

“Who goes there?” Reflections on signs and personhood in Christopher Hutton’s *Integrationism and the Self*

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Review of *Integrationism and the Self: Reflections on the Legal Personhood of Animals* [Series *Routledge Advances in Communication and Linguistic Theory*] by Christopher Hutton. London: Routledge, 2019, 190 pp.

In his compelling new book, *Integrationism and the Self: Reflections on the Legal Personhood of Animals*, Christopher Hutton (2019a: 23) interrogates the circumstances in which “the category of personhood is currently being treated as one that is open for new admissions”. In particular, as his title suggests, the possibility of considering the personhood of non-human animals is under discussion in the book. Most immediately, the issue is a matter of law and legal discourse and, as Hutton shows, both have had a long history in which ‘person’ is the key category. On the basis of the topic alone, then, this volume will be of interest to those working on ethology, ethics, law, semiotics of legal discourse and philosophy (of mind, especially). In obvious ways, it is a companion volume to his book (Hutton 2019b) on the Corbett v Corbett case and its invention of ‘legal sex’, a volume which also demands to be read by those working on gender, ethics, law, semiotics of legal discourse, sex and identity. Yet, it is possible that *Integrationism and the Self*, especially, will hold particular interest among biosemioticians – not because of the focus on non-human species but because of the integrationist perspective that informs its argument.

Taking its cue from the work of Roy Harris (see, as an initial mission statement, Harris 1978), the integrationist perspective insists that language and communication, rather than being considered as two separate entities, should be radically integrated. That is, language is not to be construed as an ‘entity’ that can be identified as residing in a definite location, but is tied up in the human communication that takes place in every situation, being made, re-made and

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recast wherever there are humans, to the extent that language is nothing but that process. Thus, as Hutton (2019a: 4) points out early in this book, “Integrationism sees language primarily as *acta* [...]. Speaking, writing and interacting are first-order activities, and integration is a dynamic, contextual, time-dependent process [...]. Reifications of language are second-order constructs”. As a result of integrationism being orientated towards communication and language as a continuous, relentless process, it has proved itself amenable to some cognitive perspectives where the enactive bearing of communication is to the fore. This fact is notwithstanding Harris’ (2008) incisive criticism of much ‘cognitivism’ for its promotion of “cognobabble” and exemplification of “the language myth”, the latter being an assumption that language, in its relation to cognition, can somehow be a stable entity that exists somewhere. While Harris was assiduously working his way through the areas of intellectual life where the language myth had wreaked havoc – including, in addition to cognitive science, the world of discourse on art (Harris 2003), the writing of history (Harris 2004a) and science (Harris 2005) – Hutton (2011: 511) has suggested that “It is in the interactions between the study of language and other disciplines that integrationism has the best chance of finding an attentive partner for intellectual dialogue and discussion”. Indeed, in his work with Pablé (Pablé, Hutton 2015), Hutton took the unprecedented step, moving integrationism out of its human communication homeland, to engage with general semiotics’ orientation to non-verbal (as well as verbal) modes and to consider the biological provenance of such modes.

In some respects, the book under discussion here amounts to a further step in the same direction, although its resolutely integrationist bearing certainly sheds light on some important contemporary issues without bowing to either intellectual or socio-political fashion. The volume is made up of an introduction and conclusion, plus five chapters: one on what Hutton calls ‘bedrock concepts’; one on analysing these in language studies; one on integrationism and systems theory; one on animals and personhood; and one on legal precedents in animal personhood. At the very least, two or three of the chapters amount to superb, up-to-date literature reviews of the topic at hand. Yet, there is much more to the volume than this.

Central to the discussion in the volume as a whole is the issue of the self. Given the agency held by integrationism to be inherent in the *acta* of communication, it is not surprising that the self is the crucial concept. However, what Hutton shows overall is that what is at stake in animal personhood is not so much whether non-human animals are closer to humans than was hitherto thought, whether they are further away from humans than we previously imagined or whether they are capable of the same levels of making and re-making of communication as humans;

rather, what is shown is that the upgrading of "certain categories of animal to the level of human beings for some legal purposes" is an act of "expanding rather than undermining the fundamental anthropocentrism of law" (Hutton 2019a: 2). Integrationism is well-placed to make observations on this seeming paradox. It sees 'person' and 'self' as fundamentally abstract concepts (Hutton 2019a: 4). As such,

[i]f the self is actively and constantly integrating, this might imply that it stands outside the stream of indeterminacy as a stable and self-identical agent. Yet if the self acts through integration, then it arguably also integrates itself. If signs are made and remade in contexts, so must the self be. (Hutton 2019a: 5)

Such niceties seldom trouble legal discourse. The law concerns itself with 'things' (such as property), acts (particularly legally identifiable ones) and persons. Yet, as Hutton (2019a: 144) argues cogently, "The person/*res/acta* distinction conceals the underlying anthropocentrism of law. *Res* and *acta* are emanations from *persona*. Person is for these reasons the central legal category, in which are crystallized law's definitional and interpretative dilemmas".

One reason that the category 'person' is so troublesome – for law, generally, but also for integrationism, which sheds light on it as a category – is because *everyone* knows what it means and *no-one* knows what it means. In his excoriation of the way that broadly cognitive approaches have invented a new vocabulary for cognitive processes – as if that vocabulary will pin down and reify for all time what those processes actually *are* while at the same time outlawing lay terms – Harris (2008) suggests that the word 'mind', embargoed in cognitivism, is actually efficacious and eminently defensible because of the way it is constantly re-made in lay discourse. 'Person' undergoes a similar fate: law is continually trying to fix it as a category (and failing in the task); lay discourse, by contrast, can utilize a good understanding of what it is through co-creation of the term in each communication.

Both 'person' and 'mind' are examples of what Hutton (2019a: 6; 2017) calls 'bedrock concepts', concepts that are difficult to break down into more fundamental ideas without circularity or tautology, yet which represent indispensable points of reference. Bedrock concepts allow reasoning to take place, but their definitions are continually contested. Whereas mundane objects allow for decontextual definitions, bedrock concepts are more challenging because they are bound up in ethical or philosophical debates. Often, as Hutton (2019a: 7) points out, bedrock concepts are caught between 'real' and 'verbal' definitions, where the former involves checking whether the concept conforms to scientific criteria that

constitute its boundaries and fix its being while the latter entails comparing the term used to reference the concept with adjacent terms and the history of usage of all the relevant terms assembled. Following an exquisitely concise discussion of the common strategies involved in attempting to fix soul, person and nature, Hutton (2019a: 44) concludes that bedrock concepts can often cause “disorientation and alienation”. They exist in some hinterland between second-order reifications and folk linguistics. The only route to clarity and the avoidance of tautology is through a “cognitive dance”. Thus, some meanings will be “momentarily held fixed in order that others may be interrogated, at the same time as the inquiry is understood to look beyond the surface structure of language to matters of philosophical substance or ontology” (Hutton 2019a: 44).

Hutton finds linguistics’ approaches to bedrock concepts, particularly through Natural Semantic Language and cognitive metaphor theory, to be somewhat wanting. They paper over the tension between real and verbal definition. For him, the “impossibility of distinguishing between these two modes reflects the overweening ambition of the Western tradition in relation to bedrock thinking. Stipulative definition is used to make ontological claims, and ontological claims are invoked in support of stipulated definition” (Hutton 2019a: 66). Like other approaches, including biosemiotics and much contemporary semiotics,

[i]ntegrationism rejects all understandings of language that see it as grounded in a dedicated faculty or a particular module of mind or brain, and refuse to separate language as a category of human activity from all its other aspects or dimensions. (Hutton 2019a: 68)

Linguistics – but also and increasingly, it seems, other fields – promulgate versions of this language myth where processes, such as interpretation, are effectively undercut by the assertion that they feature a substrate called ‘language’. Alternatively, some approaches insist on the primacy of the process itself, evacuating agency and thus nullifying agentive processes such as interpretation.

For Hutton, systems theory, in particular, is an example of an anti-humanism opposing what might be taken to be the broad humanism of the integrationist position. Any combat against the language myth tends to hinge on the role of the person – not just the category of person, but the nature of the agency involved in mobilizing meaning. In the case of systems theory, agency is downgraded to the extent that it renders a *subject* rather than an *individual* in the functioning of systems. Moreover, Hutton does not just have in mind the more ‘hardcore’ systems theory that one might associate with the current of thought that takes its inspiration from Bertalanffy. In fact, he targets Chomskyan linguistics with its

distinctions between competence and performance, I-language and E-language which "reflect the boundary between a universal, impersonal, naturalistic system and the disordered, experiential world of human societies" (Hutton 2019a: 72). Hutton makes a persuasive case for the congruence of Chomskyan linguistics and systems theory, showing how they share a view in which

the environment is disordered. Order as a property of systems is constructed autopoietically in response to, but not as determined by, the environment. In the case of a child acquiring language, the environment as disorder provides a necessary but not sufficient stimulus for the emergence of the full biosystem. (Hutton 2019a: 72)

Included in such perspectives is the theoretical biology of Jakob von Uexküll, where organisms are taken to be self-regulatory in respect of their umwelten but their interactions with the environment "trigger variation and drive evolutionary change" (Hutton 2019a: 72).

The main opposition between systems theory and integrationism is posed by Hutton as "system without agency" and "agency without system" (Hutton 2019a: 71) respectively. At this stage in the discussion, Hutton does not commit to the fully autonomous agent which haunts integrationism, with its humanist, solipsistic baggage. In fact, he explores, instead, the tension "reflected in the relationship between integrational theory and various strands of distributed, embedded, embodied, enactive, extended, or ecological understandings of language" (Hutton 2019a: 73). The latter perspectives have striven to demonstrate that language, as integrationism was already at pains to point out, can never be envisaged as an eternally-located reification. Yet, they insist, also, that language can never be construed as the product of some self-identical Cartesian agent mobilizing signs from a position of full control in an internally malleable, but securely ensconced, mentality. The specific tension to which Hutton refers – one which arises from the way in which distributed, embedded, embodied, enactive, extended, or ecological perspectives might represent an arbitrating or conciliatory position between integrationism and systems theory – is summed up by two nicely selected quotes from Bateson and Harris:

Suppose I am a blind man, and I use a stick. I go tap, tap, tap. Where do I start? Is my mental system bounded at the hand of the stick? Is it bounded by my skin? Does it start halfway up the stick? Does it start at the tip of the stick? (Bateson 2000[1972]: 325, quoted in Hutton 2019a: 74)

I am no more convinced that using my pocket calculator is an extended form of thinking than that riding a bicycle is an extended form of walking, or driving a motor car an extended form of riding on horseback. Thinking by proxy makes no more sense than being happy or sad by proxy. The black tie I wear at the funeral isn't doing my grieving for me. Nor is it a bit of grief that somehow escaped from inside me and got distributed. (Harris 2004b: 729, quoted in Hutton 2019a: 78)

The key process under consideration here, as Hutton points out, is one derived from systems theory in which the organism and environment are presented in respect of how they are “coupled”. For integrationism, the question concerns whether the agent/speaker is fully responsible for integrating language and communication or whether the agent/speaker is somehow a variably active integrator in a more general process of integration – “a dynamic construct of contextual sign-making practices” (Hutton 2019a: 83). Integrationism’s “radical anti-foundationalism” seems to “postulate the existence of an autonomous agentive self” (Hutton 2019a: 83) when the more reasonable explanation might be that the self is caught up in the semiotic processes that it purports to control. The latter would certainly look to be likely given that the self of integrationism is caught up in the “ceaseless labour” (Hutton 2019a: 69) of communicating, making not only language something different at every juncture of time but also the self ‘itself’. Hutton sensibly leaves this question largely in abeyance before returning to it in the conclusion with respect to animal personhood.

It might be imagined that consideration of the debates around agents and environments, organisms and systems amounts to an excessively lengthy digression in the face of the question of animal personhood. However, Hutton (2019a: 141) has grasped the horns of a dilemma between “law as grounded in natural categories and law as artificial reasoning”. In law, it might be argued that non-human animals share with humans fundamental capacities which can be considered in assessing their legal personhood; on the other hand, law has routinely projected artificial endowments of personhood on such entities as the ‘corporation’. This also presents a problem for integrationism and, by association but in different ways, any theoretical perspective on signification. “On the definitional level”, Hutton writes (2019a: 141),

integrationism would recognize that the word person, whether understood as a natural kind or an artificial category of law, has no intrinsic boundary. There is no rule of language that restricts how particular linguistic categories are applied. At the ideological level, integrationism is arguably anthropocentric, but it does not follow that it takes any particular view of arguments for or against animal personhood. Rather it points to the limitations of our capacity to think through

fundamental or bedrock issues to reasoned conclusions. Law, like the study of language, is always *in medias res*, buffeted about by the contingencies of socio-political and cultural forces and attempting to carve out a coherent narrative underlying its decision-making whilst being subject to pressures of which it is only partially aware.

What the matter of legal personhood presents is illuminated by, but also exemplified in, integrationism: it is a bedrock concept caught between 'real' and 'verbal' definitions. Confronted with bedrock categories, law will turn to the natural order or it will define concepts for its own 'artificial' purposes or, sometimes, combine the two by way of reference to theological bearings (Hutton 2019a: 144). "The history of thinking about selfhood and personhood", Hutton (2019a: 146) concludes, "stages a constant collapse of real definition into verbal definition, and verbal definition into stipulative definition".

Since that collapsing is a constant, the conclusion of Hutton's book requires some resolution which avoids charges of solipsism in respect of the autonomous self that is associated with humanism, but does not back into the third-person view of systems theory with its occasional claims to be operating in relation to "objective reality". Law offers some lessons, despite the fact that it draws on naturalist arguments (the higher animals are analogous to humans in their capacities), social arguments (higher animals have a sense of social obligations) and theological arguments (animals might have immaterial souls). Yet, as Hutton (2019a: 148) observes "within the interpretative culture of law, the gravitational pull of the reified ordinary language category, person as 'human being', is extremely powerful". Similarly, the gravitational pull of the reified ordinary language category, human as synonymous with a fully autonomous consciousness, is also part of a strong and prevalent belief: "Viewed from the lay perspective," writes Hutton (2019a: 147), no doubt aware in doing so that the lay perspective is more difficult to glean than Harris ever thought it was, "the denial of the self is the purest academic nonsense, especially when a stipulated distinction is drawn between the reality of person and the fiction of self". This latter refers to the way in which anti-humanism considers the unitary, autonomous self to be a mere epiphenomenon of greater systems (Hutton 2019a: 34, 147). Yet, if the laity does assume that there is a fully autonomous self in any human being – and that is a big 'if' when one considers that the lay perspective might be that such a self exists in all life forms or, alternatively, never gives the matter a second thought – then there is a big problem, one that also might be inherent to integrationism. That is, the triumph of bourgeois ideology – in this case, the individualist conception of the self – is simply visited on the lay perspective and integrationism accepts this as

its starting point. Put very bluntly, this is the issue which lurks in the incomplete conceptions of communication, co-creation and the agent in integrational semiology.

In pursuing a much-needed first-person perspective which does not fall into the traps of bourgeois humanism, Hutton resists such a conclusion in this book. The Harrisian idea of ‘co-creation’ of communication is central to Hutton’s conception of the first-person perspective in which moment-to-moment spontaneous sense-making occurs and from which a third-person impersonal landscape is projected. For Hutton (2019a: 147–148),

This sense-making is not a solipsistic activity. As Duncker suggests, integration involves centrally an orientation to others. It implies an Other, echoing the humanist *I/you* duality (2017). The ‘person in concrete, living, individuality’ who is ‘re-created again and again in the perpetual flux of life’ is at the heart of theological personalism.

Running through this volume, in its disquisition on law and the category of animals, but also in its observations about the self and agency, is an important argument about ‘personalism’. In contrast to humanism, which grew out of an opposition to the Christian Church in particular and became a cornerstone of bourgeois endeavour, “Personalism is a cover term for frameworks, both religious and secular, that put the human person at the centre, philosophically, methodologically, and ethically” (Hutton 2019a: 11). If that description seems quite compatible with humanism, Hutton (2019a: 148) clarifies:

Integrationism, I would argue, should be seen as a form of personalism. It rejects the third-person impersonal perspective. The label of personalism captures the personal, first-person nature of sign-making, as well as its ethical dimension. It is arguably a more accurate label for integrationism than individualism or humanism, and builds on the notion of a person-centred approach to human behaviour (Klemmensen 2018). Sign-making is personal, rather than individual or human. In its personal nature lies the assumption that others are also persons and that sign-making must orient itself to them. The third-person perspective is best understood as an imaginary, a projection, or, indeed, a fiction. What emerges from accounts of human-animal interaction is that many people have a powerful first-person experience of the co-personhood of animals. Belief in the personal suffering of animals offers then the only ethical imperative.

So, a person-centred approach is based on the assumption of other persons and, therefore, the direction of sign-making. This would seem to make sense at first glance, in the same manner as intersubjectivity as a concept appears to rely on

personalism without individualism. However, the question does arise regarding interpersonal interaction as a dyad.

From Harris' (1978) critique of Saussure onwards, there has been a suspicion of 'telementational' models. Some process other than telepathy must take place between humans and the one that fits that bill, amounting to a *third*, is surely the sign – by which is meant, here, not a reified entity but, of course, the process of semiosis. Any interaction must require this kind of process, a third which enables (the illusion of) a dyad. This is true of the projection of a third-person impersonal landscape, to which Hutton refers, and it is also true of the projection of signs onto another as well as the projection of a future self, bound up with those signs. Of course, integrationists would refer to the fact that semiosis *in use* changes on every occasion of usage so that it is "immaterial" to the argument. However, this is a little like saying that the purpose of bullets, vodka, rain and wood changes every time with each use, as if none of them had material or semiotic reality that is carried over from moment to moment. Despite the fact that this book is so well argued, as well as the fact that it does not use the term except in quotations, the conclusion with which the reader is left seems to be summed up by the somewhat problematic concept of 'intersubjectivity'.

Hutton does a great deal to advance the cause of integrationism. With his nuanced conception of 'bedrock concepts' and their entanglement in 'real' and 'verbal' definition, he effectively enables the integrationist 'person' to elude its seeming fate as a 'transcendental signified' (Derrida 1976: 49), a much-vaunted destination at the end of the yellow brick road of signification which turns out to be not a Wonderful Wizard but a small man with a loudhailer in Oz. This presentation of the lack of stability in the category 'person' is persuasive, particularly in the way that it mirrors the very procedure of law. But the inherent difficulty of this perspective, certainly acknowledged by Hutton in relation to law, is that it is still perilously close to Humpty Dumptyism, solipsism and psychologism, no matter how much personalism can be said to be based on either intersubjectivity and/or co-creation.

There are two problems arising from advancing the integrationist position to the fullest extent in this discussion of legal personhood for animals. The first might be understood as methodological and is concerned with the reliance on a seemingly psychologistic dimension of personalism. The matter can be illustrated with a quote from Stjernfelt in his evaluation of Peirce's anti-psychologism in pursuit of semiosis as a 'reality'. Here, Stjernfelt (2014: 4) significantly undermines over-reliance on the laity as the locus of truth; he writes:

A basic problem in psychologism is that it immediately allows for relativism. If one mind holds one thing to be true while another prefers another, both minds are equally entitled to be investigated by psychology. Who are we to judge, if psychology is taken to be the deepest or even the only access to those claims? Psychology studies psychic processes in general, with no distinction as to whether particular claims made by those psyches are true or false, and the truth or falsity of a claim may not be decided from investigating the psychological process bringing forth that claim. To make a caricature: If mathematical entities were really of a purely psychological nature, then truths about them should be attained by means of psychological investigations. The upshot of psychologism might thus be that a proper way of deciding the truth of the claim that $2+2=4$ would be to make an empirical investigation of a large number of individual, psychological assessments of that claim. So, if we amass data of, say, 100,000 individual records of calculating $2+2$, we might find that a small but significant amount of persons take the result to be 3, which would give us an average measure of around 3.999 as the result. This might now be celebrated as the most exact and scientific investigation yet of the troubling issue of $2+2$; far more precise than the traditional, metaphysical claims of the result being 4, which must now be left behind as merely the coarse and approximate result of centuries of dogmatic mathematicians indulging in armchair philosophy and folk theories, not caring to investigate psychological reality empirically.

A starker warning against the perils of depending on human data would be difficult to find. When Harris (1981: 204, quoted by Hutton 2019a: 82) states that the language-bound theorist “has ultimately no leverage to bring to bear on understanding language other than such leverage as can be exerted from the *terra firma* of his [sic] own linguistic experience”, this must also apply to the language-boundedness of the theorists’ subjects, too. The laity are not Homeric heroes, as they might seem in some integrationist writings, waking up each morning and seeing the world anew, as if without experience. Rather, they access the past and plan for the future. Certainly, in co-creation there is some impingement on both communication and the self; yet, surely, that impingement cannot trump the experience and the projection of themselves into the future that agents constantly undergo.

The obvious issue, here, is that there are limit points to the reliance on data provided by organisms with psychologies. In biosemiotics, for example, even with all its emphases on interpretation, ultimately the focus is on the *umwelt* of the human or the non-human animal: a world that is very much specific to the organism, but one that must have some purchase on reality in order for the organism/species to avoid extinction. Put another way, using the vocabulary of integrationism, a species’ grasp of some phenomena – food, predators – must be a registering of some *determinate* rather than *indeterminate* characteristics.

Language, clearly, is not a *determinate* phenomenon; anyone who has disputed the meaning of an utterance knows that, and integrationism proceeds productively from that point. Nevertheless, it is a complicated matter: indeterminacy implies a third-person perspective that does not exist, meaning there are no signs that are the same for different people, or for the same person across situations. An Olympian viewpoint would be required to realize that signs are indeterminate. Yet, arguably, for the sign-maker signs are determinate because they have an integrational function. If they were truly and radically indeterminate, they could not integrate activities *for the sign user* 'here-and-now'. Put another way, signs would be completely ineffectual. Perhaps it is the effectivity of signs which is the crux of debate. If language – or communication, or semiosis – is taken to be what constitutes the human *umwelt*, then the survival of *Homo sapiens* is fair testimony that the species' immersion in language renders at least part of reality in a manner which is beneficial to species endurance. Language, as modelling rather than chatter, offers a handle on reality; it may be radically indeterminate while offering sufficient determinacy to shore up the survival project.

The second, related, problem in the strong version of the integrationist position on co-creation and radical indeterminacy arises from the implications of intersubjectivity. What arises between two agents in co-creation is not guaranteed to deliver a closer grasp on what is real. This hardly needs to be said. Yet the fact should not constitute grounds for abandoning the relation which agency within a species might bear to the real in favour of a concocted, intersubjective reality that will be required to suffice. Such an abandonment is characteristic of the way that postmodernism and poststructuralism foregrounded artifice and human constructions, simultaneously registering despair at the impossibility of escaping from discourse because of the power relations inherent in discursive interaction. It is a kind of naïve nominalism. Perhaps the result of any dalliance with intersubjectivity, including the implicit one in integrationism, is a retreat from the goal of engaging with the real. If the survival of species is an indicator of some apprehension of determinacy, a connection with the real, then there must be some mediating factor operating "over and above" the organism and, say, its predator.

The product of co-creation, a "reality" constructed from indeterminacy, is often taken to be what exists between these subjects (or subjectivities). As John Deely observes, this assumption that a relation arises only between really existing subjects, goes all the way back to Aristotle. In a paper from 2002 entitled "Why intersubjectivity is not enough", Deely argues that this assumption is simply wrong. Firstly, a relation can exist *over* two subjectivities without either subjectivity being aware of it. Secondly, and because of the first, the relation that constitutes a sign

can pertain *to the unreal* as well as the *real*. This is important because something arises from the human's negotiation of the *real* and the *unreal* which is slightly different from Hutton's conclusion regarding 'real' and 'verbal' definitions in law.

The example that commonly occurred in Deely's talks and writings to demonstrate the reality of relation, its suprasubjectivity, concerns the child's relation to her biological father and presumed father in cases where the child has no knowledge of the truth of her paternity. For the child, her genetic relation to her presumed father, based on her subjectivity and the intersubjectivity which she and he share, is real for her – and no doubt co-created multiply through their interactions as 'sign relations' – even though the biological facts rule against it. Her biological relation to her true father, by contrast, is demonstrably real – if the opportunity ever arises for such demonstration. Yet it is completely unknown to her. Deely (2002: 18) writes:

So we see, finally, why intersubjectivity is not enough, even when it may happen to be involved in a sign relation: because what is essential to every relation as relation is not that it be between really existing subjects, but only that it be in every case irreducible to subjectivity, whether pure physical subjectivity or subjectivity which as such has been objectified, made object, apprehended. Intersubjectivity is required for a relation in Aristotle's category of relation, but is not required as such for every relation, and *a fortiori* not for a sign relation. The objective term of the sign relation, the significate or 'thing stood for', may no longer or may even never have been subjectively real at all, even though, through sensation, perception and understanding always do involve termini that are subjective as well as objective or known.

Following on from this, Deely makes a more general point about the nature of sign relations as they are implicated in human semiosis, the focus of integrational semiology. As with Hutton's observations on legal categories and lay communication, the concept of the real and the constructions of language are invoked, although Deely's terminology is different. For Deely, there is mind-independent reality, *ens reale*, the world of phenomena beyond a specific *umwelt* but susceptible of apprehension in part within that *umwelt*; and there is mind-dependent reality, the world of phenomena known only within the parameters of a specific *umwelt*, deriving principally from experience and without intellectual leaps to contemplate what might be beyond that experience. In a sign relation, what is real or what is unreal is rendered indifferently; however, in either case there is a triadic relationship, invisible to sense. Thus, whether it is intersubjective or not, "every relation, be it in the order of *ens reale* or *ens rationis*, obtains as relation suprasubjectively" (Deely 2002: 19). Deely concludes that the 'indifference' of signs

to the order of reality signified, sustained by a suprasubjective relation, can only be sorted out by a "semiotic animal" (Deely 2002: 19) – a human, characteristically endowed with the unique capacity to oscillate, as if without effort, between mind-dependent and mind-independent reality.

Returning to Hutton but keeping Deely's observations on the "semiotic animal" in mind, there is an important point that the former makes in an earlier paper, already quoted, regarding the politics of integrationism. Hutton (2011: 509) identifies at the heart of the attack on the language myth and the language machine a robust resistance to reification. That is, Harris' insistence on "personal and community responsibility, and the idea of meanings being made and re-made by language-makers, rather than being pre-determined for them by a system which lies beyond their agency" (Hutton 2011: 509). Contemplating the character of this creativity, it seems that rather than being self-perpetuating, creativity entailing creativity entailing creativity and so on, there might be alternative fertile common ground for Hutton's and Deely's perspectives. When signs are not recognized for their signhood but for what they signify – that is, the possibility to signify beyond themselves is not considered – they exist as objects, the provenance of which is occluded by whether those signs indicate (a) that which is to be avoided because it dangerous, (b) that which is to be sought out because it offers comfort or nourishment, and (c) that which can be safely ignored. Such is the orientation to signs which ethology has revealed as indigenous to non-human animals. By contrast, "The greatness of the human species", Deely (2002: 21) argues in response to questions about his intersubjectivity paper,

consists in understanding, and using understanding to make a better world. Thomas Aquinas said for the human being and only for the human being there is a difference between speculative and practical understanding. For the animal there's no difference. You can't even say that the animal understanding is practical, for in order to speak of practical understanding you have to contrast it to speculative. So the human being is distinctive because it is able to come to know something of the truth about things. But that knowledge of the truth then extends the power of the human being over the world of nature. So the line between speculative and practical knowledge of the human being is not a line that is fixed once and for all but one that is constantly shifting. What is distinctive about human understanding is the speculative dimension, which becomes practical by extension. But those who simply take the extension and use it – you can use it for good purposes, you can use it for evil purposes – depend upon but fall short of the fully human. The fully human requires speculative grasp for its own sake, the *vita contemplativa*, understanding. So what is the difference of the human, of the animal which merely uses signs versus an animal which also knows that there are signs? The way to fuller humanity is open to the second animal, closed to the first animal. But

from one point of view there is no difference, if all you care about are “practical results”. Then even the fully human is reduced merely to a tool, the instrument of a practicality (such as killing ever more people!) not otherwise attainable.

The first point to grasp from this, then, is that while the human does not have direct, untrammelled access to the real, it is by no means negligible that the human is able to conceptualize that there *is* something that is real. That is, the human understands – and seeks, through this understanding, to foster further understanding – that any existent thing harbours qualities which are beyond the capacity of the human *umwelt* to fully apprehend.

For Deely, following Aquinas, the speculative dimension of human semiosis is that through which it is “able to come to know something of the truth about things”. This is not to say that human semiosis constantly captures truth. Rather, it is in a state of perpetual oscillation between *ens rationis* and *ens reale*, caught up in the indifference of signs to the order of reality. Non-human animal understanding is ‘practical’ in the sense that the non-human animal does not engage in speculative thought about the nature of semiosis. This is mentioned here not to offer a final definition of personhood that legal discourse and integrationism have missed, nor to cap a review of an important book by attempting to bash it with an insight from semiotics. Rather, the aim is to suggest a way, benefiting from both integrationism and semiotics, to approach personhood’s position in human semiosis. As Hutton demonstrates the similarities in the dilemma of legal discourse and in lay communication, caught between ‘real’ and ‘verbal’ definitions, it seems that there are parallels with the characteristic oscillation between mind-dependent and mind-independent orders of reality as identified by Deely. Considering the divergences and convergences of semiotics and integrationism may also shed light on the kind of questions that can be asked about animal personhood. From a semiotic point of view – if not necessarily from a semiological one – the non-human animal is not just a creation of discourse. That would be to create an animal from experience alone, from mind-dependency. As such, lay communication is marked by a significant difference from legal discourse that is apparent in the latter’s requirement to make judgments. Lay communication, in contrast, has the luxury to consort with the real, through musing on mind-independency and suspending judgment in the face of knowing at least some of what it is that the human cannot know. The non-human animal of lay communication, it would seem, can never be a mere verbal construct. In the terms of Hutton’s bedrock concepts, the real in the real/verbal couplet prevents that possibility. Interrupting the indifference of signs to orders of reality, then, would appear to require the full force of the law.

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