

Luanne Frank reads the look between a whale and *Sea Shepherd* Capt. Paul Watson. She says their look seems to refute Heidegger's claim that animals are world-less (583), and to extend "the range of possible efficacy" of the look, and thus "the applicability of Heidegger's theory" (605). In *Parmenides*, Heidegger traces the concept of *alétheia*, or unconcealedness, as truth (587). *Alétheia* has the sense "of having shown up," "of having been revealed," "of having been somehow unseen" (587). It implies a change, an activity of "showing up or appearing... dependent on being visually apprehendable, visible, available to the look and enabled by light" (587). The visual theme marks no ordinary look: not "the grasping look of a subject that imposes itself on an object"—but an extraordinary look that "allows the looked-at, or looked-upon, in being looked at in a certain way to 'be'" (587). The look "extends itself to the other and awaits the other as such," "expectantly letting the other be," awaiting "in return a reciprocal look" that lets *both* parties be (592). In the rapport of the look, Being is granted, "delivers *itself* to and into them... suffuses them [with] Being" (591). Such a look strikes Watson during his first whaling intervention, blocking whalers with his boat and body. When the whalers harpoon a female whale, the male they assume is her mate lunges, hurling himself at the whaling boat (597). He too is struck by harpoons, and he roars, then rears, and charges at Watson. But the whale stops; Watson sees "his muscles pull back" (597), and Watson is caught up in the "gentle, knowing, forgiving gaze" (599) of the whale, who turns and swims away. Frank argues that this encounter defines "henceforth" Watson's "very specific mode of Being" (600-1). N.B. that Watson in his lifetime "encountered innumerable animals" but "does not speak of their look as he does of this whale's" (606). "[P]resumably" the look's initiator, Watson yet *receives* the whale's look of perhaps reciprocal recognition, each seeing the other "as the same sort of fellow being as I am" (603). Whether the whale "knows" about the looking, we cannot know (605): we might say the whale's intentionality does not govern the scene of the look. All we know is that, even if it *was* unreciprocated, Watson's own "granting look" seems to "effect the unconcealment of the looker and the looked-upon alike" (605), granting being to both Watson and the whale, who show up, become available to each other's looking, and are let (expectantly) be. Frank reads Watson's encounter not (only) to illustrate "a human/animal connection," but to corroborate "the efficacy" of the look, Heidegger's "looking into and shining into another being" (605). Though this look "comes from a quarter Heidegger will not have been willing to consider" (605), still it ought to give pause over the world-less-ness of animals; perhaps even over Heidegger's criteria for having world.

Part 2: She curls metal fingers around a burning zippo lighter. The blue pixels of her eyes tighten in the black screen of her face as she watches the flame. The flame's reflection in the glass tunnels of his eyes slides down to one side as he turns his head on his electronic neck and casts his look, from the flame in her hand that he has never seen before, to her eyes in focus, incisive. They are lesbian robots: WALL•E and EVE: butch and femme. In a delightful blog post, Kate Bornstein argues that *WALL•E* is a "hot, dyke Sci Fi action romance": as robots, WALL•E and EVE have none of the criteria humans use for determining biological sex. But they are indisputably gendered, *styled* from names to parts to dispositions. I go to the look of these robots to get at the look between butch and femme, and to get *away* from the apparent triviality of a look shared between humans, for whom Heidegger takes Being for "granted." (Pun intended.) *WALL•E* also highlights the shift from the verbal to the visual register that Frank makes by focusing on the look rather than on language: the film has no dialogue for the first 22 minutes. Butch and femme are genders whose relation is laden with tropes of visibility. The butch usually figures the hypervisible: the woman who looks like a man. Her masculinity stands in relief in public, and her inability to "pass" in a heterosexual matrix may even become threatening. The femme by contrast figures invisibility, to the extent that her excessive femininity (and her queerness) goes unmarked. EVE as femme pursues first a sanctioned recognition: per her directive, she must furnish evidence of plantlife on earth so that the humans aboard her spaceship can go home. But when the ship's autopilot tries to eliminate the plant so it can maintain its fascist control, EVE's pursuit of her directive becomes excessive, and outlaw. WALL•E as butch sticks out on EVE's home turf: his earthly dirt attracts unwanted attention from policing cleaning robots as he tries to help EVE. Just like a butch, WALL•E is vulnerably filled with feelings, even though his interiority may take the form of not showing it. We may read WALL•E's smitten looking at EVE as the initiating look, the not-grasping that awaits expectantly, letting the other be, even shining into and granting WALL•E's being: before EVE, WALL•E's world is literally a heap. But it's EVE who comes to earth and finds *him*. Her fierce femme-ness not only captures his gaze; it strikes him, as if thrown off her body by the forceful optics of *erôs*. He sees EVE as it is possible for her to be (seen), *but* explicitly *not* as the *same* sort of being as is he. The circuit of the look between WALL•E and EVE is reciprocal, but *not* identical: it runs through their difference, the conflict of their directives, their disparate origins, the temporal drag of their machine and computer parts, and/but most crucially their differently gendered play (come on, they bond over *Hello, Dolly!*), which play points up the resonance of their respective styles of being even at the level of Being. It is the difference that makes the look *so* striking, as one is seized by her eyes in return.

- Bornstein, Kate. "WALL•E: A Butch/Femme Love Story... or Silly Rabbit! Robots Have No Gender." *Kate Bornstein's Blog for Teens, Freaks and Other Outlaws*. Web. 11 Oct 2011. <[http://katebornstein.typepad.com/kate\\_bornsteins\\_blog/2008/07/walle-a-butchfe.html](http://katebornstein.typepad.com/kate_bornsteins_blog/2008/07/walle-a-butchfe.html)>.
- Cvetkovich, Ann. "Untouchability and Vulnerability: Stone Butchness as Emotional Style." *butch/femme: Inside Lesbian Gender*. Ed. Sally R. Munt. Washington, D.C.: Cassell, 1998. 159-169. Print.
- "WALL•E" *IMDb: The Internet Movie Database*. IMDb, n.d. Web. 11 Oct 2011. <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0910970/>>.
- Worman, Nancy. "The Body as Argument: Helen in Four Greek Texts." *Classical Antiquity* 16.1 (April 1997): 151-203. Print.