

ANIMAL PHILOSOPHY:

ESSENTIAL READINGS IN CONTINENTAL THOUGHT

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BECOMING-ANIMAL

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MEMORIES OF A BERGSONIAN

We believe in the existence of very special becomings-animal traversing human beings and sweeping them away, affecting the animal no less than the human. . . . Structuralism clearly does not account for these becomings, since it is designed precisely to deny or at least denigrate their existence: a correspondence of relations does not add up to a becoming. When structuralism encounters becomings of this kind pervading a society, it sees them only as phenomena of degradation representing a deviation from the true order and pertaining to the adventures of diachrony. . . . It is always possible to try to explain these *blocks of becoming* by a correspondence between two relations, but to do so most certainly impoverishes the phenomenon under study. . . .

A becoming is not a correspondence between relations. But neither is it a resemblance, an imitation, or, at the limit, an identification. The whole structuralist critique of the series seems irrefutable. To become is not to progress or regress along a series. Above all, becoming does not occur in the imagination, even when the imagination reaches the highest cosmic or dynamic level, as in Jung or Bachelard. Becomings-animal are neither dreams nor phantasies. They are perfectly real. But which reality is at issue here? For if becoming animal does not consist in playing animal or imitating an animal, it is clear that the human being does not "really" become an animal any more than the animal "really" becomes something else. Becoming produces nothing other than itself. We fall into a false alternative if we say that you either imitate or you are. What is real is the becoming itself, the block of becoming, not the supposedly fixed terms through which that which becomes passes. Becoming can and should be qualified as becoming-animal even in the absence of a term that would be the animal become. The becoming-animal of the human being is real, even if the animal the human being becomes is not; and the becoming-other of the animal is real, even if that something other it becomes is not. This is the point to clarify: that a becoming lacks a subject distinct from itself; but also that it has no term, since its term in turn exists only as taken up in another becoming of which it is the subject, and which coexists, forms a block, with the first. This is the principle according to which there is a reality specific to becoming (the Bergsonian idea

of a coexistence of very different "durations," superior or inferior to "ours," all of them in communication).

Finally, becoming is not an evolution, at least not an evolution by descent and filiation. Becoming produces nothing by filiation; all filiation is imaginary. Becoming is always of a different order than filiation. It concerns alliance. If evolution includes any veritable becomings, it is in the domain of *symbioses* that bring into play beings of totally different scales and kingdoms, with no possible filiation. There is a block of becoming that snaps up the wasp and the orchid, but from which no wasp-orchid can ever descend. There is a block of becoming that takes hold of the cat and baboon, the alliance between which is effected by a C virus. There is a block of becoming between young roots and certain microorganisms, the alliance between which is effected by the materials synthesized in the leaves (rhizosphere). If there is originality in neoevolutionism, it is attributable in part to phenomena of this kind in which evolution does not go from something less differentiated to something more differentiated, in which it ceases to be a hereditary filiative evolution, becoming communicative or contagious. Accordingly, the term we would prefer for this form of evolution between heterogeneous terms is "involution," on the condition that involution is in no way confused with regression. Becoming is involutory, involution is creative. To regress is to move in the direction of something less differentiated. But to involve is to form a block that runs its own line "between" the terms in play and begeth assignable relations.

Neoevolutionism seems important for two reasons: the animal is defined not by characteristics (specific, generic, etc.) but by populations that vary from milieu to milieu or within the same milieu; movement occurs not only, or not primarily, by filiative productions but also by transversal communications between heterogeneous populations. Becoming is a rhizome, not a classificatory or genealogical tree. Becoming is certainly not imitating, or identifying with something; neither is it regressing-progressing; neither is it corresponding, establishing corresponding relations; neither is it producing, producing a filiation or producing through filiation. Becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, "appearing," "being," "equaling," or "producing."

MEMORIES OF A SORCERER, I

A becoming-animal always involves a pack, a band, a population, a peopling, in short, a multiplicity. We sorcerers have always known that. It may very well be that other agencies, moreover very different from one another, have a different appraisal of the animal. One may retain or extract from the animal certain characteristics: species and genera, forms and functions, etc. Society and the State need animal characteristics to use for classifying people; natural history and science need characteristics in order to classify the animals themselves. Serialism and structuralism either graduate characteristics according to their resemblances, or order them according to their differences. Animal characteristics can be mythic or scientific. But we are not interested in characteristics; what interests us are modes of expansion, propagation, occupation, contagion, peopling. I am

legion. The Wolf-Man fascinated by several wolves watching him. What would a lone wolf be? Or a whale, a louse, a rat, a fly? Beelzebub is the Devil, but the Devil as lord of the flies. The wolf is not fundamentally a characteristic or a certain number of characteristics; it is a wolfing. The louse is a lousing, and so on. What is a cry independent of the population it appeals to or takes as its witness? Virginia Woolf experiences herself not as a monkey or a fish but as a troop of monkeys, a school of fish, according to her variable relations of becoming with the people she approaches. We do not wish to say that certain animals live in packs. We want nothing to do with ridiculous evolutionary classifications à la Lorenz, according to which there are inferior packs and superior societies. What we are saying is that every animal is fundamentally a band, a pack. That it has pack modes, rather than characteristics, even if further distinctions within these modes are called for. It is at this point that the human being encounters the animal. We do not become animal without a fascination for the pack, for multiplicity. A fascination for the outside? Or is the multiplicity that fascinates us already related to a multiplicity dwelling within us? In one of his masterpieces, H. P. Lovecraft recounts the story of Randolph Carter, who feels his "self" reel and who experiences a fear worse than that of annihilation: "Carters of forms both human and non-human, vertebrate and invertebrate, conscious and mindless, animal and vegetable. And more, there were Carters having nothing in common with earthly life, but moving outrageously amidst backgrounds of other planets and systems and galaxies and cosmic continua. . . . Merging with nothingness is peaceful oblivion; but to be aware of existence and yet to know that one is no longer a definite being distinguished from other beings," nor from all of the becomings running through us, "that is the nameless summit of agony and dread."¹ Hofmannsthal, or rather Lord Chandos, becomes fascinated with a "people" of dying rats, and it is in him, through him, in the interstices of his disrupted self that the "soul of the animal bares its teeth at monstrous fate":² not pity, but *unnatural participation*. Then a strange imperative wells up in him: either stop writing, or write like a rat . . . If the writer is a sorcerer, it is because writing is a becoming, writing is traversed by strange becomings that are not becomings-writer, but becomings-rat, becomings-insect, becomings-wolf, etc. We will have to explain why. Many suicides by writers are explained by these unnatural participations, these unnatural nuptials. Writers are sorcerers because they experience the animal as the only population before which they are responsible in principle. The German preromantic Karl Philipp Moritz feels responsible not for the calves that die but before the calves that die and give him the incredible feeling of an unknown Nature — *affect*.³ For the affect is not a personal feeling, nor is it a characteristic; it is the effectuation of a power of the pack that throws the self into upheaval and makes it reel. Who has not known the violence of these animal sequences, which uproot one from humanity, if only for an instant, making one scrape at one's bread like a rodent or giving one the yellow eyes of a feline? A fearsome involution calling us toward unheard-of becomings. These are not regressions, although fragments of regression, sequences of regression may enter in.

We must distinguish three kinds of animals. First, individuated animals, family pets, sentimental, Oedipal animals each with its own petty history, "my"

cat, "my" dog. These animals invite us to regress, draw us into a narcissistic contemplation, and they are the only kind of animal psychoanalysis understands, the better to discover a daddy, a mommy, a little brother behind them (when psychoanalysis talks about animals, animals learn to laugh): *anyone who likes cats or dogs is a fool*. And then there is a second kind: animals with characteristics or attributes; genus, classification, or State animals; animals as they are treated in the great divine myths, in such a way as to extract from them series or structures, archetypes or models (Jung is in any event profounder than Freud). Finally, there are more demonic animals, pack or affect animals that form a multiplicity, a becoming, a population, a tale . . . Or once again, cannot any animal be treated in all three ways? There is always the possibility that a given animal, a louse, a cheetah or an elephant, will be treated as a pet, my little beast. And at the other extreme, it is also possible for any animal to be treated in the mode of the pack or swarm; that is our way, fellow sorcerers. Even the cat, even the dog. . . .

But what exactly does that mean, the animal as band or pack? Does a band not imply a filiation, bringing us back to the reproduction of given characteristics? How can we conceive of a peopling, a propagation, a becoming that is without filiation or hereditary production? A multiplicity without the unity of an ancestor? It is quite simple; everybody knows it, but it is discussed only in secret. We oppose epidemic to filiation, contagion to heredity, peopling by contagion to sexual reproduction, sexual production. Bands, human or animal, proliferate by contagion, epidemics, battlefields, and catastrophes. Like hybrids, which are in themselves sterile, born of a sexual union that will not reproduce itself, but which begins over again every time, gaining that much more ground. Unnatural participations or nuptials are the true Nature spanning the kingdoms of nature. Propagation by epidemic, by contagion, has nothing to do with filiation by heredity, even if the two themes intermingle and require each other. The vampire does not filiate, it infects. The difference is that contagion, epidemic, involves terms that are entirely heterogeneous: for example, a human being, an animal, and a bacterium, a virus, a molecule, a microorganism. Or in the case of the truffle, a tree, a fly, and a pig. These combinations are neither genetic nor structural; they are interkingdoms, unnatural participations. That is the only way Nature operates – against itself. This is a far cry from filiative production or hereditary reproduction, in which the only differences retained are a simple duality between sexes within the same species, and small modifications across generations. For us, on the other hand, there are as many sexes as there are terms in symbiosis, as many differences as elements contributing to a process of contagion. We know that many beings pass between a man and a woman; they come from different worlds, are borne on the wind, form rhizomes around roots; they cannot be understood in terms of production, only in terms of becoming. The Universe does not function by filiation. All we are saying is that animals are packs, and that packs form, develop, and are transformed by contagion.

These multiplicities with heterogeneous terms, cofunctioning by contagion, enter certain *assemblages*; it is there that human beings effect their becomings-animal. But we should not confuse these dark assemblages, which stir what is

deepest within us, with organizations such as the institution of the family and the State apparatus. We could cite hunting societies, war societies, secret societies, crime societies, etc. Becomings-animal are proper to them. We will not expect to find filiative regimes of the family type or modes of classification and attribution of the State or pre-State type or even serial organizations of the religious type. Despite appearances and possible confusions, this is not the site of origin or point of application for myths. These are tales, or narratives and statements of becoming. It is therefore absurd to establish a hierarchy even of animal collectivities from the standpoint of a whimsical evolutionism according to which packs are lower on the scale and are superseded by State or familial societies. On the contrary, there is a difference in nature. The origin of packs is entirely different from that of families and States; they continually work them from within and trouble them from without, with other forms of content, other forms of expression. The pack is simultaneously an animal reality, and the reality of the becoming-animal of the human being; contagion is simultaneously an animal peopling, and the propagation of the animal peopling of the human being. The hunting machine, the war machine, the crime machine entail all kinds of becomings-animal that are not articulated in myth, *still less in totemism*. Dumézil showed that becomings of this kind pertain essentially to the man of war, but only insofar as he is external to families and States, insofar as he upsets filiations and classifications. The war machine is always exterior to the State, even when the State uses it, appropriates it. The man of war has an entire becoming that implies multiplicity, celerity, ubiquity, metamorphosis and treason, the power of affect. Wolf-men, bear-men, wildcat-men, men of every animality, secret brotherhoods, animate the battlefields. But so do the animal packs used by men in battle, or which trail the battles and take advantage of them. And together they spread contagion.⁴ There is a complex aggregate: the becoming-animal of men, packs of animals, elephants and rats, winds and tempests, bacteria sowing contagion. A single *Furor*. War contained zoological sequences before it became bacteriological. It is in war, famine, and epidemic that werewolves and vampires proliferate. Any animal can be swept up in these packs and the corresponding becomings; cats have been seen on the battlefield, and even in armies. That is why the distinction we must make is less between kinds of animals than between the different states according to which they are integrated into family institutions, State apparatuses, war machines, etc. (and what is the relation of the writing machine and the musical machine to becomings-animal?). . . .

MEMORIES OF A SPINOZIST, II

There is another aspect to Spinoza. To every relation of movement and rest, speed and slowness grouping together an infinity of parts, there corresponds a degree of power. To the relations composing, decomposing, or modifying an individual there correspond intensities that affect it, augmenting or diminishing its power to act; these intensities come from external parts or from the individual's own parts. Affects are becomings. Spinoza asks: What can a body do? We call the *latitude* of a body the affects of which it is capable at a given degree

of power, or rather within the limits of that degree. *Latitude is made up of intensive parts falling under a capacity, and longitude of extensive parts falling under a relation.* In the same way that we avoided defining a body by its organs and functions, we will avoid defining it by Species or Genus characteristics; instead we will seek to count its affects. This kind of study is called ethology, and this is the sense in which Spinoza wrote a true Ethics. A racehorse is more different from a workhorse than a workhorse is from an ox. Von Uexküll, in defining animal worlds, looks for the active and passive affects of which the animal is capable in the individuated assemblage of which it is a part. For example, the tick, attracted by the light, hoists itself up to the tip of a branch; it is sensitive to the smell of mammals, and lets itself fall when one passes beneath the branch; it digs into its skin, at the least hairy place it can find. Just three affects; the rest of the time the tick sleeps, sometimes for years on end, indifferent to all that goes on in the immense forest. Its degree of power is indeed bounded by two limits: the optimal limit of the feast after which it dies, and the pessimal limit of the fast as it waits. It will be said that the tick's three affects assume generic and specific characteristics, organs and functions, legs and snout. This is true from the standpoint of physiology, but not from the standpoint of Ethics. Quite the contrary, in Ethics the organic characteristics derive from longitude and its relations, from latitude and its degrees. We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body.

Once again, we turn to children. Note how they talk about animals, and are moved by them. They make a list of affects. Little Hans's horse is not representative but affective. It is not a member of a species but an element or individual in a machinic assemblage: draft horse-omnibus-street. It is defined by a list of active and passive affects in the context of the individuated assemblage it is part of: having eyes blocked by blinders, having a bit and a bridle, being proud, having a big peepee-maker, pulling heavy loads, being whipped, falling, making a din with its legs, biting, etc. These affects circulate and are transformed within the assemblage: what a horse "can do." They indeed have an optimal limit at the summit of horsepower, but also a pessimal threshold: a horse falls down in the street! It can't get back on its feet with that heavy load on its back, and the excessive whipping; a horse is going to die! — this was an ordinary sight in those days (Nietzsche, Dostoyevsky, Nijinsky lamented it). So just what is the becoming-horse of Little Hans? Hans is also taken up in an assemblage; his mother's bed, the paternal element, the house, the cafe across the street, the nearby warehouse, the street, the right to go out onto the street, the winning of this right, the pride of winning it, but also the dangers of winning it, the fall, shame . . . These are not phantasies or subjective reveries: it is not a question of imitating a horse, "playing" horse, identifying with one, or even experiencing feelings of pity or sympathy. Neither does it have to do with an objective analogy between assemblages. The question is whether Little Hans can endow his own elements with the relations of movement and rest, the affects, that would make it become horse, forms and subjects aside. Is there an as yet unknown assemblage

that would be neither Hans's, nor the horse's, but that of the becoming-horse of Hans? An assemblage, for example, in which the horse would bare its teeth and Hans might show something else, his feet, his legs, his peepee-maker, whatever? And in what way would that ameliorate Hans's problem, to what extent would it open a way out that had been previously blocked? When Hofmannsthal contemplates the death throes of a rat, it is in him that the animal "bares his teeth at monstrous fate." *This is not a feeling of pity*, as he makes clear; still less an identification. It is a composition of speeds and affects involving entirely different individuals, a symbiosis; it makes the rat become a thought, a feverish thought in the man, at the same time as the man becomes a rat gnashing its teeth in its death throes. The rat and the man are in no way the same thing, but Being expresses them both in a single meaning in a language that is no longer that of words, in a matter that is no longer that of forms, in an affectability that is no longer that of subjects. *Unnatural participation.* But the plane of composition, the plane of Nature, is precisely for participations of this kind, and continually makes and unmakes their assemblages, employing every artifice.

We wish to make a simple point about psychoanalysis: from the beginning, it has often encountered the question of the becomings-animal of the human being: in children, who continually undergo becomings of this kind; in fetishism and in particular masochism, which continually confront this problem. The least that can be said is that the psychoanalysts, even Jung, did not understand, or did not want to understand. They killed becoming-animal, in the adult as in the child. They saw nothing. They see the animal as a representative of drives, or a representation of the parents. They do not see the reality of a becoming-animal, that it is affect in itself, the drive in person, and represents nothing. There exist no other drives than the assemblages themselves. There are two classic texts in which Freud sees nothing but the father in the becoming-horse of Hans, and Ferenczi sees the same in the becoming-cock of Arpad. The horse's blinders are the father's eyeglasses, the black around its mouth is his mustache, its kicks are the parents' "lovemaking." Not one word about Hans's relation to the street, on how the street was forbidden to him, on what it is for a child to see the spectacle "a horse is proud, a blinded horse pulls, a horse falls, a horse is whipped . . ." Psychoanalysis has no feeling for unnatural participations, nor for the assemblages a child can mount in order to solve a problem from which all exits are barred him: a *plan(e)*, not a phantasy. . . . But to break the becoming-animal all that is needed is to extract a segment from it, to abstract one of its moments, to fail to take into account its internal speeds and slownesses, to arrest the circulation of affects. Then nothing remains but imaginary resemblances between terms, or symbolic analogies between relations. This segment refers to the father, that relation of movement and rest refers to the primal scene, etc. It must be recognized that psychoanalysis alone is not enough to bring about this breakage. It only brings out a danger inherent in becoming. . . .

MEMORIES AND BECOMINGS, POINTS AND BLOCKS

What constitutes arborescence is the submission of the line to the point. . . . A line of becoming is not defined by points that it connects, or by points that

compose it; on the contrary, it passes *between* points, it comes up through the middle, it runs perpendicular to the points first perceived, transversally to the localizable relation to distant or contiguous points. A point is always a point of origin. But a line of becoming has neither beginning nor end, departure nor arrival, origin nor destination; to speak of the absence of an origin, to make the absence of an origin the origin, is a bad play on words. A line of becoming has only a middle. The middle is not an average; it is fast motion, it is the absolute speed of movement. A becoming is always in the middle; one can only get it by the middle. A becoming is neither one nor two, nor the relation of the two; it is the in-between, the border or line of flight or descent running perpendicular to both. If becoming is a block (a line-block), it is because it constitutes a zone of proximity and indiscernibility, a no-man's-land, a nonlocalizable relation sweeping up the two distant or contiguous points, carrying one into the proximity of the other – and the border-proximity is indifferent to both contiguity and to distance. The line or block of becoming that unites the wasp and the orchid produces a shared deterritorialization: of the wasp, in that it becomes a liberated piece of the orchid's reproductive system, but also of the orchid, in that it becomes the object of an orgasm in the wasp, also liberated from its own reproduction. A coexistence of two asymmetrical movements. . . .

BECOMING MUSIC

We find the same zigzag movement in the becomings-animal of music: Marcel Moré shows that the music of Mozart is permeated by a becoming-horse, or becomings-bird. But no musician amuses himself by "playing" horse or bird. If the sound block has a becoming-animal as its content, then the animal simultaneously becomes, in sonority, something else, something absolute, night, death, joy – certainly not a generality or a simplification, but a haecceity, this death, that night. Music takes as its content a becoming-animal; but in that becoming-animal the horse, for example, takes as its expression soft kettledrum beats, winged like hooves from heaven or hell; and the birds find expression in *gruppetti*, *appoggiaturas*, staccato notes that transform them into so many souls.⁵ It is the accents that form the diagonal in Mozart, the accents above all. If one does not follow the accents, if one does not observe them, one falls back into a relatively impoverished punctual system. The human musician is deterritorialized in the bird, but it is a bird that is itself deterritorialized, "transfigured," a celestial bird that has just as much of a becoming as that which becomes with it. Captain Ahab is engaged in an irresistible becoming-whale with Moby-Dick; but the animal, Moby-Dick, must simultaneously become an unbearable pure whiteness, a shimmering pure white wall, a silver thread that stretches out and supple up "like" a girl, or twists like a whip, or stands like a rampart. Can it be that literature sometimes catches up with painting, and even music? And that painting catches up with music? (Moré cites Klee's birds but on the other hand fails to understand what Messiaen says about bird song.) No art is imitative, no art can be imitative or figurative. Suppose a painter "represents" a bird; this is in fact a becoming-bird that can occur only to the extent that the bird itself is in the process of becoming something else, a pure line and pure color. Thus

imitation self-destructs, since the imitator unknowingly enters into a becoming that conjugates with the unknowing becoming of that which he or she imitates. One imitates only if one fails, when one fails. The painter and musician do not imitate the animal, they become-animal at the same time as the animal becomes what they willed, at the deepest level of their concord with Nature.⁶ Becoming is always double, that which one becomes becomes no less than the one that becomes – block is formed, essentially mobile, never in equilibrium. . . .

Becoming is never imitating. . . . One does not imitate; one constitutes a block of becoming. Imitation enters in only as an adjustment of the block, like a finishing touch, a wink, a signature. . . . As always, the same must be said of the animals themselves. For not only do animals have colors and sounds, but they do not wait for the painter or musician to use those colors and sounds in a painting or music, in other words, to enter into determinate becomings-color and becomings-sounds by means of components of deterritorialization. . . .

Messiaen presents multiple chromatic durations in coalescence, "alternating between the longest and the shortest, in order to suggest the idea of the relations between the infinitely long durations of the stars and mountains and the infinitely short ones of the insects and the atoms: a cosmic, elementary power that . . . derives above all from the labor of rhythm."⁷ The same thing that leads a musician to discover the birds also leads him to discover the elementary and the cosmic. Both combine to form a block, a universe fiber, a diagonal or complex space. Music dispatches molecular flows. Of course, as Messiaen says, music is not the privilege of human beings: the universe, the cosmos, is made of refrains; the question in music is that of a power of deterritorialization permeating nature, animals, the elements, and deserts as much as human beings. The question is more what is not musical in human beings, and what already is musical in nature. Moreover, what Messiaen discovered in music is the same thing the ethologists discovered in animals: human beings are hardly at an advantage, except in the means of overcoding, of making punctual systems. That is even the opposite of having an advantage; through becomings-woman, -child, -animal, or -molecular, nature opposes its power, and the power of music, to the machines of human beings, the roar of factories and bombers. And it is necessary to reach that point, it is necessary for the nonmusical sound of the human being to form a block with the becoming-music of sound, for them to confront and embrace each other like two wrestlers who can no longer break free from each other's grasp, and slide down a sloping line: "Let the choirs represent the survivors . . . Faintly one hears the sound of cicadas. Then the notes of a lark, followed by the mockingbird. Someone laughs . . . A woman sobs . . . From a male a great shout: WE ARE LOST! A woman's voice: WE ARE SAVED! Staccato cries: Lost! Saved! Lost! Saved!"⁸

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Two years after the "Letter to the Father," Kafka admitted that he had "plunged into discontent" and did so "with all the means that [his] time and tradition gave [him]."⁹ It turns out that Oedipus is one of these means – fairly modern, widespread since Freud's time, allowing many comic effects. All it takes is to exaggerate it: "Strange how make-believe, if engaged in systematically enough,

can change into reality." But Kafka does not refuse the exterior influence of the father only in order to invoke an interior genesis or an internal structure that would still be Oedipal. "I cannot grant that the first beginnings of my unhappiness were inwardly necessitated; they may have indeed had a necessity, but not an inward one – they *swarmed down on me like flies* and could have been as easily driven off." In that lies the essential point: beyond the exterior or the interior, an agitation, a molecular dance, an entire limit-connection with an Outside that is going to disguise itself as an exaggerated Oedipus that is beyond all limits. . . .

Thus, the too well-formed family triangle is really only a conduit for investments of an entirely different sort that the child endlessly discovers underneath his father, inside his mother, in himself. The judges, commissioners, bureaucrats, and so on, are not substitutes for the father; rather, it is the father who is a condensation of all these forces that he submits to and that he tries to get his son to submit to. The family opens onto doors, on which from the beginning there knock "*diabolical powers that rejoice from the fact that they will arrive soon.*"¹⁰ What Kafka immediately anguishes or rejoices in is not the father or the superego or some sort of signifier but the American technocratic apparatus or the Russian bureaucracy or the machinery of Fascism. And to the degree that the familial triangle comes undone either in a single term or in its totality to the profit of those *powers* that are really its driving force, we could say that the other triangles that surge up behind it have something malleable, diffuse, a perpetual transformation from one triangle to another, either because one of the terms or points begins to proliferate, or because the sides of the triangle don't stop deforming. . . . All children can understand this; they all have a political and geographic map with diffuse and moving contours if only because of their nursemaids, servants, employees of the father, and so on. . . .

Yet, insofar as the comic expansion of Oedipus allows one to see these other oppressor triangles through the lens of the microscope, there appears at the same time the possibility of an escape, a line of escape. To the inhumanity of the "diabolical powers," there is the answer of a becoming-animal: to become a beetle, to become a dog, to become an ape, "head over heels and away," rather than lowering one's head and remaining a bureaucrat, inspector, judge, or judged. All children build or feel these sorts of escapes, these acts of becoming-animal. And the animal as an act of becoming has nothing to do with a substitute for the father, or with an archetype. Because the father, as a Jew who leaves the country to settle in the city, is undoubtedly caught in a process of real deterritorialization; but he never stops reterritorializing, in his family, in his business, in the system of his submissions and of his authorities. As for the archetypes, these are processes of spiritual reterritorialization.¹¹ The acts of becoming-animal are the exact opposite of this; these are absolute deterritorializations, at least in principle, that penetrate deep into the desert world invested in by Kafka. . . . To become animal is to participate in movement, to stake out the path of escape in all its positivity, to cross a threshold, to reach a continuum of intensities that are valuable only in themselves, to find a world of pure intensities where all forms come undone, as do all the significations, signifiers, and signifieds, to the benefit of an unformed matter of deterritorialized flux, of nonsignifying signs. Kafka's animals never refer to a mythology or to archetypes

but correspond solely to new levels, zones of liberated intensities where contents free themselves from their forms as well as from their expressions, from the signifier that formalized them. There is no longer anything but movements, vibrations, thresholds in a deserted matter: animals, mice, dogs, apes, cockroaches are distinguished only by this or that threshold, this or that vibration, by the particular underground tunnel in the rhizome or the burrow. Because these tunnels are underground intensities. In the becoming-mouse, it is a whistling that pulls the music and the meaning from the words. In the becoming-ape, it is a coughing that "sound[s] dangerous but mean[s] nothing" (to become a tuberculoid ape). In the becoming-insect, it is a mournful whining that carries along the voice and blurs the resonance of words. Gregor becomes a cockroach not to flee his father but rather to find an escape where his father didn't know to find one, in order to flee the director, the business, and the bureaucrats, to reach that region where the voice no longer does anything but hum: "'Did you hear him? It was an animal's voice,' said the chief clerk."

It is true that Kafka's animal texts are much more complex than we seem to be saying. Or, quite the contrary, much simpler. For example, in the "Report to an Academy," it is no longer a question of a becoming-animal of man, but a becoming-man of the ape; this becoming is presented as a simple imitation and if it is a question of finding an escape (an escape, and not "liberty"), this escape doesn't consist in fleeing – quite the contrary. Flight is challenged when it is useless movement in space, a movement of false liberty; but in contrast, flight is affirmed when it is a stationary flight, a flight of intensity ("No, freedom was not what I wanted. Only a way out; right, or left, or in any direction; I made no other demand"). On the other hand, the imitation is only superficial, since it no longer concerns the reproduction of figures but the production of a continuum of intensities in a nonparallel and asymmetrical evolution where the man no less becomes an ape than the ape becomes a man. The act of becoming is a capturing, a possession, a plus-value, but never a reproduction or an imitation. "[T]here was no attraction for me in imitating human beings; I imitated them because I needed a way out, and for no other reason." In fact, the animal captured by the man finds itself deterritorialized by human force, as the whole of the beginning of "A Report" tells us. But, in turn, the deterritorialized animal force precipitates and intensifies the deterritorialization of the deterritorializing human force (if we can express it that way). "My ape nature fled out of me, head over heels and away, so that my first teacher was almost himself turned into an ape by it, had soon to give up teaching and was taken away to a mental hospital."¹² Thus, there is constituted a conjunction of the flux of deterritorialization that overflows imitation which is always territorial. It is in this way also that the orchid seems to reproduce an image of the bee but in a deeper way deterritorializes into it, at the same time that the bee in turn deterritorializes by joining with the orchid: the capture of a fragment of the code, and not the reproduction of an image. (In "The Investigations of a Dog," every idea of resemblance is even more energetically eliminated. Kafka attacks "the suspect temptations of resemblance that imagination proposes"; through the dog's solitude, it is the greatest difference, the schizo difference that he tries to grasp.)

Thus, we have two effects of the development or comic enlargement of Oedipus: the discovery *a contrario* of other triangles that operate beneath and, indeed, in the familial triangle, and the *a posteriori* outlining of paths of escape of the orphaned becoming-animal. No text seems to better show the connection of these two aspects than "The Metamorphosis." The bureaucratic triangle forms itself progressively. First, the director who comes to menace and to demand; then the father who has resumed his work at the bank and who sleeps in his uniform, demonstrating the external power that he is still in submission to as if even at home he was "only at the beck and call of his superior" and finally, in a single moment, the intrusion of the three bureaucrat lodgers who penetrate the family itself, taking up its roles, sitting "where formerly Gregor and his father and mother had taken their meals." And as a correlate of all of this, the whole becoming-animal of Gregor, his becoming beetle, Junebug, dungbeetle, cockroach, which traces an intense line of flight in relation to the familial triangle but especially in relation to the bureaucratic and commercial triangle.

But at the very moment when we seemed to grasp the connections of a Going Beyond and a Falling Short of Oedipus, why are we farther than ever from a way out; why do we remain at an impasse? It is because there is always the danger of the return of Oedipal force. The amplifying perverse usage of Oedipus is not sufficient to guard against every new closure, every new reconstitution of the familial triangle that takes over other triangles such as the animal lines. In this sense, "The Metamorphosis" is the exemplary story of a re-Oedipalization. We would say that the process of Gregor's deterritorialization through his becoming-animal finds itself blocked for a moment. Is it the fault of Gregor who doesn't dare go all the way? To please him, his sister wanted to empty out the whole room. But Gregor refused to let go of the portrait of the lady in fur. He sticks to the portrait, as if to a last territorialized image. In fact, that's what the sister cannot tolerate. She accepted Gregor; like him, she wanted the schizo incest, an incest of strong connections, incest with the sister in opposition to Oedipal incest, incest that gives evidence of a nonhuman sexuality as in the becoming-animal. But, jealous of the portrait, she begins to hate Gregor and condemns him. From that point on, Gregor's deterritorialization through the becoming-animal fails; he re-Oedipalizes himself through the apple that is thrown at him and has nothing to do but die, the apple buried in his back. Likewise, the deterritorialization of the family through more complex and diabolical triangles has no room to develop; *the father chases away the three bureaucrat lodgers*, a return to the paternalistic principle of the Oedipal triangle, the family happily closes in on itself. And yet, it is not certain that Gregor was at fault. Isn't it rather that the acts of becoming-animal cannot follow their principle all the way through — that they maintain a certain ambiguity that leads to their insufficiency and condemns them to defeat? Aren't the animals still too formed, too significant, too territorialized? Doesn't the whole of the becoming-animal oscillate between a schizo escape and an Oedipal impasse? The dog, Oedipal animal par excellence, is often referred to by Kafka in his *Diaries* and his letters as a schizo beast, like the musical dogs of "The Investigations," or as the diabolical dog of "Temptation in the Village." In fact, Kafka's principal

animal tales were written just before *The Trial* or at the same time as it, like a sort of counterpoint to the novel which liberates itself from all animal concern to the benefit of a much higher concern. . . .

We are no longer in the situation of an ordinary, rich language where the word dog, for example, would directly designate an animal and would apply metaphorically to other things (so that one could say "like a dog").¹³ *Diaries*, 1921: "Metaphors are one of the things that makes me despair of literature." Kafka deliberately kills all metaphor, all symbolism, all signification, no less than all designation. Metamorphosis is the contrary of metaphor. There is no longer any proper sense or figurative sense, but only a distribution of states that is part of the range of the word. The thing and other things are no longer anything but intensities overrun by deterritorialized sound or words that are following their line of escape. It is no longer a question of a resemblance between the comportment of an animal and that of a man; it is even less a question of a simple wordplay. There is no longer man or animal, since each deterritorializes the other, in a conjunction of flux, in a continuum of reversible intensities. Instead, it is now a question of a becoming that includes the maximum of difference as a difference of intensity, the crossing of a barrier, a rising or a falling, a bending or an erecting, an accent on the word. The animal does not speak "like" a man but pulls from the language tonalities lacking in signification; the words themselves are not "like" the animals but in their own way climb about, bark and roam around, being properly linguistic dogs, insects, or mice.¹⁴ To make the sequences vibrate, to open the word onto unexpected internal intensities — in short, an asignifying *intensive utilization* of language. Furthermore, there is no longer a subject of the enunciation, nor a subject of the statement. It is no longer the subject of the statement who is a dog, with the subject of the enunciation remaining "like" a man; it is no longer the subject of enunciation who is "like" a beetle, the subject of the statement remaining a man. Rather, there is a circuit of states that forms a mutual becoming, in the heart of a necessarily multiple or collective assemblage. . . .

Another component of Kafka's writing machine is the stories. They are essentially animalistic even though there aren't animals in all the stories. According to Kafka, the animal is the object *par excellence* of the story: to try to find a way out, to trace a line of escape. . . . What Kafka does in his room is to become animal and this is the essential object of the stories. The first sort of creation is the metamorphosis. A wife's eyes shouldn't see that above all else, nor should the eyes of a father or mother. We would say that for Kafka, the animal essence is the way out, the line of escape, even if it takes place in place, or in a cage. *A line of escape, and not freedom. A vital escape and not an attack.* . . . Let us remind ourselves, however, of several elements of the animalistic stories: (1) there is no possibility of distinguishing those cases where the animal is treated as an animal and those where it is part of a metamorphosis; everything in the animal is a metamorphosis, and the metamorphosis is part of a single circuit of the becoming-human of the animal and the becoming-animal of the human; (2) the metamorphosis is a sort of conjunction of two deterritorializations, that which the human imposes on the animal by forcing it to flee or to serve the human, but also that which the animal proposes to the human by indicating ways-out or

means of escape that the human would never have thought of by himself (schizo-escape); each of these two deterritorializations is immanent to the other and makes it cross a threshold; (3) thus, what matters is not at all the relative slowness of the becoming-animal; because no matter how slow it is, and even the more slow it is, it constitutes no less an *absolute deterritorialization* of the man in opposition to the merely relative deterritorializations that the man causes to himself by shifting, by traveling; the becoming-animal is an immobile voyage that stays in one place; it only lives and is comprehensible as an intensity (to transgress the thresholds of intensity).¹⁵

There is nothing metaphorical about the becoming-animal. No symbolism, no allegory. Nor is it the result of a flaw or a malediction, the effect of some sort of guilt. As Melville says of the becoming-whale of Captain Ahab, it is a "panorama," not a "Gospel." It is a map of intensities. It is an ensemble of states, each distinct from the other, grafted onto the man insofar as he is searching for a way out. It is a creative line of escape that says nothing other than what it is. In contrast to the letters, the becoming-animal lets nothing remain of the duality of a subject of enunciation and a subject of the statement; rather, it constitutes a single process, a unique method that replaces subjectivity. However, if the becoming-animal is the object par excellence of the stories, we must in turn examine the insufficiencies of the stories. We might say that they are caught up in a choice that from both sides condemns them to defeat from the point of view of Kafka's project, no matter their literary splendor. On the one hand, the story will be perfect and finished but then will close in on itself. Or it will open but will open to something that could only be developed in a novel that would be itself interminable. In the first case, the story confronts a danger that is different from that of the letters, although somewhat analogous. The letters had to fear a sort of reflux directed against the subject of enunciation; the stories, on the other hand, bump up against a no-way out of the animal way out, an impasse of the line of escape (it is for this reason that they end when they erect this impasse). To be sure, the becoming-animal has nothing to do with a merely superficial sort of meaning, like that in the letters: however slow it may be, the deterritorialization of the becoming-animal is absolute; the line of escape is well programmed, the way out is well established. But this is only one side of the poles. In the same way that the egg, in its potentiality, contains two poles, the becoming-animal is a potentiality that is gifted with two equally real poles – a properly animal pole and a properly familial one. We saw how the animal oscillated between its own becoming-inhuman and an all-too-human familiarization. . . . To take another example: we saw how Gregor's metamorphosis was the story of a re-Oedipalization that leads him into death, that turns his becoming-animal into a becoming-dead. Not only the dog, but all the animals, oscillate between a schizo Eros and an Oedipal Thanatos. It is in this perspective alone that metaphor, with its whole anthropocentric entourage, threatens to come back on the scene. In short, the animalist stories are a component of the machine of expression. . . . Grasping the real, writing themselves within the real itself, they are caught up in the tension between two opposing poles or realities. The becoming-animal effectively shows a way out, traces a line of escape, but is incapable of following it or making it its own. . . .

ANIMAL BECOMINGS

James Urpeth

[Anyone who likes cats or dogs is a fool (Deleuze and Guattari)]

The theme of "becoming-animal" in the coauthored texts of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari is liable, at first glance, to be misinterpreted given the associations it will evoke for many people. Perhaps Deleuze and Guattari's clear (but not uncritical) endorsement in *Kafka*¹ and *A Thousand Plateaus*² of the process of "becoming-animal" seeks to promote a naïve "primitivism" in which the reader is invited to cast off all inhibition and celebrate the recovery of an unfettered "state of nature." A contemporary "return to nature" doctrine would seem to be advocated. Alternatively, the concept of "becoming-animal" might be considered, especially given its application to a wide variety of works of art, to be indicative of a reductive and functionalist approach, a "biologism" of some kind. Indeed, the overtly "materialist" tenor – albeit of a very unfamiliar kind for many Anglo-American readers – and "anti-humanist" tendency of the texts discussed here will doubtless be considered by many readers to be their most challenging feature.

This essay aims to correct such misconceptions by indicating something of the nature of the philosophical project within which the notion of "becoming-animal" arises. In the extracts reprinted in this volume, Deleuze and Guattari deploy the notion of "becoming-animal" as part of a critique of some of the basic assumptions and values prevalent, not only in the philosophical tradition, but also in a wide range of other disciplines, most notably, psychoanalysis, literary theory, and biology. An overview of the key issues involved in these various encounters will be attempted here. Finally, the very radical and distinctive "political" implications of the theme of "becoming-animal" will also be briefly considered. You might say that the theme of "becoming-animal" in Deleuze and Guattari "puts the cat among the pigeons" in any number of fields.

Perhaps the key philosophical project discernible in the following texts is the overcoming of the man/nature opposition – indeed dualisms in general – through the elaboration of a *non-reductive* materialist ontology of difference and multiplicity in which a "Spinozist" conception of power and affectivity are particularly prominent. Through the development of such an ontology, Deleuze and Guattari unfold a radically non-anthropomorphic (and thereby non-theological) conception of "nature" within which the "human" is inscribed

without remainder.³ This requires the expunging of all "moralism" (the source of negation) regarding individual or species identity, and the rejection of any pre-given transcendent form of nature or teleological trajectory. That is to say, Deleuze and Guattari are through notions such as "becoming-animal" seeking to think and affirm a radical order of *immanence*, a primordial ontological domain in which free-form creative synthesis operates unimpeded by the proprieties and boundaries of preset identities.

The extraordinary – and challenging – philosophical perspective at work in the texts included here can perhaps be best understood through an examination of Deleuze and Guattari's claim that "becoming-animal" is a *real* process. In their own words: "we believe in the existence of very special becomings-animal traversing human beings and sweeping them away, affecting the animal no less than the human" (*TP*, 237). Deleuze and Guattari insist that "becoming-animal" is not merely an act of imitation ("becoming is never imitating" [*TP*, 305]). To conceive of becoming in terms of imitation is to regard as primary and unassailable both human identity and that of the other animal involved in the process in question. "Becoming-animal" is not, therefore, a mere aping of animal behavior, perhaps for comic effect or due to a psychosexual pathology ("regression"), etc. While such processes doubtless take place, as we will see, Deleuze and Guattari do not think that they can be accurately described in terms of "becoming" or regarded as anything other than ontologically trivial. Such mimetic acts presuppose derivative phenomena such as species-identity, self-identity, literal language, the *telos* of heterosexual adulthood, etc. All such phenomena are, according to Deleuze and Guattari, less real than "becoming-animal," whose ontological primordality, as an instance of "becoming-x," they seek to affirm. It will not be surprising that such a radical ontological perspective is at one with a critique of the claims to primary status of identity, signification, representation, the primacy of concept over affect, determined desire, etc.

Hence, a productive guiding question when reading Deleuze and Guattari on "becoming animal" can be formulated thus: What is presupposed *philosophically*, particularly with reference to ontology and logic, by the assertion that "becoming-animal" is a reality? A corollary question follows from this: What is implied, in terms of value, power and desire, by Deleuze and Guattari's overt advocacy of "becoming-animal"? Only once these ontological, logical, genealogical, and political issues are clarified can the credibility of the claims made concerning "becoming-animal," and the authors' positive evaluation of it, be adequately assessed.

As regards ontology, the theme of "becoming-animal" illustrates Deleuze and Guattari's insistence on the priority of becoming over being, of the kinetic and verbal over the static and nominal. Flux, change, and relation are, for them more real than permanence, stability, and identity. Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari pursue the Nietzschean task of conceiving being in terms of becoming. This requires a critique of the traditional claim to ontological primordality of both substance and subject. Indeed, it contests the claims to primacy of any allegedly pre-given positivity or intentional agency that would presume to proceed and direct the diverse types of "becoming-x," which are, in Deleuze and Guattari's view, constantly contesting any supposedly originary self-identity. To argue for the primacy of becoming is to liberate it from all determination by the

traditional synonyms for being. Pre-eminent in this respect are the notions of "origin" and "end," the terms and means traditionally employed to contain becoming by referring it to various surrogates of being.

This overcoming of the traditional hierarchical opposition of being and becoming is evident in the claim that "there is a reality of becoming-animal, even though one does not in reality become animal" (*TP*, 273). What we ordinarily take to be the "real" animal, namely, a classifiable, identifiable, bounded object, is described by Deleuze and Guattari in terms that reveal that such a stable, objectified "reality" is in fact a secondary phenomenon. "The 'real' animal is trapped in its molar form and subjectivity" (*TP*, 275). This ontological claim concerning the primacy of becoming over being underlies all of the themes found in the extracts on becoming-animal. For instance, Deleuze and Guattari's insistence that there is nothing metaphorical about the process of "becoming-animal," that it concerns a relation that cannot be adequately described in terms of resemblance or analogy, etc., are predicated on the claim that becoming is more real than being. Such a perspective entails that the metaphysics underpinning the notion of the "literal" is flawed.

The key feature of this ontology is the theme of "immanence" – a reality that contains no negations or boundaries, but only differences and "thresholds," in which everything is implicated in everything else. This is clear in the color claim that "a fiber stretches from a human to an animal, from a human or an animal to molecules, from molecules to particles, and so on to the imperceptible" (*TP*, 249). Deleuze and Guattari develop the non-reductive nature of their materialism through the pursuit of "the magic formula we all seek – PLURALISM = MONISM" (*TP*, 20). This is illustrated in the following passage:

each individual is an infinite multiplicity, and the whole of Nature is a multiplicity of perfectly individuated multiplicities. The plane of consistency of nature is like an immense Abstract Machine, abstract yet real and individual; its pieces are the various assemblages and individuals, each of which groups together an infinity of particles entering into an infinity of more or less interconnected relations. There is therefore a unity to the plane of nature, which applies equally to the inanimate and the animate, the artificial and the natural. (*TP*, 254)

Deleuze and Guattari conceive existence through the notion of "becoming-animal" from the sub-molecular to the most over-coded "molar" formation in terms of the radical immanence of the "plane of consistency." The materialist "plural monism" they propose commits them to the affirmation of "creative lines of escape" from the "human" into the impersonal terrain of material intensities shared with the animal (see *K*, 35–6). These key ontological presuppositions of the ontology of "becoming-animal" are formulated thus:

What we are talking about is not the unity of substance but the infinity of the modifications that are part of one another on this unique plane of life. . . . A fixed plane of life upon which everything stirs, slows down or accelerates. A single abstract Animal for all the assemblages that effectuate it. (*TP*, 254–5)

In logical terms the notion of "becoming-animal" challenges the primacy traditionally accorded to negation, a claim concerning the nature of thinking shared by both Aristotelian and Hegelian philosophy. The significance of such a displacement is clear if it is recalled that it is via negation that self-identity and indeed all distinctions in kind, including the opposition between "man" and "nature," are established. The complementary critique of being and negation implicit in Deleuze and Guattari's notion of "becoming-animal" is apparent in the following passage conjoining the theme of becoming with another important motif from the period in which the texts on becoming-animal were written, namely, the "rhizome." This term is contrasted with "arborescence," Deleuze and Guattari's term for philosophies that assume the primacy of and valorize identity, essence, origin, end, etc.

A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle ... *intermezzo*. The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance. ... The tree imposes the verb "to be," but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, "and ... and ... and ..." This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb "to be" ... establish a logic of the AND ... do away with foundations, nullify endings and beginnings. (*TP*, 25)⁴

It is, therefore, Deleuze and Guattari's view that the ontologico-logical domain of becoming and conjunction precedes, and exceeds that of being and negation. Furthermore, the domain of becoming is constantly operative, contesting and eroding the order of identity and representation that is itself an effect of more profound differential and pre-oppositional generative processes or "forces." "Becoming-animal" is one – and by no means the most fundamental – of a number of instances Deleuze and Guattari identify in which immanence returns, a re-intensification (or "deterritorialization") of life takes place, and an undetermined and hyper-differentiated materiality repeats itself.

In order to explain the view that "there is a reality specific to becoming" (*TP*, 238), particularly in relation to the claim that "becomings-animal are neither dreams nor phantasies. They are perfectly real" (*TP*, 238), Deleuze and Guattari seek to establish the derivative ontological status – and diagnose the constitutive investments of power and desire involved – of the classificatory systems and theoretical concepts of the biological sciences insofar as these rest upon notions such as organism, species identification, evolutionary filiation, teleology, etc. These disciplines have, on balance, been predominantly concerned to impose such transcendences upon the material field of immanence, or "plane of consistency," which, for Deleuze and Guattari, constitutes the "transcendental" (see *TP*, 251).⁵ To undergo a desire-flow of the "becoming-animal" variety is to be drawn back into a reality more fundamental than species and genera, organic classification, and evolution through filiation and descent. It is a process of "deterritorialization" that reasserts the ontological primordially within any "territorialized," organized material or psychic totality of anonymous, undetermined, processes seeking "alliances" without regard to the interests of the organism or subject. Thus "becoming-animal" is an instance of a much wider "becoming-molecular," a positive process of "destratification" and "decodifi-

cation" in which desires alien to all categorical representation (i.e., negation) or pre-given determination (e.g., Oedipus) begin to re-circulate as the unconscious produces itself in the exteriority that is its milieu.

Hence, rather than descent and filiation within allegedly homogeneous types, Deleuze and Guattari assert the priority of alliances between heterogeneous types, called "assemblages" (*TP*, 242), which form "blocks of becoming" (*TP*, 237). These involve "symbioses that bring into play beings of totally different scales and kingdoms, with no possible filiation" (*TP*, 238). On the basis of these claims, Deleuze and Guattari insist that "becoming is not an evolution" (*TP*, 238). Instead a notion of "involution" (*TP*, 238) is introduced to refer to such processes that entail a growth in differentiation and complexity. These points are summarized in the following passage.

Becoming is a rhizome, not a classificatory or genealogical tree. Becoming is certainly not imitating, or identifying with something; neither is it regressing-progressing; neither is it corresponding, establishing corresponding relations; neither is it producing, producing a filiation or producing through filiation. Becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own. (*TP*, 239)

Deleuze and Guattari seek to clarify the notion of "becoming-animal" by distinguishing "Oedipal," "state," and "demonic" animals (*TP*, 240–1). "Becoming-animal" concerns the manner in which the third of these, namely, "pack or affect animals that form a multiplicity" (*TP*, 241), contest the first two formations, namely, "individuated animals, family pets," and "animals with characteristics or attributes; genus, classification ... animals as they are treated in the great divine myths" (*TP*, 241). Indeed, the concern here is less with the distinction between different kinds of animals than with the "different states according to which they are integrated into family institutions, State apparatuses" (*TP*, 243). This draws our attention to the fact that "there is an entire politics of becomings-animal" (*TP*, 247). This keen sense of the issue of an "ontological" politics concerning the critique of the investments of the ontology of any interpretation of nature, scientific or theological, is manifest throughout the texts above.⁶ To affirm "becoming-animal" is to wrest nature back from its ingrained reduction to representation, truth, knowledge, function, etc., and to reassert the primacy of an undetermined, *anoedipal* conception of desire.⁷ Deleuze and Guattari's non-moral, de-anthropomorphized vision of nature traversed by "becoming-animal" is evident in the following passage:

We oppose epidemic to filiation, contagion to heredity, peopling by contagion to sexual reproduction. ... Unnatural participations or nuptials are the true Nature spanning the kingdoms of nature. Propagation by epidemic, by contagion, has nothing to do with filiation by heredity ... contagion, epidemic, involves terms that are entirely heterogeneous: for example, a human being, an animal, and a bacterium, a virus, a molecule, a micro-organism ... these combinations are neither genetic nor structural; they are interkingdoms, unnatural participations. That is the only way Nature operates – against itself. (*TP*, 241–2)

In order to develop an ontological vocabulary adequate to processes such as "becoming-animal," Deleuze and Guattari draw upon the Spinozist themes of "power" and "affect" (see *TP*, 253–60). Through such motifs they develop an ontology of thoroughly impersonal, abstract, yet real, "molecular" processes of becoming that precede the individuated subject or organism, and that are irreducible to form or function. It is at this primordial level far beneath the command of any intentionality that the symbioses of becoming operate. The key ontological criteria at this level of reality are "intensity" and "speed" or "tempo." This realm of anonymity has its own mode of individuation "very different from that of a person, subject, thing or substance" (*TP*, 261) for which Deleuze and Guattari retrieve the scholastic notion of "haecceity."⁸ As Deleuze and Guattari state,

you will yield nothing to haecceities unless you realize that that is what you are, and that you are nothing but that ... a set of nonsubjectified affects ... cease to be subjects to become events, in assemblages that are inseparable from an hour a season, an atmosphere, an air, a life. ... Climate, wind, season, hour are not of another nature than the things, animals, or people that populate them, follow them, sleep and awaken within them. (*TP*, 262–3)

"Becoming-animal" is a "plunge into becomings-molecular" (*TP*, 272) involving "the relation of movement and rest of the animal particles" (*TP*, 274). The material realm of becoming constantly produces such "haecceities" at odds with the categories and values of being:

between substantial forms and determined subjects, *between the two*, there is ... a natural play of haecceities, degrees, intensities, events, and accidents that compose individuations totally different from those of the well-formed subjects that receive them. (*TP*, 253)

Hence, the realm of becoming is that of the "anorganic," the "asignifying" and the "asubjective" (*TP*, 279). Deleuze and Guattari ask us to "try to conceive of this world ... peopled by anonymous matter, by infinite bits of impalpable matter entering into varying connections" (*TP*, 255). A similar point is made in the following extract.

All children build or feel these sorts of escapes, these acts of becoming-animal. ... To become animal is to participate in movement, to stake out the path of escape in all its positivity, to cross a threshold, to reach a continuum of intensities that are valuable only in themselves, to find a world of pure intensities where all forms come undone, as do all the significations, signifiers, and signifieds, to the benefit of an unformed matter of deterritorialized flux, of non-signifying signs. ... There is no longer anything but movements, vibrations, thresholds in a deserted matter: animals, mice, dogs, apes, cockroaches are distinguished only by this or that threshold, this or that vibration, by the particular underground tunnel in the rhizome ... these tunnels are underground intensities. (*K*, 12–3)

This passage contributes to an understanding of a key feature of the ontological presuppositions of "becoming-animal" that have been identified. It is Deleuze and Guattari's unequivocal rejection of the interpretation of "becoming-animal" as a "metaphorical" process and is of particular importance to the authors' reading of Kafka's "animal" stories. As they state, "there is nothing metaphoric about the becoming-animal" (*K*, 35). Deleuze and Guattari thereby reject the complacent ontological perspectives that would immediately translate the real processes occurring in Kafka's writing into phantasies and symbolic representations requiring a hermeneutic interpretation such as psychoanalysis. Rather, all accounts of becoming in terms of "mimesis" and resemblance are dismissed as "the becoming-animal of the human being is real" (*TP*, 238). To conceive becoming in terms of imitation would be to leave intact the "molar" formations it challenges, deny the contact it implies by keeping the relata at a distance from each other, and ignore the two-way directionality of all becoming. As Deleuze and Guattari insist, "there is neither imitation nor resemblance, only an exploding of two heterogeneous series on the line of flight composed by a common rhizome that can no longer be attributed to or subjugated by anything signifying" (*TP*, 10).

Rather than interpreting Kafka's animals as metaphors and symbols to be interpreted, Deleuze and Guattari instead find a "flux of deterritorialization that overflows imitation which is always territorial" (*K*, 14). Rather than the Oedipal interpretation of the "becomings-animal" of Kafka's texts, Deleuze and Guattari insist on the non-privative status of the "orphaned becoming-animal" (*K*, 14). This rejection of the metaphysics of identity and representation in favor of "affects" and "intensities" is strikingly formulated in the following terms:

Kafka deliberately kills all metaphor, all symbolism, all signification, no less than all designation. Metamorphosis is the contrary of metaphor. There is no longer any proper sense or figurative sense, but only a distribution of states that is part of the range of the word. The thing and other things are no longer anything but intensities overrun by deterritorialized sounds or words that are following their line of escape. It is no longer a question of a resemblance between the comportment of an animal and that of a man. ... The animal does not speak "like" a man but pulls from the language tonalities totally lacking in signification. ... To make the sequences vibrate, to open the word onto unexpected internal intensities – in short, an *asignifying intensive utilization* of language. (*K*, 22)

If the ontologically flawed interpretation of the real in terms of the "literal" is accepted, then the only sense that can be made of the term "like" in statements concerning "becoming-animal" would be in terms of simile. Yet this conceals the fact that "haecceities" emerge through becoming, which entails that "the word 'like' is one of those words that change drastically in meaning and function when they are used in connection with haecceities, when they are made into expressions of becomings instead of signified states or signifying relations" (*TP*, 274).

Deleuze and Guattari devote considerable attention to clarifying the precise nature of "becoming-animal" in terms of the primacy within it of the *relation*

between the human and the animal, displacing thereby the discrete entities that seem to precede and determine such a process. This displacement of the relation by the relation within "becoming-animal" is conceived as a process of mutual deterritorialization that determines both parties. As a "block of becoming," "becoming-animal" has precedence therefore over both human and animal, neither of which are either the origin or end of it. Becoming reveals the ontological primordality of the "in-between" (*TP*, 293). However, Deleuze and Guattari's development of this "logic of relation" is clearly distinct from its deconstructive and phenomenological counterparts in both its decidedly materialist register and emphasis on the libidinal and affective. "The two becomings interlink and form relays in a circulation of intensities pushing the deterritorialization ever further" (*TP*, 10). Hence "becoming-animal" is always a mutual process. "Becoming is always double, that which one becomes becomes no less than the one that becomes" (*TP*, 305).

Deleuze and Guattari also devote considerable attention to formulating becoming as a process of "non-symmetrical double deterritorialization" in order to demonstrate that "one cannot draw a symbolic boundary between the human being and the animal. One can only compare powers of deterritorialization" (*TP*, 306–7). The process of mutual deterritorialization is described as follows:

There is no longer man or animal, since each deterritorializes the other, in a conjunction of flux, in a continuum of reversible intensities . . . a circuit of states that forms a mutual becoming, in the heart of a necessarily multiple or collective assemblage . . . the metamorphosis is part of a single circuit of the becoming-human of the animal and the becoming-animal of the human . . . a sort of conjunction of two deterritorializations . . . each immanent to the other. (*K*, 22, 35)

Deleuze and Guattari are keen to deploy this radical ontology of relation in a critique of psychoanalytic interpretations of "becoming-animal" that they condemn as reductive attempts to re-appropriate and determine desire through its Oedipal entrapment. This feature is most brilliantly illustrated by the discussion of a specific case in which psychoanalysis encountered a "becoming-animal" in the "becoming-horse" of "Little Hans." According to Deleuze and Guattari, "Little Hans's horse is not representative but affective" (*TP*, 257), and they affirm the construction of the "rhizome" (i.e., "becoming-horse") that sweeps up both Hans and the horse. This is in stark contrast to the interpretation of psychoanalysis for which such creative syntheses are regarded as pathologies threatening the mastery of the ego and the proprietary claims of the family, along with its attempted triangulation of desire. Deleuze and Guattari start neither from little Hans nor from the horse, but from the more primordial "becoming-horse of little Hans." They ask: "Is there an as yet unknown assemblage that would be neither Hans's nor the horse's, but that of the becoming-horse of Hans?" (*TP*, 258). Deleuze and Guattari's alternative to psychoanalysis, namely, "schizoanalysis," develops a quite different agenda in such cases.⁹ For Deleuze and Guattari, "becoming-animal" is not "the result of a flaw or a malediction" (*K*, 35) and thus is a reality that should be celebrated.

Unlike psychoanalysis, Deleuze and Guattari affirm the "becoming-animal of the human" (*TP*, 238). However, this is merely a preliminary and relatively modest voyage into the field of intensity and becoming.¹⁰ Unlike arguably that of many of their deconstructionist and phenomenological contemporaries, Deleuze and Guattari's thought is both ontologically and genealogically radical. The notion of becoming as intrinsically self-differential dislocates and undermines negation before it can gain any purchase. It thereby resists dialectical appropriation as it cannot be reduced to negative determination. However, beyond such ontologico-logical concerns, Deleuze and Guattari's committed exploration and valorization of "becoming-animal" reveals a hostility to the threat of entrapment in the moribund, de-intensified domain of "interiority" that constitutes human subjectivity, synonymous in their texts with "reterritorialisation," the (inevitable) recapture of "lines of flight."

One of the most remarkable features of Deleuze and Guattari's thematization of "becoming-animal" is their identification of it with art. Indeed, a striking materialist aesthetics is implicit in their conception of art in non-mimetic terms as a process of reciprocal deterritorialization.¹¹

No art can be imitative or figurative. Suppose a painter "represents" a bird; this is in fact a becoming-bird that can occur only to the extent that the bird itself is in the process of becoming something else, a pure line and pure color. . . . imitation self-destructs, since the imitator unknowingly enters into a becoming that conjugates with the unknowing becoming of that which he or she imitates. . . . The painter and musician do not imitate the animal, they become-animal at the same time as the animal becomes what they willed, at the deepest level of their concord with Nature (*TP*, 304–5).

Deleuze and Guattari refuse to align art exclusively with the human for "it is not certain whether we can draw a dividing line between animal and human beings: Are there not, as Messiaen believes, musician birds and nonmusician birds?" (*TP*, 301). This remarkable rejection of ontological segregation in all its forms is clearly expressed in the following striking passage in *A Thousand Plateaus*:

Music dispatches molecular flows . . . music is not the privilege of human beings: the universe, the cosmos, is made of refrains; the question in music is that of a power of deterritorialization permeating nature, animals, the elements, and deserts as much as human beings. The question is more what is not musical in human beings, and what already is musical in nature . . . human beings are hardly at an advantage, except in means of overcoding . . . that is even the opposite of having an advantage . . . nature opposes its power, and the power of music, to the machines of human beings, the roar of factories and bombers . . . it is necessary for the nonmusical sound of the human being to form a block with the becoming-music of sound, for them to confront and embrace each other like two wrestlers who can no longer break free from each other's grasp. (*TP*, 309)

In conclusion, it is important to note that, beyond attempting to identify the conceptual content and comprehend the meaning of the above texts, Deleuze and Guattari's writings have a decidedly "performative" character. "Becoming-animal" is entirely an affective affair, a matter of desire, a process of "contagion" (*TP*, 239). Far more important than understanding *what* is being said in the texts above, it is crucial to feel oneself drawn, on a libidinal and affective level, into the processes that are not merely being described in them but are actually taking place by way of them.

If, upon completion, the reader remains none the wiser concerning the content of the extracts included here but feels oddly feral, perhaps inclined to whinny, bark, or howl joyously, then an understanding more profound than that which can be conceptualized will have been gained.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DERRIDA

CHAPTER SIX: DELEUZE AND GUATTARI.

BECOMING-ANIMAL (GILLES DELEUZE AND FÉLIX GUATTARI)

- 1 [Translator's note: H. P. Lovecraft, "Through the Gates of the Silver Key," in *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath* (New York: Ballantine Books, pp. 1970), 191-2.]
- 2 Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Lettres du voyageur à son retour*, trans. Jean-Claude Schneider (Paris: Mercure de France, 1969), letter of 9 May 1901.
- 3 Anton Reiser (extracs), in *La légende dispersée: Anthologie du romantisme allemand* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1976), pp. 36-43.
- 4 On the man of war, his extrinsic position in relation to the State, the family, and religion, and on the becomings-animal, becomings-wild animal he enters into, see Dumézil, in particular, *Mythes et dieux des Germains* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1939); *Horace et les Curiares* (Paris: Gallimard, 1942); *The Destiny of the Warrior*, trans. Alf Hiltebeitel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); *Mythe et épopée* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968-1973), vol. 2. One may also refer to the studies on leopard-man societies, etc., in Black Africa; it is probable that these societies derive from brotherhoods of warriors. But after the colonial State prohibited tribal wars, they turned into crime associations, while still retaining their territorial and political importance. One of the best studies on this subject is Paul Ernest Joset, *Les sociétés secrètes des hommes-léopards en Afrique noire* (Paris: Payot, 1955). The becomings-animal proper to these groups seem to us to be very different from the symbolic relations between human and animal as they appear in State apparatuses, but also in pre-State institutions of the totemism type. Lévi-Strauss clearly demonstrates that totemism already implies a kind of embryonic State, to the extent that it exceeds tribal boundaries (Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966], pp. 157ff.).
- 5 Marcel Moré, *Le dieu Mozart et le monde des oiseaux* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).
- 6 As we have seen, imitation can be conceived either as a resemblance of terms culminating in an archetype (series), or as a correspondence of relations constituting a symbolic order (structure); but becoming is not reducible to either of these. The concept of mimesis is not only inadequate, it is radically false.
- 7 Giséle Brelet, "Musique contemporaine en France," in *Histoire de la musique*, ed. Roland Manuel, "Pléiade" (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), vol. 2, p. 1, 166.
- 8 A text by Henry Miller for Varèse, *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare* (New York: New Directions, 1945), pp. 176-7.
- 9 Kafka, *Diaries*, trans. Martin Greenberg (New York: Schocken Books, 1949), 24 January 1922, vol. 2, p. 210.
- 10 Letter to Brod, in Wagenbach, *Franz Kafka*, p. 156: "Diabolical powers, whatever their message might be, brush up against the doors and rejoice already from the fact that they will arrive soon."
- 11 Note, for example, Kafka's enduring disdain for Zionism (as a spiritual and physical reterritorialization): Wagenbach, *Franz Kafka*, pp. 164-7.
- 12 There is another version of the same text where it is a question of a sanitarium: compare, the ape's cough.
- 13 Kafka commentators are at their worst in their interpretations in this respect when they regulate everything through metaphors: thus, Marthe Robert reminds us that the Jews are like dogs or, to take another example, that "since the artist is treated as someone starving to death Kafka makes him into a hunger artist; or since he is treated as a parasite, Kafka makes him into an enormous insect" (*Oeuvres complètes* [Paris: Cercle du livre précieux, 1963-5], vol. 5, p. 311). It seems to us that this is a simplistic conception of the literary machine - Robbe-Grillet has insisted on the destruction of all metaphors in Kafka.
- 14 See, for example, the letter to Pollak in Kafka, *Letters to Friends, Family and Editors*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), 4 February 1902, pp. 1-2.
- 15 Kafka often contrasts two types of voyage, an extensive and organized one, and one that is intense, in pieces, a sinking or fragmentation. This second voyage takes place in a single place, in "one's bedroom," and is all the more intense for that: "Now you lie against this, now against that wall, so that the window keeps moving around you. . . . I must just take my walks

and that must be sufficient, but in compensation there is no place in all the world where I could not take my walks" (Kafka, *Diaries*, 19 July 1910, vol. 1, pp. 27-8).

ANIMAL BECOMINGS (JAMES URPETH)

- 1 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1986). Henceforth *K*.
- 2 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1988), p. 237. Henceforth *TP*.
- 3 A philosophical problematic on such a scale requires, of course, an extensive exposition beyond the reach of this introduction. Two such attempts at this, both of exceptional quality, are Michael Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (London: UCL Press, 1993), and Brian Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992).
- 4 "Introduction: Rhizome" (*TP*, 3-25) provides an invaluable overview of many of Deleuze and Guattari's basic philosophical concerns, and is especially helpful for an understanding of the notion of "becoming-animal."
- 5 An important source of the materialist critique of science (and, even more so, of "scientificism") at work in the texts on becoming-animal is the extensive discussion of the nature of science throughout Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (London: Athlone Press, 1984). Deleuze summarizes his position thus: "the balance sheet of the sciences is a depressing one: passive, reactive and negative concepts predominate everywhere" (71). However, that science per se is not, for Deleuze and Guattari, inherently objectifying and reductive (a stance taken by, in general terms, the phenomenological "rethinking of the transcendental") is clear from their own appeal to numerous scientific sources.
- 6 See *TP*, 275-80, 291-2. "Becoming-animal" as a form of "becoming-minoritarian" is an important instance of what Deleuze and Guattari term "micropolitics," a politics of desire that at crucial points departs from the agenda of the "politics of identity," and pursues a more radical trajectory than that of representation and emancipation that, it is argued, remains a "molar" or "majoritarian" politics. This theme is also clearly evident in *Kafka* in the guise of "an entire micropolitics of desire" (*K*, 10). See also *K*, 12-13.
- 7 For an interesting formulation of Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the "unconscious," see *TP*, 284. This contestation of psychoanalysis's Oedipal determination of desire and the unconscious is, of course, a main theme in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem, and H. R. Lane (London: Athlone Press, 1984).
- 8 A "haecceity" is an impersonal mode of individuation; examples given are "a season, a winter, a summer, an hour, a date" (*TP*, 261). They consist "entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect and be affected" (*TP*, 261). See also *TP*, 253, 261-5, 540, n. 33. The connection between the notions of "haecceity," "rhizome," and "becoming" occurs implicitly at *TP*, 263.
- 9 Deleuze and Guattari state that "schizoanalysis, or pragmatics, has no other meaning: make a rhizome" (*TP*, 251). There is a further scathing criticism of the reactionary tendencies of the psychoanalytic interpretation in this case and its negative effect at *TP*, 14.
- 10 "Becoming-animal," Deleuze and Guattari argue, is of limited radicality in comparison with other types of "becoming-minoritarian" (e.g., "-woman," "-child"), which they identify on a scale of intensity that culminates in "becoming-imperceptible" (*TP*, 248, 272, 279). The merely preliminary character of "becoming-animal" is an important element in Deleuze and Guattari's claim that Kafka's stories, which are the principal site of the "becoming-animal" of his writing, are less radical ontological events than his novels (*K*, 14-15). See also *K*, 36-9, 59, 87.
- 11 Aside from Kafka, a "great author of real becomings-animal" (*TP*, 243), Deleuze and Guattari appeal among others to Melville (*Moby Dick* is venerated as the masterpiece of "becoming-animal"), Lawrence, Woolf, and, in music, Mozart, Schumann, Messian, and Boulez. For Deleuze, the painting of Francis Bacon also contains a dimension of "becoming-animal." See Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum,

2003), pp. 20-7, 32, 59. All these artists are engaged, in varying degrees, with various "blocks of becoming."

CHAPTER SEVEN: DERRIDA

THE ANIMAL THAT THEREFORE I AM (MORE TO FOLLOW) (JACQUES DERRIDA)

- 1 Later the same day, and on the next day, this introduction was followed by four sessions during which I proposed readings of Descartes, Kant, Heidegger, Levinas, and Lacan. Those interpretations, as close and patient as possible, were designed to test the working hypotheses that I am outlining here, on the threshold of a work in progress.
- 2 Michel de Montaigne, *Apology for Raymond Sebond*, in *The Complete Works of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1957), p. 331; hereafter abbreviated *A*. The *Apology* needs to be examined very closely, especially to the extent that Montaigne doesn't just revive, in its luxuriant richness, a tradition that attributes much to the animal, beginning with a type of language. Most pertinent in this respect, marking a difference from the modern (Cartesian or post-Cartesian) form of a hegemonic tradition is the moment where Montaigne recognizes in the animal more than a right to communication, to the sign, to language as sign (something Descartes will not deny), namely, *a capacity to respond*. For example: "It is not credible that Nature has denied us this resource that she has given to many other animals: for what is it but speech, this faculty we see in them of complaining, rejoicing, calling to each other for help, inviting each other to love, as they do by the use of their voice? How could they not speak to one another? They certainly speak to us, and we to them. In how many ways do we not speak to our dogs? *And they answer us*. We talk to them in another language, with other names, than to birds, hogs, oxen, horses; and we change the idiom according to the species." And following a quotation from Dante concerning the ant: "It seems that Lactantius attributes to beasts not only speech but also laughter" (*A*, 335; my italics).
- 3 *The Cat* is, as we well know, the title of two poems, but only the first of those directly addresses its subject in the singular, familiar form ("*Viens, mon beau chat*"), before recognizing in it the figure of "the woman I love" [*ma femme*]. Baudelaire even names the cat's gaze ("the image of the woman I love rises before me: her gaze, like yours, dear creature" ["*Je vois ma femme en esprit. Son regard./Comme le tien, aimable bête*"]) and "When my eyes are drawn . . . towards my beloved cat . . . and find I am looking into myself" ["*Quand mes yeux, vers ce chat que j'aime . . . Et que je regarde en moi-même*"]; and its voice ("To utter the longest of sentences it has no need of words" ["*Pour dire les plus longues phrases./Elle n'a pas besoin de mots*"]) (Charles Baudelaire, "Le Chat" and "Le Chat," *Les Fleurs du mal*, in *The Complete Verse of Baudelaire*, trans. and ed. Francis Scarfe, 2 vols. [London, 1986], vol. 1, pp. 98, 122, 121).
- 4 See Rainer Maria Rilke, "Schwarze Katze," in *Neue Gedichte/ New Poems*, trans. Stephen Cohn (Manchester: Carcanet, 1992), pp. 202-3. (On another occasion I will have to try to read this poem that I have rediscovered thanks to Werner Hamacher.) The poem is dedicated, if that is the word, to "your gaze" ("*dein Blick*") and to a specter ("*ein Gespenst*") — those are its first words; one could set it into play with the poem he signs concerning "The Panther"; see pp. 60-1 (which again begins by naming the gaze [his gaze this time: "*Sein Blick*" are the first words]) — rediscovered thanks to Richard Macksey, who has also translated it into English. Since the conference at Cerisy, cat lovers and friends the world over have been giving me cats like this. This would also be the moment to salute Jean-Claude Lebensztejn's forthcoming masterpiece entitled *Miaoulique (Fantaisie Chromatique)*.
A propos, why does one say in French "has the cat got your tongue?" ("*donner sa langue au chat*") to mean that one has thrown in the towel?
- 5 "An animal's eyes have the power to speak a great language. . . . Sometimes I look into a cat's eyes" (Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith [New York: Scribner, 1958], pp. 96-7). Buber also speaks of "the capacity to turn its glance to us." "The beginning of this cat's glance, lighting up under the touch of my glance, indisputably questioned me: 'Is it

possible that you think of me? . . . Do I really exist?' . . . (T here is a transcription for a word, that we do not have, denoting self without the ego)" (97).

- 6 Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*, in *The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll* (New York: Modern Library, 1936), p. 268. Derrida used Lewis Carroll, "*Les aventures d'Alice au pays des merveilles*" et "*Ce qu'Alice trouva de l'autre côté du miroir*," trans. Jacques Papy, ed. Jean Gattegno (Paris: Gallimard, 1994). — Trans.
- 7 "Chasser": also "to hunt." — Trans.
- 8 In modern French the noun, *une bête*, is normally used to mean "animal" with a slightly familiar sense; as adjective *bête* means stupid. *Une bêtise*, which I have taken the liberty of translating below with the neologism *asinanity*, means a "stupid mistake" or "idiocy." — Trans.
- 9 Ça, also "Id." — Trans.

THINKING WITH CATS (DAVID WOOD)

- 1 See "Eating Well, or the Calculation of the Subject," trans. Peter Connor and Avital Ronell [interview with Jean-Luc Nancy, in Derrida's *Points . . . Interviews 1974-94* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995)]. In this paper Derrida notoriously develops the idea of a generalized carnophallogocentrism.
- 2 For the full details, see the note appended to the selection from Derrida in this book.
- 3 There is something uncanny, for me at least, in Derrida's pursuing here the theme of following in an autobiographical context. A year before presenting a paper at Essex entitled "Heidegger after Derrida" (1986) I found myself at a Derrida conference in Chicago slated to present the paper just before Derrida's paper. The hall was packed with people making sure they had seats for the following paper. My paper was entitled "Following Derrida." My *Thinking after Heidegger* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002) continues the same meditation on the many senses of "follow" in English, including "understand."
- 4 Jacques Derrida, "The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)," trans. David Wills, *Critical Inquiry*, 28 (Winter 2002), pp. 369-418.
- 5 From A. A. Milne, *Winnie-The-Pooh* (New York: Penguin, 1996), chap. 3, p. 32.
- 6 Derrida's cat first came to my attention in *The Gift of Death*, trans. David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 71: "How would you justify the fact that you sacrifice all the cats in the world to the cat that you feed at home every morning for years . . . ?" His theme will become most apposite to this paper — Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac illuminates the "aporia of responsibility" that afflicts all of us when we acquire special attachments. We find ourselves infinitely betraying everyone else. On the whole, Derrida argues that the abyss always threatens our complacencies, while I tend to respond that the abyss is always historically and contextually framed.
- 7 Thomas Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?," *Philosophical Review*, 83, no. 4 (October 1974), pp. 435-50.
- 8 *Being and Nothingness* [1943], trans. Hazel Barnes (London: Methuen, 1986), part III, chap. I, section IV: "The Look," p. 259.
- 9 Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity* [1961], trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969).
- 10 In *Being and Nothingness* (257) he describes the structure of "Being-seen-by-another." This is the general structure of his play *No Exit*.
- 11 From "The Paradox of Morality," in *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other*, eds. Robert Bernasconi and David Wood (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 168-80, p. 172.
- 12 D. H. Lawrence, "The Snake," in *Complete Poems* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994), p. 349.
- 13 See my "Where Levinas Went Wrong," in *The Step Back: Towards a Negative Capability* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004 [forthcoming]).
- 14 *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, p. 379.
- 15 Though it is clear we would have no cognitive capacity without general terms!
- 16 Derrida's own words are: "At the risk of being mistaken and of having one day to make honorable amends . . . I will venture to say that never, on the part of any great philosophy from Plato to Heidegger, or anyone at all who takes on, as a philosophical question in and of itself, the question called that of the animal and of the limit between the animal and the