

THE BODY, IN THEORY
Histories of Cultural Materialism

Editors

Dalia Judovitz, Emory University
James I. Porter, University of Michigan

Editorial Board

Malcolm Bowie, Francis Barker,
Norman Bryson, Catherine Gallagher,
Alphonso Lingis, A. A. Long,
Jean-François Lyotard, Elaine Scarry
Jean Louis Schefer, Susan Stewart

The body constructed by theory and through social and cultural practices has provided the departure point for studies that broach new fields and styles of inquiry. The aim of the series *The Body, in Theory: Histories of Cultural Materialism* is to reconstruct a history of materialisms (aesthetic, linguistic, and philosophical) by locating the body at the intersection of speculative and cultural formations across a wide range of contexts.

Titles in the series

*The Subject as Action: Transformation
and Totality in Narrative Aesthetics*
by Alan Singer

*Power and Knowledge: Astrology,
Physiognomics, and Medicine
under the Roman Empire*
by Tamsyn S. Barton

*Under the Sign: John Bargrave
as Collector, Traveler, and Witness*
by Stephen Bann

*The Deluge, the Plague:
Paolo Uccello*
by Jean Louis Schefer,
translated by Tom Conley

Simulacra and Simulation
by Jean Baudrillard,
translated by Sheila Faria Glaser



SIMULACRA AND SIMULATION

BY
JEAN BAUDRILLARD
TRANSLATED BY
SHEILA FARIA GLASER

Ann Arbor
The University
of Michigan
Press
1994

THE ANIMALS:
TERRITORY AND
METAMORPHOSES
(1981)

What did the torturers of the Inquisition want? The admission of evil, of the principle of evil. It was necessary to make the accused say that he was not guilty except by accident, through the incidence of the principle of Evil in the divine order. Thus confession restored a reassuring causality, and torture, and the extermination of evil through torture, were nothing but the triumphal coronation (neither sadistic nor expiatory) of the fact of having *produced Evil as cause*. Otherwise, the least heresy would have rendered all of divine creation suspect. In the same way, when we use and abuse animals in laboratories, in rockets, with experimental ferocity in the name of science, what confession are we seeking to extort from them from beneath the scalpel and the electrodes?

Precisely the admission of a principle of objectivity of which science is never certain, of which it secretly despairs. Animals must be made to say that they are not animals, that bestiality, savagery—with what these terms imply of unintelligibility, radical strangeness to reason—do not exist, but on the contrary the most bestial behaviors, the most singular, the most *abnormal* are resolved in science, in physiological mechanisms, in cerebral connections, etc. Bestiality, and its principle of uncertainty, must be killed in animals.

Experimentation is thus not a means to an end, it is a *contemporary* challenge and torture. It does not found an intelligibility, it extorts a confession from science as previously one extorted a profession of faith. A confession whose apparent distances—illness, madness, bestiality—are nothing but a provisional crack in the transparency of causality. This proof, as before that of

divine reason, must be continually redone and everywhere redone—in this sense we are all animals, and laboratory animals, whom one continually tests in order to extort their reflex behaviors, which are like so many confessions of rationality in the final moment. Everywhere bestiality must yield to reflex animality, exorcising an order of the indecipherable, of the savage, of which, precisely in their silence, animals have remained the incarnation for us.

Animals have thus preceded us on the path of liberal extermination. All the aspects of the modern treatment of animals retrace the vicissitudes of the manipulation of humans, from experimentation to industrial pressure in breeding.

Gathered at a convention in Lyons, European veterinarians became concerned about the diseases and psychological troubles that develop in industrial breeding farms.

—*Science and the Future*, July 1973

Rabbits develop a morbid anxiety, they become coprophagous and sterile. The rabbit is “anxious,” “maladapted” from birth, so it seems. Greater sensitivity to infections, to parasites. The antibodies lose their efficacy, the females become sterile. Spontaneously, if one can say so, mortality increases.

The hysteria of chickens infects the whole group, a “psychic” collective tension that can reach a critical threshold: all the animals begin to fly and scream in all directions. The crisis over, there is a collapse, general terror, the animals take refuge in the corner, mute and as if paralyzed. At the first shock, the crisis begins again. It can last several weeks. One attempted to give them tranquilizers . . .

Cannibalism on the part of pigs. The animals wound themselves. The calves begin to lick everything that surrounds them, sometimes even unto death.

“It is certainly necessary to establish that bred animals suffer *psychically* . . . A zoo psychiatry becomes necessary . . . A psychic life of frustration represents an obstacle to normal development.”

Darkness, red light, gadgets, tranquilizers, nothing works. In birds there is a hierarchy of access to food—the *pecking order*. In

these conditions of overpopulation, the last in the order is never able to get to the food. One thus wished to break the *pecking order* and *democratize* access to food through another system of distribution. Failure: the destruction of this symbolic order brings along with it total confusion for the birds, and a chronic instability. Good example of absurdity: one knows the analogous ravages of good democratic intentions in tribal societies.

Animals somatize! Extraordinary discovery! Cancers, gastric ulcers, myocardial infarction in mice, pigs, chickens!

In conclusion, the author says, it certainly seems that the only remedy is space—“a bit more space, and a lot of the problems observed would disappear.” In any case, “the fate of these animals would become less miserable.” He is thus satisfied with this conference: “The current concern about the fate of bred animals is witness, *once again*, to the alliance of the morality and the meaning of a well-understood interest.” “One cannot simply do whatever one wants with nature.” The problems having become serious enough to damage the profitability of business, this drop in profitability may lead the breeders to return the animals to more normal living conditions. “In order to be raised in a healthy manner, it is now necessary to be always concerned with *the mental equilibrium of the animals*.” And he foresees the time when one will send animals, like people, to the country, to restore their mental equilibrium.

One has never said better how much “humanism,” “normality,” “quality of life” were nothing but the vicissitudes of profitability. The parallel between these animals sick from surplus value and humans sick from industrial concentration, from the scientific organization of work and assembly-line factories is illuminating. In the latter case as well, the capitalist “breeders” were led to a revision that was destructive of the mode of exploitation, innovating and reinventing the “quality of work,” the “enrichment of tasks,” discovering the “human” sciences and the “psychosociological” dimension of the factory. Only the inevitability of death renders the example of the animals more shocking still than that of men on an assembly line.

Against the industrial organization of death, animals have no other recourse, no other possible defiance, except suicide. All the

anomalies described are suicidal. These resistances are a failure of industrial reason (drop in profits), but also one senses that they run counter to the *logical* reasoning of the specialists. In the logic of reflex behaviors and of the animal-machine, in rational logic, these anomalies are not qualifiable. One will therefore bestow on animals a psychic life, an irrational and derailed psychic life, given over to liberal and humanist therapy, without the final objective ever having changed: death.

With ingenuity, one thus discovers, like a new and unexplored *scientific* field, the psychic life of the animal as soon as he is revealed to be maladapted to the death one is preparing for him. In the same way one rediscovers psychology, sociology, the sexuality of prisoners as soon as it becomes impossible to purely and simply incarcerate them.¹ One discovers that the prisoner needs liberty, sexuality, "normalcy" to withstand prison, just as industrially bred animals need a certain "quality of life" to die within the norm. And nothing about this is contradictory. The worker also needs responsibility, self-management in order to better respond to the imperative of production. Everyone needs a psychic life to adapt. There is no other reason for the arrival of the psychic life, conscious or unconscious. And its golden age, which still continues, will have coincided with the impossibility of a rational socialization in every domain. Never would the humanities or psychoanalysis have existed if it had been miraculously possible to reduce man to his "rational" behaviors. The whole discovery of the psychological, whose complexity can extend ad infinitum, comes from nothing but the impossibility of exploiting to death (the workers), of incarcerating to death (the detained), of fattening to death (the animals), according to the strict law of equivalences:

so much caloric energy and time = so much work power
 such an infraction = such an equivalent punishment
 so much food = optimal weight and industrial death.

Everything is blocked, so psychic life, the mental, neurosis, the psychosocial, etc. are born, not at all in order to break this delirious equation, but to restore the principle of mutually agreed upon equivalences.

Beasts of burden, they had to work for man. Beasts of demand, they are summoned to respond to the interrogation of science.² Beasts of consumption, they have become the meat of industry. Beasts of somatization, they are now made to speak the "psy" language, to answer for their psychic life and the misdeeds of their unconscious. Everything has happened to them that has happened to us. Our destiny has never been separated from theirs, and this is a sort of bitter revenge on Human Reason, which has become used to upholding the absolute privilege of the Human, over the Bestial.

Besides, animals were only demoted to the status of inhumanity as reason and humanism progressed. A logic parallel to that of racism. An objective animal "reign" has only existed since Man has existed. It would take too long to redo the genealogy of their respective statuses, but the abyss that separates them today, the one that permits us to send beasts, in our place, to respond to the terrifying universes of space and laboratories, the one that permits the liquidation of species even as they are archived as specimens in the African reserves or in the hell of zoos—since there is no more room for them in our culture than there is for the dead—the whole covered by a racist sentimentality (baby seals, Brigitte Bardot), this abyss that separates them follows domestication, just as true racism follows slavery.

Once animals had a more sacred, more divine character than men. There is not even a reign of the "human" in primitive societies, and for a long time the animal order has been the order of reference. Only the animal is worth being sacrificed, as a god, the sacrifice of man only comes afterward, according to a degraded order. Men qualify only by their affiliation to the animal: the Bororos "are" macaws. This is not of the prelogical or psychoanalytic order—nor of the mental order of classification, to which Lévi-Strauss reduced the animal effigy (even if it is still fabulous that animals served as a *language*, this was also part of their divinity)—no, this signifies that Bororos and macaws are part of a cycle, and that the figure of the cycle excludes any division of species, any of the distinctive oppositions upon which we live. The structural opposition is *diabolic*, it divides and confronts distinct identities: such is the division of the Human, which throws

beasts into the Inhuman—the cycle, itself, is *symbolic*: it abolishes the positions in a reversible enchainment—in this sense, the Bororos “are” macaws, in the same way that the Canaque say the dead walk among the living. (Does Deleuze envision something like that in his becoming-animal and when he says “Be the rose panther!”?)

Whatever it may be, animals have always had, until our era, a divine or sacrificial nobility that all mythologies recount. Even murder by hunting is still a symbolic relation, as opposed to an experimental dissection. Even domestication is still a symbolic relation, as opposed to industrial breeding. One only has to look at the status of animals in peasant society. And the status of domestication, which presupposes land, a clan, a system of parentage of which the animals are a part, must not be confused with the status of the domestic pet—the only type of animals that are left to us outside reserves and breeding stations—dogs, cats, birds, hamsters, all packed together in the affection of their master. The trajectory animals have followed, from divine sacrifice to dog cemeteries with atmospheric music, from sacred defiance to ecological sentimentality, speaks loudly enough of the vulgarization of the status of man himself—it once again describes an unexpected reciprocity between the two.

In particular, our sentimentality toward animals is a sure sign of the disdain in which we hold them. It is proportional to this disdain. It is in proportion to being relegated to irresponsibility, to the inhuman, that the animal becomes worthy of the human ritual of affection and protection, just as the child does in direct proportion to being relegated to a status of innocence and childishness. Sentimentality is nothing but the infinitely degraded form of bestiality, the racist commiseration, in which we ridiculously cloak animals to the point of rendering them sentimental themselves.

Those who used to sacrifice animals did not take them for beasts. And even the Middle Ages, which condemned and punished them in due form, was in this way much closer to them than we are, we who are filled with horror at this practice. They held them to be guilty: which was a way of honoring them. We take them for nothing, and it is on this basis that we are “human” with

them. We no longer sacrifice them, we no longer punish them, and we are proud of it, but it is simply that we have domesticated them, worse: that we have made of them a racially inferior world, no longer even worthy of our justice, but only of our affection and social charity, no longer worthy of punishment and of death, but only of experimentation and extermination like meat from the butchery.

It is the reabsorption of all violence in regard to them that today forms the monstrosity of beasts. The violence of sacrifice, which is one of “intimacy” (Bataille), has been succeeded by the sentimental or experimental violence that is one of distance.

Monstrosity has changed in meaning. The original monstrosity of the beast, object of terror and fascination, but never negative, always ambivalent, object of exchange also and of metaphor, in sacrifice, in mythology, in the heraldic bestiary, and even in our dreams and our phantasms—this monstrosity, rich in every threat and every metamorphosis, one that is secretly resolved in the living culture of men, and that is a form of alliance, has been exchanged for a spectacular monstrosity: that of King Kong wrenched from his jungle and transformed into a music-hall star. Formerly, the cultural hero annihilated the beast, the dragon, the monster—and from the spilt blood plants, men, culture were born; today, it is the beast King Kong who comes to sack our industrial metropolises, who comes to liberate us from our culture, a culture dead from having purged itself of all real monstrosity and from having broken its pact with it (which was expressed in the film by the primitive gift of the woman). The profound seduction of the film comes from this inversion of meaning: all inhumanity has gone over to the side of men, all humanity has gone over to the side of captive bestiality, and to the respective seduction of man and of beast, monstrous seduction of one order by the other, the human and the bestial. Kong dies for having renewed, through seduction, this possibility of the metamorphosis of one reign into another, this incestuous promiscuity between beasts and men (though one that is never realized, except in a symbolic and ritual mode).

In the end, the progression that the beast followed is not different form that of madness and childhood, of sex or negri-

tude. A logic of exclusion, of reclusion, of discrimination and necessarily, in return, a logic of reversion, reversible violence that makes it so that all of society finally aligns itself on the axioms of madness, of childhood, of sexuality, and of inferior races (purged, it must be said, of the radical interrogation to which, from the very heart of their exclusion, they lent importance). The convergence of processes of civilization is astounding. Animals, like the dead, and so many others, have followed this uninterrupted process of annexation through extermination, which consists of liquidation, then of making the extinct species speak, of making them present the confession of their disappearance: Making animals speak, as one has made the insane, children, sex (Foucault) speak. This is even deluded in regard to animals, whose principle of uncertainty, which they have caused to weigh on men since the rupture in their alliance with men, resides in the fact that *they do not speak*.

The challenge of madness has historically been met by the hypothesis of the unconscious. The Unconscious is this logistical mechanism that permits us to think madness (and more generally all strange and anomalous formations) in a system of meaning opened to nonmeaning, which will make room for the terrors of the nonsensical, now intelligible under the auspices of a certain discourse: psychic life, drive, repression, etc. The mad were the ones who forced us to the hypothesis of the unconscious, but we are the ones in return who have trapped them there. Because if, initially, the Unconscious seems to turn against Reason and to bring to it a radical subversion, if it still seems charged with the potential of the rupture of madness, later it turns against madness, because it is what enables madness to be annexed to a reason more universal than classical reason.

The mad, once mute, today are heard by everyone; one has found the grid on which to collect their once absurd and indecipherable messages. Children speak, to the adult universe they are no longer those simultaneously strange and insignificant beings—children signify, they have become significant—not through some sort of “liberation” of their speech, but because adult reason has given itself the most subtle means to avert the threat of their silence. The primitives also are heard, one seeks

them out, one listens to them, they are no longer beasts. Lévi-Strauss pointed out that their mental structures were the same as ours, psychoanalysis rallied them to Oedipus, and to the libido—all of our codes functioned well, and they responded to them. One had buried them under silence, one buries them beneath speech, “different” speech certainly, but beneath the word of the day, “difference,” as formerly one did beneath the unity of Reason; let us not be misled by this, it is the same order that is advancing. The imperialism of reason, neoimperialism of difference.

What is essential is that nothing escape the empire of meaning, the sharing of meaning. Certainly, behind all that, nothing speaks to us, neither the mad, nor the dead, nor children, nor savages, and fundamentally we know nothing of them, but what is essential is that Reason save face, and that everything escape silence.

They, the animals, do not speak. In a universe of increasing speech, of the constraint to confess and to speak, only they remain mute, and for this reason they seem to retreat far from us, behind the horizon of truth. But it is what makes us intimate with them. It is not the ecological problem of their survival that is important, but still and always that of their silence. In a world bent on doing nothing but making one speak, in a world assembled under the hegemony of signs and discourse, their silence weighs more and more heavily on our organization of meaning.

Certainly, one makes them speak, and with all means, some more innocent than others. They spoke the moral discourse of man in fables. They supported structural discourse in the theory of totemism. Every day they deliver their “objective”—anatomical, physiological, genetic—message in laboratories. They served in turns as metaphors for virtue and vice, as an energetic and ecological model, as a mechanical and formal model in bionics, as a phantasmatic register for the unconscious and, lastly, as a model for the absolute deterritorialization of desire in Deleuze’s “becoming-animal” (paradoxical: to take the animal as a model of deterritorialization when he is the territorial being par excellence).

In all this—metaphor, guinea pig, model, allegory (without

forgetting their alimentary "use value")—animals maintain a compulsory discourse. Nowhere do they really speak, because they only furnish the responses one asks for. It is their way of sending the Human back to his circular codes, behind which their silence analyzes us.

One never escapes the reversion that follows any kind of exclusion. Refusing reason to madmen leads sooner or later to dismantling the bases of this reason—the mad take revenge in some way. Refusing animals the unconscious, repression, the symbolic (confused with language) is, one can hope, sooner or later (in a sort of disconnection subsequent to that of madness and of the unconscious) to put in question once again the validity of these concepts, just as they govern and distinguish us today. Because, if formerly the privilege of Man was founded on the monopoly of consciousness, today it is founded on the monopoly of the unconscious.

Animals have no unconscious, this is well known. Without a doubt, they dream, but this is a conjecture of a bioelectrical order, and they lack language, which alone gives meaning to the dream by inscribing it in the symbolic order. We can fantasize about them, project our fantasies on them and think we are sharing this *mise-en-scène*. But this is comfortable for us—in fact animals are not intelligible to us either under the regime of consciousness or under that of the unconscious. Therefore, it is not a question of forcing them to it, but just the opposite of seeing *in what way they put in question this very hypothesis of the unconscious, and to what other hypothesis they force us*. Such is the meaning, or the non-meaning of their silence.

Such was the silence of madmen that it forced us to the hypothesis of the unconscious—such is the resistance of animals that it forces us to change hypotheses. For if to us they are and will remain unintelligible, yet we live in some kind of understanding with them. And if we live in this way, under the sign of a general ecology where in a sort of planetary niche, which is only the enlarged dimension of the Platonic cave, the ghosts of animals and the natural elements would come to rub against the shadow of men who survived the political economy—no, our profound understanding with beasts, even on the road to disappearance, is

placed under the conjugated sign, opposite in appearance, of *metamorphosis* and of *territory*.

Nothing seems more fixed in the perpetuation of the species than animals, but yet they are for us the image of metamorphosis, of all possible metamorphoses. Nothing more errant, more nomadic in appearance than animals, and yet their law is that of the territory.³ But one must push aside all the countermeanings on this notion of territory. It is not at all the enlarged relation of a subject or of a group to its own space, a sort of organic right to private property of the individual, of the clan or of the species—such is the phantasm of psychology and of sociology extended to all of ecology—nor this sort of vital function, of an environmental bubble where the whole system of needs is summed up.⁴ A territory is also not a space, with what this term implies for us about liberty and appropriation. Neither instinct, nor need, nor structure (be it "cultural" and "behavioral"), the notion of territory is also opposed in some way to that of the unconscious. The unconscious is a "buried," repressed, and indefinitely subdivided structure. The territory is open and circumscribed. The unconscious is the site of the indefinite repetition of subjective repression and fantasies. The territory is the site of a completed cycle of parentage and exchanges—without a subject, but without exception: animal and vegetal cycle, cycle of goods and wealth, cycle of parentage and the species, cycle of women and ritual—there is no subject and everything is exchanged. The obligations are absolute therein—total reversibility—but no one knows death there, since all is metamorphosed. Neither subject, nor death, nor unconscious, nor repression, since nothing stops the enchainment of forms.

Animals have no unconscious, because they have a territory. Men have only had an unconscious since they lost a territory. At once territories and metamorphoses have been taken from them—the unconscious is the individual structure of mourning in which this loss is incessantly, hopelessly replayed—animals are the nostalgia for it. The question that they raise for us would thus be this one: don't we live now and already, beyond the effects of the linearity and the accumulation of reason, beyond the effects of the conscious and unconscious, according to this brute,

symbolic mode, of indefinite cycling and reversion over a finite space? And beyond the ideal schema that is that of our culture, of all culture maybe, of the accumulation of energy, and of the final liberation, don't we dream of implosion rather than of explosion, of metamorphosis rather than energy, of obligation and ritual defiance rather than of liberty, of the territorial cycle rather than of . . . But the animals do not ask questions. They are silent.

NOTES

1. Thus, in Texas, four hundred men and one hundred women experiment with the sweetest penitentiary in the world. A child was born there last June and there were only three escapes in two years. The men and women take their meals together and get together outside of group therapy sessions. Each prisoner possesses the only key to his individual room. Couples are able to be alone in the empty rooms. To this day, thirty-five prisoners have escaped, but for the most part they have returned of their own accord.

2. In French, *bêtes de somme* means beasts of burden. Baudrillard plays with the word *somme* in the phrase that follows: "Bêtes de somme, elles sont sommées de répondre à l'interrogatoire de la science," and in the use of the word *consommation* in the following phrase.—TRANS.

3. That animals wander is a myth, and the current representation of the unconscious and of desire as erratic and nomadic belongs to the same order. Animals have never wandered, were never deterritorialized. A whole liberatory phantasmagoria is drawn in opposition to the constraints of modern society, a representation of nature and of beasts as savagery, as the freedom to "fulfill all needs," today "of realizing all his desires"—because modern Rousseauism has taken the form of the indeterminacy of drive, of the wandering of desire and of the nomadism of infinitude—but it is the same mystique of unleashed, noncoded forces with no finality other than their own eruption.

Now, free, virgin nature, without limits or territories, where each wanders at will, never existed, except in the imaginary of the dominant order, of which this nature is the equivalent mirror. We project (nature, desire, animality, rhizome . . .) the very schema of deterritorialization that is that of the economic system and of capital as

ideal savagery. Liberty is nowhere but in capital, it is what produced it, it is what deepens it. There is thus an exact correlation between the social legislation of value (urban, industrial, repressive, etc.) and the imaginary savagery one places in opposition to it: they are both "deterritorialized" and in each other's image. Moreover, the radicality of "desire," one sees this in current theories, increases at the same rate as civilized abstraction, not at all antagonistically, but absolutely according to the same movement, that of the same form always more decoded, more decentered, "freer," which simultaneously envelops our real and our imaginary. Nature, liberty, desire, etc., do not even express a dream the opposite of capital, they directly translate the progress or the ravages of this culture, they even anticipate it, because they dream of total deterritorialization where the system never imposes anything but what is relative: the demand of "liberty" is never anything but going further than the system, but in the same direction.

Neither the beasts nor the savages know "nature" in our way: they only know *territories*, limited, marked, which are spaces of insurmountable reciprocity.

4. Thus, Henri Laborit refuses the interpretation of territory in terms of instinct or private property: "One has never brought forth as evidence, either in the hypothalamus or elsewhere, either a cellular group or neural pathways that are differentiated in relation to the notion of territory . . . No territorial center seems to exist . . . It is not useful to appeal to a particular instinct"—but it is useful to do so in order to better return it to a functionality of needs extended to include cultural behaviors, which today is the vulgate common to economics, psychology, sociology, etc.: "The territory thus becomes the space necessary to the realization of the act of bestowing, the vital space . . . The bubble, the territory thus represent the morsel of space in immediate contact with the organism, the one in which it 'opens' its thermodynamic exchanges in order to maintain its own structure . . . With the growing interdependence of human individuals, with the promiscuity that characterizes the great modern cities, the individual bubble has shrunk considerably . . ." Spatial, functional, homeostatic conception. As if the stake of a group or of a man, even of an animal, were the equilibrium of his bubble and the homeostasis of his exchanges, internal and external!