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## Beyond the Anthropological Difference

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Beyond the Anthropological Difference**, by Matthew Calarco,  
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In *Beyond the Anthropological Difference*, Matthew Calarco aims both at exposing and interpreting the current theoretical situation regarding animals and at proposing a new way of conceiving human-animal relations, advancing what he calls an 'ontology of indistinction'. Mimicking Jacques Derrida's project of decentring philosophy, here Calarco aims at decentring ethics appealing to a serious consideration of the relations between beings as opposed to a search for a 'primary locus of ethical consideration' (41).

The book's argument is laid out throughout seven sections, presenting a critical part through sections 2 to 4, and a constructive part through sections 5 to 8. In section 2, Calarco engages critically with an essay by Hans-Johann Glock titled 'The Anthropological Difference: What can Philosophers Do to Identify the Differences between Human and Non-human Animals?' (*Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 70, 2012: 105–31). In this essay Glock develops a positive position regarding the need for identifying an anthropological difference. Calarco's critical engagement with Glock's essay proves necessary in order to paint the theoretical backdrop against which Calarco develops his own argument. Section 3 is dedicated to defining 'speciesism' and 'anthropocentrism' – two key concepts in animal ethics – and to favour the use of the latter term. The reasons for this and its implications are fully developed in section 4, where Calarco argues that the term 'anthropocentrism', contrary to 'speciesism', aids in seeing the linkage between the violence and injustices inflicted on animals and on humans who are deemed not fully humans. Here it becomes clear that Calarco is seeking an intersectional understanding of violence which is not found within our traditional theoretical framework. Such endeavour leads Calarco to characterize our tradition, not as speciesist but as anthropocentric. It is in section 5 that the book moves on to its constructive part; here, Calarco delineates a new ontology – through an indistinction approach – that, according to the author, better reflects the human-animal relation aiming to achieve a new type of *praxis*. In the following section, section 6, Calarco explores the possibilities of this new *praxis* through three ethologies (social, ecological, and mental): here ethics is seen as *ethos*, that is, as the quest for a good life, which implicates, as Calarco suggests, a re-situating of human beings within a larger community now encompassing nonhuman animals as well. Section 7 is dedicated to the discussion of a reconfiguration of normative ethics, arguing for an open-ended ethics and politics, which follows from