabulous discourse on the political was born and developed its history: ...? (v. I: 119f.).

So, not so gratuitously, is Derrida's "The Beast and the Sovereign," masculine and feminine, animal, man, and "naturally," sovereign (the sovereign who does not efface its traces so well (v. I: 183), that is, the latter is proper to man, but even in the face of

1 All citations in the form of "v. I" or "v. II" refer to Derrida's "The Beast and the Sovereign"; "AB" designates an Ai'i-Barai lexical item or linguistic item.

2 Derrida, Jacques: *The Beast and the Sovereign*. Vol. 1. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. 368 pp. ISBN 978-0-2261-4439-9. [E Book]. Price: \$ 26.00.

Derrida, Jacques: *The Beast and the Sovereign*. Vol. 2. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011. 320 pp. ISBN 978-0-2261-4440-5. [E Book]. Price: \$ 30.00.

defect, fault, and evil, for both Lacan and Derrida (v. I: 181), there are not two psychologies, one for animal and one for man. In characterizing the latter, man (*homo*), animal, sovereign, the father, male and female, Derrida cites La Fontaine in the refrain, “[t]he reason of the strongest is always best; As we shall shortly show” (v. I: 26).

The dominant animal-human species of Europe and the Mediterranean was given as *lupus* (and *homo homini lupus* and *mormolukeion*); that of Papua was, successively the Genus *Phalanger* (*cuscus*); a 4-legged omnivorous / herbivorous marsupial; *mi* in the Papuan Barai example) and very much later, in modernity, the pig (AB: *ma*). It is these other species, other animals, that I can think commence affabulation. Everything is affabulation at its commencement, but, “as we shall shortly show,” they should not remain as such. The joining of man and beast is affabulation, old Papuan “narcissistic resemblance” and probably “a kind of ontological sexual attraction.” It would have been a fitting extension to the archaic and recent Papuan male in his adoration of the phalanger or seduction by it, and in his auto-affection. As for *la bête*, *bête*, and *la bêtise*, in my example, one might have a statement about the “depth,” “the ground,” “the abyss,” as a “holding out for something” (Derridian pig-headedness – v. I: 260). I think that if there were *bêtise*, in the example, it might well have been mistakenly taken for an error or an illusion.

Anthropology’s embarrassing statal obligation, from Kant, has left it refusing to propose “corruption, weakness, cowardice, stupidity ... vitality, irrationality” (v. I: 75), which, oddly, meant that regions were infinitely manipulable, and most importantly it also meant that regions could be taught. Unfortunately, they were even more dismissive of region or regions except as they too were manipulated. The “onto-theological-political structure” of sovereignty was all that remained of and for anthropology, the apophatics (denial). As sovereignty can refer to this modernity, or that of a tribe, a clan, a lineage, a village, to a country, it always led to or was created as an anthropological modernization, a continuous modernization, of those many apparently different forms of political sovereignty exhibited. “Sovereignty in general” (Gk: *kurios*) is the order or realm of the political (v. I: 177), not simply of the order of the political. The singular form which concerns the primordial or still autochthonous Papuan is a very restricted onto-theologico-political sovereignty, not at all a divine kingship, though involving a number of its elements.

In this matter at hand, it is unclear for Derrida, whether beast or sovereign, in their oscillation

(fantastically fast – as fast as the Papuan change of gender; Barker 2006) is this, or a replacement or a convention? He seems to have left it as a matter of choice or vague suitability. As he notes, the failure of convention usually is a failure of language, a different language or the absence of language. It is, however, well to note that training, domestication, slavery/potestality, taming, etc., are finally also conventions. *Potestas* was such a practice that was strongly exercised in old southeastern Papua, not simply as the ceremonial mother’s brother – sister’s son relation or *Ajui Bo*, the Big Mother’s Brother, the archetypical Ai’i Barai Papuan human other.

Derrida, as for the structure of his seminars here, has no difficulty accepting oscillation in potestality as slavery, as he refers to it, “becoming-this or becoming-that” (v. I: 101 ff.). I do not know that this makes the matter clearer or more accessible or more acceptable. Nevertheless, it seems that one may proceed with and in ipseity (and, again, associated oscillation or alternation), for the moment through sovereignty, authority, master, first arrival, follower and late arrival, first to emerge from the earth, last to emerge. It fits well enough with the subject one wishes to approach, the “semblables”, “épouvantails”, “teratologues”, “automatons, eidolons, gods, lesser gods, mortals (human beings perhaps), revenants, and so on. It is important to acknowledge that the first of the previous list, “semblables,” might, for its Papuan application, best be “translated” by “compeer” as Derrida had done in “Rogues” (2005): “The compeer is one of equal rank or standing, an equal, peer ...” (Oxford English Dictionary = OED).

The region to be considered, and generalized as a Papuan example, now seems to consist in significant part of the affabulation of animals and man through grafts as *chimera* (above). Each region, as Derrida notes, has two genders, 2 species, 2 sexual *genre*, and two *genera* “as the inscription of animal species”, or as they say, the human race (v. I: 142). Further, the threshold (“starting over”, the “indivisible”) of this region can be partially or wholly effaced by the human race, which makes for region, the signifier: The power to obliterate that trace. I would not, however, discount or de-emphasize the trident *genus*, the neuter as Derrida seemed to have it on this occasion. These are real composites, not simply grafts; and, in disfiguration and ornamentation, they were quite complex and for practical concrete purposes they were permanent features. This made anatomical features such as the “face” difficult to consider (vide Barker 2014a).

In the text, and in gross terms, for my purpose, the animal is “my fellow” in a number of senses, or can be such. In Freudian psychoanalysis and in du-

bious mythology (origin myths, reinvention – v. II: 109), this is the founding animality of patricide, Oedipus, that generates the fraternity (Papuan example: *uva/uworihi*, “same-sex sibling[s] same age in the midst of”).³ The fraternity may or may not extend to Ojibway or old Papuan “totemism.” The former is the remnant of the trace and is effaceable, at least in significant part. This is the “fellow” of “another species,” “my fellow” (v. I: 154). It is in recognition, and almost invariably, in the face (Levinas), as the face. Obligation and prohibition comes only to the fellow, the similar, the host, and the animal if you like. This preamble has now situated most of historic anthropology.⁴

Anthropology and universities to one side, Derida emphasizes many times in “The Beast and the Sovereign,” that it is the non-fellow. It is the unrecognizable one which “awakens” (v. I: 156), though it is that which is only somewhat similar which can equally jolt or traumatize. One might, I suppose, take the foregoing as how the animal, the beast, comes to be left only with reaction (automaticity), without response, or between the two.

Section 1

“La bête n'est pas mon fort”

The beast spoken about, in primordial montane Papua (southeastern Papua), is a composite of grafts as human, and a large phalanger, perhaps or probably comparable to a human being, or the *semblable* (Fr.), in the meaning of fellow. Of its animal quality, it is unclear whether it feigns feigning,⁵ whether it is

the “subject of the signifier” (v. I: 174f.), the Lacanian “dominance” “of the signifier over the subject,” or, as with “the symbolic order”, which for the subject is “constitutive”. This type of sovereignty was “superior” to that of man over beast (the feint as an effaced trace). There is a complication of sorts here, in The Other as witness (the third party; witness or *terstis* – v. I: 261), and this Big Phalanger was the Other of The Other, and it now may or may not be an animal Other. This Other, or Other of the Other as witness, is exactly what one has in the fable or in those narratives of *Mi Bo*, the Big or Ancient Phalanger, first phalanger, epochal phalanger, named Mibo. The Big Phalanger, that image, is again a fellow. It is the image and the name of the literal witness, or can be such. In the specific Papuan example, the Big Phalanger, *Mi Bo*, as the Other, in the myth of origin, is in the *abîme*. Now the *abisus* (L.) in old Papua was, to some extent, as the rainforest, “nothing” (AB: *ba*); or it may have been “being put in the stone.”⁶ In a strong sense this *ba*, literally “nothingness,” is unrecognizable; perhaps the suggested place(s) cannot be found. They cannot be found unless there is a designated shelter or house, and a (named) place (see Barker 2014a).

He/she/it (*triton genus?*),⁷ shortly to be discussed ipseity, is equally alteritous. The genus *Phalanger* is not subject to genus *Triton* except as imaginary inadequacy provided in narratives. One has an animal-Other as a witness. Unlike actual narratives of ori-

3 I have already presumed a certain archonticality that I would describe in the following manner: The ancient Papuan that I refer to, that example, is indicative of that which was immediately prior to the arrival of the Europeans, more specifically the London Missionary Society (LMS), and that general ensuing and devastating “madness.” What I mean by “Papuan Example” might well be just that; or, it may be the response to the madness generated by the London Missionary Society, that is, the use of old things as in a response, even a millenarian response.

The set of origin myths referred to was named “Vejamo” (not Uriala for the high god). That oedipal myth was produced from the interaction with the LMS. I, where possible, attempt to identify and emphasize those elements and features which were simultaneous with or prior to this fundamental singularity.

4 I suppose that “anthropology” would be “what is proper [*idion*] to man,” though I sometimes think that *anthropos* or *anthropon* may sometimes be the more appropriate terms.

5 In *Mi Bo* narratives, because the *teratologue* is thought to be ever-present in some capacity and either remains or leaves for an unknown destination (millenarianism aside), feigning feigning may be appropriate.

6 Being “put in the stone” is similar to *e iri*, the “cave,” or “man/people mouth/opening.” They may in fact be the same.

7 *Mi Bo*, totemically, is like the named python/serpent, *Simo* (“fire/heat makes”). The association with heat and fire was generated by *si*, as the cane hoop used in fire-making and worn about the waste of the adult male. The cane hoop waistband also determined the modern Papuan, the “real” (AB: *ho*) human, and the region that forms my ancient Papuan example. The preferred marriage category was *si ba*, (“fire-making cane without”). The named mythological serpent (*Simo*) is especially absolute, a trident *genus*, and he-she. In originary narrative, it delimits boundaries, creates pools of water; its image (*revenant*), that phantasm, determines war by “path.” *Simo*, like Mibo, was ancestral, a progenitor. *Simo* was central to the principal earth shrine or *a'a* and was also a progenitor.

It is likely that I am required to add that “Mibo,” as literal as it is (big/old phalanger), was also a proper name (Mibo), and perhaps more importantly that it had the value of a title, *Mi Bo*, like *E Bo*, or “Big Man.” To some degree, unlike *E Bo*, the title of *Mi Bo* was a sovereign, a “king.” Such a title was anathema in ancient Papua even if disclaimed despotism was the norm for the Big Man. The Big Men of a “village” could be refracted as a leading (*e dinu*, “base man”) hunter, sorcerer, war leader, dance leader, and, oddly, feasting (exchange-sacrifice) leader, formally. Unlike a garden settlement, a “village” could eventuate only under a single Big Man, who, theoretically, “brought people onto his land,” a political leader who attracted those people from or to his “named local group.”

gin, Big Phalanger narratives are not in themselves entirely “secret” or “hidden,” and, therefore, they are not often suggestive of the “occulted” (“just as this translation occults, or forgets, or deforms, or corrupts, or perverts ...” [v. I: 449]). not in any strict sense, unlike a true prosthesis or fetish; however, some of the content of those narratives is occulted; or doubly so, since Mibo, beyond his personage, secretes himself at the origin place (Awa or Haganumu) as a sort of witness. *Mi Bo*, the Big Phalanger is, nevertheless, almost on the side of animality, since it does not speak or communicate, except in an original language, shared by the beasts (“animals” including pig [ma]; *simie* now as *mi* and *ma*),⁸ and this long prior to the arrival of *porcus* in Papua. *Mi Bo*, however, can also be a man, and an animal proper to man. In this old Papuan example, the origin narrative (named Vejamo) commemorates the loss of the original language, the multiplication of languages, and “paths” taken by local groups at the dispersal. There are a number of defects that are implied for this *teratologue* in the rather large set of related origin narratives.⁹

In sum, I think “defect” (evil, fault, lack, deficiency¹⁰) predominates doubly, as in unconscious on the side of the animal (Derrida saw the Lacanian animal without a consciousness that was “properly its own” – v. I: 161), and the phantasm perhaps, and consciousness on the side of the human subject, “whereas the humanity of the human subject is on the side of the unconscious, the law of the signifier, speech, the feigned feint, *etc.* ...” (v. I: 194). The “defect” arises again in attributing “generic” as a trait of the human *genus*, or animal *genus*, or whether (the) human “frees itself of *genus*, from the generic, the genetic” (v. I: 186). In addition, and still with *malaise* or “defect,” it produces symbolic gen-

eration, “relations between generations” (filiation, descent, cognation, friendship) in reacting or adjusting to various types or categories of faults and crimes or transgressions. From the original/original defects or faults, from the generation of the symbolic generationally, from *katēgōria* as accusation and such, there is also Aristotelian *habitus*. This, oddly, has given way to *exis* (L.), as a way of life, or “a way of being” (v. I: 205), but, it is also the serpent (Gk.: *εχις*) and *oikos-nomia* indicating the domestic and domestication (e.g., Simo, the named totemic python of the Papuan example). For Derrida, the question, as given, is one of translation. He does, however, seemingly, use *bêtisage*, a kind of ultimate idiomatic, as a point of “intranslatability” (v. I: 231), what may have been *atakos* (Gk.), the *autarkic* (solitary), that is, to the animal. *Mi Bo*, for the modern Papuan was one such point of “untranslatability,” one such form of autarky marking sovereignty (at the commencement of aggregation; or, in itself). Mibo, the ancient phalanger in myth, in narrative, in various performances, is very much a matter of accusation and the adjoining “perspectival” (v. I: 241), as in *katēgōria/catēgōria* (Gk.). There is no translatability because that was universal as to *genus*, but it was not limited to a language, a culture, a society, and, therefore, it was untranslatable except without speech (Gk.: *phonē?*).

There seems to be little thought given to the “proper” of the animal except as sovereign, and then as the implications of ritual practice and in the sum of narratives (and discourse) about animals as totems (fetishes; ancient Papuan: *Ma’i ma’i*, in one of the restricted senses of this classification), or observations of animal collectivities or gatherings. In the essential detail (as mentioned elsewhere), Mibo conceals himself in the rainforest surrounding the origin place (Awa Mountain and the *e iri*, “cave,” “man mouth/hole/opening”); and is this concealment not crude effacement of its own trace? Similarly, in another narrative of the same type, *Mi Bo*, by the end of the narrative (like Nihira, if he is not in fact Nihira, 2nd son of the high god) leaves for unknown parts. More detail from the narrative is impossible because, again, the sovereign of the animals, and those of humans, now speak another language. They speak the original language. Viewed differently, Ai’i, a dialect of Barai, was perhaps considered the original language, the “people of the first word.” It is only then a matter of the degree of occultation applied.

It is in the not becoming-animal of the human being that one is to be confined. It is now the “becoming-anthropomorphically-animal” (v. I: 196) perhaps – and “perhaps” is literally added as a sus-

8 *Mie* is “fire” and “fireplace,” however, it is also the smallest acknowledged unit of organization, the “household” and the nuclear family.

9 In several of the Mibo narratives of the region (*e hate oi*, mountain people), the “humanimal” has no orifices which he acquires from two sisters (not of the region, but Aömie) at the same time as sister-exchange marriage (*ehi ehi*) was acquired. Mibo can have pig tusks which fall out on sexual intercourse with the two sisters. It is understood from these narratives that the *teratologue* is an anthropophagist (AB: *e ana’o*). *Mi-anie* is “firewood,” which is “phalanger ate.” It was the smoking of phalangers for preservation, but also the use, by Mibo, of the phalangers as firewood. This latter indicates an inversion whereby phalangers are burned with human beings having replaced the phalanger, a simple inversion. In sum, it appears that Mibo was a compendium of “defects,” flaws, or inadequacies. in general, the *Mi Bo* narratives of foreign origin could principally reflect competition.

10 What is recognized at this point is the *Benommenheit* of the beast, its benumbment, its captivation (v. II: 295).

pension, or undecidability throughout. This was to be a symptom, a failure, a failed recognition founded on the unconscious, which possibly saw too much in the animal and too little in man. The ancient Papuan animal and man cannot be understood on this plane or these “plateau” (Deleuze), except that they do not wish to understand, or, quizzically, for reasons that had yet to be analyzed.

For Derrida, and particularly for the ancient Papuan, the Old Phalanger, the distinction between the (“so-called” v. I: 242) animal and human orders, is determined by internecine warfare, revenge, and an equal polemics, and those activities normally including seduction and hunting which are not other than an extension of the former. It is this pragmatics which essentially undermined a distinction between reaction and response. If one were to attribute qualities to the Papuan “I, me,” to “their/his,” anthropology would predominantly be the foregoing (v. I: 246–248). This is, after a fashion, another of Derrida’s refrains: “the reason of the strongest prevails.” If one believes that *vis-à-vis* the ancient Papuan I have been either too much for or too little for modernity, then I would propose the Papuan prostheses of every kind imaginable, the *phallus*, the tree (*vide Ani*, “penis”), the string bag, the river, the mountain ... arguably from the most modern female perspective (1990s) that I know, the whole of the landscape. Debatably, it is the whole of the sociocultural frivolousnesses of old southeastern central Papua and older Papuans conceptualized in the marionettes (*automata*), a *phallus*, tusks, feathers, shells, and so on, and a fetish for occultation. Their power is the effect of their fables, of fictions, the *simulacrum*.

To admit all of what has been said thus far, one must say something of the generational transmission, of the filial, and the other of the old Papuan and the modern Papuan (circa 1970). The “now-present” (v. I: 309) Derrida would have exemplified in the acclaimed poem (that narrative) or less in some commended novel. The counterpart of the poem in ancient Papua was the refined narrative or *poësis* as song (AB: *erute*). The old Papuan is seducing, hunting, and sees phalangers playing on a rock in the distance, one of which becomes his consort, his wife (Barker 2014a). This is the ancient Papuan form of giving “time to the other” (v. I: 309), that gathers more than one, leaving the other and others, the marsupials to change principally into human females, to have “vaginas cut” for them. Their speech of sorts is what is proper to it.¹¹

11 Whereas Derrida might have seen animality as the limit between man and Others, these ancient Papuan narratives somewhat transgress that type of limit in a kind of affabulation that

This was simple unelaborated passivity as the phalangers for this event “advene” (v. I: 311), and their phantasmatic transformation to humans, and back. The ancient Papuan “others” were commonly *revenants*, humans-on-the-way-to-becoming-animals, animals-on-the-way to becoming-humans, anthropophagists, “wild people” (AB: *siba-rihi*), and animal progenitors of humans (*Uriara/Uriala*, *Vejamo*, *Nihira*, *Simo*, and *Bubuoe*, The Hornbill and emblem of homicide, the original pervasive or general spirit) (*vide* v. II: 172, 173 f.).

It is from this point that Derrida returns to relations of species, to hunting, taming, training, domestication, (and horticulture?), from my examples of the Papuan phalanger (the principal of the hunt or principal or capital species), there is also the meaning which is adjudicated, after or during the event, with first-comer/first arrival, second-comer/second arrival, person who named the place, master, slave, guest, the host, the sovereign, the fellow, etc., Derrida, here, allows Heidegger’s *Da* and *Da-sein* to “advene” in history as the “historical origin of history” (v. I: 356). This *Da* arrives as *polis*, the historical site which, it seems, permits or could support sovereignty. This is the commencement of “being-at-home-everywhere” or being-at-home-“nowhere” (v. I: 266, 357).

In the matter of *domus*, domesticity, house, the ancient Papuan’s longhouse (*do soi’o*, *ai ni amo*), or garden house (*iro do*), that “home,” was reduplicated in more occulted form as the *nemeton*, the centre of the earth shrine, with the wings of the eagle outstretched as the roof (or the branches of the *Ma’i ma’i*, the totemic tree, the clan or *Ani Bo*) under which were gathered, in hallucination, all named totemic species, the principal (capital) species. It included water (AB: *idua*), the pool, and stone (AB: *mui*), the house of *revenants*. Derrida observes, it seems, that *oikonomia* is the general condition of this type of ipseity, mastery (v. II: 135) over females and all animals, a drive, a “pushing.” One might, here, choose to follow *oikonomia*, or as with Derrida, proceed with the marionette or *automaton*, the sovereign and “absolute knowledge” (e.g., the marionette – v. I: 386) – which is likely not much different from the Papuan’s previous epoch with its common natural language (*Ai’i*).

Sovereignty, now, however, is *Trieb*, drive (transference, transition, translation, passage, division – v. I: 388). One begins to think this may have been done, for anthropology’s sake, one suspects, because these things also mean “inheritance, transmis-

occurred “only once,” e.g., *bora maine*, “upper forest girl,” or *bora ina’i*.

sion ... the division, distribution,” and so on (v. I: 388). Sovereignty as concerns ancient or old Papua does and does not have to do with *oikos*. The “autopsic” sense looks at *oikos* in medial ideas, words again such as transfer, translation, transposition, inheritance, distribution. There is another view of sovereignty as “hyperbolic excess” (v. I: 388), or “nothing”; and yet another view is a set of titles for sovereignty, political roles. There was, or should be prior to this sovereign(ty) *walten*, but it remained unclear whether *logos*, that violence and gathering, was not “superior” to it.

Zōē, the “living animal,” is the simple fact of living, the “bare life.” The political (*politikon*) merges with *bios* (Gk.); and that it has qualities, probably Aristotelian qualities. Here, Derrida may think of *politikon zōon* as *zōē*, that is (already) qualified and not “bare.” This is likely because of the desire to have “natural life” included in the formulation of the state as biopolitics – which is later dismissed (v. I: 436)? This world (Ger., *im Ganzen*),¹² of course, in rough terms, conforms to the ancient Papuan village (AB: *are*; Gk., *koinōnia*, or “settlement”), which forms exclusively under a contradictory type of sovereignty, conforming to biopolitics which can be biopolitics in extreme occultation or not. This led Derrida to observe (v. I: 439) that, *It can even be said that the production of a biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power.*

Related, again, Derrida (v. I: 422) seemed to finally disallow simple diachronic succession and simple synchronic simultaneity, where “passage” belonged to a single founding decision, with that ground marked by its “adjacent” thresholds. There would be no more originary ground or abyss: “more than a single single; no more a single single” (v. I: 443). The strand that one continues with is reaction and response, of animal and man respectively. Derrida (v. I: 446) insists that what is interpreted as response, of “responsible response”, or reaction, is a matter of translation between languages, which is the indissolubility of the sovereign and the beast, that is, the “indivisibility of the concept of responsibility – and consequently of the concept of sovereignty, which depends on it” (v. I: 168).

Positionally, the one who is *apolis* must be an animal or a god, or both in variant contexts, or serially. In the occulted manner once more the high god of the primeval Papuan example was Uriala, the “path/way of the phalanger,” whilst the sovereign was *E Bo* (“man-person big/old/fat/powerful,” or *E Rohi'i*, “man with rotting food”). Enact-

ed in the night sky, the phalangers were the Milky Way (*Υαλα*) which could also reflect in the *nemeton* (AB: *A'a*) as stars, as phalangers, as sea shells, cowry shells, retrievable wealth, but principally as phalangers. It was the “pool,” the “mirror,” that gathering of water. Uriala, himself, was the Morning Star.¹³ The high god is a “sort of” *apolis*, as is *Mi Bo*, the Big Phalanger, as was Wasia, another *teratologue/épouvantail/eidolon*, a recently resurrected *archon* (Gk.). Again, it seemed to me that, for Derrida, the *genus* man was “zoo-political (v. I: 462) (*zōon politikon*).

Section 2

“... That Anthropology, the Essence of What Is Proper to Man ...” (v. I: 245)

Derrida begins with “I am alone” which speaks of the relation of man to the world. The animal exists only as it is not human. More complicated is the phrase, “The beasts are not alone,” as “S is P” (v. II: 26). All and each inhabits a different world. His belief was that those forces which stabilize “the world” are “always deconstructible” (v. II: 31). The other form of this statement is that this world is of the community’s determination (v. II: 31). One thinks the construction of a world, and of its absence as non-world, as *immonde* (L.: “filthy, revolting” (v. II: 32), repellant, disfigured, or condensed-compressed,¹⁴ artificialized in some sense), also as unornamented, as a promotion of the sovereign, interpretation as sovereignty, as interpretation of reaction and interpretation of response, these translations, that, and the island, the archipelago is the norm (is “home”): “The reason of the strongest is best.” Translation becomes the stuff of homesickness, of nostalgia (and melancholy – v. II: 145), of the drive to be “everywhere at home,” that is the question (v. II: 140). It is also a return to *Walten* or *Gewalt*, “as autarcic force ... of the totality of beings” (v. II: 64), or *physis*. As Derrida puts it, “*Walten* as *physis*, *physis* as *Walten* is everything ... originally sovereign power” (v. II: 64). *Physis* is translated by *Walten*, “the sovereign predominance of beings” and because it is near the original in-

13 I see no reason that Uriala, the high god or for his 2nd son Nihira – if there were any limit whatsoever on that identification – that the mythological primogenitor should not be of the *genus* of *Mi Bo*. There was though no narrative or statement to this effect.

14 Rather importantly, “condensing” or “compressing” was one of the emphatic forms of the ancient Papuan abyss and/or world, and it was largely a kind of default.

12 “World;” “[t]he state or realm of human existence on earth” (OED).

tent of *physis*, and not by “growth.” It is the prevalence of violence not growth (v. II: 65), and not “nature.” *Physis*, as violence, is no longer opposed to the state of society (“history, society, spirit, liberty, culture,” etc. – v. II: 88); there is no “natural right.” And, “[t]he *logos* is what brings *walten* to speech” (v. II: 67). Truth becomes the unconcealing (unveiling) of *physis* as *walten*.

The first decision is where to begin, which path to take. The paths chosen by ancient Papua were several, perhaps the high god (Uriala) as a “path” or “practice” (AB: *uri*), a path or barred (abyssal, detour ...) path, the partially barred or abyssal path of the *teratologie*-sovereign, *Mi bo*, the Big Phalanger (Mibo), the path of the animals, of all beings; the path of lesser gods and culture protagonists (Vejamo, “made [public] shame”) and that path which was determined by the transgression of patricide; or the lesser, the younger son (Nihira, “eye opener”) of unknown providence, perhaps “light skinned,” “shining skin;” then the *épouvantail* (Wasia), a matter of hyper-occultation of the domestic, a fragment of the Baigona Cult from the Managalase; and then might be added the long list of named animal totems, whose paths are barred, yet those paths exist in some determined permanence (originary distribution, clan territories, etc.). All of these personages can be or are original and somewhat originary. These paths, these representatives, all rule over beings and are ruled over themselves by *walten*, their law, its law, the law, as always unconcealed by *Logos*. From the origin time or origin place, the primitive crime or transgression proper to man, in Lacanian form was always the Law (transgression and the superego) in crime. This is the Law which “refers us only to the similar” (v. I: 155), the “fellow,” the living being with a face (AB: *e a'o*, “man alive”; *e ho bari mama'i*, “man true/real shining proper”; or with a human face). One should spend much time on the ancient Papuan face.¹⁵ Derrida refers to Celan (v. I: 358), “... transporting oneself to a domain that turns toward the human, its strange face (the three appearances of art: the automats, the figure of the monkey, the Medusa’s head): this moment of stepping outside the human must be summonsed to appear with the moment that, earlier, had implied that ‘perhaps’”

The ancient Papuan face was concealed and prostheticalized (or adorned or ornamented) with all manner of fragments of the “capital” species, particularly those species represented or gathered at the

nemeton as that region. It is a sort of becoming-animal of the human face. If it is art, as Derrida might have suggested, it is a different question. What if the concealment of the adult human male ancient Papuan face is not occultation, or what if it is and is not occultation?

It was omitted purposively by Derrida, but “the world,” the totality of regions which with their different regions, is ignored. Each region is a path “toward” its animals (v. II: 82), and *flora* (?).¹⁶ This is how one imagines the “Being of beings,” that that important question, may have differentiated. There is also the analysis of *Dasein* as “the analytic of exemplary beings,” the question of their Being (v. II: 92), which is, again, a question of region. It is a question of region only to the extent that animals are only, again, distinguished as not being human, not being Papuan (?). This distinguishing of animals, as has been indicated, was much harder in old Papua because these animals are not indifferent or completely unresponsive to man. Thus there is Derrida’s problem of “close” and “distant,” of “I am alone” (“exception, singularity, unicity, election and the irreplaceable” – v. II: 95). The question might be rephrased as “when did the ancient Papuan abandon his own ipseity,” what was his pure spontaneity, that *automat*? The massive complication is that “region” is more like the “world” than world is in its details, in its elements (cf. v. II: 85 ff.).

Nostalgia or homesickness is before any psychoanalytic. It “drives” one toward “everything” (v. II: 134).¹⁷ This *Getriebenheit*, this *Trieb*, of wanting to be at home, this nostalgia, does not belong to any psychoanalytic code: “It pushes to where there is not yet any such drive” (v. II: 134). The nostalgia is more originary, and that drive, or *Walten*, can be “indissociable from the *Trieben*” (*Getriebenheit*) (v. II: 136). To enter a little of hermeneutics, I have a very different view of the fact of the narrative (including mythology) of any kind, of poetry and so on. The population of the narratives, the actions, for ancient Papuans, was more than characters of a fictional variety – although they were that too. They were types

15 Side by side, with the “face” of the human, there is “... the animal, the monkey, the marionette, and above all the Medusa’s head” (v. I: 350).

16 Taro, the original cultigen of the place of dispersal (not the Wawaga Valley), and particularly yam (*iro*) were thought to have living spirit (*oi*). The yams were painted to give an appearance of clothing, of features such as vulvas. Imaginatively, such may have been the ancient Papuan idea of speculation and particularly “growth” that all *flora* was likely to have been thought to be animated with spirit.

17 This might not have been the case for old Papuans (AB: *E Ma'i*). The living-spirit of a human being was attached to its village, its house, and its gardens. As much as “homesickness” was paralleled by a loss of living-spirit, by illness, or fear, it was not simply a matter of separation of living-spirit from the person, from the man.

of human being (human types), specific behaviors of human beings regardless of the dismissal of occultation, dismissal of *automata*.¹⁸ More directly, the nostalgia drove then “to everything,” and did so because of the lack of the copula in the form of the image. *Dasein* would take on a stark precision. Each species of animal and ordinary performance will idiomatically have its “house” or “shelter” (Papuan example: *do*, *-ru-*, *ai*). It will be described as such habitually. The difference between Being and beings, is a “certain” *Walten* (v. II: 149), or “strays” from a certain *Walten*. It is nothing, but it *waltet*; it “worldifies.” To be “everywhere at home” the Heideggerian nostalgia, that drive (*Dasein*) is the difference between Being and beings and is to be gripped, “grasped” by the image, a primordial kind of “grasp” and possibly a sort of “originarity” (v. II: 145). This is the “whole” of “beings as such” (v. II: 139), the world.

The text, if it concerned the ancient Ai’i Barai of Papua (or whomever they replaced) would hardly ever leave occultation or culture. The First Fall of their discourse, their “history” would have been, as given, patricide. The Second Fall would have been as a double soteriologic (L.: *sōtēria*), one concerned with essences, the other a return to the common ground of their human experience. Derrida concerned himself with a philosophical soteriology, modified by the return of human experience.

Derrida’s replacement of Heideggerian *ontological differenz* with his own *différance* has been obvious enough. In general terms, this is sufficient and appropriate. More specifically, the moment that I mentioned “image,” I should make the problem more available in some of its details. Derrida’s analytic is, in a way, founded on the copula¹⁹, but, ironically, this copula apparently does not signify anything. The matter is, for a moment, to consider the absence of the copula. It seems that it is dismissed by him because there is no meta-discourse on what language is; that and, the particularity of the concept of “being” to a language would be unacceptable. Then the point that should be of interest to one is this: Derrida did not seem to accept that

one might qualify the copula as mere images, that is, one cannot form the absence of the copula as an opening with or in language, “remarking” an opening in language. Even if I would rather not accept this pronouncement of “dead images,” or images of the dead, I see no precise alternative to it.²⁰

The ancient Ai’i Barai example, in our light approach to “the supplement of the copula” (modified), is offset by the “life force” of that “spirit,” the animating force of everything (*fauna* and *flora*) which is *oi* (Ai’i), “breath,” “mist”; or *aru*.²¹ The strength of the “being” is always *aja*, “power,” which is mystical, but it is in concert with *aji*, which is “strength,” “force.” Having presented these three concepts I wish to indicate something about ancient Papuan “being,” which is perhaps not all that different from other present modernities – although I do believe that it is more exaggerated. It is that the ancient Papuan “being” (*aru*), that “spirit,” could be, it seemed, virtually completely effaced at any moment. The ancient Papuan was possibly the ultimate in effacement of Being, “being,” and perhaps “beings” as well. This effacement, deletion, destruction of the trace, was exaggerated nostalgia in the form of the *revenant*. Ritual practices, and among them particularly mortuary practices, mourning and burial were dominant in associating “the experience[s] of the trace and that of the effacing of the trace” (v. I: 181).

As an abbreviated recapitulation I would think that Heidegger saw his three questions, a world, of finitude, and of solitude, amalgamated as one problematic (v. II: 137 f.), *Kraft und tragen*.²² Derrida considered *tragen* as transport and transfer, etc. *Walten* became indissolubly linked with *Austrage*, [*sic.*] “conciliation” which was to be central to the difference between Being and beings; moreover, *Dasein*, the compulsive “to be everywhere at home” is equally central to that difference between Being and beings. This difference can only

18 It would be reasonable to suggest that in the ancient Papuan example the *revenant* – and there are many forms of *revenant* and spirit – are, in their descriptions, attributed with elementary behaviors and types of action. These behavior types are so restricted that one might well, again, believe that they are *automatons*. It is worth noting that upper rainforest (ancestral) massed spirits, the oldest, behave like animals, they claw and bite as if they were phalangers; and they appear in trespass on “wild places,” *ai urie*, and during war.

19 See Derrida’s attempt or rejection of Ewe ethnography for lack of the copula.

20 The principal difficulty in the rejection of the image in relation to the non-copula is the utilitarian value of Mother Khôra, of image source typologies such as the elementary matrix with its simplex and implex images, unless these are somehow confined to initiating phenomenological fact? If it is, for one reason or another, to answer the previous question, can one then “maintain” the elementary matrices, these, in a sense, literally deterritorialized spaces, with a sideways step to Hegelian geometry; or, are these quasi-deterritorialized space-images only another instance of the “thousand plateaux” (Deleuze); or, are they no more than a set or related set of oppositions that have already been resolved?

21 The living spirit of a real human being in the ancient Papuan example was *arui* (pl. *juoi*). Old, unpredictable spirits were *si’uoi*, a “mass” of spirits.

22 “... what is happening *there*, which makes of us who we are or *what* we are ...” (II: 138).

be named *Walten*, which for Derrida, is “nothing,” “[b]ut it *waltet*” (prevails, occurs, arises, dominates as a thing) (v. II: 175); again, it worldifies, bringing the thing nearer.

Previously, I emphasized the older Papuan example, as the others, the *revenants* as living (*phantasmata*) and dead. Freud, I suppose like Derrida, and as given before, locates phantasms and drives between two systems, conscious and unconscious simultaneously. Derrida rejected this division of qualitative and factual, something qualitatively conscious, yet, factually unconscious (?), a thing (qualitatively phenomenal), which is not a thing, a phantom (symptom) (v. II: 191). It is undesirable; its origin is undesirable (v. II: 194); or, perhaps, it is repression. As “repression” one imagines the commonly human secret of anthropophagy, which is only averted as a repression (v. II: 178); the anthropophagic human is possibly somewhat “less my fellow” and more other (v. II: 178).

Then there are others or the *revenants*, and those which follow them, the descendants, and followers in a sense. The phantasms resist the *logos* which is as speech, as gathering (v. II: 262). The phantasm/*phantasmata* has or have no logic of its or their own; the Freudian phantasm is to repeat somewhat differently, a “neuter” (v. II: 262), which is to say, it is found on “both sides of ... two ... concepts” (v. II: 262). Blanchot and Derrida placed the neuter between Being and beings. The latter are the two opposing concepts which distinguish human from animal, *Dasein* from animal. *Walten* bears or opens the onto-ontological difference, “and thus does not yet belong to either Beings or beings” (v. II: 269). *Walten* is not this nor is it that. It is not Being nor being, but on “this side of Being and beings” (v. II: 270). The neuter marks or remarks being. The *revenant*, the spirit, is neither Being nor beings (v. II: 269), not yet, but almost something; it is between one and the other.²³ The neuter is also or always in transgression. The transgression is that between the two concepts, between “soul” and “body”, etc. The whole of Derrida’s thesis is a general thesis of animality (v. II: 272). It seems to be zoological without being founded on superior and inferior animals, that “statement of essence” as with Heidegger (v. II: 273, 277). The difficulty of zoology and biology is given as the problem of the universities (v. II: 275 f.). It is a matter of a faulty or incorrect scientific knowledge as against, once again, those

phenomenological statements of essence (relations of ontology) (v. II: 277) such as Heidegger’s.

The first problematic is as that of the animal *as such*, of the animal-in-general whose “poor in world” was a malaise, as opposed to the statement of essence (the manner of being *versus* science); the second problematic is that of illness as an anthropomorphism (v. II: 277). Other problematics, or associated ones, are that animals seem to have or must have some relation to (human) *Dasein*, and that historicity and epochality, which in Derrida’s view, are “neither natural nor eternal” (v. II: 277 f.).

Continuing, the primal enunciative proposition (v. II: 302) is, to reinforce it, *logos apophantikos*. It is all that is capable of displaying what it, *as such*, is directed at. This is what is missing in prayer for example, for prayer is what one wishes the other to be present at, present at one’s own presence (v. II: 247 f.), to retain that memory, but a prayer is not true or false (v. II: 261). Every statement then, no matter how constative it appears to be, begins to look like a general performative, in every address to the other. It is at this point that I would like to begin to look at *verhalten* and *benehmen* (Ger.), to behave in a certain way, or behave towards, and to behave one’s self in more current terms, more ordinary terms.

Section 3

“Wer ist der Mensch?” (v. I: 355)

Verhalten is the relation to beings *as such*, the man’s behavior toward animals *as such*; and there is *Benehmen* (behave) which is the relation to beings but not *as such*, “the perception of something as something” (v. II: 305). This is Derrida’s interpretation of Heidegger. Derrida continues with Aristotle (v. II: 307) associating the possibility of *suntheke* (Gk.) as convention or “conventional arrangement” with that of the symbol (*sumbolon*). This is the reason, in this instance, that *sumbolon* (Gk.) is not of nature and the reason why the animal, which is even more natural, cannot access the *logos semantikos* nor the *suntheke* nor convention, nor *sumbolon* nor *Bedeutung*, signification; therefore, the animal is *allogon*. Heidegger believed that, unlike Aristotle, *logos*, was not *phonē*, but, first was convention (v. II: 308 f.), which was largely constituted in transgenerational pacts. This is what the animal is deprived of, and which is the basis of the *als-Struktur*, the *as such*, and the world as “whole”. For Heidegger, “we do not hear because we have ears, we have ears because we hear.” Sound is not the basis of meaning,

23 “The *Walten* resembles this neuter which is neither this [*sic.*] not that, neither positive, nor negative, nor the dialectic, which neither is nor is not Being nor a being, but beyond or this side of Being and beings.” (v. II: 270; modified).

signification; rather sound “signifies by reason of the meaning, the signification, the symbol of which is *kata syntheke*, by convention and pact, by agreement” (v. II: 309). Heidegger, secondly, based himself on the distinction between *phusei* (natural) and what is conventional or *kata suntheke*, symbolic. In this way, the animal is denied anything artificial (conventional signs). As much as it is unreasonable, I should note that the oldest Papuan example would have absolutely associated *phonē*, voice, with *logos* and epochally, associated anthropophagy²⁴ (all forms of kakopophagy) with a pre-originary natural language, which “natural language” for Heidegger, was, unfortunately, “crude and primitive” (v. II: 310). Other sets, such as “category”, species, and *genus* were contested in the pre-originary narrative and other statements in the ancient Papuan example. At stake here, for Heidegger were more recent (modern) interpretations of *physis* as “natural.” In this were the oppositions of *physis*-thesis, *physis/nomos*, and, obviously, *physis* convention, or *physis/symbolon* (v. II: 310). The primeval Ai’i Barai example directly indicated *physis* as nature and natural, inclusive of the human. This is all within the compass of a doubly or triply occulted onticality/ontal. The origin myths or narratives, unlike *Mi Bo*, the sovereign of all animals, their language, the originariness itself, etc., were all secret, occulted meanings, meanings to be protected against the versions of adjacent populations for instance. The secreting, to repeat, is present, language, speech.²⁵

Derrida (v. II: 325), again, in another opposition, categorized cremators and inhumers as “species classifications.” They seemed to represent “designated” groups, gatherings of herds or hunting packs, secret societies, orders, sects, religious orders (v. II:

281). They are probably much more than an “archaic curiosity of two orders” in archaic Papuan. In that example, *Mi Bo*, the *teratologue*-anthropophagist is cremator (partial or complete) for animal and human. Epochally, at the completion of the originary events, the dispersal, inhumation and display of skulls and long bones were the practices. Then there is seriality of two orders epochally, or the continuous presence of two orders?

The King, “the sovereign of all the animals,” is the principal occultation of the Ancient Ai’i Barai Papuan, and epochality, in which the difference between animals and a type of humananimality (*teratologue* or *épouvantail*) fails, only to be reasserted following the origin. Heidegger seems to be undecided; although the Ai’i Papuan *teratologue*, *Mi Bo*, projecting “itself” to beings as beings, “it *walten*,” the sovereign (v. II: 268–271). This transcending, however, was perhaps thought lost at the originary moment in the ancient example, a break in language, or a break in languages, or types of languages. Equally, as for Heidegger, language, even a [sic.] “natural” language, if any exists for beings who transcend as being, is not for the animal. Here, Heidegger would have emphasized *Miteinandersein*, in “being-the-one-with-another,” open to beings about them, to beings-as-such, transcendence in the abbreviated *symbolon* form of sovereign, including languages. This *Mitsein* is, again, all transcendence; it is originary (v. II: 317f.). Transcendence for Heidegger is *Miteinandersein*, “open to the beings around them, to beings as such” (v. II: 317), the social. The question for Derrida is, if all *logos semantikos* is not *apophantikos*-monstrative enunciation “what does it mean?” (v. II: 317). Again, Derrida’s prayer is performative, each question is a prayer, but “[each] prayer as such does not ask a question” (v. II: 323). It is usually a question about the relation to the Other. Derrida, I think, saw *Walten*, in “... the power to accede to the ontological difference, and therefore to the *as such*, and consequently to the *logos* in general, versus *logos semantikos*, and more especially as *logos apophantikos*” (v. II: 317ff.). At least, this would seem to be the weighting granted to it.

Section 4

“Well, It Is in the Austrag That It *waltet*” (v. II: 354)

In the same way, the effacing of the trace, that quasi-break, opens the signifier, and where there is a trace of the thing, it is formed as the signifier. The trace is then a “hollow”, a hollowing-out (v. II: 284). So, differently now, *logos* tends to become the power to

24 Other principal forms indicating anthropophagy (*e ni’oi’i*) were from the proliferation of species, particularly the main cultigen, yams (*iro*), which is historically the second such cultigen. Anthropophagy, in the ancient Barai example, is dedicated to “growth” of cultigens and proliferation of types of cultigens in narratives (*ni uria* or *ni* as mortuary songs, *su-vuae* and *inia* types of narratives which are recited at planting). The fundamental figure is *e ni*, the “eye [of] man,” lit. “man [is] eye.”

25 “Secret”, in the Papuan instance was better observed as “hidden” (which was confused with “heathen,” vide Barker 1998]. “Secret” is *ui* in Barai. It is literally “seed,” “shoot,” “palm of the hand,” “instep of the foot, anything unseen or concealed” (often a thing or person or group with potential). Thus, a relation with strangers or neighboring groups might have been stated as *e ui* or “seed man/men,” if it had potential. More to matters here, seed/shoot/secret/hidden-heathen was more than simply a metaphor for “growth.” Unraveling “growth” and “occultation,” therefore, was a rather elaborate undertaking. – In complementary form, the proliferation of species is associated with the sovereign, that is, the original proliferation. The same is true for the other capital species.

efface the trace and the animal remains *zōon alogon*. Truth and non-truth, un-truth, are equally originary, that is dissimulation as well. *Walten* is that force, power or violence that can lead to the *as such*, to the *logos*, the *logos*-in-general (v. II: 293), as both *logos semantikos* and *logos apophantikos*. For Heidegger, again, “*logos*” contains *Möglichkeit*, “possibility,” the true or false. The *logos apophantikos* is the concealing/revealing, the either/or, “which pronounce being” (v. II: 293). Each time this is approached in the text, it is done so slightly differently, with different possibilities. The emphasis on the monstrative *logos apophantikos*, irrespective of error, is equally important in moving to the effacement of the *as such* of the signifier which leaves its place, only its place (v. II: 295). This is allowing place, by which one might find its meaning again. It is clear that this can be more than somewhat different from the *creux* (Fr.), the hollow of Crusoe’s footprint, different from the monstrative version.

Before the immediately preceding is the central fact of a difference between Being and beings *as such*, which are “only different as the same” (v. II: 355). This was to be, it seems, between the agreed supervening of Being and this “arrival,” the arrival of beings *as such* (v. II: 355). Moving forward slightly, and somewhat repetitiously, there is *tragen* and *Austrag*, conciliation, *tragen* as contained in *Austrag*. Perhaps Heidegger defined *Austrag* as that “in which it *walten*, ‘in which’ the *Walten* *waltet*” (v. II: 355). *Austrag* is the uncovering and sheltering of Being and the arrival of beings. *Walten* is (as) the event/origin/force/meaning of the ontological difference of the Supervenience of Being and the Arrival of beings (v. II: 355).

For Heidegger, *Walten* proceeds from *Walten der Differenz*, the higher or greater power of difference; what holds them apart and recounts one to the other (Being to Being) as ground and “justified in their grounding” (v. II: 356) by the *Austrag/ausschalten*, to carry, to bear, to contract the ontological difference (v. II: 357): Then the other refrain is “*Die Welt ist fort; ich muss dich tragen*,” again, constative and then performative: “[T]his world which at bottom ... advenes only by going away” (v. II: 358; vide quotation of Celan). There is, in this, a stronger element of cohabitation, a common place or habitat, with or without “the world *as such*,” there is the “earth” (v. II: 314). This is, of course, a presumed or anticipated unity of the world – always that. Somewhat in fear of the psychoanalytic, the “worlds” in which we live, differ, become unrecognizable, entirely other, revolting, monstrosities (*immonde*), not resembling much of anything (v. II: 366), non-fellows (v. I: 155). In the ancient Papuan

example, “River People” (AB: *Horu*) are disfigured and live sexual excess with enlarged genitalia, but, by agreement, they return to a different village of longhouses, under the river, accessed through a large stone. Standard *revenants* live together in large named stones (*mui*), or are “put into the stone,” at least those who transgress cultural conventions are.²⁶ Through them such named individual *revenants* have a common village, Horutihaha. They are highly individualized, if, ultimately, only by transgression. River People literally share (participate in) two types of world, and two habitats.

In related fashion, it can, one thinks, be seen that as much as the *als ob* exists, and sometimes quite strongly, it does not figure so in that which is considered here. The strongest form may well be that of the individual who contributes to convention in acting *as if* that person were, for instance, a fully initiated Papuan male even where he was not initiated, or a River Person even if he were not one. For Kant, in the most general terms, there would have been an *als ob*, as the world as “regulative idea of reason” (v. II: 370). The Papuan example does not know of this “as if”, or admits it only occasionally if at all, circumstantially: “The *als ob* ... is the essential modality in which is presented the regulative idea of the world, the world as regulative idea of reason” (v. II: 370). Derrida referred to Heidegger’s principal theme as the *als-Struktur*, then to that of Kant’s as the *Alsobstruktur*, commenting that for the latter that the world “... hangs by a mere *als ob*” (v. II: 370). Most difficult would have been Kant and the “bellicose state” (v. II: 317–325; cf. Derrida 2005: 83–86). Derrida sees the *as if* as “indispensable”

26 Stone for Heidegger was without world. This seemed to have been more or less the same in the ancient Papuan example. The stone imprisons transgressors of the cultural conventions, prescriptions, and proscriptions (*aguoi* and *aniu*). The stone may constitute a “door” for the River People (*Horu*), also transgressors. That is, specific stones can be the villages or long houses of spirits of various types. Differently, yam stones (*iro mui*), magical stones, in male and female pairs, which contain in some way the spirit of yams or are animated stones, produce yams and reproduce other such stones and yams (cf. *weltlos*). The yam stones may also “make sounds (*uwa*) like children.” With the exception of the latter, there is a real sense in which the named stones (as given above) may constitute a world, a complete settlement or village, and also constitute the passage from that world to the world of their origin. The *revenants*, living spirits, and the like, are always defined in part by *domus*, even if this *domus*-world is some sort of terror, something revolting. Thus they are always accessible, findable, and more. I must add that in the ethnographic present (ca. 1970) there was only one such pair of yam stones, held by Uwara, a Big Man. His belief concerning the yam stones was considered idiosyncratic or an error by some.

(2005: 85). He understood it as a “constitutive use” though and not a regulative one.

... it seems to be *as if* we were behaving *as if* we were inhabiting the same world and speaking of the same thing and speaking the same language, when in fact we well know – at the point where the phantasm precisely comes up against its limit – that is not true at all (v. II: 369).

Derrida seemed to mark the phantasm, the unthinkable and the unbelievable, with the *as if*. Kant’s regulative idea of the *als ob*, in the creation of an obligatory or necessary illusion, is that of world as a divided sovereignty, I and God or something close to this.

In all of this, the objective has been to sustain a *Walten* which maintains or retains some of the anthropological, some of the political, and some hint of onto-theology – perhaps despite Derrida’s comments (v. II: 329). The only variation that one would have kept was to insist on the ontological-theological sovereign, of one kind or another, high god (Uriala), or in a slightly more muted way, divine kingship (the lapsed *teratologue*).

Derrida questioned whether there can be an excess of sovereignty (*vid. sup.* “hyperbolic excess”)? In the ancient Papuan example or literal political “reigning,” one would find specialized, refracted forms of near sovereignty, such as diviners and war leaders (*E Bo*, “Big Men”), cult practitioners and sorcerers, whose definitions might well be qualified as absolute knowledge, as excessive (despotic, *despotikon*), or a surplus, or, occasionally, complete sovereignty of a sort. In this one is relapsing to the ordinary vocabulary of *Walten* (v. II: 330), domination, potency, power, predominate, dominant absolutely, to reign, to hold sway sovereignly, superiority, superiority of spirit, violence, and so on. The sovereignty is spirit and this “sovereignty *waltet*.” It executes itself; it prevails; it affirms itself; it does this beyond any “science” (simple science) (v. II: 331), “or in any case [the] non-mythological” (v. I: 176):

To speak of the nothing, and therefore of non-being, and therefore already of Being as different from beings, although not other than beings – this the scientist cannot do, but the poet and the philosopher can (v. II: 334).

The *Gewalt* (power or *Macht*) of what *waltet* is physical or “natural”; it is not real. For instance, if there is sovereignty or excellence in poetry, it is the “order” of spirit (v. II: 354). As impious as this might seem, relative to anthropology, it is spirit which prevails, is superior, that seems to have a place above (*vide: poēsis*). It is, mechanically, as they say, “in the *Austrag* that it *waltet*” (v. II: 354).

It would be well to continue that sovereignty/su-

periority is also a certain “impotence” (v. II: 355). Derrida wanted beings-as-a-whole, to be *Walten*, and Beings to be violent, “predominant and prepotent.” Thus *Walten* is not limited in its definition. It appears “to be being” and *Walten* were the same, that is, the same, as given previously, to *logos* and to *physis* (v. II: 339): “The violence that grips man is indeed that of the *as such* of beings that *Dasein* is and that he must take upon himself, in its *Walten, as such*” (v. II: 338).

To achieve one final part of the explanation, this consideration of “The Beast and the Sovereign,” in this qualification and theme of “violence,” that which opens a “path” or opens “ground,” as beings are revealed or unveiled, thus appear as sea, earth, and animals.²⁷ As Derrida would say, the *als-Struktur* that differentiates animal and man is what *Walten*’s violence makes possible. It would all seem to be in the “taming and joining” of forces or violences (*Gewalten*) because of which are discovered beings *as such*. I expect that this is what “The Beast and the Sovereign” was also about.

Section 5

Toute bête: Conclusion

In “The Beast and the Sovereign,” as in the ancient Ai’i Barai example, but particularly the latter, the figure of the sovereign, if that is what an *E Bo*, “Big Man” is, that “figure” is one of “tyranny,” or in Papua historically one might more often have said “despotism.” In this tyranny or despotism, cruelty was not much distinguished (v. I: 209). If one looks closer to see who was “at bottom” (v. I: 210), who was the ground or what was the ground, the “beast” or the “sovereign,” the reply would [likely] be the sovereign. Phrased somewhat differently, the ground or non-ground, that “bottom,” arguably before the resolution of opposites, is the phalanger, the Big Phalanger, *Mi Bo*, who is the sovereign. The relation of man and phalanger was the commencement of the political, the sovereign, and the “Big Man,” in this region of Papua New Guinea.

Mostly ignoring Derrida’s reliance on Schelling, there are only a few Papuan statements of the individual which are not embedded, all of them rather cloudy. The ancient southeastern Papuan individual emanates from here, this “depth,” this “non-ground,” its nascence in “pure ground,” the origi-

²⁷ I here would term the old Papuan semiological media as “stone” (*mui*), “fire” (*mie*), “water” (*idua*), “earth” (*sa*), and I would add “mist”/“spirit,” “life-force” (*oi*).

nary ground, *ex arkhēs*²⁸. It is the phalanger. One is sovereign or *bête*, and the animal cannot be *bête*; and if it is *bête*, it is the tyrannical as evil and as cruelty (and as illness?), all perhaps unified in error?

Those animals (including phalangers) which can reside in stone or inhabit stone and those human beings who inhabit stone, that is, inhabit stone monuments²⁹ (Papuan example: *Mui Bo* which are classified as *Ma'i ma'i* associated with the *nemeton*), are those animals and men who are on their way to “becoming-animals” and possibly “becoming-thing” – I do not know if the latter is completely true. The granite monument (that large named stone) is impassive perhaps, but it is invulnerable and Derrida would probably have said “immune” from attack (v. I: 219). Becoming-*bête* is an immortality of sorts and a “survival.” The same, to repeat, was true for the River People, the Horu: some would have wings of flying fox, some “with boards in their backs,” many others were missing limbs as those dismembered in homicide, etc., an *immonde*. Again, they were “on the way” to becoming a certain species of animal.

The French sense of *bête* or *bêtisage* more properly would have been the New Guinea Highland's Tok Pisin *long long*, “crazy” or “stupid” persons who could be killed outright, or *uti uti ro'a* in my older Papuan Ai'i Barai example, “spinning/turned-around speaking”, confused speech, “stupid,” which

28 Derrida usually uses *arkhē* as commencement and/or commandment.

29 It should be given that a “clan stone,” that monument, is classified in the ancient Papuan example as *Ma'i ma'i*. *Ma'i ma'i* can be an honorific applied to the standardized components, objects, and animals (the capital species), conventionally gathered to the *nemeton* (*a'a*) of a localized clan (*Buru*, named *Harpyopsis Nova Guineae*). The set of clan (*Buru*) totems is the category *Ma'i ma'i*. *Ma'i ma'i*, in this context of the clan, was declared to be that which was the oldest or “ancient.” It is in this way that *Ma'i ma'i*, “ancient,” is equivalent to “convention” or “tradition.” The adjective *bo* was also an honorific as “great” or “renown.” It was habitually applied to all such totems.

More mundanely, *Ma'i ma'i* was the set of capital species of *fauna* and *flora* “gathered” at the *nemeton*, or habitually hallucinated in this fashion. The founding or originary serpent named *Simo* (“and her children”) were also imagined to be present; she was the harbinger of war. There are, of course, outside of the context of the clan or local group many other possible glosses of both *Ma'i ma'i* and *ma'i* such as opposite-sex sibling, sister, most often *Ma'i ma'i* or named clan tree or “local group.” The latter was also given as *Ani Bo*. *Ani Bo* could be the tree as that which sheltered the various capital species, or it could be the personal or patrilineal plant emblem. The *ani* is the *phallus*. In its primary usage, *Ma'i ma'i* could derive from an equally prominent phrase of the time, *E Ma* or perhaps *mama'i*, “with pride.” This was a sort of descriptive counterpart to *E Bo* or Big Man (leader). It meant “very old man,” an “ancient” or “oldest.” This latter would open another aspect of Ai'i Barai cosmology, albeit an important aspect.

extended to millenarian cult behavior in retrospect, inchoate.³⁰ This is not the same as the “untranslatable” French word. I would say then that for the (particular) ancient example there is no word *bête* (v. I: 447), except *bête*, as Derrida likely expected. Somewhat differently, even though *bêtise* is proper to the human – and it is not animality – the Big Phalanger is a human, and he is *bête*, or he is an animal and not *bête*. As in volume I page 247, the question remains “To whom, to what does *bêtise* belong?” In more explicit form,

... *bêtise* is always necessarily on both sides, the side of the “who” and the side of the “what,” on the side of the one that manages to posit itself as sovereign, and on the side of what the sovereign denounces or attacks as the *bêtise* of the other (v. I: 248).

In looking at “The Beast and the Sovereign” from a certain perhaps unexpected perspective, there has also been the presentation of a view of Heidegger following Derrida. I hope the latter has not been a poor “aping [of] Heidegger [nor Derrida], vulgar *Dasein*” (v. II: 279 modified). In looking at one instance of the fragments of older Papuan ethnography from a quite expected perspective, the southeastern Papuan Big Phalanger is Nihira, the “eye-opener” who left by an indeterminate path for unknown parts and who returns, may have returned from time to time, at least in narrative, or is always there at a distance, or he can be thought of in these ways. The same is true for Mibo who departs like a phalanger “with hair covering his eyes.” More than this, perhaps, considering the form of old Papuan narratives in which the mythical progenitors might be observed as with the implication of a being “sent away” or “sent off” in favor of something new, or where this absence or nonappearance is a kind of deferral, that absence is possibly also a delay in an inheritance, an inheritance that is yet to arrive? Perhaps it would be the inheritance of a secret, an impossible divisible sovereignty? It is an incomplete statement; however, I think that everyone (unless they are *bête* or a “*gros bêta*”) should know who they are? For the others it seems *as if* “Big Man” and “Big Phalanger” were the same? With the last question, “I mean with the lightness of unawareness, at least for the time and space of an *as if*, signing the insurance policy ...” (v. II: 317), or “social insurance” as Derrida put it.³¹

30 The generic Ai'i-Barai term for “insanity” would have been *uvu-te'i*. It, like others, was a matter of failing to comply with tradition.

31 This provisional statement of central Papuan beliefs and concomitant practice is completed in a full structuro-cosmological presentation in “Papuan Shrines and Generic Shrines” (2014b).

The original fieldwork in the Wawaga Valley was accomplished with the funding of the Canada Council. Fieldwork was aided by Tom Dutton and Burt Voorhoeve who were at the Department of Linguistics at ANU and Marta Rohatynskyj who accompanied me to Emo River. James Banove was indispensable. Also of great assistance was the University of Papua New Guinea and the New Guinea Research Unit, Boroko, Frank Sabben the then ADC at Kokoda, Chris Day D. C. Popondetta. John Austing S. I. L. Asapa conducted himself somewhat like a *teratologue*.

References Cited

Barker, Thomas R.

1976 Some Features of Ai'i Society. In: Report to the Canada Council. [387 pp.]

- 1979 Barai Group Formation. Toronto. [Ph. D. Thesis, University of Toronto, Department of Anthropology]
- 1998 Culture, Secrets, and Ömie History? "Dissemblance" and the Wawaga Valley. *American Ethnologist* 25/3: 500–501.
- 2006 The Ateker. The Theoretical Beginning. [Unpubl. Ms]
- 2013 Contrapuntal Lineage, Clan, and Village. *Anthropos* 108: 117–135.
- 2014a Legitimate Hierarchies. The Person and Regionalism. Rabaul/Toronto. [Unpubl. Ms; 155 pp.]
- 2014b Papuan Shrines and Generic Shrines. Toronto. [Unpubl. Ms; 441 pp.]

Derrida, Jacques

- 1976 Of Grammatology. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- 2005 Rogues. Two Essays on Reason. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- 2009 The Beast and the Sovereign. Vol. 1. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [E Book]
- 2011 The Beast and the Sovereign. Vol. 2. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [E Book]