

Can philosophy conceive of a perfect animal? Can it think of the animal as anything other than an imperfect human? In *The Beautiful Animal*, Michael Lewis attempts to rethink the Hegelian dialectic so as to render it capable of assigning a proper place to the animal, particularly the beautiful animal, and to rework the philosophy of nature so as to encompass the fossil. The fossil itself teaches philosophy — and especially the dialectic — how it must modify itself in order to encompass the beautiful animal, in the form of what we term the fossilised dialectic: resistant to the spiritualisation which will always leave the animal behind.