Deleuze and the Non/Human

Jon Roffe
and
Hannah Stark

Deleuze and the Non/Human

This page intentionally left blank

Deleuze and the Non/Human

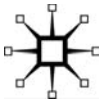
Edited by

Jon Roffe
University of New South Wales, Australia

and

Hannah Stark
University of Tasmania, Australia

palgrave
macmillan



First published 2015 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN: 978–1–137–45368–6

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

Contents

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to our colleagues at the University of Tasmania and the University of Melbourne for providing supportive environments in which to do this work. We acknowledge the University of Tasmania for generously investing in this project through the Arts and Environment small grants program and the Career Development Scholarship initiative. Our thanks go to the team at Palgrave Macmillan and to our indexer Madeleine Davis for their hard work in the production process.

Hannah would particularly like to thank Anne Romeo for her endless patience and good humor and her family for their unwavering support. She would like to express profound gratitude to Ken Ruthven for his excellent advice and mentorship.

Jon would like to thank Virginia (*excipe furticas et refer ipsa notas*).

We both extend our warmest appreciation to the contributors whose hard work and intellectual rigor have made this book what it is.

Notes on Contributors

Keith Ansell-Pearson is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Warwick, UK. He specializes in modern European philosophy, especially Nietzsche, Bergson and Deleuze. In recent years he has been working on Nietzsche's neglected middle period texts, especially *Dawn*. His research topics include: Nietzsche on the sublime and the sublimities of philosophy; the meaning of his 'philosophy of the morning', including his moral therapy and his interest in Epicurean teaching as a way of curing humanity of its neuroses; and his ethics of resistance.

Simone Bignall is Vice-Chancellor's Research Fellow and Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of New South Wales, Australia. She is the author of *Postcolonial Agency: Critique and Constructivism* (2010). She is co-editor of *Deleuze and the Postcolonial* (with Paul Patton, 2010); of *Agamben and Colonialism* (with Marcelo Svirsky, 2012) and of *Deleuze and Pragmatism* (with Sean Bowden and Paul Patton, 2014). She is currently completing a project titled *Excolonialism: Ethics after Enjoyment*.

Ronald Bogue is Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Georgia, US. He has written widely on the work of Deleuze including *Deleuze and Guattari* (1989), *Deleuze on Literature* (2003), *Deleuze on Cinema* (2003), *Deleuze on Music, Painting and the Arts* (2003), *Deleuze's Wake: Tributes and Tributaries* (2004), *Deleuze's Way: Essays in Transverse Ethics and Aesthetics* (2007) and *Deleuzian Fabulation and the Scars of History* (2010).

Sean Bowden is Lecturer in Philosophy at Deakin University, Australia. He is the author of *The Priority of Events: Deleuze's Logic of Sense* (2011), and the co-editor of *Badiou and Philosophy* (2012) and *Deleuze and Pragmatism* (2014).

Clare Colebrook is Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of English at Penn State University, US. She has published books on Deleuze, European philosophy, feminist theory, poetry and human extinction.

Elizabeth Grosz is Jean Fox O'Barr Women's Studies Professor in Trinity College of Arts and Sciences at Duke University, US. She has written widely on the body, sexuality, space, time and materiality and her publications include *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics,*

and Art (2011), *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (2008), *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power* (2005) and *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution and the Untimely* (2004).

Timothy Laurie is Lecturer in Screen and Cultural Studies at the University of Melbourne, Australia. His research focuses on ethics and social identity in popular culture, drawing on Deleuzian, queer and critical race perspectives. He is currently writing a book about interdisciplinary research methods in the study of popular music.

Stephen Loo, an architect, philosopher and artist, is Professor of Architecture and Director of the Creative Exchange Institute (CxI) at the University of Tasmania, Australia. He has published widely on language, affect and the biophilosophy of the contemporary subject, post-humanist ethics and experimental digital thinking. His recent publications include *Deleuze and Architecture* (with Hélène Frichot, ed., 2013) and *Poetic Biopolitics: New Political and Ethical Practices in the Arts and Humanities* (with Peg Rawes and Tim Matthews, ed., forthcoming).

Jon Roffe is Vice-Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of New South Wales, Australia. He is also the founding convenor of and lecturer at the Melbourne School of Continental Philosophy. He is an editor of *Parrhesia: A Journal of Critical Philosophy*, and the co-editor of a number of books on twentieth-century French philosophy. Jon is the author of *Badiou's Deleuze* (2012), *Muttering for the Sake of Stars* (2012), *Abstract Market Theory* (forthcoming with Palgrave Macmillan) and, with AJ Bartlett and Justin Clemens, *Lacan Deleuze Badiou* (2014).

Arun Saldanha teaches in the Department of Geography at the University of Minnesota, US. He is the author of *Psychedelic White: Goa Trance and the Viscosity of Race* (2007). He has co-edited a series of recent volumes: *Sexual Difference between Psychoanalysis and Vitalism* (2014) with Hoon Song, *Deleuze and Race* (2013) with Jason Michael Adams, and *Geographies of Race and Food: Fields, Bodies Markets* (2013) with Rachel Slocum.

Undine Sellbach, a philosopher, writed and performer, is a research associate in the School of Philosophy. She teaches in the School of Architecture and Design at the University of Tasmania, Australia. Her research explores the imagination and ethics in the context of notions of life, gender, instinct and the unconscious. With Stephen Loo, Undine is currently working on a monograph on psychoanalysis, ethics and the entomological imagination, with recent publications in *Parallax* and

Angelaki. Their performance-based work include 'Whirlwind of Insects in the Body of a Girl' presented at Sexuate Subjects: Politics, Poetics and Ethics, International Conference at University College London (2010), and the *Grasshopper Cabaret* for Architecture-Writing Symposium at KTH Stockholm (2012).

Hannah Stark is Lecturer in English at the University of Tasmania, Australia. She is the author of *Feminist Theory after Deleuze* (forthcoming) and recently has published in *Angelaki, Feminist Theory* and *Cultural Studies Review*.

Ashley Woodward is Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Dundee, UK and a founding member of the Melbourne School of Continental Philosophy. He is the author of *Understanding Nietzscheanism* (2011), *Nihilism in Postmodernity* (2010), editor of *Interpreting Nietzsche* (2011) and co-editor of *Sensorium: Aesthetics, Art, Life* (2007) and *The Continuum Companion to Existentialism* (2011). He is currently working on several projects on the under-appreciated aspects of the work of Jean-François Lyotard, including a book, *Lyotard: The Inhuman Condition*, forthcoming.

Introduction: Deleuze and the Non/Human

Jon Roffe and Hannah Stark

The double figure of the wasp and the orchid features at a number of key moments in the work of Gilles Deleuze. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari use this figure to illustrate a series of significant interrelated concepts, including the rhizome, becoming, de- and reterritorialization. They are fascinated by the way certain orchids display the physical and sensory characteristics of female wasps in order to attract male wasps into a trans-species courtship dance, which they describe as 'against nature'.[1] As these wasps move from flower to flower, desperately trying to copulate with them, so too does the pollen which has been transferred to their bodies. Through this seduction the wasps are unsuspectingly co-opted into the orchid's reproductive apparatus. This is a signal example of what Deleuze and Guattari call a *becoming*: the wasp, enlisted into the reproductive cycle of the orchid, engages in a becoming-orchid. This is not, they stress, an act of imitation, but a genuine incorporation of the body of the wasp into the orchid's reproduction. The same is true in turn for the orchid itself, which engages in a becoming-wasp, not by copying the female wasp, but by crossing over into the zone of indiscernibility between it and the wasp in a series of de- and re-territorializations.

This figure exemplifies in turn the concept of the rhizome: a new productive connection is made through a rupture of natural species-specific filiation. In *Dialogues*, Deleuze and Parnet bring the wasp and orchid example to bear on philosophical engagement itself. New concepts and approaches, they suggest, are created not through the conversation of independent individuals, but through a mutual becoming of those involved: 'This could be what a conversation is – simply the outline of a becoming. The wasp and the orchid provide an example' (Deleuze and Parnet 2002: 2).

The central motivation of this book is to pursue just such a program of becoming, seduction, or theft: 'Capture is always a double capture, theft, a double theft, and it is that which creates not something mutual, but an asymmetrical bloc, an aparallel evolution, nuptials, always "outside" and "between"' (Deleuze and Parnet 2002: 7).

This imperative manifests itself in the way that we have endeavored to push the discipline of philosophy beyond itself through a series of encounters with other disciplinary practices. Here, philosophy becomes the orchid, invited to proliferate through non-conventional engagements with other disciplines. But Deleuze himself can also be conceived as the orchid here, drawn into illicit liaisons with thinkers like Haraway and Brassier who, through this engagement, are read against their hostility to Deleuze's work, seduced into the unnatural reproduction of Deleuzean thought.

The nonhuman turn

The figure also has a third sense for this book: the productive interplay between the concepts of the human and the nonhuman. This is embodied, of course, in the oblique of the title. At this present moment in intellectual history it is impossible to consider the human without contextualizing it with the nonhuman turn. Furthermore, it is unsurprising that the nonhuman turn has been, in its entirety, an interdisciplinary affair – no discipline has a unique purchase on the nonhuman, and engaging with it demands of us that we exceed the boundaries set before us. As does Deleuze. Indeed, there is no single thinker who occupies the nexus of so many intersecting lines.

The nonhuman turn has involved a critical reappraisal of the human and its place in a broader, nonhuman context. It has been instrumental in challenging human privilege and placing the human in the more-than-human world, motivated in part by the ongoing theoretical and political interrogation of the anthropocentrism of the Western tradition. Accompanying this has been the critique of the liberal humanist subject as an exclusionary site: protecting some members of the human species by admitting them to the category of 'the human' while depriving others of its status and privilege. This manifests in the history of violent political exclusions based on race, gender, sexuality, and bodily capacities and incapacities. We see this through the speciesism that inheres in Western thought by which the category of the human elevates one species, *Homo sapiens*, above all others, thus facilitating and justifying human privilege. These hierarchies are further cemented through

the dehumanization of subjugated groups by projecting onto them perceived animal characteristics, positioning them as uncivilized, base, non-linguistic and more fully embodied than the properly human. In this way the human species has always defined itself in relation to its less-than-human others.

The nonhuman turn has staged the critique of anthropocentrism through engaging with entities that have traditionally been devalued in our systems of meaning and cultural practices: animals, objects, plants, nonhuman nature, etc. There is no doubt that anthropocentrism has obscured the relationship between human and nonhuman animals but it has also masked other relationships such as that between the organic and inorganic, the animate and the inanimate, and the classical opposition between subject and object. The nonhuman turn invites us to re-interrogate these perceived oppositions. This philosophical project has been accompanied by a growing critical awareness of the need to question how the category of the human operates in relation to the political discourses of our time. In particular, this has involved considering how the human functions in relation to social justice agendas and in the context of debates about sustainability and the role of the human in environmental futures.

A key marker of the nonhuman turn has been the critical engagement with objects. The recent speculative realist movement is committed to displacing the human from the center of analysis. While certain representative thinkers such as Quentin Meillassoux and Ray Brassier appear to be reinforcing the classical subject/object distinction, their aim is to disarticulate reality from human experience. In this regard they share with object-oriented philosophy the assertion of the radical independence of objects from the human subject's access to them. This has troubled the distinction between subject and object and challenged the opposition itself. More significantly, it has undermined human privilege by relocating the human as one object in a field of many others. Objects, in this sense, include not only mundane things but also the living, the conscious, and those entities that exceed human spatio-temporal frameworks. The larger implication of the critical energy, which has coalesced in these emerging fields, is that knowledge is indifferent to human consciousness.

While speculative realism erases the embodied particularity of thought, other engagements with objects and things, as characterized by new materialism, have maintained the feminist project of acknowledging that the thinking body is also a sexed body. New materialism sets itself against the linguistic paradigm of the late twentieth century

by reexamining the human in a broader material context. In this way, new materialism calls us to 'reorient ourselves profoundly in relation to the world, to one another, and to ourselves' (Coole and Frost 2010: 6), thus placing the body in a broader network of bodies (such as the bodies of animals) and situating it within larger processes (such as evolution). Jane Bennett, for example, places the human body (in its particularity) within a broader network or assemblage of other 'vibrant' things. She celebrates the 'nonhuman vitalities actively at work around and within us' (2012: 231), which not only undermines the stability of the human as a bounded and coherent entity, but also challenges the notion of the passivity of nonhuman matter.

The nonhuman turn also manifests in broad questions about the environment and the place of the human within nonhuman timescales. This is evident in work on extinction from a variety of perspectives. Brassier's speculative realism in part invites us to adopt a nonhuman point of view located after human extinction (Brassier 2007). Similarly, Claire Colebrook proposes a thought experiment by which human thought (and Theory) must be contemplated in the inevitable absence of human life (2014). Elizabeth Grosz located the human in deep or geological time as 'but a momentary blip in a history and cosmology that remains fundamentally indifferent to this temporary eruption' (Grosz 2011: 25). This is part of her Darwinian re-contextualization of the human as one species amongst many, which provokes us to reconsider the relationships between humans and nonhuman nature (including, but not limited to, nonhuman animals and plants). It also invites a reconsideration of agency so that human agency is diminished in the face of evolutionary forces and nonhuman agency can be acknowledged. Myra J. Hird and Celia Roberts remind us that the human is a very small part of a larger nonhuman world. They write that the 'majority of the Earth's living inhabitants are nonhuman, and nonhuman characterizes the deep nonliving recesses of the Earth, the biosphere and space's vast expanse' (2011: 111).

As we reconcile ourselves with our environmental future and with the emergence of the 'anthropocene' as a key conceptual framework, we are compelled to consider the philosophical consequences of the human impact on the environment on a planetary scale. The anthropocene requires that we re-evaluate the human and its place in the world. According to Dipesh Chakrabarty, humans now 'act as a geological force on the planet' and the distance between human and natural history has collapsed (2012: 2). The notion of the 'good' and 'bad' anthropocene endows humans with immense agency in their relationship to the

earth, positioning humans as accountable for past actions and inactions and also offering human stewardship as a 'solution' for anthropocene futures. We are also invited to speculate as to the nature of a world without us. This occurs on an individual level when climate change requires that we think about the impact of today's actions on future generations, a future that we will never see (Morton 2013), and also at the level of species when we consider the inevitability of human extinction (Colebrook 2014). Within these debates the human emerges as a contested figure: simultaneously contextualized as a miniscule entity in relation to nonhuman time scales and positioned as the force shaping a new geological era.

The figure of the human has been further troubled by the various strains of posthumanism, which has, on the one hand, staged a rigorous critique of models of Enlightenment humanism, while on the other hand demonstrated a continued fascination with this model. Accompanying this has been a call to a posthumanities: a new disciplinary configuration which could move us beyond accustomed ways of producing knowledge so as to better address the challenges of the contemporary world.

The stakes in the nonhuman turn are high. What is common to the various manifestations of the nonhuman turn is the displacement of the human from the center of analysis. This allows critical energy to shift from anthropocentric point of view from which all previous analyses have proceeded, and to consider the objects of enquiry that this approach has obscured.

Deleuze's philosophy already anticipated many of the current debates about the non/human. This book continues this engagement by extending the lines of investigation beyond philosophy and beyond Deleuze's work. At the same time, its goal is to open up a critical line of questioning about what the non/human means in Deleuze's work itself. It is thus both about the non/human from Deleuze's point of view, and about Deleuze from the point of view of the various problematics that can be included in the nonhuman turn.

The non/human in Deleuze

This is not to say that the human has no place in Deleuze's work. There is a certain understanding of Deleuze, quite widespread, that presents his work as maintaining a simple form of antihumanism. On this view, Deleuze's philosophy has no place at all for the concept of the human, and relentlessly attacks it. In part, this is because Deleuze's

work contributed to the broader antihumanist currents of 1960s French thought.

However, as a number of the contributions to this volume attest, there is in Deleuze a consistent, complex and profound engagement with the human that exceeds any complete reduction to this moment. Whatever its sources – which seem to us likely grounded in certain institutional and intellectual cultures, and no doubt also partly resulting from the order in which Deleuze's works appeared in English – it does more to foreclose the resources that he has to offer that present an accurate portrait of his thought.

It seems to us that there are four interrelated lines of engagement with the non/human in Deleuze's work: a positive genetic account of the human, a broad critique of the human, an resituation of the human in a univocal ontology, and a concomitant affirmation of the rich plurality of the nonhuman within which the human is contextualized. One of the significant things about Deleuze's work is that he continued to engage with the category of the human throughout its whole trajectory – through the history of philosophy books, the post-structuralist texts of the late 1960s and through his collaborative work. This is not to say that there is a stable idea of the human throughout, but that he continues to be provoked by this problematic.

The first line of argument is exemplified in the subtitle of Deleuze's first book, *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*, which presents a positive, genetic or constructive, account of the human. In this book, Deleuze's argument is entirely bound up with an empiricist account of the human, defined as the result of a complex synthetic movement. This human nature is, in turn, 'the real object of science' for Hume (Deleuze 1991: 32). *Empiricism and Subjectivity* already bears the characteristic blurring of authorship – that is to say, the mark of a double becoming: a becoming-Hume and a becoming-Deleuze – that will become the hallmark of his books on other thinkers. For this reason, we must not see this account of the human as an object extrinsic to Deleuze's own thought, but an early component that will continue to be developed.

With the possible exception of his contribution to the edited collection *Instincts et institutions*, the other significant contribution to the theory of the human by Deleuze in the 1960s is to be found in the lecture series *Qu'est-ce que fonder?* [What is Grounding?] (Deleuze 2014)[2] In effect, these lectures extend the Humean account by Kantian and Heideggerian means. Deleuze begins by noting the fact that human beings not only realize natural ends (satisfy instincts) but do so by *creating* the means of

their realization. Human beings, Deleuze argues, also creatively transform these ends into those proper to culture and reason. This transformation allows for what will later be called a deterritorialization of the human animal from the organic strata. It is through the endless pursuit of the 'cultural ends of reason', that the very capacity to ground the activity of reason is revealed, in the form of our 'constitutive finitude' as human beings (Deleuze 2014).

This trajectory finds an even fuller and more clearly Deleuzean expression in *Bergsonism*. Deleuze notes there with approval Bergson's assertion that 'the meaning of philosophy', is 'to go beyond the human condition' (Deleuze 1998: 28), itself characterized by the mutilating habits that the subtractive nature of perception bequeathes to us. However, he also insists on the importance in Bergsonian thought of the properly human dimension of intelligence and the capacity for society that this engenders. The trio of the artist, the mystic and the philosopher with which the study closes are all figures of the human being at its height: while all of being expresses the *élan vital* in its creative evolution, only human beings express the full scope of the virtual past.

The two volumes with which Deleuze closes out the 1960s share in this project of theorizing the nature and place of the human, though in both cases the emphasis is more clearly on the genesis of the human being. In *Difference and Repetition* the account concerns the advent of *psychic systems*. Drawing on psychoanalysis, Deleuze accounts for not only human subjectivity and its psychic dimension, but also the place of the Other, language and intersubjectivity (see, in particular, Deleuze 1994: 96–115; 254–261). The *Logic of Sense* deploys the same resources, drawing even more heavily on work by Klein and Lacan, in order to account for the advent of the speaking and thinking human being, through a transcendental philosophy of the event and its determination of the material world.

Even *Anti-Oedipus*, which famously opens with the vista of pre-subjective desiring-machines, and is often presented as an antihumanist manifesto, is essentially concerned with the forms that desire takes in human social life. 'Social-production is', Deleuze and Guattari insist, 'only desiring-production under determinate conditions' (1984: 29). However, the major goal of the book is to explain how it is that desiring-production is misconstrued from the point of view of the socius. In other words, while the human is but one formation of desire, it is the formation of desire that really and materially subordinates it to the structure of lack. The project of *Anti-Oedipus* is to analyze precisely the social organization and re-organization of human being.

With these points made, we consider it essential to emphasize that a second strand of argumentation is also present throughout Deleuze's work. This strand is characteristically critical. This is to say not that Deleuze is a simple antihumanist 'after all', but that the human, once constituted, must be seen neither as the triumph of nature nor the embodiment of freedom, but the site of a capture and diminution of life.

We have already cited the critique of the limits of the human found in *Bergsonism*, but this aspect of Deleuze's thought is initially found in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. In this text, Deleuze certainly presents Nietzsche as having developed a positive, constructive and genetic account of the human form. But this is immediately doubled with a merciless critique: it is not just that there are some forms of human existence that are better than others, but that, more profoundly, the human as such is the irredeemable site of nihilism. The human brings about and reigns over only the 'kingdom of nihilism', and 'inhabits only the dark side of the Earth' (Deleuze 2008: 161; 186): 'What constitutes man and his world is not only a particular type of force, but a mode of becoming of forces in general, not reactive forces in particular, but the becoming-reactive of all forces' (158).[3] Correlatively, what is required is 'Another becoming, another sensibility: the Overman' (61). The same note is sounded in the enigmatic closing section of *Foucault* in which Deleuze amplifies the Nietzschean resonances of Foucault's infamous remark about the end of man that closes *The Order of Things*.[4]

While it uses a whole bracket of new concepts and terminology, *A Thousand Plateaus* will maintain this same critical perspective on the human, this time clearly inflected with an ethical tonality. The book is replete with imperatives – 'always follow the rhizome', 'Make maps', 'flee', 'Take anything and make it a matter of expression' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 11; 25; 201; 316) – that clearly indicate the character and urgency of the break with the mode of capture that the human form constitutes. The French *défaire*, translated as 'to dismantle', is found throughout and in relation to those elements that constitute human subjectivity: the face, the organization of the body, arboreal thinking. If, they write, 'human beings have a destiny, it is rather to escape the face, to dismantle the face and facializations, to become imperceptible, to become clandestine' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 171).

At the core of *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, published a year later, is the same ethics. The organized human body 'is not life, it is what imprisons life' (Deleuze 2003: 45). One reason Bacon's paintings are so important to Deleuze is the fact that, by evoking meat, 'the common

zone of man and beast' (Deleuze 2003: 23, translation modified), Bacon reveals the transversal that cuts through the barrier that separates the human from the living as such. 'Hence', Deleuze writes, Bacon's 'living idea that even animals are part of humanity, that we are all criminals, we are all cattle' (Deleuze 2003: 24). That this connection has an ethical weight is made clear in the 'Letter to a Harsh Critic':

> I don't know what I am – I'd have to investigate and experiment with so many things in a non-narcissistic, non-oedipal way – no gay can ever definitively say 'I'm gay.' It's not a question of being this or that sort of human, but of becoming inhuman, of a universal animal becoming – not seeing yourself as some dumb animal, but unraveling your body's human organization exploring, this or that zone of bodily intensity, with everyone discovering their own particular zones, and the groups, populations, species that inhabit them. (Deleuze 1995: 11)

Beyond being conceived as a locus of the capture of life, the human is also capable of a distinctive experience of shame – or rather, the means of this capture themselves inspire shame in us. In a powerful and often-quoted passage, Deleuze and Guattari write that,

> it is [not] only in the extreme situations described by Primo Levi that we experience the shame of being human. We also experience it in insignificant conditions, before the meanness and vulgarity of existence that haunts democracies, before the propagation of these modes of existence and of thought-for-the market, and before the values, ideals, and opinions of our time. The ignomy of the possibilities of life that we are offered appears from within. We do not feel ourselves outside of our time but continue to undergo shameful compromises with it. (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 107–108)

The invocation of democracy here, moreover, is not incidental. As Deleuze and Guattari attest elsewhere in *What is Philosophy?*, the entire system of liberal democracy functions in part to trap life in a very particular form of human existence. This includes, famously, the notion of human rights themselves. Deleuze's striking assertion during a discussion of the law in his *Abécédaire* must be recalled here: 'There are no "rights of man", only rights of life'.[5] Human rights, Deleuze argues, are ways of subordinating life to the logic of capitalism, and are contradicted by even the most open democracies (see also Deleuze and Guattari 1994:

107). The very people who are, from the liberal democratic point of view, deprived of these rights do not speak in their name.[6]

We can add a third to these two strands – the genetic and the critical – in Deleuze's theorization of the human. This line of argumentation concerns his commitment to the univocity of being, which places the human alongside all other beings. The doctrine of univocity does not erase particularity, but insists on the radical and foundational equality of all beings: televisions, earthworms, stones, pineapples, as well as human beings.

Despite the Nietzschean critique of the human that we have already seen, this strand of Deleuze's work is perhaps best framed in terms of 'the great Spinoza-Nietzsche equation' (Deleuze 1995: 135). A profound Spinozism animates many well-known remarks, such as: 'A single and same voice for the whole thousand-voiced multiple, a single and same Ocean for all the drops, a single clamor of Being for all beings' (Deleuze 1994: 304). The same commitment to univocity is found in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, in which all things are understood through the multiple, non-hierarchical play of forces: 'We will never find the sense of something (of a human, a biological or even a physical phenomenon) if we do not know the force which appropriates the thing, which exploits it, which takes possession of it or is expressed in it' (Deleuze 2008: 3).

Deleuze's sustained interest in the human is complemented by an equally intense consideration of the nonhuman. Deleuze's work is teeming with 'powerful non-organic life' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 81). This interest reaches its height in *A Thousand Plateaus*. The most obvious manifestation of this is a vast menagerie of nonhuman animal life in the book, including but not limited to lobsters, cats, truffle pigs, grass wrens, octopi, dogs, cicadas, coral fish, wolves, rats, horses, ticks, owls, rhinoceroses, flies, eagles, crabs, whales, louse, chaffinches, rabbits, elephants and cheetahs. The same can be said for plant life: *A Thousand Plateaus* mentions potatoes, lilies, couchgrass, crab grass, orchids, cotton, trees, rice, weeds and grain plants. And beyond plants, the book touches on a broad swathe of other entities: viruses, Brooklyn, sedimentary rock, zombies, quasars, banners, gold, sand, felt, swords, bridges, books, paintings, musical scores, sandstone, laser beams, telescopes, maps, the Ark of the Covenant, quartz, stirrups, the Indian ocean, vampires, money, tents, quilts, gothic cathedrals, used clothes, stars, ice, fortresses and Venus. Beyond these discrete entities, the text frames space and time in nonhuman terms: on the one hand, plateaus, smooth spaces, territories and milieus, and on the other rhythms both cosmic and mundane.

Even listing things in this way is problematic because of Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on becoming-other. Discrete entities are not primary, but emergent, temporary stabilizations in the general dynamism of being. Since the direction of becoming is always towards becoming-imperceptible – for the human this involves the becoming-nonhuman of the human, through becoming-animal, becoming-vegetable, becoming-molecule ...

Becoming is just one of a series of concepts which allow Deleuze and Guattari to locate the human, in its specificity, within the broader nonhuman context. Another significant example is the concept of the assemblage, which accounts for the way that things come together in complex networks. This concept recognizes the temporary emergence of hierarchies in these networks, without investing the emergent structures of power with essentialist notions of being. In addition, assemblages enable us to envisage the way that entities different in kind participate together, giving rise to reality as such.

But perhaps the most pronounced element of the nonhuman found in Deleuze's work is his sustained interest in nonhuman thought and perception. *Difference and Repetition* offers us a new conception of thought, in which thinking is liberated from the human subject and renconceived as what animates the world. We see this with Deleuze's important concept of the problem, which is ideal without belonging to a thinking self, and is generative of both being and change. The analysis of cinema makes similar claims. Not only does the cinema force us to undergo an encounter with the limits of human thought, but cinematic images in general are nonhuman and are produced from a nonhuman point of view. Perhaps better known than both of these examples is the position presented in *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari argue there that concepts, percepts, affects and functions are all nonhuman in character, even if they are the product of human activity.

The key point here is that the human subject is no longer to be conceived as the beginning and end of thought, the only form which thought can take. Thought moves through the human, rather than emanating from human beings as the unique property of this animal. But Deleuze's work also opens human thought up to the nonhuman outside, and forces it go beyond itself.

The nonhuman turn has also been fascinated by these possibilities. This can be seen in work of people like Brassier and Colebrook, who conceive of thought in relation to human extinction, and Michael Marder, who offers a philosophy of plant thinking. This is not by any means an exhaustive list – the possibility of nonhuman thought is

entertained in media studies and new materialism. Our point is not only that Deleuze's thought preceded these contemporary trends, but more importantly, that returning to Deleuze's work on these topics may provide as yet undiscovered resources.

The ultimate importance of Deleuze for the examination of the non/human lies, we suggest, in the intertwining of these four strands of his work. Together, they provide a conceptual framework of immense richness, one that exceeds any simple oppositional or representationalist approach. It is adequate, that is, to the irreducible complexity of the contemporary situation.

Critical engagements

Contributors in this collection have taken up the problematic of the non/human in relation to Deleuze's work and the nonhuman turn more broadly. This book is structured so that it moves from discussions of the human to the animal, vegetable and then mineral. Simultaneously, its trajectory is from ontological and epistemological concerns to ethical, political, aesthetic and finally environmental ones.

The opening chapter presents a new interview with Elizabeth Grosz, commissioned for this collection. In it, Grosz reflects on the role of Deleuze in the nonhuman turn in its various forms, and the value of Deleuze's thought for interrogating both the human and the nonhuman – and its limits. Grosz also foregrounds the significance of feminism in advancing the critique of anthropocentrism, this latter having taken one of its most formidable forms in the hypostatization of the masculine.

In the following contributions, Ashley Woodward and Jon Roffe both address in their own ways Ray Brassier's significant recent challenge concerning role of the human in Deleuze's philosophy. In Chapter 2, Woodward argues that Brassier's embrace of nihilism and his attack on both vitalism and the role of values in thought leaves him unable to motivate his own critical project. Conversely, by situating Deleuze's concept of life in contradistinction to other forms of philosophical vitalism, he shows how Deleuze manages to at once agree that science has disenchanted the old concept of Nature, while still affirming life itself as the *raison d'être* of critical thinking.

Jon Roffe focuses more specifically on Brassier's critique of Deleuze, which claims that in spite of his impressive attempt in *Difference and Repetition* to formulate a general ontology of temporal dynamism, Deleuze necessarily presupposes a crucial metaphysical role for human

subjectivity. Roffe argues that this impressive critical reading fails because it pays insufficient detail to the distinctions between the various figures of subjectivity in *Difference and Repetition* itself. Furthermore, by following through Brassier's argument, Roffe demonstrates that the human being must also be situated on the side of the object as Deleuze formulates it.

Sean Bowden's contribution turns towards the specific question of *agency*. He notes the tendency to conceive of agency in Deleuze as quintessentially nonhuman in character, a position exemplified in the work of Jane Bennett and John Protevi. Against this tendency, Bowden argues that this approach to agency is inadequate on its own terms, but also that it does not make use of the resources that Deleuze himself offers for formulating an *expressive* account of agency that does not take the agent and her actions as metaphysically discrete. This account finds its locus in the ethical moment of *The Logic of Sense*, but, Bowden argues, can be deployed more broadly to supplement the insufficient assemblage model of agency common in the literature.

Chapter 5 by Keith Ansell-Pearson also considers the relationship between the human and the nonhuman in Deleuze in a non-reductive fashion, by arguing that pre-requisites for the passage beyond the human condition are to be found within the human itself. Drawing on Deleuze's early influences in the history of philosophy, Ansell-Pearson considers how this can be. The key resource here, he argues, is Bergson's (relatively overlooked) account of creative evolution, and its concomitant emphases on the contingency of the human form and its unique place in the processes of this evolution.

Undine Sellbach and Stephen Loo plunge down from the height and breadth of Ansell-Pearson's discussion to the minute folds in matter and the life of the insect in their discussion of Deleuze, Leibniz and von Uexküll. Flies, worms, bees, ticks, caterpillars and their butterflies form their object of analysis, thanks to their intermediary place in the order of beings, between the nonhuman order of matter (Leibniz's plastic forces) and the rational order of the higher monads. Far from being *merely* intermediaries however, Sellbach and Loo suggest that the insect order constitutes an order of the living correlative to the *petites perceptions* that compose the world of conscious experience: the human, far from being a transcendent 'kingdom within a kingdom' is in fact a kind of ecosystem, a complex animal tissue.

Deploying a schizoanalytic analysis, Simone Bignall explores social oppression and human liberation in Lindsey Collen's *The Rape of Sita*. In relation to this narrative, Bignall engages with the dehumanizing

nature of rape and interrogates gendered and colonial violence as caught up in the political inclusions and exclusions foundational to the category of the human. Bignall deploys Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-woman as a strategy for disrupting the forms of gendered subjectivity that enable rape and in order to renew the category of the human itself.

Also mobilizing textual analysis, Timothy Laurie examine DreamWorks Animations' Madagascar trilogy in order to explore the different figures of the animal in *A Thousand Plateaus:* pets, myth-animals and the becoming-animal. Reading the Madagascar films through these three different variations on the animal, Laurie argues for the productivity of a Deleuzo-Guattarian reading of the nonhumans in these films, while simultaneously cautioning against the insidiously humanizing aspect of the becoming-animal which make it less revolutionary that it might at first appear to be.

Ronald Bogue also takes up the figure of becoming-animal in Deleuze and Guattari's work. He engages with the resonances between Deleuze's work and that of Donna Haraway, in spite of her stated animosity to Deleuze's concept of becoming-animal. In bringing these thinkers into dialogue, Bogue considers the distinction between this key concept in *A Thousand Plateaus* and Haraway's 'becoming-with'. Bogue reengage with Deleuze's work on becoming in relation to Haraway in order to consider unexamined areas for Deleuze such as technoscientific culture and animal domestication. In turn, bringing Haraway into contact with Deleuze facilitates a new consideration of the trajectory from the cyborg to the companion species in her work.

Hannah Stark likewise makes use of Deleuze's concept of becoming in staging an engagement between Deleuze and the emerging field of Critical Plant studies. Her chapter takes Michael Marder's recent work as a provocation to think about the place of plants in Deleuze's work. Through the case study of the corn plant, Stark examines the intimate nature of our relationship to plants and to the nonhuman more broadly.

The final two chapters, in their different ways, are motivated by climate change and its impacts. Arun Saldanha brings Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'mechanosphere' to bear on the anthropocene. Saldanha insists that Deleuze and Guattari's work on the capacity of capital to de- and reterritorialize everything, is essential to a critical consideration of the human (and its nonhuman others) in the face of impending capitalist catastrophe. He finds in their geophilosophy a revolutionary anthropocene politics.

Claire Colebrook returns us to the speculative terrain that Woodward and Roffe explored at the beginning of this volume to ask 'who' it is that we imagine to come after the post-human. Examining the intertwined critical narratives of the human, post-human and prehuman in the face of the anthropocene, she engages Deleuze and Guattari's positioning of the human within a broader notion of inhuman history. She does so in order to postulate a nonhuman future without nature and to argue, against Chakrabarty, that the human 'geological scar' is far from exceptional. What she finds in Deleuze and Guattari's work is the scope for an inhuman concept of climate change.

Through engaging in the problematic of the non/human these chapters remind us that it may not be a case of eradicating the human as a critical category, so much as challenging the human privilege which subsists at the foundation of our thought. Moreover, they remind us of the value of redeploying Deleuze's work in relation to the most contemporary of philosophical problems.

Notes

1. '... 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' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 242).
2. The text itself is unpaginated. An excellent set of commentaries on the lectures is provided in Kerslake 2009.
3. The following passage is equally emblematic: 'Many phenomena can only be interpreted as expressing this heavy triumph of reactive forces. Is the whole human phenomenon not an example of this?' (Deleuze 2008: 86).
4. 'If those arrangements [the modern episteme] were to disappear as they appeared, if some event of which we can at the moment do no more than sense the possibility – without knowing either what its form will be or what is promises – were to cause them to crumble, as the ground of Classical thought did, at the end of the eighteenth century, then one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea' (Foucault 1994: 387).
5. Deleuze 2004, 'G comme Gauche'.
6. Deleuze 2004, 'G comme Gauche'. See, on this issue, Daniel W. Smith's discussion of the issue of rights in a review of Paul Patton's *Deleuze and the Political*, in Smith 2012: 352–3.

Works cited

Bennett, Jane (2012) 'Systems and Things: A Response to Graham Harman and Timothy Morton', *New Literary History* 43(2): 225–233.

Brassier, Ray (2007) *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan).

Chakrabarty, Dipesh (2012) 'Postcolonial Studies and the Challenge of Climate Change', *New Literary History* 43(1): 1–18.
Colebrook, Claire (2014) *The Death of the PostHuman: Essays on Extinction, Volume One* (Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press).
Coole, Diana and Samantha Frost (2010) 'Introducing the New Materialisms', in *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, Politics*, eds., Coole and Frost (Durham and New York: Duke), 1–43.
Deleuze, Gilles (1988) *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books).
Deleuze, Gilles (1991) *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*, trans. Constantin Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press).
—— (1994) *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia).
—— (1994) *Negotiations*, trans. Martin Joughin. (New York: Columbia University Press).
—— (2003) *Francis Bacon*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum).
—— (2004) *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze, avec Claire Parnet* (Paris: DVD Editions Montparnasse).
—— (2008) *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (London: Continuum).
—— (2014) 'What is Grounding?' Last accessed November 7, 2014. http://www.webdeleuze.com/php/texte.php?cle=218&groupe=Conf%E9rences&langue=1
Deleuze, Gilles and Claire Parnet (2002) *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Continuum).
Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari (1984) *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (London: Athlone).
—— (1988) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Athlone).
—— (1994) *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press).
Foucault, Michel (1994) *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage Books).
Grosz, Elizabeth (2011) *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art* (Durham and London: Duke).
Hird, Myra J. and Celia Roberts (2011) 'Feminism Theorizes the Nonhuman', *Feminist Theory* 12(2): 109–117.
Kerslake, Christian (2009) *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy: From Kant to Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press).
Morton, Timothy (2013) *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press).
Smith, Daniel W. (2012) *Essays on Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press).

1

Deleuze and the Nonhuman Turn: An Interview with Elizabeth Grosz

Jon Roffe and Hannah Stark

Recently the category of the human has been besieged from all sides. Not only has it been revealed to have been complicit with the violent exclusions of those considered to be less-than-human, understood as a normative notion (women, nonheterosexuals, people of color, the disabled) but its metaphysical security has also been challenged by the flourishing of theoretical interest in the nonhuman: forces, animals, objects and plants. How do you position your own work in relation to the critique of the human – in both its liberal and metaphysical forms – and how do you see the nonhuman turn developing?

This is a multi-faceted question. On the one hand, along with many others, I applaud the opening up of the category 'human' to those others that dominant forces have considered nonhuman or partially human or pre-human (exclusions that bring together not only women, peoples of color of every variation, people distinguished by class, or by ability, as well as the exclusion of children). If we could take a species-based model of the human, it would have to include all types of human beings and all their variations, all corporeal and psychological differences. These differences could not be categorized hierarchically but only described in their variations. But on the other hand, it is no longer clear that the category 'human' is, after all, that to which we should aspire in our various political struggles. This may be true both in terms of our received history (just as man may not provide the ideal to which women should aspire, it is not at all clear that our aims should be to be or become human, especially if this is a label or category of which we have been deprived) and in terms of positive ideals of difference that many working in feminist, anti-racism, post-colonial and queer projects invoke. Does the human provide a generic label which may in some way unify us in a way that it

hasn't before? Doesn't the use of this term as a universal always deprive the multitude of its multiplicity, its particularity and heterogeneity?

The nonhuman turn, one of many 'turns' occurring at the moment, is one of the implications of a critique of the restriction of the human to the able-bodied, Western, white, civilized, masculine man, and forms of control exerted by the category 'human'. At its best, a reorientation beyond the self and its modes of recognition, beyond the limited perspective of human self-interest opens up an entire world of questions not limited to the human, better able to address the human from a broader framework than that provided by introspection and identification, that is, capable of addressing the place of the human in a bigger world. It would be a new opening for the discourses of culture and politics, especially the politics of various forms of identity-structures and identifications, to look out to the world rather than in to the self to discover who one is. Worlds await and have yet to be thought about in political and theoretical terms. The human is, obviously, a hinge, a pathway, one of many, by which the world may understand itself, by which thought or conceptuality is added to or elaborated in the world. But if the human and its modes of conceptualization understood this world better, the place of the human would not be so perilously close to extinction, so self-destructive as it has been. If the human is seen as one among a huge number of species and billions of living beings, this provides a kind of antidote to the endless spirals of self-inspection.

In your opinion, what role has Deleuze's work played in facilitating a consideration of the nonhuman?

For me, Deleuze's work has been indispensible. I am not sure that this is true for many others working in the nonhuman or post-human field. Many have come from the emerging fields of animal studies and ecophilosophy, others from within the world of art and/or technology studies, and others again from religious studies and theology. The human is under conceptual assault since the eruption of so-called post-modern philosophy, which first of all made man an effect of history, of language and of politics rather than their cause. Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, Irigaray, Nancy and many others, following in the wake of Nietzsche, have invoked the death of man, and inhuman forces, ghosts and spirits as well as animated matter and regimes of governmentality to explain the constitution of man as a philosophical concept, and to address the limits, the forms of self-undermining, that this concept entails. Deleuze, from his earliest to his final writings, focuses primarily on this question: what of the nonhuman or the inhuman exceeds man? What forces

run through humans to connect them to animals and plants, to incipient brains, to milieus and atmospheres, to geographical and historical events – that is, what forces make the human exceed itself? Which is the same question as what makes the human think? And sense? And calculate? What in the world imposes itself enough on the human to generate concepts, affects and percepts? Rather than focus on the human in its engagements with the nonhuman (as does, say, phenomenology), it is the nonhuman forces that interest him most. These nonhuman forces – from the smallest sub-atomic forces to the operation of solar systems, forces comprising the human and its overcoming, forces that cannot be comprehended by the human (the plane of immanence) but that connect the human to all that is both human and nonhuman – are Deleuze's primary preoccupation throughout his work. Just as significant as his own writings are the wealth of writings that he utilizes from the history of philosophy – from the Stoics to Spinoza and Nietzsche, through to Gilbert Simondon and Raymond Ruyer – that demonstrate a vast historical body of writings on the human's delusions of its own significance in the order of things. Deleuze provided me with more than his own work to think through this question of the beyond of the human, the more-than-human.

Feminism seems to have played a significant role in the advent of the nonhuman turn. It is particularly striking that many of the people who are currently engaging with the nonhuman in Deleuze studies emerged out of feminist theory – beyond your own work, we could cite Rosi Braidotti, Claire Colebrook and Patricia MacCormack, to name just a few.[1] *What do you think is involved here? What, in your view, are the commonalities between feminist theory and work on the nonhuman? And, looking forward, what potential do you see for future work at the intersection of these two areas of inquiry?*

The question of the nonhuman has been central in the work of many feminists, and particularly those influenced by Deleuze. It is also a thread that runs through the work of feminists influenced by Irigaray; and perhaps through certain strands of ecofeminism. Its centrality is the result precisely of the way the history of thought – and not just Western thought – has systematically excluded women and femininity from the characteristics that mark the universal (read: masculine) human. If reason is that characteristic that marks the human, then women have been understood as unreasonable, irrational, unruly; if language defines the human, then 'great writing' is that undertaken by men; if political (or religious) community defines the human, then women are relegated to the tasks of handmaiden and server. To the extent that the human is

regarded as an accomplishment, it is denied to women, mothers, girls and all those associated with their denigrated or less-than-adequate characteristics.

While there is a schism between feminists committed to the social, economic and political equality of women in regard to the human and feminists committed to concepts of sexual difference or sexuate autonomy, there is a common recognition by a great many feminists that the concept of the human, man, has always been masculine or understood in terms that privilege the masculine. Egalitarian feminists aim to create a more inclusive concept of the human, one that now makes room for the excluded others that the human as produced as a biased and politicized concept; while many within so-called difference feminism are more attracted to a concept of what may be beyond the human, and thus perhaps beyond the masculine. Deleuze studies have become increasingly influential within this strand of feminist thought because Deleuze and Guattari have shown that the inhuman both inhabits the human, and that the human always resides in and partakes of a world that is nonhuman. Deleuze's work has become a conceptual tool in feminist conceptions of what two – or more – sexes may be like. In this sense, his work profoundly complements Irigaray's conception of woman as that which has yet to exist. If this is true, the human as such has yet to exist, and indeed may never come into existence.

Deleuze's influence on feminist thought was slow in developing, at least relative to the influence of other (male, French) philosophers, Lacan, Derrida, Foucault, who all discuss the limits of human consciousness and intentionality and have exerted a powerful influence on a generation of feminist theorists. I think it is in part the result of the difficulty and abstractness of Deleuze's thought that, until quite recently, it generated strong resistance on the part of feminists, even though Braidotti, and other feminists, such as Dorothea Olkowski and Tamsin Lorraine have written positively about Deleuze for a couple of decades.[2] Deleuzian feminism still remains a rather small branch of feminist theory, perhaps because his work upsets the terms by which we commonly understand ourselves as human, upsets the fantasy of linear historical progress in political struggles and upsets a notion of a politics directed to particular goals, knowable in advance.

Since your own work on time in Time Travels (2005) *and* The Nick of Time (2004) *we have seen an intensification of interest in nonhuman timescales – Timothy Morton's work on global warming as a Hyperobject (2013) is the example that comes to mind, as does Claire Colebrook's work on human*

extinction (2014), and Ray Brassier's engagement with the time of extinction (2007). In Becoming Undone *you describe the human as 'but a momentary blip in a history and cosmology that remains fundamentally indifferent to this temporary eruption' (2011: 24–25). How do you see your own work on time intersecting with this recent political interest in the place of the human in timescales that radically undermine its position at the center of all things?*

This is a moment in history, after devastating worldwide wars, global economic crises and global climate upheaval, where philosophy has devoted a good deal of thought to reconsidering geopolitics and its key terms. But the question of temporality, the temporality of life, the temporality of evolution, the temporality of the universe itself has remained a relatively underdeveloped and politically uninteresting topic. For me, it was the coupling of Darwin and Bergson, a natural coupling given Bergson's profound fascination with Darwinism, that brought about a realization of temporality as an active, immaterial force that frames and distributes matter and life. Morton, Brassier, Graham Harman and those associated with 'Object Oriented Ontology' or 'Speculative Realism' have taken a broader perspective on being, and life, than an earlier generation of feminists and activist philosophers which inevitably, given the change in scale of objects themselves – no longer the singular tree of Merleau-Ponty, a human-scale entity that reflects and is reflected by a perceiving subject in a mutual but always humanized encounter – but mega- or hyperobjects whose scale and composition can no longer be recognized or contained by a living being; this brings with it a broader, longer and more abstract concept of duration.[3]

Claire Colebrook is of course quite different in her interests than this quite non-feminist (and loosely related) group of thinkers, for not only does she use the work of Heidegger (in common with some of these thinkers), she uses Deleuze and Irigaray very effectively to rethink vitalist and life affirming philosophies from the scale of catastrophic extinction. What we all share, if anything, is an understanding of the embeddedness of local, human-to-human relations with a much broader network of connections that takes us, eventually, to the furthest reaches of time and space. Between us, though, I suspect that this shared perspective hides a number of differences.

While Deleuze is clearly a key resource here, there are also not-insignificant elements that seem to emphasize the priority of the human in his work – we're thinking of the invocation of the semi-divine power to choose at the close of Bergsonism (1991)*, the place of psychic systems in* Difference and Repetition (1994)*, and even the ethics of counter-actualization in* Logic of

Sense (1990). *Perhaps here we confront a tension in Deleuze, but it may also be a matter of emphases, or even a case of his own position changing across the length of his work. What do you make of this situation?*

I am not sure that I agree with this. It isn't a question of the priority of the human in Deleuze's work. The human and many of its characteristics are of course objects of analysis and discussion in his work. But in the Bergson book, for example, he speaks in and through Bergson in elaborating Bergson's philosophical invention, duration and with it, indetermination or degrees of freedom. In *Difference and Repetition*, he speaks in and through Freud and Lacan of their concepts of psychical and energetic systems, and in *The Logic of Sense*, he speaks through the Stoics, among others he reanimates. These are not so much affirmations of the human or its priority as articulations and analyses of what we might call a human-effect, an 'all-too-human' perspective he must address insofar as they provide the terms he moves beyond. In this, his model is perhaps more Spinoza, 'the prince of philosophers' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 48), than anyone else. Spinoza moves from what appears to be and is perceived by the human to be an impersonal plane of immanence, God or nature, in which the human finds its miniscule place. The philosophers who attract him the most – Zeno, Chrysippus, Epictetus, Spinoza, Kant, Nietzsche, Bergson, among many others – emphasize the smallness of the human in the largeness of the universe. My favorite quote to illustrate this comes from Epictetus: 'You are a tiny soul carrying a corpse'! This really makes clear in an unavoidable way this smallness of the human in the order of nature. There is only a tension or uneasiness when we place the human above or beyond the world, when we attach to the human the capacity for transcendence or an exceptional position of sovereignty over nature. When we understand the human, not as the telos or end of nature but as a small part of it, many philosophical claims about human privilege fall away.

In Becoming Undone, you write: 'A new humanities becomes possible once the human is placed in its properly inhuman context' (2011: 21). What does serious consideration of the nonhuman mean for the humanities and for disciplinarity more generally?

This is a tough question, partly because what a 'new humanities' might mean isn't given and each discipline will, sooner or later, need to address it in its own terms. The nonhuman is a cover-all term for a wide variety of things: other living things (animals and plants); nonliving things (objects, processes, events); and incorporeals, including space and time. To think the human in relation to these and other nonhumans will entail upheavals and challenges to various forms of human, and even

post-human, disciplinarity. And even interdisciplinary studies have no particular privilege in addressing this: the question of the nonhuman is the unspoken of all the humanities. What does, say, philosophy or geography or cultural studies look like when the human's intimate and usually unacknowledged immersion in the nonhuman is addressed? Or more interestingly, what does a non-reductive philosophy or history, coupled with the sciences, or forms of art, look like? In what ways can a reconfigured concept of the nonhuman in the humanities effect the ways biological, chemical or physical sciences operate? I don't know, and can't imagine, what impact these kinds of questions might have on our understanding of the humanities in the future. Indeed, if economic exigencies continue to dominate education and the production of knowledge, there may not even be humanities left! These questions become even more pressing as non-intellectual pressures mount on those in the humanities to produce 'useful' (i.e., money-making) knowledge. The humanities requires a recognition not only of the politics of the human that informs and produces knowledge of the human; but also of the ontological forces of the nonhuman that press the human from both within and outside.

Beyond the potential issues that arise with respect to politics that we have already invoked, what, in your view, are the limits to the nonhuman turn? Conversely, is there a limit to what Deleuze can provide for this strain of thinking?

The most obvious limit to focusing on the nonhuman is our convenient forgetting of our own location, here and now, as human – our implications in the prevailing relations of power that regulate and police humans. Whatever nonhuman turn we may make, we must make it as (versions of) the human. The universe we inhabit, reaching to the furthest limits of our technically enhanced perception, remains a human universe to the extent that our bodies, sense-organs, and forms of reason and understanding are, through and through, human. We are not post-human beings even as the human, like all living things, continually evolves and may, sooner or later, render itself extinct. As Jakob von Uexküll makes clear, the universe each of us inhabits is a partial world, complete in itself for us, but only a perspective on some aspects of the whole.[4] In the rush to become nonhuman, we forget that our wishing to be nonhuman does not make it true.

Deleuze, like any other philosopher, is limited in his contributions to thinking about the nonhuman. Using solely his work would not address the nonhuman adequately. What he offers us is a distinctively quirky reading of the human, its complications and limits. He does not provide

us with a worldview or a theoretical framework: instead he offers us a series of questions or problems and a series of distinctive concepts (Body without Organs, rhizomes, becoming-brain and so on) through which we may read other philosophers, and our place in the world, differently than received opinion. He offers no answers, only questions we cannot but ask.

Notes

1. See Braidotti (2013), Colebrook (2013), MacCormack (2012).
2. See for example Braidotti (1994), Olkowski (1999) and Loraine (1999).
3. See for example Morton (2013), Brassier (2007) and Harman (2011).
4. See Uexküll 2010.

Bibliography

Braidotti, Rosi (2013) *The Posthuman* (Cambridge and Malden: Polity).
—— (1994) *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference* (New York and West Sussex: Columbia).
Brassier, Ray (2007) *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan).
Colebrook, Claire (2014) *Death of the Posthuman: Essays on Extinction, vol. 1* (Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press).
Deleuze, Gilles (1994) *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia).
—— (1991) *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlison and Barbara Habberjam (Brooklyn: Zone).
—— (1990) *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester (New York: Columbia).
Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari (1994) *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia).
Grosz, Elizabeth (2011) *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art* (Durham and London: Duke).
—— (2005) *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power* (Durham and London: Duke).
—— (2004) *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution and the Untimely* (Durham and London: Duke).
Harman, Graham (2011) *The Quadruple Object* (Hants: Zero).
Lorraine, Tamsin (1999) *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experiments in Visceral Philosophy* (Ithaca and London: Cornell).
MacCormack, Patricia (2012) *Posthuman Ethics: Embodiment and Cultural Theory* (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate).
Morton, Timothy. *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minneapolis and London: Minnesota).
Olkowski, Dorothea (1999) *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press).
Uexküll, Jakob von (2010) *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans*: *With a Theory of Meaning*, trans. Joseph D. O'Neil (Minneapolis: Minnesota).

2
Nonhuman Life

Ashley Woodward

> 'You have tasted of death now,' said the Old Man. 'Is it good?'
> 'It is good,' said Mossy. 'It is better than life'.
> 'No,' said the Old Man: 'it is only more life. – '
>
> George MacDonald, 'The Golden Key' (1867)

Deleuze, vitalism and *Lebensphilosophie*

It is a simultaneously well-known and typically repressed fact that philosophy has from its inception concerned itself with wisdom: it has understood itself as a practical activity – a way of life, defended by a theoretical discourse.[1] The contemporary philosophical scene is one in which most of the terminology and concepts for thinking (and practicing) philosophy in this way have been vitiated: we can no longer talk of the human, of the subject, of existence, of life, of value, of meaning and so on, without encountering a whole history of critical reservations regarding the philosophical usage of such terms (Heidegger's critiques of value and of existentialism, structuralism's – and especially Foucault's – critique of the human, and so on). To some extent this is the result of scientific, theoretical, and cultural changes which have made the old categories through which we understand ourselves questionable. To some extent this is also the result of philosophy's proper work of examining its own presuppositions. In these respects the current state of affairs cannot be lamented. However, to the extent that substantive reasons and arguments have been forgotten and such terms have become simply unfashionable, this is a failure both of philosophical thought and its vocation as existential activity. One term which has, surprisingly, once again been floated in contemporary academic circles as an index of

existential concerns is 'life'. This is due, primarily and perhaps solely, to the work of Gilles Deleuze.

The surprising aspect of the contemporary currency of 'life' is due to two currents with which it was associated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, along with which it fell into disrepute: vitalism and *Lebensphilosophie* (life-philosophy). Vitalism was a movement in biological science which opposed purely mechanistic understandings of life by asserting that there is something unique that living beings possess, a 'life force'. Thus, biology was thought not to be reducible to physics and chemistry.[2] Now largely forgotten, *Lebensphilosophie* was once a popular philosophical trend in Germany, from roughly 1870 to 1930. In the words of Jason Gaiger, *Lebensphilosophie* was 'a philosophy which asks after the meaning, value, and purpose of life, turning away from purely theoretical knowledge towards the undistorted fullness of lived experience. ... [It] typically oppose[d] rigid abstractions with a philosophy based on feeling and intuition' (1998: 487). Moreover, it posited 'life' as an irrational metaphysical principle at the basis of thought and existence, and established normative criteria for both philosophical thought and cultural critique on the basis of the distinction between the 'healthy' and the 'sick' (Schnädelbach 1984: 141, 145). *Lebensphilosophie* had its origins in Schelling's late philosophy, and took Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Bergson as its primary influences.[3] *Lebensphilosophie* connected itself with vitalism, and used the model of a living organism to understand phenomena not obviously organic in nature, such as Spengler's analysis of human societies as organisms with a life-cycle of growth and decline (1932).

Vitalism has long since lost its scientific credibility and has no currency in contemporary biology, where living organisms are understood simply as complex arrangements of inorganic matter, and no vitalist principle of 'life' is thought to be a necessary *explanans*. *Lebensphilosophie* had an even more ignonimous fate, its celebration of biological health and vigor, privileging of physiological strength over weakness, and critique of culture based on these values having fed National Socialist ideologies. *Lebensphilosophie* was banished with the de-Nazification of Germany. The fates of vitalism and life-philosophy, then, make it particularly surprising that the popularity of Deleuze has allowed a revival of interest not only in the term 'life', but in philosophical forms of vitalism, in association with two of the three main philosophical progenitors of *Lebensphilosophie*, Nietzsche and Bergson.[4]

If 'life', as bequeathed to us by Deleuze, has been able to enjoy some contemporary currency, it is arguably because his construal has

managed to clearly avoid the dangerous pitfalls that vitalism and *Lebesnsphilosophie* ran into. That is, it has avoided any narrow biologism and organicism.[5] Deleuze has done this precisely by construing life as something *nonhuman*. In order to illustrate the relevant contrast, we can take Oswald Spengler's *Man and Techincs* (1976; originally 1931) as an exemplary life-philosophical text which construes life in such a way as to give the *human* privilege within a hierarchy of organisms, with dangerously fascistic implications.[6]

Following the range of meanings embedded in the German *Technik*, Spengler understands 'technics' as encompassing both the invention and use of tools and machines, and techniques which do not necessarily involve tool-use (for example, strategy). For him, '*technics is a tactics of living*' (Spengler 1976: 9, emphasis in original) and life is understood as fundamentally *conflictual*, a battle for survival and dominance between living organisms. In his words, '[t]his battle *is* life – life, indeed, in the Nietzschean sense, a grim, pitiless, no-quarter battle of the Will-to-Power' (1976: 11). In the battle of life, Spengler establishes a hierarchy with man (the human) at the apex. This hierarchy is determined by the criterion of mobility, itself specified in terms of the ability to *will* and to *choose*. Forms of life are ranked from lowest to highest as follows: first vegetal, then animal, divided into herbivores (lower because their action is primarily defensive flight from predators, thus not self-determined) and carnivores (higher because their actions are self-determined and 'offensive, hard, cruel, destructive' [1976: 14]). Man is situated with and beyond the carnivores, exalted as a beast of prey:

> *The animal of prey is the highest form of mobile life*. It implies a maximum of freedom of self against others, of responsibility to self, of singleness of self, an extreme of necessity where that self can hold its own only by *fighting and winning and destroying*. It imparts a high dignity to Man, as a type, that he is a beast of prey (14, emphasis in original).

More than this, however, the human is given the privileged place in the hierarchy of living organisms because he is the inventor of technics 'proper': that is, techniques which are not simply species instincts, but freely determined by the individual's capacity to *consciously will and choose*.[7] The human is thus the freest and most dominant form of life, but is also condemned to prey on his fellow humans. While eschewing biological notions of the superiority and inferiority of races, Spengler nevertheless sees racial and cultural groups as locked in a global struggle over resources, and laments the fact that the 'white' races have sold the

secrets of their technologies to the 'colored' races, a decisive factor in what he sees as an inevitable end to the 'Faustian culture' of the West (1976: 38–40).

Deleuze's construal of life as a vital power separates itself from this vision of the violence and domination of human groups by reading the same sources as life-philosophers such as Spengler – Nietzsche, in this case, but Bergson as well – in a significantly *nonhuman* fashion. Where Spengler has developed Nietzsche's oppositions of reactive and active, Slave and Noble into types of living *organisms*, with the consciousness characteristic of human beings determining its highest place in the hierarchy of life, Deleuze develops the same concepts in a different direction, with different consequences. For Deleuze, the active and reactive characterize preindividual forces: the will to power is not a contest between organisms but a metaphysical differentiating principle, human consciousness is placed on the side of the 'nihilistic' becoming-reactive of forces, life itself is construed as a fundamental metaphysical principle of difference associated with the temporality of the eternal return, and Nietzschean ethics are understood as the capacity not to dominate the weaker, but to affirm life as becoming (see Deleuze 1983).

The distinction of Deleuze's notion of 'life' from those of vitalism and *Lebensphilosophie* perhaps appears to be of little more than historical interest today, though it is still important to note in understanding the potential problems that such a concept might fall into if it is reified around 'the human'. More recently, however, a new series of challenges have arisen against the philosophical notion of life, in which Deleuze features as a primary target. The most audacious, and also the most rigorous and significant of these has taken the form of an alternative discourse of the nonhuman: Ray Brassier's *Nihil Unbound* (2007).[8]

Vigor mortis?: Brassier

While Brassier's core concern is to develop the prospects of a speculative realism, *Nihil Unbound* is clothed in the polemic of an affirmation of nihilism. Brassier sees nihilism primarily as a concomitant to the Enlightenment disenchantment of the world, 'a necessary consequence of the coruscating potency of reason, and hence an invigorating vector of intellectual discovery' (2007: xi). Correspondingly, nihilism is 'the unavoidable corollary of the realist conviction that there is a mind-independent reality' (xi). He notes that the interests of living and the interests of thinking do not necessarily coincide, and sides with the latter against the former. In short, for Brassier, '[n]ihilism is not an

existential quandary but a speculative opportunity' (xi). However, there is more at stake in Brassier's project than simply changing the definition of nihilism. For as this short summary should already indicate, Brassier's opting to take the speculative opportunity comes at the (for him, *unavoidable*) expense of exacerbating what others have seen as an existential problem. Consequently, he sets out to destroy the forms of philosophical thought – such as Deleuze's concept of life – which might respond to this problem.

Brassier's project is 'nonhuman' insofar as he takes 'the manifest image of man' (a concept taken from Wilfrid Sellars – see 1963) as a limiting barrier to the kind of speculative thought he advocates, and posits the destruction of this image and its corollaries as a necessary propedeutic to speculative thought's achievement of its aims. These corollaries include an ontological privileging of time over space, and the vitalist privileging of organic life over inorganic death. For Brassier, thought illegitimately bounded by 'the human' is essentially what Quentin Meillassoux (2008) has defined as *correlationism*; in short, the Kantian and post-Kantian view that thought cannot access the real in itself, since what it accesses is always already inside a correlation of thought and its supposed outside. Brassier develops his investigation of the possibilities of speculative realist thought (a thought which would move beyond the impasse of correlationism and be able to think the real in itself) by moving through the works of Meillassoux, Alain Badiou, and François Laruelle. He notes their important gains but also criticizes the insufficiencies of each. What is at stake, for him, is the ability of thought to think the real without thought itself co-determining it. According to his reading, Meillassoux correctly identifies the problems with correlationism, but his attempted realism relies on a notion of intellectual intuition which ends up making the real dependent on thought. Badiou circumvents this problem, and enacts a valuable disenchantment of ontology by passing it from phenomenology to mathematics, but he ends up with an equally problematic idealism of inscription, according to which the thought of the real requires the exemption of mathematics in its materiality from its own ontological purview. Only Laruelle, Brassier argues, gives us the resources for a properly speculative realist thought. Yet Brassier qualifies what he takes from Laruelle for his own project: he argues that Laruelle's virtue is in using the resources of transcendental philosophy against idealism, but that he ends up compromising too much with this transcendental philosophy. Nevertheless, according to Brassier, Laruelle demonstrates the viability of realism by construing the real not on a substantial model, but as 'a discontinuous cut in the

fabric of ontological synthesis' (Brassier 2007: 149), and discovers a new method of philosophical thought by which *the object may be understood to seize thought and force it to think it:* a non-dialectical logic of negation called 'unilateralization'.

After this discovery of the possibility of a speculative realism, in the third part of *Nihil Unbound* ('The Truth of Extinction') Brassier tackles three major philosophers whose thought has typically been taken as a challenge to philosophical humanism: Heidegger, Deleuze, and Nietzsche. In each case, he seeks to show that they remain caught in humanism (and in correlationism) in some significant sense: both Heidegger and Deleuze ontologize *time* in a way which ultimately depends on a thinking subject (undermining the capacity to think time and space as irreducible objective features of the real), while Nietzsche's affirmation of life reduces ontology (becoming) to a function of thought. Brassier's strategy is typically both internal and external: he undertakes an immanent critique of the philosopher he is dealing with, showing that their project contains inherent contradictions or problems and fails on its own grounds, and then he also shows an insufficiency in relation to his own project, typically arguing that the philosopher's works remain 'human, all-too-human' – bounded by human subjective thought.

This combination of internal and external critique might also be trained on Brassier's own work: as I will argue, Brassier's project in *Nihil Unbound* cannot ground itself in its own terms, and ultimately fails to give us any reasons for assenting to its arguments. Significantly, Brassier fails to show that it is *necessary* (as he claims it is) to embrace nihilism, and to seek out and destroy all traces of vitalism, in order to think objective realism. As such, the very *raison d'être* for wearing his dark polemical cloak drops away. Deleuze suggests that Nietzsche completes the Kantian critical project by questioning the *values* which underlie philosophical claims (1983: 1–3). It is this questioning I wish to train on Brassier.[9] I will argue that it cannot, or at least, that Brassier fails to do so in *Nihil Unbound*. The question is this: why should we choose speculative thought over existential concerns? Why privilege thought over life? In other words, what is the *value* of the speculative realist thought that Brassier thinks more important than life itself? We have already seen that, in Brassier's introduction, he specifies such thought as an *invigorating* vector of intellectual discovery. So speculative realist thought is 'sold' to us as 'invigorating'. A further justification for the 'value' of such thought is given in the concluding chapter of the book, in terms of an account of the *motivating force* of speculative thought – in Nietzschean terms, of 'the will to know'.

In his critical treatment of Nietzsche, Brassier notes that Nietzsche associates the will to knowledge with the will to nothingness, and qualifies it as a modification of the will to power, where the later is understood as a vitalist metaphysical force. So for Nietzsche, life precedes knowledge, and the later is construed as a nihilist, decadent modification of the former. Brassier inverts this order of privilege through a reading of Freud's death drive, in which this drive is identified as the motivating force of thought. Through an analysis of sections of Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (2001), he argues that the death drive gives us the key to understanding what 'drive' in general means for Freud, such that all animate, organic life can be understood as motivated by a drive which originates in an aboriginal scission between life and death, the organic and the inorganic, and which seeks to return to the inorganic. Freud in fact declares that 'the aim of all life is death' (quoted in Brassier 2007: 235).

Freud thus speculates that the drive animating every living organism is to return to the inorganic state from which it originally developed. The original individuation, the scission of life and death, creates a kind of trauma – an excitation, an excessive influx of energy – which the organism tries to 'bind', to incorporate into its psychic functioning, by repeating. But this binding is impossible, since the trauma was never experienced (the organism did not yet exist) so cannot be successfully repeated, and cannot be experienced (since it involves the return to an inorganic state). As such, the trauma remains constitutively unconscious, and compulsively repeats in a way which can never achieve satisfaction for the living organism. This is the motive force of the death drive – the retrospective attempt to bind a trauma – which gives rise to a *trace* in the organism, which is conscious thought. So in this way, following Freud, Brassier posits that thought itself is fundamentally motivated by the death drive. In gesturing towards this drive, he gives at least a partial answer to the question, *why think*? It is not an answer in terms of *reasons*, but in terms of *motivation* (understood in a sense which is not 'folk-psychological', but material).

Things become more complicated when we ask the question, what does speculative realist thought achieve? The short answer would be that it achieves a thinking of the real, which Brassier specifies as a gain; specifically, 'a gain in intelligibility' (2007: 238). But what is the value of intelligibility? What does such intelligibility achieve? In seeking an answer to such questions, we discover that Brassier equivocates, or perhaps changes his mind, between two presentations of this argument: one in the last chapter of *Nihil Unbound*, and one in an earlier essay

which covers much of the same ground: 'Solar Catastrophe: Lyotard, Freud, and the Death Drive' (2003). In both, Brassier proposes that the extinction of all life in the cosmos, indicated by contemporary physicists' prediction of a 'heat death', has a transcendental force: it obliterates all 'humanist' orientations of philosophical thought according to a future horizon which might imbue it with some direction, meaning, and value. If thought has no future, it is as if everything is dead already. Faced with the prospect of future obliteration, no matter how distant, nothing will ultimately have made any difference, so nothing we do or think now makes any difference either. Brassier construes this as a trauma on the cosmic scale which mirrors the aboriginal trauma of organic individuation in Freud. Such a thought wipes away *all* horizons (understood as orientations for thought), not just the horizon of God, or the terrestrial horizon (Nietzsche's injunction to 'Be true to the Earth'), but the cosmic horizon as well. Brassier's question here is, can thought go on without a horizon? Phrased another way, the question is: can thought think its own death? This dramatizes the problem of the possibility of realist thought, beyond the correlation, since it is equivalent to asking, can thought think that which exists outside, beyond, or without thought itself?

In the 'Solar Catastrophe' essay, Brassier maintains Laruelle's distinction between philosophical and non-philosophical thinking,[10] and specifies that it is *philosophical* thought which is motivated by the trauma of the death drive, and which he asserts *cannot* go on without a horizon. He writes: 'I believe it cannot and can only continue to oscillate – perhaps indefinitely – between two possibilities: the claim that there is a horizon of all horizons, if not the earth then some other candidate, and the claim that we can keep changing horizons indefinitely' (2003: 429). However, drawing heavily on (largely unexplained) Laruellean concepts, he asserts that non-philosophical thought can *bind* the trauma of death – 'consummate rather than obviate the death-drive' (2003: 429) – and thus continue without need of a horizon. Brassier specifies that this means that thought effectuates *a non-human subject* of the death drive, which he calls the 'subject-(of)-death' (428–29).

In the later *Nihil Unbound*, however, Brassier criticizes Laruelle's distinction between philosophy and non-philosophy,[11] with the implication that such a distinction can no longer characterize his conclusion. It is still *philosophical* thought which is described as being driven by the motive force of the death drive in its compulsion to repeat, but constitutive inability to bind, the aboriginal trauma of death. Yet it is

also then simply *philosophical* thought which, it is proposed, is able to successfully bind this trauma. What happens when this binding takes place? Brassier writes: 'In becoming equal to it, philosophy achieves a binding of extinction, through which the will to know is finally rendered commensurate with the in-itself' (2007: 239). Yet this is only possible, he concludes, if the subject of philosophy recognizes that he or she is already dead, and philosophy itself is the organon of extinction. The equivocation here, it seems, is this: the motive of thought, its attempt to become equal to the in-itself (the real), is defined as *the inability to bind* trauma, yet the conclusion of speculative realist thought is specified as *a successful binding*, in which thought 'is finally rendered commensurate with the in-itself'. Now Brassier specifies this as an *adequation without correspondence* between the objective reality of extinction and the subjective knowledge of the trauma to which it gives rise (2007: 239), yet this would seem to constitute the binding of trauma, obviating the motive for thought itself. Thus, in achieving its aim, it seems that Brassier's speculative realism, far from *invigorating* thought, ultimately voids it of all motivating and animating force.

Considered from the perspective of the problem of nihilism as it has been thought in the philosophical tradition, Brassier's project appears radically under-determined. It is not at all clear that nihilism, understood as the feeling or judgment that existence is meaningless, *necessarily* follows from objective realism, nor from the destruction of the manifest image of man, nor from the 'cosmic nihilism' instituted by solar catastrophe. In fact, this is radically challenged by the attitudes of various ancient philosophers of 'wisdom', as well as more recent philosophers. For Pyrrho of Elis, for example, Skeptical philosophy involves so radically altering our view of ourselves and our way of life that it involves 'stripping off man completely, or liberating oneself entirely from the human point of view' (Hadot 1995: 112–113), and for Stoics and Epicureans a kind of 'cosmic consciousness' is embraced for its therapeutic value: seeing the meaninglessness of human life from a cosmic scale liberates us from our trivial day-to-day worries and brings peace of mind. Second, as Brassier acknowledges in passing (2007: xi), the earliest philosophical use of the term 'nihilism' is typically identified as Jacobi's 'Letter to Fichte', in which he insists that nihilism follows from a radical subjective idealism (in which the Ego can know nothing but itself and its own ideas). There is nothing *a priori* more nihilistic about objective realism than about subjective idealism. It is interesting to note, too, that Spengler embraces a cosmic nihilism similar to Brassier's,

yet manages to integrate it with his life-philosophical humanism. He writes:

> Intrinsically it is a matter of no importance what is the destiny, among the swarms of the 'eternal' stars, of this small planet that pursues its course somewhere in infinite space for a little time; still less important what moves for a couple of instants upon its surface. But each and every one of us, intrinsically a null, is for an unnamably brief moment a lifetime cast into that whirling universe. And for us therefore this world-in-little, this 'world-history', is something of supreme importance. (1976: 11)

Nihilism, as Nietzsche insists, is ambiguous. It is a *historically contingent* matter that 'the disenchantment of the world' has evolved nihilistic consequences as a result of Enlightenment rationalism (and objective realism as one manifestation of that). Specifically, it would seem to have such consequences in relation to the Christian worldview, the collapse of which is the focus of Nietzsche's analysis of nihilism as a contemporary malaise. In short, *contra* Brassier, 'meaning' or significance, understood in an existential sense, is necessarily tied neither to the manifest image of man, nor to some kind of subjectivism. Rather, the really interesting problems of philosophy surrounding nihilism are those which have been pursued by philosophers such as Deleuze, who have tried to rethink 'meaning' under the conditions which follow from 'disenchanting' science; to think the possibility of enchantment without disavowing the Enlightenment disenchantment of the world; to follow the luminous traces of life into nonhuman regions.

Nonhuman life: Deleuze

Despite the problems I have outlined above, there is a sense in which Brassier's nihilist book *is* invigorating. Yet this invigorating force is better explained by Deleuze's vitalism than in Brassier's own terms. Throughout his work, Deleuze repeatedly offered surprising interpretations of artists and writers whose works were typically seen as sick or degenerate, or as representing pessimistic interpretations of life (Sacher-Masoch, Artaud, Kafka, and so on). Part of Deleuze's genius was to offer a speculative metaphysical explanation for why we can experience such works as *the heightening of the feeling of life*, rather than the reverse. It is this same effect which allows us to understand the invigorating power of Brassier's *Nihil Unbound*. The clearest explanation of this effect is found

in Deleuze's book on Francis Bacon. Here he notes a useful distinction that Bacon makes in one of the published interviews between *cerebral pessimism* and *nervous optimism*. Bacon explains that '[o]ne's basic nature is totally without hope, and yet one's nervous system is made out of optimistic stuff'. And in the same passage: 'If life excites you, its opposite, like a shadow, death, must excite you' (in Sylvester 1987: 78, quoted in Deleuze 2003: 181, note 6).

This distinction allows Deleuze to develop his argument for a vitalism underlying Francis Bacon's painting. Moreover, it responds in a key way to the Nietzschean problem of nihilism understood as a distinction between *the intelligible* and *the sensible*, with the former privileged over and devaluing the latter. It is significant that Brassier understands 'the human', in line with Sellars' manifest image, as defined by the concept of a person as possessing rational purposive agency (Brassier 2007: 6). Deleuze's way of responding to nihilism through a deployment of a nonhuman conception of life takes the side of the sensible by plunging into bodily forces and sensations, escaping the overtly rationalist 'manifest image of man'.

As is of course well known, Bacon's work has typically been given a 'pessimistic' interpretation: his distorted figures are damaged, broken, traumatized; he paints the horrors of life. Yet Deleuze challenges this, presenting Bacon as a vitalist painter who, far from inspiring us with nihilistic judgments against life, intensifies it:

> the horror of life becomes a very pure and very intense life. 'Life is frightening,' said Cézanne, but in this cry he had already given voice to all the joys of line and color. Painting transmutes this cerebral pessimism into nervous optimism (2003: 52).

The key to understanding this move is precisely that aspect of Deleuze's philosophy which concerns us directly here: his understanding of life as a force which is primarily, and perhaps fundamentally, *nonhuman* and *nonorganic*.

'Life' is deployed in Deleuze's early works on Bergson and Nietzsche by effectively showing that an answer to the Nietzschean problem of nihilism is to be found in the Bergsonian notion of *duration*. Deleuze understands nihilism as a judgment against life which denies difference in its modalities as multiplicity and becoming.[12] The metaphysical tradition has perpetuated this nihilism through concepts which deny difference: unity and being. Deleuze finds in Bergson an explanation of how notions of unity and being emerge from a more fundamental multiplicity

and becoming, act to nihilistically deny them, yet may be transformed by an affirmation of what they deny. This rests on the distinction in Bergson between the fundamental metaphysical understanding of time understood as a changing succession of qualitatively different states, and the tendency to spatialize these states by breaking them into discreet units and measuring them according to fixed quantities. Two principles of difference are associated with qualitative time and quantitative space: the former involves an *internal difference* between pairs of forces which act to determine their qualities, while *external difference* is that which is understood to exist between constituted objects with fixed properties (which are 'spatialized' and 'quantified'). In short, Deleuze associates Bergson's pairs of forces with Nietzsche's active and reactive, Bergson's internal difference with Nietzsche's will to power (which he calls 'the differential and genetic element of forces'), and the eternal return with the affirmation of duration as the fundamental dimension of reality.[13] In this way, Deleuze finds a solution to Nietzsche's problem of nihilism in the Bergsonian understanding of reality as temporal becoming (duration). This does justice to at least one major aspect of Nietzsche's understanding of the problem of nihilism, as stemming from the denial of the full reality of change as part of life (for example, in Plato's exaltation of unchanging *Eidos*).

Deleuze develops these ideas further in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, where life is understood as a force, or collection of forces, which operates on a level below and preceding the forms of 'the human' and 'the organism'. These forms themselves, while expressions of life, also serve to contain and dampen its intensity. Life is therefore intensified by figural distortions of these forms, their unbinding or deconstruction. If one understands life on an essentially human or organic model – taking these images as the minimal, necessary conditions for any form of life which might be affirmed as valuable – then the kinds of distortions we see in Bacon's figures will appear only as trauma, damage, and the expression of pessimism and nihilism: life disfigured.[14]

Deleuze, however, argues that there is a more fundamental level of the body at which the forces of life operate, the body without organs (BwO). Several passages in *Francis Bacon* give us perhaps the most illuminating account in Deleuze's *oeuvre* of this infamously elusive concept. This is the *intensive* body, operating underneath and prior to the phenomenological lived body. The BwO is traversed by intensive forces which are prior to and give rise to the organism, that is, the organized body. The BwO is not opposed to organs, but to the organism, that is, to a determinate

organization of determined organs: a particular arrangement of forces in the body which *imprisons life*. This understanding of life is bound up with Deleuze's analysis of *sensation*. Sensation is produced when the forces which flow over the body (at the nonorganic level) encounter an external force. For Deleuze, sensation exceeds the bounds of the organic body because it is registered at a level prior to the organization of the organic body and its organs. Sensation is not representational (as it is, for example, for Leibniz, for whom sensation is understood as a representation more distinct than a bare perception but less distinct than a conscious thought), but *bodily*. Deleuze describes it as having a spiritual impetus – insofar as it moves away from organic representation – but this is a spirituality *of the body*, inclining towards that which is prior to or beneath the organic body, rather than what is thought to transcend it (2003: 46–47).

Deleuze describes the BwO in terms of *provisional* organs, which are determined through an encounter with an external force, producing a sensation. The organism will change if the encountered force changes. However, the BwO is *finally* determined, Deleuze tells us, by *the temporary and provisional presence* of determinate organs. That is, organs are determined by the encounters of the forces flowing over the body and external forces, but are subject to change with changing encounters with other external forces. Of course, Deleuze does not have in mind here the organs as they are physically defined and specified by empirical science (which he calls the *fixed* organs), but the arrangements of force we can feel 'under' the organic body, of the organization of the fixed organs. Thus, the BwO is a flux of changing forces. These forces constitute 'a powerful nonorganic life' (2003: 46). It is in this sense, then, that Deleuze develops a notion of *nonorganic* life: life is understood as the flow of those forces which operate transversally to the organism, giving rise to it, flowing over and through it, impacting it from outside and creating sensations understood as the differential meeting of forces in the BwO and forces from the outside. These forces are basic physical forces – 'pressure, inertia, weight, attraction, gravitation, germination' (2003: 57) – but also forces of desire, and of sensation understood as both affect and percept (see Deleuze and Guattari 1994, chapter 7). These forces, registered as sensation, are manifestations of life insofar as they are countermovements to nihilism, understood as the devaluation of the sensible by the intelligible, and of becoming by being.

As is well known, Deleuze asserts that the problem of art is not to represent or invent forms, but *to capture forces*. For painting, this means to render visible forces which are not themselves visible (2003: 56).

Deleuze proposes that the value of Bacon lies in his having proposed one of the most important solutions to this problem in the history of art, through his 'figural distortions'. Yet it is not forces themselves which are captured in painting, it is sensation – the way the force is felt and registered. The body wrestles with the external force, and it is this wrestling through which the sensation 'raises itself to its condition' (that is, the external force) and makes the invisible force visible. In short, Bacon captures forces in painting through sensation: that is, the meeting of the body's own forces with external forces, which are registered as forces of deformation in relation to the organic body. So for Deleuze, representation captures life in organic forms, while deformations – such as Bacon's deformations of figures – express and release the life which traverses the organic. It's in this way that what appears to others only as a pessimist negation can appear to Deleuze as a vitalist affirmation, and he is able to explain why representations of horror and death can at the same time harbor and release forces of life. If Brassier's polemical invocations of nihilism, death, and destruction excite, it is arguably because they disrupt the rigid forms of thought into which even the most avant-garde concepts tend quickly to congeal. Yet, exciting as they are, Brassier's realist speculations fail to explain *why* they excite as well as does the Deleuzean metaphysics of life he rejects.

This chapter has been motivated by a conviction which is the opposite of Brassier's, and which animates the thought of Nietzsche and Deleuze (among many others): namely, that the task of philosophy is to affirm life and invent reasons for believing in this world (Deleuze 2005: 172). This is a task it must pursue by raising itself to the challenges of new developments in science, art, and philosophy itself. These developments – and I agree to this extent with Brassier – legitimately take place autonomously, without concern for their existential implications. Yet it is the nature of the existential vocation, which is at least one important part of philosophy, to then reflect on such developments and their implications for meaning and value. Deleuze's remobilization of the concept of 'life' is one strategy for doing this. The attempt to hunt out and destroy every residue of vitalism is not only to mistake, but is in bad faith with respect to the relations between thought and the vital. Not only is there no necessary relation between objective realism and the voiding of 'life', but the very passion for extinction operating at the level of conceptual thought is a vital force operating at the level of the nervous system. My aim in this chapter has been to liberate Deleuze's thought about life from this critique, in order to keep it in play as a

philosophical resource for combating contemporary nihilism. This is no 'sop to the pathetic twinge of human self esteem' (Brassier 2007: xi), but a radically nonhuman force of invention.[15]

Notes

1. This is the thesis of Pierre Hadot (1995, 2002).
2. Notable proponents of vitalism included the embryologist Hans Driesch, Wilhelm Ostwald, Ernst Mach, Richard Avenarius and Hans Vaihinger.
3. Some major philosophers associated with the life-philosophy movement include Georg Simmel, Ludwig Klages, Oswald Spengler, Wilhelm Dilthey and Theodor Lessing.
4. Despite the undeniable importance and influence of Deleuze's *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1983), there were other important studies of Nietzsche (for example, Bataille's and Klossowski's in France, Kaufmann's in the United States, Müller-Lauter's in Germany) which would likely have ensured him a renewed interest in any case. The same cannot be said of Bergson, for whom Deleuze's responsibility would appear to be sole in renewing attention to this once most famous of French philosophers. See Deleuze 1991, 2004.
5. As Ansell-Pearson (1999) has argued, Bergson already in fact avoided the narrow conception of vitalism which centers on organic life, and today few would see the life-philosophical readings of Nietzsche as in any way decisive. However, Deleuze has to be given credit for allowing us to see these elements of their works.
6. In fact Spengler, like many of the life-philosophers, had a difficult relationship with the National Socialist Party and the proximity of his work to Nazi ideology can only adequately be understood if its dissonances with Nazism, as well as resonances, are taken into consideration.
7. Spengler writes: 'Technics in man's life is conscious, arbitrary, alterable, personal, *inventive*. It is learned and improved. Man has become the *creator* of his tactics of living – that is his grandeur and his doom. And the inner form of this creativeness we call culture – to be cultured, to cultivate, to suffer from culture. The man's creations are the expression of this being in *personal* form' (1976: 18).
8. Also of note are Eugene Thacker's *After Life* (2010) and the conference *To Have Done with Life: Vitalism and Antivitalism in Contemporary Philosophy*, Zagreb, June 17–19, 2011 (http://donewithlife.mi2.hr).
9. This might appear question-begging insofar as it relies on a category – value – which Brassier seeks to disqualify (especially if understood as Heidegger does, as necessarily implying a positing by a subject). Yet, as I am suggesting here, we could pose the question in another way simply by asking if his project of endorsing nihilism can adequately ground itself – that is, justify itself in its own terms. Moreover, this argument is not simply a version of Patricia Churchland's 'bad vitalist argument' (Brassier 2007: 17), since the claim for 'invigoration' is not an assumption – it is Brassier's own claim.
10. Laruelle contends that all philosophy is structured by a 'decision' to posit a divide between immanence (the real) and transcendence (thought), and then to mix or synthesize immanence and transcendence in philosophical concepts,

which aim to think the real, to capture it in representations. For Laruelle, this is an 'idealist pretension' insofar as philosophy imagines it can 'at least co-determine the Real' (1999: 139). By contrast, non-philosophy begins with the radical immanence of the real (the One), and aims to let thought be determined *by* it, to think *from* the real with a procedure Laruelle calls 'vision-in-One'. Non-philosophy continues to use philosophy as 'material', but aims to divest it of all transcendence and of the pretension to represent the real in concepts which synthesize transcendence and immanence. Determining exactly how such a non-philosophical thinking is possible is the object of Laruelle's prolific conceptual and terminological inventions, and frequent revisions.

11. Brassier argues that, like Heidegger's reduction of the entire history of philosophy to a single essence, 'Laruelle has conflated the critique of a certain kind of philosophizing with a critique of philosophy *tout court*' (2007: 121).
12. Deleuze writes: 'What nihilism condemns and tries to deny is not so much Being, for we have known for some time that Being resembles Nothingness like a brother. It is, rather, multiplicity; it is, rather, becoming. Nihilism considers becoming as something that *must* atone and must be reabsorbed into Being, and the multiple as something unjust that must be judged and reabsorbed into the One. Becoming and multiplicity are guilty – such is the first and the last word of nihilism' (2001: 84).
13. These associations have convincingly been argued by Giovanna Borradori (1999 and 2001). She underlines the significance of Deleuze's early essay 'Bergson's Conception of Difference' (2004), as well as *Bergsonism* (1991) and *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1983).
14. Arguably, such a view of life, indexed on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological description of the lived body, is what explains Paul Virilio's inability to see twentieth century avant-garde art as anything but the traumatic symptom of the century that witnessed the Holocaust (Virilio 2006).
15. I have argued elsewhere (Woodward 2013) that Deleuze fails to provide the conceptual resources for successfully *overcoming* nihilism, a suspect aim in any case. Yet the claim that there are useful resources in his work for confronting, combating, or negotiating nihilism is a different matter entirely, and supported by my previous work.

Works cited

Ansell-Pearson, Kieth (1999) *Germinal Life: The Difference and Repetition of Deleuze* (London and New York: Routledge).

Borradori, Giovanna (1999) 'On the Presence of Bergson in Deleuze's Nietzsche', *Philosophy Today* 43: 40–145.

—— (2001) 'The Temporalization of Difference: Reflections on Deleuze's Interpretation of Bergson', *Continental Philosophy Review* 34: 1–20.

Brassier, Ray (2003) 'Solar Catastrophe: Lyotard, Freud, and the Death Drive', *Philosophy Today*, 47(4) (Winter 2003): 421–430.

Brassier, Ray (2007) *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

Deleuze, Gilles (1983) *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (London: Athlone).

—— (1991) *Bergsonism,* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books).
—— (2001) 'Nietzsche', trans. Anne Boyman in *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life* (New York: Zone).
—— (2003) *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London and New York: Continuum).
—— (2004) 'Bergson's Conception of Difference', trans. Michael Taormina, in *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953–1974*, ed. David Lapoujade (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e)), 32–51.
—— (2005) *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London and New York: Continuum).
Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari (1994) *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press).
Freud, Sigmund (2001) *'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', 'Group Psychology', and Other Works*, ed. James Strachey. *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 18. (London: Vintage).
Gaiger, Jason (1998), 'Lebensphilosophie', in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 5, ed., E. Craig (London: Routledge).
Hadot, Pierre (1995) *Philosophy as a Way of Life,* trans. Michael Chase (Oxford: Blackwell).
—— (2002) *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
Laruelle, François (1999) 'A Summary of Non-Philosophy', trans. Ray Brassier. *Pli* 8: 138–148.
Meillassoux, Quentin (2008) *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, trans. Ray Brassier (London and New York: Continuum).
Schnädelbach, Herbert (1984) *Philosophy in Germany 1831–1933*, trans. E. Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
Sellars, Wilfrid (1963) 'Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man', in *Science, Perception and Reality*, ed. Robert Colodny (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul).
Spengler, Oswald [1918] (1932) *The Decline of the West*, trans. C. F. Atkinson (London: Allen & Unwin).
—— [1931] (1976) *Man and Technics: A Contribution to a Philosophy of Life*, trans. Charles Francis Atkinson (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press).
Sylvester, David (1987) *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon 1962–1979,* 3rd edn. (New York: Thames & Hudson).
Thacker, Eugene (2010) *After Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
Virilio, Paul (2006) *Art and Fear*, trans. Julie Rose (London and New York: Continuum).
Woodward, Ashley (2013) 'Deleuze, Nietzsche, and the Overcoming of Nihilism,' *Continental Philosophy Review* 46(1): 115–147.

3

Objectal Human: On the Place of Psychic Systems in *Difference and Repetition*

Jon Roffe

That ancient rhetorical trope, symbolic patricide, is alive and well in contemporary philosophy. One need look no further than the fate of Gilles Deleuze at the hands of those who amass beneath the plural banner of contemporary philosophy for proof of this. Of course the great, unavoidable irony is that the position of father is often only occupied post mortem, symbolic murder being at the same time the installation of this or that thinker at the head of yesterday's table. I mean here simply that in the rush to stake new theoretical ground beyond 'post-modernism', hermeneutics and deconstruction, wild empiricism, correlationism – in sum, all of those avatars of imperialism our autochthonous fairy tales warn us about in such dire tones – Deleuze's name comes to stand in for everything we must not anymore want or think, despite his demonstrable innocence in many regards. This prosecutory fervor leads to critical attacks that engage very little with the work itself, unconsciously exemplifying Walter Benjamin's ninth thesis for the critic: 'Polemics mean to destroy a book in a few of its sentences. The less it has been studied the better' (2008: 67).

One striking and important exception is Ray Brassier's critical reconstruction of Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* in his *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction*.[1] In just under 25 compact pages, Brassier explicates the entire system of *Difference and Repetition*, with great novelty and insight. He follows this with a critique that is grounded in this excavatory work, and which gains a great deal of its force from this. Nonetheless, Brassier's critique turns around a fatal conflation. At issue is the status of thought for Deleuze. Brassier argues that *Difference and Repetition* gives an occulted primacy to human thought, such that it itself is conceived as the *raison d'être* of the individuation of all beings and in general. Deleuze's project, despite its apparent embrace

of a 'powerful non-organic life', (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 81) in the end privileges not just the organic over the inorganic, but the human over the nonhuman. Turn the vitalist geo-philosopher's cloak inside out and one finds a patchwork Humean empiricism and a kind of neo-humanism that is unjustifiable by its own lights, however novel the terms of its deployment. His ontology having adopted 'a privileged role for a special kind of being, an exceptional mode of individuation, that of the psyche' (Brassier 2007: 163), Deleuze ends up having to illicitly assert 'the exclusive prerogative of *homo sapiens* (Brassier 2007: 201).

What follows falls into the category of 'interpretation and defence', to borrow a subtitle from Henry Allison's well-known text on the first *Critique* (Allison 2004). The problem that Brassier raises is a decisive one, and it is by following Brassier's argument through that an alternative way to construe Deleuze's position emerges, one that does not lead to the ruinous conclusion that, for Deleuze, human thought must have an essential, if occulted, primacy. I mean by this that despite the apparently technical nature of the argument I wish to present, it involves a very basic question about the place of the human in Deleuze's work. Brassier's reading, though mistaken, casts an important light on this question.

In what follows, I will argue that the project of *Difference and Repetition* can be construed in such a way as to preserve at once the qualitative difference of human being from that of the nonhuman, and the unity of the means of production of all three regimes.[2] This twin requirement, it would seem, is not only necessary in order for Deleuze's account to be at all acceptable (the human in fact being qualitatively different from the various registers of the nonhuman), it also repeats in another register the elementary ontological commitment of *Difference and Repetition* – to the expression of ineliminable difference on the basis of an absolute univocity of being.

Subjectal and objectal

I would begin here by hazarding a distinction in order to clarify what is at stake. This is above all due to the fact that the terms 'objective' and 'subjective' are used by Deleuze to qualify two different modalities of *doxa*, rather than marking an ontological distinction between the subject and the object (Deleuze 1994: 129–30). It also helps to avoid the word 'subjectivity', which is only used once in *Difference and Repetition* in a very specific fashion (Deleuze 1994: 71).

I will term *subjectal* the system composed by human thought, that is, the actual and achieved (that is, individuated) noological capacities of

homo sapiens – simply, human beings in the normal sense of the word. *Difference and Repetition* deploys a large number of Brassier 2007 concepts that seem, in the first instance, to belong to this category but in fact do not – a point that is inimical to the argument that follows.

Correlatively, the term 'objectal' will concern the regime of objects and their primordial relationship with the pre-objectal field of intensive individuation. In other words, the objectal is the primary object of Deleuze's ontology in *Difference and Repetition*. When cast in these terms, Brassier's account consists in the assertion that, despite everything else, the subjectal grounds the objectal in Deleuze; I will argue by way of contrast that the subjectal is a subset of the objectal.

Brassier's Deleuze

Deleuze essentially appears in Brassier's *Nihil Unbound* as a rival, who, along with Heidegger, he is taken to have 'radicalized Kant's transcendentalisation of time' (Brassier 2007: 149). Brassier's broader project is to advance just such a radicalization in order to affirm the correlation of thought and human extinction – only to the degree that this conjoining, an '*adequation without correspondence*' (Brassier 2007: 239; emphasis in original), is effected by philosophy does it attain its capacity to think being, while at the same time ejecting superstition in its entirety from foundational thought. Thus, as he himself indicates elsewhere, Brassier's own project takes place under the aegis of the definition of philosophy provided in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*: 'I agree with Deleuze's remark that ultimately the most basic task of philosophy is to impede stupidity' (Brassier 2011: n.p.).

While Brassier pursues this through a series of engagements, with the works of Alain Badiou, Quentin Meillassoux, and ultimately François Laruelle, his discussion of Heidegger and then Deleuze recognizes that they too have attempted to outstrip the privilege of the human in their conception of temporality. This outstripping is the final fruit of the triumph of the enlightenment project and the attack on superstition, and the ejection of any and all reference to human uniqueness and the ineffable roots of experience is necessarily a part of this.

This discussion, however, constitutes a certain deconstructive riposte. For, on Brassier's view, both philosophers end up insisting on the place of human existence nonetheless:

> the transcendental syntheses of time elaborated by Heidegger and Deleuze subordinate objective space-time to a form of ontological

> temporality commensurate with the subjectivity of *Dasein* or 'Life'. Against the correlationist privileging of transcendental temporality, speculative (post-metaphysical) realism must uphold the autonomy of a space-time that is independent of the correlation of thinking and being. (Brassier 2007: 149)

Brassier's later critique of Deleuze is already found here in Brassier 2007: despite his explosion of the Kantian transcendental subject, Deleuze finds himself in the position of having to affirm the essential role of the thought of a certain ur-subjectivity, at once empiricist and vitalist in character, in order that his account of ontogenesis functions. As I have said already, the focus of what follows will concern thinking alone – that is, the status of the psyche in Deleuze's account – and will therefore put aside Brassier's detailed discussion of temporality; the status of the relationship between the inorganic, the organic and the psychic must also be left unaddressed. This said, it is still possible to summarily outline four major points of this critical account.

1. Brassier begins by outlining the ontogenetic account of reality presented in *Difference and Repetition*, particularly in its final chapter. Unlike a great many commentators, he fully appreciates the significance of the category of intensity in Deleuze's construction, and his explication gives it pride of place accordingly. Thus – in a deft and detailed nine pages – Brassier explains the concept of intensity and the processes of intensive individuation as the means of articulating the virtual, *qua* the 'static perplication of differential relations in the realm of the Idea' (Brassier 2007: 171), and the regime of actualized, metastable things.[3]
2. Now, as Brassier notes, intensive difference is not homogenous, but is characterized by being at once individualized (constituted of distinct yet mutually implicated individuals) and individuating. Virtual Ideas are expressed by intensive individuals which, by way of spatio-temporal dynamisms, produce the order of qualified and extended things. However, because what I expressed is ideal and problematic rather than sensible, the individual is essentially the thinker as such. For Brassier, therefore, the intensive individual is the name in this context for Deleuze's commitment to the primacy of thought: 'Intensity as spatio-temporal dynamism implies an individual thinker precisely insofar as it is the expression of an Idea' (Brassier 2007: 172). Thus Deleuze insists, 'the Idea finds expression in the realm of the sensible because intensity *thinks* and is inseparable from thought; albeit a

thought that is no longer a function of representational consciousness' (Brassier 2007: 172; emphasis in original). A key passage for Brassier's reading in *Difference and Repetition* is thus the following:

> Every body, every thing, thinks and is a thought to the extent that, reduced to its intensive reasons, it expresses an Idea the actualisation of which it determines. However, the thinker himself makes his individual differences from all manner of things: it is in this sense that he is laden with stones and diamonds, plants 'and even animals'. The thinker, undoubtedly the thinker of eternal return, is the individual, the universal individual. (Deleuze 1994: 254)[4]

3. The intensive individual is not merely the locus of the genesis of the actual, but also the state to which any actual thing returns when exposed to an encounter which bears an intensive charge unable to be habitually incorporated into the thing as it stands. Recast in terms of thinking (as Deleuze does in 'The Image of Thought' chapter), this situation concerns the transcendent deployment of the faculties: that primordial exercise of thinking in which it is forced to once again raise itself up to the thought of intensity. Brassier puts it well: 'The transcendent exercise of the faculties thereby marks the juncture at which thinking is forced into being and being is encountered in thinking' (Brassier 2007: 169).
4. Because all individuation is, as Deleuze himself attests, an issue of thought, Brassier turns to the other discussions of thinking in *Difference and Repetition* in order to make sense of this assertion. The larval self, the I and the Self, the passive self (Deleuze 1994: 78; Brassier 2007: 174), the agent (Deleuze 1994: 94; Brassier 2007: 182–184), and the originary subjectivity of habit (Deleuze 1994: 70; Brassier 2007: 174) all figure prominently. Space does not permit the consideration of all of these *topoi* here. Brassier tends to treat these all as synonymous, though, so it would seem that the critique presented here could be likewise extended across the whole series. The most significant case in Brassier's reading, though, and the one that I will focus on here, is the psychic, or what Deleuze calls 'psychic systems' (Deleuze 1994: 249).

For Brassier, the constitution of the psyche is the exception in the general order of things for Deleuze, because it is here that individuation is itself comprehended: 'Thus psychic individuation involves an act in which the intensive realm of pre-individual singularities surfaces

within individuated psychic actuality, usurping the specification of consciousness in the I and its organization in the self' (Brassier 2007: 181). But what is more, because it is 'only in the psychic dimension' (Brassier 2007: 193), that the intensive and the process of its explication is attained as such, 'the principle of explication [...] is not an "objective" aspect of bio-physical reality but rather an empirical dimension of experience' (Brassier 2007: 191).

In essence, Brassier's argument is the following. Deleuze's discussion of individuation turns around the characterization of the individual as the thinker – and this individual is entirely ubiquitous: it is 'universal'. It also appears that the capacity to express individuating factors as such – to think being – belongs alone to psychic systems. Consequently, it seems that Deleuze must give an irreducible role of the human thinker in ontogenesis itself. If the passage back to intensity from the regime of the actual is, like ontogenesis, prosecuted within the element of thought, and if the site of thinking is the human being, then the spectre of correlationism once more appears. 'Deleuze's insistence on casting psychic expression as the sufficient reason for physical explication' (Brassier 2007: 199), leads to the – quixotic and seemingly untenable – assertion that, without the fact of human thought no individuation is possible whatsoever. Or again: it is the capacity for human thought, in its transcendent exercise, to become equal to the conditions of its own genesis that is the *sine qua non* for individuation in general: 'only the psychic individual can become equal to its own intensive individuation. Ultimately, it is the thinker – the philosopher-artist – who is the "universal individual"' (Brassier 2007: 185).

The problem here – which the following will discuss – is that the psychic system is identical to neither the 'elementary consciousness', nor the 'larval self', nor a great many other apparent figures of the subjectal in *Difference and Repetition*.[5] Conversely, thinking is not dealt with as a single phenomenon in *Difference and Repetition*, but is the name both for the process of individuation itself, *qua* explication of virtual Ideas, and for subjectal thinking and its particular intensive precursors. The flaw in Brassier's reconstruction of Deleuze lies in its identification of the subjectal regime of psychic systems with that of the objectal figure of the thinking individual.

Perhaps nothing is more emblematic of his argument than the following modification Brassier introduces into the English translation of *Difference and Repetition*, in a passage that concerns the relative status of death and dying (the objectal and subjectal registers of death,

respectively). The original, followed by Patton's translation and Brassier's alternative version, reads as follows – I have added the emphases in the latter two texts:

> *elle est individuation, protestation de l'individu qui ne s'est jamais reconnu: dans les limites du Moi et du Je, même universels*. (Deleuze 1968: 333)
>
> it is a matter of individuation, a protest by the individual *which* has never recognized *itself* within the limits of the Self and the I, even where these are universal. (Deleuze 1994: 259)
>
> In this regard, dying is 'individuation, a protest by the individual *who* has never recognized *himself* within the limits of the Self and the I, even when these are universal.' (Brassier 2007: 185)

In a certain sense, the whole of Brassier's reading turns around this choice, and the appropriateness of this translation must be put to the test: is the thinking individual a *he* or *she* who becomes equal, in the encounter, to intensive individuation as such, or is *it* a factor proper to the process of individuation? Brassier (quite rightly, in my view) notes at one point that it is sometimes difficult to tell whether Deleuze's project as a whole concerns the world as given to the subjectal, or the objectal world in its intensive genesis and ongoing modification: 'he is constantly equivocating between the claim that he is providing an account of the genesis of actual experience and the claim that he is giving an account of the genesis of actuality *tout court*' (Brassier 2007: 199).[6] The whole question is whether or not this equivocation is grounded in a more basic conceptual problematic.

'An elementary consciousness'

It is during the first part of Brassier's explication that the following – *prima facie*, extremely puzzling – passage is cited, which seems to invoke a certain figure of the subjectal:

> Actualisation takes place in three series: space, time and also consciousness. Every spatio-temporal dynamism is accompanied by the emergence of an elementary consciousness which itself traces directions, doubles movements and migrations, and is born on the threshold of the condensed singularities of the body or object whose consciousness it is. (Deleuze 1994: 220)

It is with this passage that Brassier first introduces what he takes to be the ruinous subjectal register in Deleuze's account of individuation (Brassier 2007: 172). For Brassier, this passage is an indication of the need, on Deleuze's view, of a psychic registration of the process of individuation in order for individuation as such to proceed. He immediately links it to the figure of the thinking individual: 'In actualization, univocal being splits between the expressing thought of the intensive thinker – the "larval subject" of the spatio-temporal dynamism – and the expressed Idea. Thus the difference between thinking and thought, thinking and being, is [...] internal to things themselves' (Brassier 2007: 173).

Before we turn to the status of the individual (and putting aside the invocation of the larval subject) it is worth noting that the individual qua 'intensive thinker' (a nomination that does not appear in *Difference and Repetition*) has not yet been presented in the text. The pages immediately preceding it sketch the *raison d'être* of individuation in very general way in terms of spatial and temporal dynamisms, which he calls 'dramatization' (for example, Deleuze 1994: 218; cf. Brassier 2007: 171) and which he likens here to an expanded version of the Kantian schemata. Correlatively, the invocation of consciousness is quickly put aside as Deleuze returns first to the theme of repetition, and then to set up the question the account of individuation in the following chapter is meant to resolve: 'what grounds dramatization[?]' (Deleuze 1994: 221).

The addition of consciousness to space and time is clearly peculiar, but the means for its explanation can be found implicit in these passages, which traffic in the biological examples that will constitute the major set of case-studies in the discussion of individuation. In play here is the thought of Raymond Ruyer, a crucial if mostly overlooked influence at this moment in Deleuze's argument. This 'elementary consciousness', is nothing other that what Ruyer will call the *survol* or overflight. For Ruyer, the *survol* is the *auto-unifying form* that must be in play if we are to avoid a collapse into an Aristotelian hylomorphism, in which static structure is imposed upon an indifferent material substratum, and the many problems and paradoxes that attend this view.

Writing in *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari will characterize the *survol* in the following terms:

> It is a primary, 'true form' as Ruyer has defined it: neither a *Gestalt* nor a perceived form, but a *form in itself* that does not refer to any external point of view, any more than the retina or striated area of the cortex refers to another retina or cortical area; it is an absolute consistent

> form that surveys *itself* independently of any supplementary dimension, which does not appeal therefore to any transcendence. (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 210)

It is particularly important to insist here that, for Ruyer and Deleuze in his wake, this consciousness in no way resembles the forms of consciousness attributed to the subjectal order by various idealisms, phenomenology or simple (Lockean) empiricism. Indeed, the hallmark of the consciousness that is the *survol* in Ruyer is that it is in play at every level of reality. The significance of the example of the philosopher gazing at a checkered tabletop in *Néo-finalisme* (Ruyer 1952: 96)[7] is exceeded by the various discussions of the consciousness proper to the physio-chemical and the organic:

> A unicellular entity has neither hands nor eyes. It nevertheless forms pseudopods, a mouth, a stomach, and it excretes. An egg, an embryo in its initial stage, acts like a unicellular entity. It deforms itself with regard to its overall form: an absolute overview [*survol*] (that is, an overview without an external point of view which would be perpendicular to the surface or the volume), this 'paradoxical' overview (paradoxical for us), is the very fact that the unicellular entity or the young embryo is not a point or a series of points, but a delocalized form that is 'seen' (with quotation marks), but which is not seen (without quotation marks). (Ruyer 1988: 25, translation modified)[8]

'[t]he unicellular entity or the embryo in its initial stage is a completely dark vision and not a non-vision. In other words, it is primary consciousness of its own form' (26), a sentiment that Ruyer frequently repeats elsewhere. For example: 'a protoplasm, a molecular edifice with delocalized relations, an embryo, an organic tissue or a cortex, are conscious of themselves' (Ruyer 1966: 167).

It is precisely this primary consciousness constituted by the *survol* that Deleuze attributes to the ongoing process of individuation-construction. This is not the place to present Ruyer's own thought, even less to defend either it or Deleuze's deployment of it. But two things can be quickly concluded: (1) the passage Brassier takes as an assertion of a uniquely human consciousness is in fact asserting something quite different, and (2) the consciousness in question here is (following Ruyer) objectal rather than subjectal.

Thought, objectal and subjectal

The word 'thought', considered from the objectal point of view, is synonymous in Deleuze with expressive individuation itself. Here, let us return to a passage already cited above, since it puts the matter clearly: 'Every body, every thing, thinks and is a thought to the extent that, reduced to its intensive reasons, it expresses an Idea the actualisation of which it determines' (Deleuze 1994: 254). Thinking here clearly has nothing at all to do with representation, with good and common sense, or more generally with the dogmatic image of thought. Expressive individuation: what is expressed is the virtual, by way of the individual. This individual is in turn – as I have already noted – not to be conflated with the subjectal order. Here, the individual is to be conceived of, as the thematic of expression makes this clear, in Leibnizian (but also Simondonian, Ruyerian and Darwinian) terms (Deleuze 1994: 246–249).

The emblem and most frequent example Deleuze presents of what he means by the individual is the embryo: not yet a living thing, it constitutes a fluid, intensive milieu: 'The destiny and achievement of the embryo is to live the unlivable, to sustain forced movements of a scope which would break any skeleton or tear ligaments' (Deleuze 1994: 205).

Incidentally, the fact that many of Deleuze's examples here are drawn from biology does not allow us to infer, as Brassier asserts in the weakest moment of his argument, that the inorganic is *a priori* excluded from the account (Brassier 2007: 197), and that 'physics is conspicuously underrepresented' (Brassier 2007: 200). Granted, the choice and prevalence of examples by a thinker is always symptomatic, but can only ground strong conclusions at great risk of misinterpretation. For instance, one must already have a sense of what constitutes a conspicuous underrepresentation. Deleuze, for his part, is clear: 'mathematics and biology appear here only in the guise of technical models which allow the exposition of the virtual and the process of actualization' (Deleuze 1994: 220–1). And, once again, it seems to me that a grasp of the Ruyerian dimensions of the analysis allow us to see the project Deleuze is engaged in more clearly – one in which the psychic, organic and inorganic all require the same dynamic process of objectal thought in order to arise in their specificity. 'Psychic, organic and chemical – three dramatisations of different orders' (Deleuze 1994: 220).

What then is subjectal thought for Deleuze? Though it is not, as we will see, general in the sense that Brassier suggests, we must also avoid

the supposition that it does not exist in Deleuze's view, for there is a place in his account for human specificity. On this point, Deleuze is clear: subjectal thought is representational in nature, and turns around the figures of the 'I' and the 'Self'. The critique of the dogmatic image of thought presented in the central chapter of *Difference and Repetition* does not suggest that representation – here, specifically, empirical resemblance and the form of identity – does not characterize thinking at all. The claim, a transcendental one, is that we do in fact think representationally, but that this is a product that obscures its non-representational origin.

This is what motivates Deleuze's famous assertion that 'stupidity is never that of others but the object of a properly transcendental question: how is stupidity (not error) possible?' (Deleuze 1994: 151). Here, stupidity is the presence in subjectal thought of its own least capacity, which is the same time the emblem of the intensive objectal origins of the subjectal. From the latter point of view, we can say that representational thought is reduced to stupidity – it is stupefied – whenever it encounters the intensive in the sensible regime. This is what Deleuze is getting at in the following well-known passage:

> there is only involuntary thought, aroused but constrained within thought, and all the more absolutely necessary for being born, illegitimately, of fortuitousness in the world. Thought is primarily trespass and violence, the enemy, and nothing presupposes philosophy: everything begins with misosophy. Do not count upon thought to ensure the relative necessity of what it thinks. Rather, count upon the contingency of an encounter with that which forces thought to raise up and educate the absolute necessity of an act of thought or a passion to think. (Deleuze 1994: 139)

This passage addresses the threshold of stupidity, beyond which the subjectal is in play. We can even say that the representation-stupidity complex is to the subjectal what the membrane is to biological life, what at once founds its possibility and filters encounters such that a certain relatively stable, relatively closed existence can continue on: 'Stupidity is neither the ground nor the individual, but rather this relation in which individuation brings the ground to the surface without being able to give it form' (Deleuze 1994: 152).

Strictly speaking, though, it is not the case that 'there is only involuntary thought' as Deleuze writes. We must here tease out three concomitant claims. The first is that objectal thought is neither voluntary nor

involuntary, in the sense that it is a process characterized by spatio-temporal dynamisms that Deleuze defines in terms of the three passive syntheses. The second is that representational, subjectal thought is voluntary thought, but this register cannot itself account for itself, nor its origins. The third claim is the real object of this citation: it is the general processes of individuation in being that constitute the intensive locus – the shock to stupidity – that is involuntary from the point of view of the subjectal.

A related claim, we might note, is made with respect to the Oedipus complex in *Anti-Oedipus*: 'We are not saying that Oedipus and castration do not amount to anything. We are oedipalised, we are castrasted' (Deleuze and Guattari 1984: 67). The Oedipus complex is thus, as Eugene Holland puts it, an '"objective error" of social organization' (1999: 41). In the same way that the Oedipus complex is a real organization of psychic life that arises with capitalism, while always presupposing the schizoid traits of desiring-production, representational thinking in *Difference and Repetition* is the real and common modality of subjectal thought that nonetheless comes into being on the basis of the non-representational processes of individuation. The capitalist collusion of the Oedipalizing psychoanalyst is doubled by the collusion with representation perpetrated throughout the history of philosophy; the problem in both cases is the confusion of the contingent product for the universal and necessary conditions of its production – tracing.

As I noted, representational thinking has as its anchors what Deleuze calls the 'I' and the 'Self'.[9] Describing them as the form and content of the subjectal, respectively, his explication will turn around the idea that the species *homo sapiens* has interiorized its species-being. The key passage is the following:

> Speaking of evolution necessarily leads us to psychic systems. For each type of system, we must ask what pertains to Ideas and what pertains to implication-individuation and explication-differenciation respectively. With psychic systems the problem assumes a particular urgency, since it is by no means certain that either the I or the Self falls within the domain of individuation. They are, rather, figures of differenciation. The I forms the properly psychic determination of species, while the Self forms the psychic organisation. The I is the quality of human being as a species. The determination of psychic species is not of the same type as the determination of biological species, since here the determination must equal, or be of the same power as, the determinable [...] In correlation with the I, the Self must understand itself

> in extension: the Self designates the properly psychic organism, with its distinctive points represented by the diverse faculties which enter into the comprehension of the I. As a result, the fundamental psychic correlation is expressed in the formula '*I* think *Myself*', just as the biological correlation is expressed in the complementarity of species and their parts, of quality and extension. That is why both the I and the Self each begin with differences, but these differences are distributed in such a way as to be cancelled, in accordance with the requirements of good sense and common sense. (Deleuze 1994: 256–257)

While this complex passage calls for a great deal of explication, I will restrict myself to four remarks.

1. It is quite clear here that the 'psychic system of the I-Self' (Deleuze 1994: 261) is entirely irreducible to the order of the individual – the very distinction that Brassier's reading collapses. Whereas the individual belongs to intensity, the 'I' and the 'Self' belongs to differenciation: 'The individuating factors or the implicated factors of individuation therefore have neither the form of the I nor the matter of the Self. This is because the I is inseparable from a form of identity, while the Self is indistinguishable from a matter constituted by a continuity of resemblances' (Deleuze 1994: 257).
2. The passage from the biological to the psychic does not involve a leap from the material to the spiritual as if to a level transcendent to it, but rather involves the interiorization of the differences that, in the biological register, give rise to extrinsic qualifications and extensions (qualities and parts). In this sense, it repeats the interiorization that allows for the advent of the living – the membrane – without requiring any more than the living as such for its initial condition or prior state. As early as *Bergsonism*, and in keeping with Bergson's own claims in *Creative Evolution*, Deleuze is careful to emphasize that the 'privilege of man' arises not for any necessary reason.[10] After all, the capacity for human memory to access the whole of the virtual past each time is underwritten by 'a certain state of cerebral matter' (Deleuze 1988a: 107), and not by any exclusive higher order characteristic. What marks the shift to the psychic is the invagination of individuation: whereas a primary consciousness exists in survey for the organic (auto-unification of the living), psychic systems turn this consciousness back on itself. This is why Deleuze will say – contra Descartes and Kant (Deleuze 1994: 58) – that the 'I think myself', or, better, 'the I thinks the self' is the very emblem of psychic reality.

3. This formulation allows us to see that the 'I' here is a formal attribution to subjectal thought, while 'self' pertains to the content of subjectal thinking. Deleuze's account here appears to repeat the account of the Kantian transcendental subject: to the transcendental unity of apperception, 'pure, original, unchanging consciousness' (Kant 1998: A106) that gives subjective unity to my representations, on the one hand, and the empirical self, the ensemble of the experiences yoked together by apperception. However, only the first parallel is strictly accurate. It is true that the 'I' is the form of thought that provides thoughts with a tentative and extrinsic unity, which Deleuze here describes as the *quality* of subjectal thought (all particular representations are qualified by this 'I'). On the other hand, the Self is not to be conceived as the set of passive, empirical ideations gathered together by this 'I'. Instead, the Self is the ensemble of (harmoniously) operating faculties. As Deleuze says above, 'the Self designates the properly psychic organism, with its distinctive points represented by the diverse faculties which enter into the comprehension of the I' (Deleuze 1994: 257). The content of thought is not therefore representational content (for example, the experience of a boat floating down a river) but the various powers of thinking that are capable of giving rise to this content.
4. When what Deleuze has to say about the I-Self pair in *Difference and Repetition* is considered more broadly (especially with regard to the role of time), it becomes clear that, like everything else, they are exposed to the possibility of their ungrounding. This is to say that they are always in contact with the sub-representational origins. Deleuze will call this correlative situation that of the fractured I (for example, Deleuze 1994: 90) and the divided or 'dissolved self' (Deleuze 1994: 58). The encounter with intensity here throws the identity that one attributes to the thinker and the capacities of thought (the 'parts' of the psychic organism of the self) into the maelstrom of intensity once again.

The importance of this point is double. On the one hand, it indicates that subjectal thought is, contrary to Brassier's account, no exceptional case when it comes to the recrudescence of intensive dynamism. On the other, because the I-Self structure can come radically undone in this way, it cannot be thought that the subjectal order is some kind of evolutionary attainment 'once and for all'. Ultimately, then, and despite the deeply Kantian construal of the subjectal in play here, Deleuze makes room here for some kind of analogue of the Nietzschean *Übermench* – and in

fact, nothing else is at stake in the peculiar final section of his *Foucault*, 'Towards a Formation of the Future?' (Deleuze 1988b: 129–32), which makes equally heavy use of evolutionary biology.

The human and the nonhuman

In a passage that summarizes the contention we have been criticizing, Brassier writes that 'in Deleuze's account the only difference which time makes is a difference in and as thought, a difference that is indissociable from thinking' (Brassier 2007: 203). We can now see that this is both true and false: true, if thought is conceived as the objectal process of individuation; false if we take 'thinking' here to mean the representational capacity of individuated human beings, bearing the noological facilities of the I, the Self and the (calm) transcendental use of the faculties.

Deleuze does not simply eradicate all differences between the human and the animal, the human and the living, the human and reality as such. The strength of his account is to provide a metaphysics that makes room for the advent of these differences without for all this requiring them to have an *a priori* source. As we have seen, thought in the two different senses of objectal and subjectal, individuation and representation, concern the same mechanism. The latter case is but one conclusion of the process that gives rise to irreducibly diverse outcomes.

At the same time, and beyond its thoroughgoing approach to the tangled tale of *Difference and Repetition*, Brassier's reading is to be commended. It reminds us that the human being is an object of Deleuze's attention in this, perhaps his most traditional philosophical treatise, and that the distinction between the human and the nonhuman is not without a difference. We do Deleuze a grave disservice when we construe him as having entirely dispensed with the human being in the name of some grand homogenous ecology of the living. We would do well to recall that what Deleuze himself describes as essential in his own account of univocity is not absolute unity but *difference*: 'Being is said in a single and same sense of everything of which it is said, but that of which it is said differs' (Deleuze 1994: 36).

Notes

1. Deleuze (1994) and Brassier (2007), respectively. A good summary of the broader goals of Brassier's book is found in Ashley Woodward's contribution to this volume.
2. Brassier himself notes this very point with respect to the two regimes of the organic and the psychic: 'The larval subject of habit is not only the

fundamental component of all organic life but also provides the foundation from which all other psychic phenomena, including representational consciousness, derive' (Brassier 2007: 174–175). All that is at stake here, in a sense, is the addition of a third register, the inorganic, and the integrity of the divisions, entirely contingent in origin, between the inorganic, the organic and the psychic.

3. It is in this context that Brassier presents what is surely the most helpful definition of the meaning of vitalism for Deleuze, and is an important corrective to the widespread dogma of Deleuzean primal active matter: 'Deleuze's vitalism boils down to a single fundamental conviction: time makes a difference that cannot be erased' (Brassier 2007: 203). This is entirely correct. We ought not look to the virtual, or to intensity, or anywhere else for that matter in order to understand what constitutes the vital for Deleuze – it is time that pays for all in this regard.
4. We will see that this translation already contains the seeds of Brassier's reading: strictly speaking, since 'every thing thinks', the thinker is really an 'itself [*lui-même*]'.
5. This list would include, in relation to the register of temporality, the second, 'spiritual' repetition constituted by memory.
6. The other major locus of this kind of ambiguity in Deleuze's text concerns the precise position of the subjectal in the complex explication of the three orders of time – there are certainly moments in which it would appear Deleuze is, as Brassier argues, inserting voluntary memory, the 'I think', and other subjectal elements into the objectal register. It seems to me that the same line of argument pursued here with respect to individuation also holds with respect to temporality.
7. Both Bains (1997: 520–522) and (Bogue 2009: 302–303) give good glosses of this example. See also the cases of the mathematician at the blackboard and the artist at the canvas (Ruyer 1988: 25).
8. Chapter two of *La Genèse des Formes Vivantes* (Ruyer 1958), 'De la molecule à l'organisme', presents a whole suite of examples, beginning with the carbon atom and working its way up to the case of the living organism, by way of the interesting case of the virus.
9. Three notes: (1) the nature of these concepts cannot be properly examined here, but it is important to see that the other [*Autrui*] as Deleuze thematizes it in *Difference and Repetition* is always situated in relation to the Self and the I. As such, these three concepts would form an essential locus for any discussion of sociality in Deleuze's early work; (2) the I and the Self also find their own parallel in *Anti-Oedipus*, in the exclusive connective and conjunctive syntheses; (3) while the discussion of these concepts is limited in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze devotes them somewhat more attention in *Logic of Sense* in the context of his Leibnizian analysis of the person and the individual (that is, the monad strictly speaking, rather than the intensive form we find in *Difference and Repetition*). Nonetheless, the same structure can be found in play there. Consider the following well-known passage:

> Far from being individual or personal, singularities preside over the genesis of individuals and persons; they are distributed in a 'potential' which admits neither Self nor I, but which produces them by actualizing

> or realizing itself, although the figures of this actualization do not at all resemble the realized potential. Only a theory of singular points is capable of transcending the synthesis of the person and the analysis of the individual as these are (or are made) in consciousness [...] Only when the world, teeming with anonymous and nomadic, impersonal and pre-individual singularities, opens up, do we tread at last on the field of the transcendental. (Deleuze 1990: 102–103)

10. For a much more detailed analysis of this argument, see Chapter 5 in this volume by Keith Ansell-Pearson.

Works cited

Allison, Henry (2004) *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defence* (New Haven: Yale University Press).

Bains, Paul (1997) 'Subjectless Subjectivities', *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 24(3): 511–528.

Benjamin, Walter (2008) *One Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. J. A. Underwood. (Penguin: London).

Bogue, Ronald (2009) 'Raymond Ruyer', in *Deleuze's Philosophical Lineage*, eds., Graham Jones and Jon Roffe (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), 300–320.

Bowden, Sean (2011) 'Gilles Deleuze, a Reader of Gilbert Simondon', in *Gilbert Simondon: Being and Technology*, eds., Arne De Boever, Alex Murray, Jon Roffe and Ashley Woodward (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), 135–153.

Brassier, Ray (2007) *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan).

Brassier, Ray (2011) 'I am a nihilist because I still believe in truth: Ray Brassier interviewed by Rychter' *Kronos* 1(16), accessed August 6, 2014 http://www.kronos.org.pl/index.php?23151,896

Deleuze, Gilles (1968) *Différence et Répétition* (Paris: PUF).

—— (1988a) *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Zone).

—— (1988b) *Foucault*, trans. Séan Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).

—— (1990) *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, ed., Constantin Boundas (London: Athlone).

—— (1994) *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press).

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari (1984) *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (London: Athlone).

—— (1988) *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Athlone).

—— (1994) *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press).

Holland, Eugene (1999) *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to Schizoanalysis* (London: Routledge).

Kant, Immanuel (1998) *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Ruyer, Raymond (1946) *Éléments de Psycho-Biologie* (Paris: PUF).

—— (1952) *Néo-finalisme* (Paris: PUF).
—— (1958) *La Genèse des formes vivantes* (Paris: Flammarion).
—— (1966) *Paradoxes de la conscience et limites de l'automatisme* (Paris: Albin Michel)
—— (1988) 'There is No Subconscious: Embryogenesis and Memory', trans. R. Scott Walker. *Diogenes* 36(24): 24–46.
Sauvanargues, Anne (2011) 'Crystals and Membranes: Individuation and Temporality', trans. Jon Roffe, in *Gilbert Simondon: Being and Technology*, eds., Arne De Boever, Alex Murray, Jon Roffe and Ashley Woodward (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), 57–70.

4

Human and Nonhuman Agency in Deleuze

Sean Bowden

The concept of agency in Deleuze's work has received no small amount of attention in the secondary literature. It is fair to say, however, that the treatment of Deleuzian agency has taken a variety of different and sometimes incompatible forms. A useful way of framing these differences in approach is to view them as turning on the question of the relation between human and nonhuman agencies, where 'nonhuman agency' sometimes means 'the agency of that which subtends the human', and sometimes 'the agency of entities other than human beings'. I would suggest that we can distinguish the ways in which scholars have understood Deleuze's conception of agency by dividing them into two broad camps. On the one hand, there are those who see Deleuze as denying agency to human beings because real agency is essentially nonhuman, in the first sense of this phrase. In other words, for a number of readers of Deleuze, agency must be ontologically identified with something like the 'virtual' ground of all actual things and the events attributable to them. On the other hand, there are those who understand Deleuze as granting agency to human beings. Within this second camp, however, we must further distinguish between those who take Deleuze to treat human and nonhuman agency in a symmetrical way (with 'nonhuman' in this case meaning animals, but also non-organic things); and those who see in Deleuze's work a connection between human agency and some form of nonhuman agency (in the first and/or second sense of this phrase), but who nevertheless also affirm a distinct kind of human intentional agency.

So, who are the occupants of these two camps, beginning with those philosophers who understand Deleuze to deny agency to human beings in favor of a more fundamental 'virtual' agency? Peter Hallward, in *Out of this World*, reads Deleuze as maintaining that real agency – that is,

the capacity to 'make new, to transform, change, disrupt, differ and so on' – belongs only to the realm of 'virtual creatings'. In relation to these virtual creatings, actual creatures such as human beings are merely passive results, products or conduits. For Deleuze, on Hallward's account, 'whatever genuinely acts, thinks or creates is less the work of an individual than of forces that work *through* the individual' (2006: 159; see also 28–29). Brian Massumi, in his *Parables for the Virtual*, likewise takes Deleuze to deny agency to human beings. For Massumi, Deleuze views human volition as ultimately epiphenomenal, or as being 'performed by autonomic, bodily reactions occurring in the brain but outside consciousness ... prior to action' (2002: 29). In other words, for Massumi's Deleuze, human action does not involve human intentionality or consciousness in some form, but rather emerges from the 'pressing crowd' of virtual incipiencies, tendencies or potentials from which the human body is inseparable (2002: 30–31).

In the second camp, we find a good number of thinkers who understand Deleuze to grant agency to human beings. What unites many of these thinkers in their approach to agency in Deleuze is their take-up of what we might call an 'affective assemblage' model of agency.[1] As is clear from the name of this model, this approach draws heavily on Deleuze's (and Deleuze's and Guattari's) work on Spinoza's concept of affect, as well as on Deleuze's and Guattari's ontology of assemblages. The basic idea is this: for Deleuze, following Spinoza, the power of a given body to act – that is, to affect other bodies – is inseparable from its capacity to be affected by other bodies, for better or for worse (see Deleuze 1990a: 93). Moreover, the capacity of a body to affect and be affected is inseparable from the 'affections' experienced by that body, especially the affections of joy and sadness, which, respectively, correspond to good and bad encounters with other bodies or, what amounts to the same thing, increases or decreases in the power of acting as a result of these encounters (Deleuze 1990a: 239–241; see also Deleuze 1988: 48–51). Agency, then, on this view, is a matter of a body's 'becoming active' through its 'joyful' associations with other bodies. Or to put it in terms of the ontology of assemblages advanced in *A Thousand Plateaus*, agency is inseparable from the different 'assemblages' of heterogeneous affective bodies that a given body enters into, where every body is itself an assemblage of more elementary bodies, and so on, *ad infinitum*. As Deleuze and Guattari summarize it:

> 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… 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. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 256–257)

Now, a number of philosophers wishing to develop novel analyses of human political agency have taken up, in various ways, this affective assemblage model of agency (see especially Armstrong 1997; Bignall 2010a and 2010b). However, it is not entirely clear whether they would be prepared to allow that this model of agency also applies to at least some nonhuman entities, and nor is this question of the full extension of Deleuze's concept of agency their primary concern. For this reason, I will put to one side this otherwise extremely important work.

On the other hand, two quite recent and much-discussed works which fall into the second camp, and adopt the affective assemblage model of agency, do straightforwardly claim that agency is not the exclusive preserve of the human being. In the first text, *Vibrant Matter*, Jane Bennett argues that agency should be thought of as distributed throughout a Deleuzo-Spinozan affective assemblage of human and nonhuman 'actants', rather than something explicable only with reference to human will or intentionality (2010: 21; 23). This entails, on Bennett's view, that human and nonhuman agency (in the second sense of 'nonhuman agency') should be treated in a symmetrical fashion, even if Bennett will also argue for a distinct type of human responsibility that calls this symmetry into question. Indeed, I will contend below that, by making this latter move, Bennett ends up implicitly affirming a role for human intentional action in her account of the agency of assemblages.

The second text is John Protevi's *Political Affect*, which combines Deleuzian ontology with complexity theory and some recent developments in cognitive science. He argues in this work that the human subject or agent is not only produced, but sometimes bypassed altogether, in assemblages of somatic forces that subtend the subject and social forces that supertend the subject (2009: xi: 3–4). In other words, for Protevi, agency is sometimes nonhuman in the above-mentioned first sense, since the human body can be the vehicle for an action insofar as it is a conduit for direct connections between somatic and social forces, and in the absence of subjectivity. Nevertheless, Protevi maintains that

he is not eliminativist about the subject, and that human action sometimes encompasses deliberate conscious intentions. And even if Protevi does not directly draw on Deleuze's work in order to argue for this point (drawing rather on Shaun Gallagher's work in the phenomenological tradition), he clearly treats human intentional action as compatible with a Deleuzian understanding of agency.

So what is to be made of these diverse approaches to agency in Deleuze's work? I have argued elsewhere (see Bowden 2014 and 2015) that implicit in Deleuze's *Logic of Sense* is an 'expressive' account of intentional human agency. Such an account, I argue, makes sense of Deleuze's conception of 'willing the event' (see Deleuze 1990b: 149), and allows Deleuze to distinguish between two kinds of events – namely, actions and mere occurrences – and so also to distinguish between agency and patiency. So given that I take human thought and intentions to play a role – what Deleuze would call a 'quasi-causal' role – in what humans can be said to actively do, I take myself to have a reason to reject those readings of Deleuze that see him as denying agency to human beings in favor of some kind of nonhuman 'agency of the virtual'.[2]

But now, with regard to those readings of Deleuze's understanding of agency that one finds in the second camp, I will argue in what follows that there is in fact a need to supplement this work with a Deleuzian account of human intentional agency, along the 'expressive' lines I have explored elsewhere. I will do so, first of all, by showing how Bennett's mobilization of a Deleuzian conception of agency in the ethico-political domain implicitly presupposes an account of human intentional agency. Secondly, I will show that Protevi's desire to preserve a place for human intentional agency within a broader Deleuzian framework actually finds support in Deleuze's work. By way of conclusion, then, I will reiterate the basic features of Deleuze's expressive account of human intentional agency and demonstrate how these are compatible with the basic features of an affective assemblage approach to agency.

Bennett and the 'agency of assemblages'

In *Vibrant Matter*, Jane Bennett seeks to question the identification of agency with human intentional agency and to extend agency to nonhuman things, including nonorganic things. Drawing on Deleuze's work on Spinoza's 'affective bodies' on the one hand, and Deleuze's and Guattari's concept of assemblages on the other, Bennett understands action or doings to be the product of human–nonhuman assemblages, where an 'assemblage owes its agentic capacity to the vitality of

the materialities constituting it' (2010: 34). Bennett's work is a timely reminder that overly-simplistic conceptions of human agency are both descriptively inadequate, insofar as they tend to overlook the complexity of situations in which human action is produced, and normatively problematic, insofar as they don't provide us with the tools to formulate an efficacious environmental ethics (see also May 2013: 13). However, Bennett's argument seems problematic in three respects.

First of all, Bennett asserts that the members of an assemblage, whether simple or complex, are all 'actants' in the sense that they (1) individually possess a 'certain vital force' and (2) are collectively able to produce effects (hence the 'agency of assemblages') (2010: 24). For Bennett, this first claim finds support in Deleuze's reading of Spinoza's concept of *conatus*, which signifies a stubbornness or inertial tendency to persist in the case of simple bodies, or, in the case of complex bodies, an effort made to maintain the specific relation of movement and rest between the complex body's parts (see Deleuze 1990a: 230). However, Bennett's particular use of the concept of *conatus* is ultimately question-begging. Bennett, it would appear, wishes to draw on the concept of *conatus* in order to explain how bodies, whether human or nonhuman, are capable of acting. But what is supposed to be explained here is already assumed in the concept of *conatus*: to be conative is to be capable of acting in some primitive sense. This is clear from what Bennett says about conative bodies. Simply in virtue of being conative, these bodies perform all kinds of actions (seeking, forming alliances, congregating, pursuing, maintaining, vying, etc.), and these basic actions ultimately account for the 'agency' of the assemblages of which these bodies are members. She writes:

> the effort required to maintain the specific relations of 'movement and rest' ... entails continual invention ... [E]very mode, if it is to persist, must seek new encounters ... What it means to be a 'mode', then, is to form alliances and enter assemblages ... [E]ach mode vies with and against the (changing) affections of (a changing set of) other modes ... Conative substance turns itself into confederate bodies, that is, complex bodies that in turn congregate with each other in the pursuit of the enhancement of their power ... [B]odies enhance their power *in* or *as a heterogeneous assemblage*. What this suggests for the concept of *agency* is that the efficacy or effectivity to which that term has traditionally referred becomes distributed across an ontologically heterogeneous field. (2010: 22–23)

Now, it is true that, for Deleuze's Spinoza, an existing (simple or compound) body's *conatus* – or essence, or power of acting – is inseparable from the affections experienced by that body, and thus also its capacity to affect and be affected by other bodies (Deleuze 1990a: 230–231). In Spinoza, however, a body's capacity to act is *identified* with its *conatus*, not *explained* by it. In order to explain a body's *conatus*, we must have reference to Spinoza's conception of God or Nature which, as adequate cause, determines a body to exist by determining extensive parts to enter into the relation that characterizes that body. Only once the body is determined in this way to exist is its power of acting determined as *conatus* and subject to affective modification (see Deleuze 1990a: 230; Deleuze 1988: 98–99). In short, then, absent the affirmation of Spinoza's God or Nature, as *causa sui*, Bennett's attempt to explain agency with reference to the concept of *conatus* is ultimately circular. And it is unclear to what extent Bennett is committed to a metaphysics that embraces a Spinozan notion of substance.[3]

It might be objected, of course, that what really matters here is not so much circularity, but what getting into the circle in the right way brings to light. It might be said that talk of nonhuman conative bodies is ultimately only a useful anthropomorphism that sensitizes us to isomorphisms between the human and nonhuman realms, and the complex ways in which both human and nonhuman factors are implicated in producing 'what happens' in the world (see Bennett 2010: 98–100). But even if this is the case, this kind of talk obfuscates an important distinction between two types of things that happen: the actions or doings we commonly attribute to 'agents' and the mere happenings or undergoings we attribute to 'patients'. This obfuscation is the target of my second criticism of Bennett. Indeed, it seems clear that, in conjunction with other bodies, a given entity may contribute to the production of a particular event *qua* patient (by means of something it undergoes), just as an entity may contribute to an event *qua* agent (by means of something it does). This distinction is familiar and important to us in an everyday way. To take a relatively restricted example, a runner in a road race may cause the runners behind her to trip because she stumbles due to heat exhaustion, or she may cause it by deliberately tripping them while pretending to involuntarily stumble. She is responsible for what happens in both cases in a causal sense (that is, in conjunction with all kind of other elements), but in the first case she is responsible *qua* patient, because of something she undergoes, and in the second case she is responsible *qua* agent, because of something she actively does. It

seems important to distinguish between these types of contributions to what happens. Something is lost if we collapse this distinction. Of course, a particular element of an assemblage might contribute to some effect partly in virtue of what they do, partly in virtue of what they undergo, and it may not be at all clear how these different contributions should be weighted. But the difficulty here does not render the distinction any less important to make. Indeed, an adequate understanding of a given event depends on drawing it in the right way.

Perhaps Bennett would reply that she is ultimately not as interested in these ontological and epistemological questions as she is in the ethical and political question of the best vocabulary to use to talk about the human being's relationship with its natural and artificial environment. Perhaps the vocabulary of human–nonhuman 'affective assemblages' and the agency proper to them is more efficacious than a vocabulary of 'human free will' for talking about the attenuated ethico-political responsibility borne by human individuals and human collectives (as elements in a larger assemblage) for the production of, and response to, environmental harm. As she writes:

> In a world of distributed agency, a hesitant attitude toward assigning singular blame becomes a presumptive virtue … [There is a] need to detach ethics from moralism and to produce guides to action appropriate to a world of vital, crosscutting forces … It is ultimately a matter of political judgment what is more needed today: should we acknowledge the distributive quality of agency to address the power of human-nonhuman assemblages and to resist a politics of blame? Or should we persist with a strategic understatement of material agency in the hope of enhancing the accountability of specific humans? (2010: 38)

But it is one thing to suggest that grounding a notion of responsibility in an overly simplistic conception of intentional human agency is wrongheaded insofar as it leads to scapegoating and the glossing over of the complexity of human–nonhuman relations and events, and quite another to say that the best way to avoid this situation is to attribute agency to anything (including humans, nonhumans and even inorganic things) implicated in the production of some effect. Indeed, as has just been argued, in order to do justice to the complexity of what happens, it seems crucial to hang on to a distinction between agents and patients: between the way something contributes to some event in virtue of what it does, or in virtue of what it undergoes. Moreover, it seems crucial to be

clear about just *what kinds of things can bear responsibility* – in Bennett's attenuated political or ethical sense – for the contributions their doings make to helping or harming the environment. And this brings me to my third criticism: as becomes clear in her discussion of political responsibility, Bennett appears to assume – implicitly, and against the grain of her argument – that only human beings can bear this latter kind of responsibility for the production of, and response to, environmental harm. Moreover, this is precisely because of a trait that Bennett thinks has illegitimately been used to mark humans off from other creatures, namely, their capacity for reflective or reason-responsive intentional agency. As she writes:

> [M]ust a distributive, composite notion of agency … abandon the attempt to hold individuals responsible for their actions or hold officials accountable to the public? … The notion of a confederate agency does attenuate the blame game, but it does not thereby abandon the project of identifying (what Arendt called) the sources of harmful effects. To the contrary, such a notion broadens the range of places to look for sources … In each item on this list, humans and their intentions participate … Perhaps the ethical responsibility of an individual human now resides in one's response to the assemblages in which one finds oneself participating: Do I attempt to extricate myself from assemblages whose trajectory is likely to do harm? Do I enter into the proximity of assemblages whose conglomerate effectivity tends toward the enactment of nobler ends? (2010: 37–38)

Now, it is true that Bennett holds that human intentionality is agentic only to the extent that it is implicated in a larger human–nonhuman assemblage (2010: 36; 108). But it in no way follows from this that nonhuman things can be thought of as agents in the way that Bennett thinks of ethico-political human agency in the above passage. In short, while Bennett wishes to extend agency to nonhuman things, she does not (because she cannot?) extend to nonhuman agents the capacity to take responsibility for harm in a reflective way – that is, as a *response* to questions such as 'Do I attempt to extricate myself from assemblages whose trajectory is likely to do harm?', 'Do I enter into the proximity of assemblages whose conglomerate effectively tends toward the enactment of nobler ends?', etc. But to fail to extend this capacity to nonhuman agents is to make a distinction between types of agents and types of action (reflectively endorsed action and non-reflectively endorsed action), which is something that Bennett does not want to do.

But let us grant that the (attenuated) human capacity for intentional agency can be coherently thought 'at the same level' as the agentic capacity of things, with the difference between these capacities being a matter of degree rather than of kind. We should ask: How exactly should this difference be understood? Bennett does not say. She offers only this brief analogy:

> [The] striving that may be exercised by a human within the assemblage … is perhaps best understood on the model of riding a bicycle on a gravel road. One can throw one's weight this way or that, inflect the bike in one direction or toward one trajectory of motion. But the rider is but one actant operative in the moving whole. (2010: 38)

In order to be compelling, Bennett's ethico-political program requires a more detailed account of the way in which human intentional action is compatible with an ontology of affective assemblages. It is such an account that I hope to advance in this chapter, in part through the work of John Protevi, and in part through an examination of Deleuze's work in *The Logic of Sense*.

Protevi and 'affective cognition'

In *Political Affect*, John Protevi seeks to challenge the model of the agent as a 'rational cognitive subject', which is to say, the agent who has particular desires; registers various features of its world and forms representations of them; calculates how best to satisfy its desires given these representations; and then physically acts in order to realize its desires according to its representations (2009: 3). In contrast to this model of an ideally rational and calculating Cartesian agent, Protevi argues that the agent is bio-cultural: always-already embodied in the 'somatic' and embedded in an ecological and socio-political environment. Moreover, Protevi's account of agency evinces a certain nonhumanism, insofar as the human subject is not only produced but also sometimes *bypassed* in the imbrications of neural and physiological processes 'below' the subject and social and political practices 'above' the subject (2009: 33; see also May 2013: 12–13). In certain cases, Protevi argues, within a given eco-social assemblage, the forces subtending and supertending the subject directly interact in such a way that it become appropriate to say that the agent of an action is not a human subject, but that 'the body does something, is the agent for an action, in the absence of a subject'

(2009: 50). Such agency, of course, is a kind of nonhuman agency, if by 'human' we mean something displaying reflective volition.

Protevi's major, and discomfiting, example of this nonhuman agency is to be found in his analysis of the way in which the deep-seated inhibition against killing, which has been empirically observed in a majority of soldiers, is overcome in the bypassing of conscious, personal subjectivity. For Protevi, in situations involving, for example, the death of a comrade or panic over being engulfed, a soldier's subjectivity can sometimes 'drop out' in the triggering of a 'berserker rage', which is to say, a 'frenzy of killing anything that enters the death zone immediately in front of the berserker' (2009: 151–152). In such an extreme case of rage, an 'affect program' – an evolutionarily inherited, somatic 'rage module' – is activated, and 'a modular agent replaces the subject' (2009: 146). In other instances, the capacity to kill is facilitated through military training and operant conditioning focusing on teamwork, command and dehumanization, as well as through the use of certain types of weapons and other techniques that put the enemy at a greater 'distance' (2009: 151). Through such disciplinary technologies, 'direct access of the military machine to reflexes embedded in the spinal cord of the soldier' is achieved. In this way, unpredictable rage states tend to be avoided; but what is triggered in battle is still a non-conscious and non-subjective agency involving an 'automatic "read and react" mode in which soldiers fire individually on whatever human-shaped targets appear in their range of vision' (2009: 155). In other words, within an assemblage of somatic processes and disciplinary and other social practices, we see the emergence of a kind of nonhuman agency in which the body of the soldier is involved. Or as Protevi puts it, one sees here:

> two elements we need to take into account besides the notion of subjective agency: (1) that there is another sense of agent as nonsubjective controller of bodily action, either reflex or basic emotion, and (2) that in some cases the military unit and nonsubjective reflexes and basic emotions are intertwined in such a way as to bypass the soldier's subjectivity qua controlled intentional action. In these cases the practical agent of the act of killing is not the individual person or subject but the emergent assemblage of military unit and nonsubjective reflex or equally nonsubjective affect program. (2009: 152–153)

What this analysis entails for attributions of responsibility to individual soldiers for their actions in battle is troubling. But that aside, it is crucial to note that, despite defending here a type of nonhuman agency, Protevi

is in no way an eliminativist about the subject, or about the psychological register which is traditionally thought to underpin intentional agency. He does not wish to affirm the 'death of the subject' or the non-reality of subjective action (2009: 31; 54). Rather, like Deleuze and Foucault, he understands subjectivity as an emergent capacity of bodies caught up in various 'subjectification practices' (2009: 31). For Protevi, individual human subjects may be produced and sometimes bypassed in the interaction of corporeal processes and socio-political practices; but when they are not bypassed, they can be appropriately described as cognitive agents. These cognitive agents are not, of course, the rational and calculative agents mentioned above. They are rather agents who, despite being inseparable from a larger eco-social assemblage of bodies that affect and are affected by them, actively make sense of their world and adopt orientations of action (2009: 33; 50). Protevi calls this 'sense-making' and 'directed action' of an agent in its world 'affective cognition' (2009: 49).

Like Bennett then, and even though their work also diverges in important respects, Protevi advocates an 'affective assemblage' approach to agency. As with Bennett, this is an approach that owes a large debt to Deleuze's and Guattari's concept of assemblages, as well as Deleuze's work (with and without Guattari) on Spinoza's concept of affect. With regard to the latter concept, Protevi argues that affect is a body's means of negotiating its world. Affect essentially 'tracks' how a body changes in relation to the different situations in which it finds itself (2009: 33). Protevi follows Deleuze and Guattari by understanding affect in both a physiological/objective register and a psychological/subjective register. On the one hand, affect is affecting or being affected: a body's undergoing some somatic change as the result of an encounter with another body (even if this change is only the laying down of a 'somatic marker' letting a body know what a particular encounter *would be* like to live through – see 2009: 48–49). On the other hand, affect is the 'felt change' in the power of a body as a result of this encounter: an increase or decrease in power felt as joy or sadness (2009: 49). Furthermore, like Deleuze and Guattari, Protevi understands affect to be inseparable from the capacity of bodies to form assemblages (or, in Protevi's adopted language of dynamical systems theory, 'emergent functional structures') with other bodies. Indeed, these assemblages are precisely where 'affective cognition' – which is to say, the 'sense-making' of bodies politic – takes place, in the form of complex 'feedback loops' between brain, body and the eco-social environment (2009: 49–50).

Now, following Protevi, the word 'sense' in 'sense-making' should be understood to connote three things, corresponding to the different ways of understanding the French word, *sens*: sensibility, signification and direction. What this means is that sense-making, as embodied and embedded affective cognition, must be understood to proceed along three interconnected lines: in a body's openness to its environment or capacity to be affected in sensibility; in a body's establishment of signification in terms of the (potential) values for that body of various affective encounters with other bodies; and in a body's establishment of a direction or orientation for action by selecting or 'actualizing' one of the paths laid out by signification (2009: 51–54). Affective cognition is at once these three aspects of sense-making. In other words, the cognition of cognitive agents is not something that takes place between perception and action, as does the processing of representations in the model of the 'rational cognitive subject'. The cognition of cognitive agents is rather 'situated action': a being's real-time direction of its action in the world, where this being is understood to be embodied, embedded and affectively open to its eco-social world (2009: 25).

What Protevi calls 'affective cognition' thus implies agency understood as situated action. But situated action is not always equivalent to conscious and deliberative, human intentional action, and nor should Protevi's allusion to the notion of 'choice' in talking about the '*selection*' of 'a path from among the *options* laid out by signification' mislead us into thinking that it is (2009: 54 – emphasis added). In the first chapter of *Political Affect*, while discussing his use of the concept of 'autonomous systems' with reference to the work of Varela, Freeman and Juarrero, Protevi argues that an individual navigating its world makes decisions and forms intentions (understood here in a restricted sense as 'outreaching behavior' and not as reflectively endorsed intentions), as the brain–body–environment assemblage, which is characterized by massive internal feedback phenomena, settles into patterns and determinate configurations of brain activity are established (2009: 17–18; see also Protevi 2010: 426). However, if there is an 'agent' here, it would seem closer to a brain–body–world assemblage non-consciously settling into patterns, rather than a deliberative, conscious person.

In the second chapter, however, Protevi does argue that the 'actualization phase' of sense-making can sometimes encompass deliberate, conscious intentions. In other words, there are cases where a deliberate, conscious decision of an individual person is made and directs an overall plan (2009: 54). This promises to give us an account of reflective human

intentional action that is compatible with an ontology of assemblages. What is this account? Protevi is rather light on details, so we will be obliged to fill them in here.

Protevi references and appears to follow the work of Shaun Gallagher (see Protevi 2009: 55–56), who argues that events of conscious deliberation can enter into the feedback loops characterizing the brain–body–environment assemblages from which cognitive agents are inseparable. Gallagher's argument for conscious intentions having real effects on behavior and action relies in part on studies of rehabilitation after brain damage. As he and Marcel (1999) argue, such studies show that changes in the content and organization of an agent's intention result in changes in the performance level of an action. In particular, improvements in the bodily movements of patients recovering from brain injury appear to be significantly enhanced when these bodily movements are performed as part of larger (pragmatically and socially contextualized) actions involving intentions and attentional foci that go beyond the physical movement itself (e.g., drinking, or toasting someone's health, as opposed to simply lifting a glass). The conclusion that Gallagher and Marcel draw is that, not only does a basic or motor action take on meaning relative to a larger intentional action, it is also generated by that intention (1999: 10). As they put it,

> In pragmatically and socially contextualized tasks behavior tends to be more integrated … [T]he availability and execution of behavior is influenced by the description or the intention under which such behavior is generated. Personal goals and motives, as well as the social pragmatics of the situation (always defined relative to the subject), can clearly provide the energizing mechanism which transforms intentions into action. (Gallagher and Marcel 1999: 11–12)

It is crucial to note that the agent here – the one whose deliberate, conscious intentions play a role in what they do – is a long way from the disembodied and disembedded 'rational cognitive subject' that Protevi critiques. Indeed, for Gallagher and Marcel, and so also for Protevi, the agent who intentionally performs basic or component actions *by* performing larger intentional actions, cannot be abstracted from the eco-social context in which the embodied performance of his or her intentional action unfolds. This agent is said to be inseparable from, or 'expressed' in, his or her actions as they affect and are affected by its eco-social context. In fact, as Gallagher and Marcel argue, our understanding of this intentional agent is obscured if we treat it in an abstract

way, or take a detached stance towards it. This agent is best accessed by taking an embodied and embedded first-person perspective. More specifically, the intentional agent is said to encounter herself, firstly, in a pre-reflective way as a spatial presence and a set of capabilities through the mostly non-conscious proprioceptive and ecological feedback that accompanies the duration of her action; and secondly, through a kind of conscious 'embedded reflection' on what it is that she is doing (see Gallagher and Marcel 1999: 19–28).

Now, it is Gallagher's and Marcel's notion of 'embedded' or 'situated reflection' that seems to be the key to understanding Protevi's claim that the 'actualization phase of sense-making', or 'adoption of a direction for action', can sometimes encompass 'deliberate intention without compromising our commitment to a materialist and naturalistic take on the embodied-embedded nature of bodies politic' (Protevi 2009: 55–56). This is because, for Gallagher and Marcel, 'embedded reflection' is the reflective consciousness of an agent who is *already* immersed in actions that are *already* meaningful and significant within a given pragmatic or social context, directing her attention to her own activities in the world or to her intentions (Gallagher and Marcel 1999: 25–26). As they put it, embedded reflection 'involves the type of activity that I engage in when someone asks me what I am doing or what I plan to do', and is directed 'toward my own activities in the world where my intentions are already directed' (25). The aim of such situated reflection, then, *in medias res*, might be to continue certain actions, to keep one's intentions accessible as pragmatic guides to one's ongoing actions, or to explain oneself (to oneself or to others) in terms of these actions. It might involve thinking matters through in terms of how one's actions relate to larger projects; or it might involve evaluating desires, beliefs and larger intentions in terms of the commitment to acting on them. And such thinking and evaluating is non-isolatable from what we and the other members of our social milieu take to be meaningful. Reflection here is thus embedded in the particulars of the practical or active life of the agent over time, as well as in the social and ecological contexts in which this agent finds himself, and in which his actions unfold and have real consequences. To be sure, the capacity for such situated reflection presupposes conceptual knowledge; narrative competence; maturation and socialization; the ability to access and issue reports about ones states, traits, and dispositions; the capacity to make judgments based on beliefs, desires and evaluations, and so on (Gallagher 2012: 128: 171). But this is only to say, once again, that the intentional agent is thoroughly embedded in a social and socializing milieu.

So now, when events of embedded reflection enter into the feedback loops characterizing the brain–body–environment assemblage from which the agent is inseparable,

> certain things in the environment begin to matter to the agent. Meaning and interpretation come into the picture… [M]y conscious interpretation of the situation has an effect. To the extent that consciousness enters into the ongoing production of action, and contributes to the production of further action, *even if significant aspects of this production take place non-consciously*, our actions are intentional. (Gallagher 2005: 239)

Finally, then, this seems to me the significance of Protevi's references to Gallagher. Gallagher provides Protevi with a means of spelling out how his account of affective cognition is compatible with the idea that deliberate, conscious intentions – in the form of an agent's embedded reflection of what she is doing or might do – can sometimes direct action. But now, given this understanding of embedded reflection and its operation in what Protevi calls the 'actualization phase of sense-making', we can begin to see how a Deleuzian affective assemblage account of agency can be supplemented with an account of human intentional action that would be both appropriate to it, and eventually help ameliorate Bennett's account of ethico-political agency. The question, however, in the context of a chapter in a collection titled *Deleuze and the Non/Human*, is whether we must have reference to the phenomenological tradition, of which Gallagher is a part, in order to achieve this. Are there resources in Deleuze's oeuvre for fleshing out this account of human intentional action? By way of an extended conclusion, I will try to answer this question.

Deleuze and 'expressive agency'

Deleuze's work rarely touches on intentional action. A key discussion does, however, appear in *The Logic of Sense* (see especially Deleuze 1990b: 202–209). Moreover, in this particular book, Deleuze provides us with the resources for developing an account of human intentional action that is, arguably, compatible with an ontology of assemblages.

I have elsewhere attempted to spell out the expressive conception of intentional agency that remains largely implicit in *The Logic of Sense* (see Bowden 2014 and 2015). In this work, however, I also voiced some

reservations about the possibility of taking a synthetic approach to Deleuze's different books in order to explicate a single Deleuzian account of agency (see Bowden 2014: 232). So, what I would like to do here is leave to one side the question of whether there is a single and coherent Deleuzian conception of agency, distributed throughout his oeuvre, and argue for the way in which the general features of an expressive account of agency, which Deleuze can be seen to defend in *The Logic of Sense*, can be thought of as compatible with the general features of an affective assemblage approach to agency.

The key idea behind the expressive conception of agency is that actions are in some sense primary in relation to the intentions that animate them. This is what sets the expressive conception apart from 'voluntaristic' approaches to agency, where intentions are thought of as primary in relation to actions. For the voluntarist, there are two separate elements of action: a physical movement, and an intention that temporally precedes and causes this movement. Moreover, for the voluntarist, the agent of an action has a privileged and unrevisable access to this prior and causally efficacious intention, which is accordingly more or less fully specified in the agent's mind. For the expressivist, on the contrary, an agent's intention is not incorrigibly known by the agent, and is not artificially separable from the action itself, such as this unfolds, and produces effects, in shared or public space. In other words, for an expressivist, to say that actions are primary with respect to intentions is to say that actions 'express' (or 'manifest', or 'communicate') their agent's intentions, and at two levels. Firstly, intentions are said to be ontologically inseparable from the unfolding of the actions that manifest them in the actual world. Secondly, the action from which an intention is inseparable is non-isolatable from a public 'expressive medium' in which the meaning and purpose of the action can be articulated and clarified (see Bowden 2014: 238–239; Bowden 2015; see also Taylor 1979 and 1983).

Now, a number of points should be noted here. First of all, it has just been said that the expressivist denies that intentions are separately identifiable causes of actions. Intentions are rather expressed, manifested, or communicated in actions as they unfold in a social, 'sense-making' space. But now, when we turn to *The Logic of Sense*, and insofar as we understand action to be a kind of event, we see that Deleuze adopts something akin to this position. He affirms, firstly, that there is a strict ontological distinction between the realm of bodies and causes, and the realm of events and sense (1990b: 4–11). And secondly, he argues that

one must nevertheless 'will the event', where this means understanding, wanting and representing the event in the expressive dimension proper to it (1990b: 149). In other words, for Deleuze, actions should not be thought of as events *caused* by intentions that can be identified apart from these actions – as, for example, prior psychological states or brain states – because causes and events belong to different ontological registers. While it is true that, for Deleuze, corporeal things and their causal relations produce everything that happens, the happening itself, or event (or in this case, the action-event), is inseparable from expressed sense (1990b: 4–5, 12, 22). An action *qua* event is inseparable from the propositions that express its sense, which is to say that an action is inseparable from an expressive 'quasi-cause'. 'Willing' this action-event, then, involves 'identifying with' or 'becoming' this expressive quasi-cause (Deleuze 1990b: 146, 148), which is to say, grasping the content of one's intention – the meaning and purpose of one's action – in its non-isolatability from a shared expressive medium.

The second point that should be noted is that the expressivist would want to say that, despite not being causes in the classical sense of this term, intentions still play a role in action. In other words, on an expressive account of agency, intentions are not epiphenomenal, or simply rationalized after the fact. When an expressivist says that intentions and actions are ontologically inseparable, what they mean is that actions are intrinsically directed, or inhabited by the intentions that direct them, even if the articulation of the content of this intention is inseparable from the action's unfolding in the expressive dimension proper to it (see Taylor 1983: 2–9). In other words, it is only as the action takes place and is made sense of that an agent's more or less inarticulate sense of her intention-in-action becomes clarified or specified, for her as much as for others. And it may very well be the case that this intention-in-action comes to be adequately explicated, in the eyes of both the agent and her social milieu, only after a long process of hermeneutical struggle.

But now, in *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze appears to acknowledge precisely this feature of the expressive account of agency. In the 29th Series on 'Good Intentions', Deleuze argues that the category of intentions entails a kind of division within actions. On the one hand, an action is always an 'image of action' projected on a 'physical surface' where it appears as intended. On the other hand, an action is always an 'accomplished action' projected on a 'metaphysical surface' where it appears as 'produced'. And the difference between these two 'halves' of

action is constitutive of what Deleuze calls a 'crack of thought' (Deleuze 1990b: 207–208). Setting aside a technical explanation of the terms in which Deleuze formulates this point,[4] what he appears to want to say is this: every action envelops a difference between (1) the 'image' the embodied agent has of what he is intentionally doing, and (2) the articulation of the meaning and purpose of that action as it unfolds on the 'surface of sense'. Moreover, it is often the case that these two 'halves' of action cannot be satisfactorily reconciled, demanding reflection and thought on the part of the agent. In other words, for Deleuze, it appears that an agent always has some sense of what she is intentionally doing, while at the same time an explication of the content of this intention-in-action depends on the sense that can be made of it in the public, but also contested, expressive medium of language and conceptual thought. In this way, then, for Deleuze, intentions and consciousness are far from epiphenomenal. They have a double role to play in action. An agent's pre-reflective intention (her sense of what she is doing) intrinsically directs her action, but she also participates in a reflective way in the articulation and clarification of her intention-in-action (that is, in her action's expressive 'quasi-cause').

The third point that must be made can be stated quite simply: it is the category of expressed or expressible intentions that we make reference to in order to distinguish between actions and mere happenings, and so between agents and patients. Intentional actions, on this account, are the 'doings' of agents who are expressive human beings. Mere happenings, undergoings, reflex movements, and the like, are events that happen to, or through, patients.

Given this, I would like to suggest that it is this expressive, Deleuzian conception of intentional agency that has the potential to ameliorate Bennett's affective assemblage approach to ethico-political agency – that is, insofar as this latter presupposes the capacity of human agents to reflect on and take responsibility for what they are intentionally doing, *qua* elements in a larger assemblage, to harm or help the environment shared with nonhumans. I would also like to suggest that this expressive conception of intentional agency might provide Protevi with a specifically Deleuzian account of the reflective and deliberate conscious intentions that he sees as playing a role in the 'actualization phase of sense-making'. The fourth and final point to be made, then, is that an expressive approach to intentional human agency, a version of which can be found in *The Logic of Sense*, is more or less compatible with a Deleuzian, affective assemblage conception of agency.

We can recall that, for Deleuze, what a given body can do – its power of acting – is the result of its affective relations with an entire, heterogeneous assemblage of bodies and forces. We can also recall that Protevi's account of 'affective cognition' or 'sense-making' presented itself as a faithful 'updating' of the Deleuzian affective assemblage conception of agency, bringing it into line with developments in contemporary science. So let us now grant that Protevi's account is cogent. In other words, let us grant that, for Deleuze, a human being is essentially embodied, embedded and affectively open to its world, and that the mostly non-conscious settling-into-patterns of complex feedback loops between brain, body and environment explains the human being's real-time direction of its action in the world. It appears here that we have a Deleuzian, affective assemblage account of a human doing that has 'direction' or is purposeful, but where the precise content of the intention animating this doing remains opaque to the agent (since it is the result of a mostly non-conscious process). It is at this point, then, that an expressive conception of intentional human agency needs to be introduced. The more or less inarticulate sense that a human being has of her intention-in-action, insofar as this action takes place and has significance in an environment shared with others, will be clarified and specified in a public, expressive medium. In other words, the meaning and purpose of the action from which the agent's intention is inseparable, will be gradually formulated through an expressive and conceptually articulated exchange involving the perspectives of both the agent and the members of her social milieu. It is in this way that the human being, *qua* conscious agent who 'wills' his action by participating in its expressive quasi-cause, explicitly deliberates or reflects on what it is he is doing, takes responsibility for his action, and relates his present action to the production of further actions. In short, what a Deleuzian conception of expressive agency promises is an account of human intentional action that is compatible with the idea that the human being is both immersed in a world of nonhuman forces and inseparable from affective relations with nonhuman animals and other things.

Notes

1. It is worth noting that Massumi also defends something like an affective assemblage model of agency. What ultimately distinguishes his work from these other thinkers, however, is his epiphenomenalism.

2. I also think there are other problems inherent in Hallward's and Massumi's accounts, although this is not a claim I can defend here. For a compelling critique of Hallward, see Protevi (2007).
3. What is clear, however, is that, in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze wishes to divest himself of precisely this notion (1994: 40–41).
4. See, however, Bowden (2011: 225–226).

Works cited

Armstrong, Aurelia (1997) 'Some Reflections on Deleuze's Spinoza: Composition and Agency' in *Deleuze and Philosophy: The Difference Engineer*, ed., Keith Ansell-Pearson (Routledge, London and New York), 44–57.

Bennett, Jane (2010) *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press).

Bignall, Simone (2010a) *Postcolonial Agency: Critique and Constructivism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press).

—— (2010b) 'Affective Assemblages: Ethics beyond Enjoyment' in *Deleuze and the Postcolonial*, eds., Simone Bignall and Paul Patton (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), 78–102.

Bowden, Sean (2011) *The Priority of Events: Deleuze's* Logic of Sense (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press).

—— (2014) '"Willing the Event": Expressive Agency in Deleuze's *Logic of Sense*', *Critical Horizons* 15(3): 231–248.

—— (2015) 'Tragedy and Agency in Hegel and Deleuze,' in *At the Edges of Thought: Deleuze and Post-Kantian Philosophy*, eds., Craig Lundy and Daniela Voss (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press).

Deleuze, Gilles (1988) *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. R. Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights Books).

—— (1990a) *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books).

—— (1990b) *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, ed., C. V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press).

—— (1994) *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Athlone Press).

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).

Gallagher, Shaun (2005) *How the Body Shapes the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

—— (2012) *Phenomenology* (London: Palgrave Macmillan).

Gallagher, Shaun and A. J. Marcel (1999) 'The Self in Contextualized Action', *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 6(4): 4–30.

Hallward, Peter (2006) *Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* (London and New York: Verso).

Latour, Bruno (2005) *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press).

Massumi, Brian (2002) *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham NC: Duke University Press).

May, Todd (2013) 'Humanism and Solidarity', *Parrhesia* 18: 11–21.

Protevi, John (2007) 'Review of Peter Hallward, *Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation*', *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, August 3.
—— (2009) *Political Affect: Connecting the Social and the Somatic* (Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press).
—— (2010), 'Adding Deleuze to the Mix', *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 9(3): 417–436.
Taylor, Charles (1979) 'Action as Expression', in *Intention and Intentionality: Essays in Honor of G. E. M. Anscombe*, eds., Cora Diamond and J. Teichmann (Ithaca: Cornell University Press).
—— (1983) 'Hegel and the Philosophy of Action', in *Hegel's Philosophy of Action*, eds., L. S. Stepelevich and D. Lamb (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press).

5

Beyond the Human Condition: Bergson and Deleuze

Keith Ansell-Pearson

Introduction

In his interpretations of Hume, Bergson, Nietzsche and Spinoza, Deleuze is engaged in the search for a superior human nature. In this essay my focus is on Deleuze's interpretation of Bergson and the attempt to think and go beyond the human condition. In his essay on Bergson and difference of 1956, in his lecture course on *Creative Evolution* of 1960, in his text of 1966 entitled *Bergsonism,* and in subsequent writings such as his collaboration with Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus,* Deleuze reveals his interest in Bergson's effort to think beyond the human condition. This is perhaps expressed most remarkably and intriguingly in *Bergsonism* when Deleuze writes of the human as the being that has the capacity 'of scrambling the planes, of going beyond his own plane as his own condition, in order finally to express naturing Nature' (Deleuze 1988: 107). In short, the question at hand is the following: how can the human become a creator equal to the whole movement of creation and invent a society of creators? How are we to think such a possibility? That is, by what means or methods of philosophy and of action can such a superior human nature become accessible to us? This is what I set out to explore and enlighten in this essay. I shall proceed by focusing largely on Bergson's text of 1907, *Creative Evolution*, and shall draw heavily on Deleuze's readings of this text as well as advancing my own interpretation of it and as one that endeavors to add support to Deleuze's insights. The critical question might be raised: in privileging the human being in his conception of creative evolution does Bergson not re-instate the worst prejudices of human thought and its presumptions about nature, life, and evolution? As we shall see, the 'privilege' of the human is of a special sort of openness, one intended to place the human into contact,

through creative intuition and emotion, with the rest of nature and the living world.

Philosophy and the study of evolution

In the English-speaking world, *Creative Evolution* (CE) appears to have the status of an optional text in Bergson's oeuvre.[1] This is in marked contrast to the French reception where thinkers from Canguilhem to Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze undertook close readings of the text. So long as we lack an encounter with this text, we remain ignorant of crucial aspects of Bergson's attempt to reform and transform philosophical thinking and practice and the impact this had on aspects of Deleuze's thinking. Bergson is a diligent reader of the biological literature of his day and intended to make a contribution to the science of biology and to the philosophy of life.[2] The primary aim of the book though is to show the need for a fundamental reformation of philosophy. Bergson wants to show the limits of mechanism, and how, through an appreciation of the evolution of life, philosophy can expand our perception of the universe. This is perhaps the key aspect of Bergson's teaching and the one that had the deepest impact on Deleuze and his promotion of Bergsonism. Today aspects of Bergson's attempt to expand human perception in the text may not be to the taste of many readers, keen, as they no doubt are, to shy away from any romance of evolution. On this point it might be claimed that Bergson is remaining faithful to philosophy's vocation as the product of wonder: 'The effort after the general characterization of the world around us is the romance of human thought' (Whitehead 1934: 9). However, even if today we feel no affinity with this aspect of Bergson's thinking about evolution, I want to show (1) that we can still gain a great deal of instruction from his attempt to get us closer to the realities of life and creative evolution, and (2) that Deleuze is an instructive reader of Bergson precisely on the issues that this effort addresses. We need to do justice to two elements of Bergson on the attempt to think beyond the human condition: first, how he endeavors to demonstrate the possibility of bringing the human into contact with other realities, such as the inhuman and the superhuman; and, second, how it seeks to show that on the level of a contingent evolution the human represents the significance of evolution in *a special sense.* My essay is an attempt to illuminate these complex issues and with the aid of Deleuze. Why should we feel motivated by this endeavor to think beyond our human condition? Deleuze provides the essential insight that is required here: we find ourselves born or thrown into a world that is ready-made and

that we have not made our own. This world always goes in the direction of the relaxed aspect of duration, Deleuze argues (Deleuze 2007: 86). It is on account of the fact that the human condition is one of relaxation that we have such difficulty in understanding the meaning of creation – precisely the notion that proves essential for artistic invention, for new modes of ethical being, and for philosophical perception, and that lies, of course, at the heart of Bergson's project.

Bergson is making two essential claims in his text, and they are interrelated:

1. First, that we have to see the theory of knowledge and the theory of life as deeply related.
2. Second, that there is a need to 'think beyond the human condition' or 'human state'. Indeed, Bergson conceives philosophy as the discipline that 'raises us above the human condition' ('*la philosophie nous aura élevés au-dessus de la condition humaine*') and makes the effort to 'surpass' ('*dépasser*') it (Bergson 1965: 50, 193). This reveals itself to be something of an extraordinary endeavor since it means bringing the human intellect into rapport with other kinds of consciousness. Bergson does not specify what exactly he means by this in his introduction. I will return to this below: that is, of what it means to expand human perception and just how we are to do this.

How are these two points related? Bergson claims that the theory of knowledge and theory of life are to be regarded as 'inseparable'. If we do not place our thinking about the nature, character, and limits of knowledge within the context of the evolution of life then we risk uncritically accepting the concepts that have been placed at our disposal. It means we think within pre-existing frames. We need, then, to ask two questions: first, how has the human intellect evolved (since it does not simply think for the sake of it but has evolved as an organ of action and utility)? And second, how can we enlarge and go beyond the frames of knowledge available to us?

Bergson has a specific conception of the human intellect and of matter. The intellect has molded itself on the geometrical tendency of matter and so as to better further its instrumental manipulations of matter. His chief claim is that the intellect has to be viewed within the context of the evolution of human life and that when we do this we can better grasp its limits and how to think beyond it. The task, in short, is to attempt to think beyond the representational and spatial habits of the intellect. For Bergson perhaps the chief function of philosophy is to expand our

perception of the world and the universe. Although Whitehead contests Bergson's view that the intellect has an inherent tendency to spatialize, he does think that 'the history of philosophy supports Bergson's charge that the human intellect "spatializes the universe"', ignoring the fluency of life and analyzing the world in terms of static categories and a static materialism (Whitehead 1978: 209; see also 321).

Bergson's criticism in CE is chiefly directed at what he calls 'evolutionist philosophy', by which he specifically means the work of Herbert Spencer. The problem with this philosophy is that it uncritically extends to the phenomena of life the same methods of explanation that have yielded successful results in the case of the study of unorganized matter. Bergson accuses this evolutionism, which in Kantian fashion claims only to come up with a symbolical image of the real in which the essence of things will always escape us, of an excess of humility. He says this because he thinks that it is possible for us to go beyond the human condition and enlarge our perception so as to provide us with an insight into the 'depths of life'. He also insists that this is not easy to do.

Here we see the character of Bergson's interest in evolution. It forms an essential part of his very conception of what philosophy is: an attempt at an enlarged perception where we think beyond the human condition. The problem with the mechanistic and geometrical understanding is that 'it makes the total activity of life shrink to the form of a certain human activity which is only a partial and local manifestation of life…' (Bergson 1983: xii). This suggests that 'life' is not one thing for him and can be appreciated in plural ways. In the text itself Bergson will argue that matter itself is to be characterized by certain tendencies, such as spatiality, so when the human intellect thinks in these terms it is representing an aspect of the real. Bergson's point is that this is only one aspect.

How, though, is it possible to think beyond the human condition and outside of its particular framing of reality? This is where Bergson appeals to evolution itself and stresses that the line of evolution that has culminated in the human is not the only line. His idea seem to be a radical one, namely, that there are other forms of life-consciousness that express something that is 'immanent and essential in the evolutionary movement' (Bergson 1983: xii), and the critical task is to then bring these other forms into contact or communication with the human intellect. Bergson asks: 'would not the result be a consciousness as wide as life?' What does he have in mind? The reader has to wait until the later chapters in the book before being able to comprehend him. Bergson is suggesting that it is possible to cultivate, through intellectual effort, a

perception of life where we experience something of the very impetus of creative life itself or what he describes as 'the push of life' and that has led to the creation of divergent forms of life from a common impulsion, such as plant and animal. In short, philosophy is that discipline of thinking that tries to make the effort to establish contact with the vitality and creativity of life and involving novelty, invention, process and duration. As I have noted, he doesn't pretend that it is easy to do this; on the contrary, he stresses that it is necessary to perform a certain violence on ourselves so as to break with our evolved habits of representation and established patterns of thought. In the introduction to CE he tackles the objection that may be raised against the project he is inviting us to pursue: will it not be through our intellect and our intellect alone that we perceive the other forms of consciousness? In answer to this objection he points out that this would be the case *if* we were pure intellects, but the fact is, he thinks, we are not. Around our conceptual and logical modes of thought, and that have molded themselves on certain aspects and tendencies of the real, there remains a 'vague nebulosity' that is made of the same substance out of which the luminous nucleus we call the intellect has been fashioned. Here we shall find, he thinks and hopes, certain powers – powers of insight, vision, and perception – the nature of which we have only an indistinct feeling when we remain shut up in ourselves and exist as closed beings. The task of philosophy is to make these powers clear and distinct, Bergson says in clear reference to Descartes.

Bergson thinks we are all born Platonists. By this he means the human need to fit reality into the ready-made garments of our ready-made concepts: 'The idea that for a new object we might have to create a new concept, perhaps a new method of thinking, is deeply repugnant to us' (Bergson 1983: 48). As in his introduction he now appeals to an expansion of our intellectual habits and forms of thought and so as to develop an idea of 'the whole of life': 'Such is the philosophy of life to which we are leading up. It claims to transcend both mechanism and finalism … ' (Bergson 1983: 50). Bergson, in fact, conceives of philosophy as an effort to 'dissolve into the whole'. Of course, what is not clear at this stage in his argument is why we should endeavor to think in terms of the whole and for what ends. I shall explain what this amounts to and how it might be carried out in the section below on intuition and sympathy. This 'dissolving' has to be seen as the ultimate end of the task of thinking beyond the human condition.

Bergson now attempts to give an indication of the key principle of his demonstration. He conceives of life as 'the continuation of one and the

same impetus, divided into divergent lines of evolution' (Bergson 1983: 53). The development of life has taken place in terms of a dissociation of tendencies, ones that 'were unable to grow beyond a certain point without becoming mutually incompatible' (ibid.). Not until chapter 3 of the text does Bergson deal in a concerted fashion with questions of contingency. He notes at this point in the book that there is no reason why we cannot imagine evolution having taken place in the one single individual being and having only the one dimension. However, it is a fact that on earth evolution has taken place through 'millions of individuals' and along divergent lines. He further maintains that something of the whole abides in each one of evolution's parts, and this common element may explain the presence of identical organs in significantly different organisms and forms of life. In short, there is a common impulsion of life and this may account for the phenomenon of convergent evolution.

As a practice of reflection philosophy is faced with the paradoxical task of freeing itself from forms and habits of thought that are strictly and exclusively intellectual. The 'will to truth' that Bergson identifies within science is not, however, wholly negative for him. On the contrary, he argues that the more it penetrates the depths of life the more it discovers the heterogeneous and the more it encounters the strange phenomena of duration which exceed its understanding. It is here that philosophy is able to supplement science in order to disclose the absolute in which 'we live and move and have our being' (Bergson 1983: 199).

Intuition and sympathy

In CE Bergson provides insights into the nature of his method of intuition and its extension through sympathy. The two notions play a crucial role in the task of thinking beyond the human condition. Let me now address this dimension of Bergson's thinking and show something of its significance.

For Bergson intuition is instinct that has become disinterested ('instinct is sympathy', he states) and self-reflective, 'capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely' (Bergson 1983: 176). Intuition is said to be a mode of sympathy 'by which one is transported into the interior of an object' (Bergson 1965: 135). The contrast is with the mode of 'analysis', which is an operation that reduces an object to elements already known and that are common to it and other objects. Intuition involves a special kind of attention or attentiveness to life (Bergson speaks of performing an 'auscultation' and in accordance with

a 'true empiricism', 1965: 147). Bergson contends that even the most concrete of the sciences of nature – namely, the sciences of life – confine themselves to the visible form of living beings: to their organs and their anatomical elements. The task at hand is to understand precisely what Bergson means when he says in CE that intuition leads us to 'very inwardness of life'.

As Deleuze notes, intuition is the method peculiar to Bergsonism. He stresses that it denotes neither a vague feeling or incommunicable experience nor a disordered sympathy. Rather, it is a fully developed method that aims at precision in philosophy (see Bergson 1965: 11). Where duration and memory denote lived realities and concrete experiences, intuition is the only means we have at our disposal for crafting knowledge of experience and reality. 'We may say, strangely enough', Deleuze notes, 'that duration would remain purely intuitive, in the ordinary sense of the word, if intuition – in the properly Bergsonian sense – were not there as method' (Deleuze 1988: 14). However, intuition is a complex method that cannot be contained in single act. Instead, it has to be seen as involving a plurality of determinations. The first task is to stage and create problems; the second is to locate differences in kind; and the third is to comprehend real time, that is, duration as a heterogeneous and continuous multiplicity. I will first note some salient aspects of Bergson on intuition and then draw on Deleuze to indicate how intuition aspires to operate as a method of precision in philosophy.

Bergson acknowledges that other philosophers before him, such as Schelling, tried to escape relativism by appealing to intuition (Bergson 1965: 30). He argues, however, that this was a non-temporal intuition that was being appealed to, and, as such, was largely a return to Spinozism: that is, a deduction of existence from one complete Being. His main engagement, however, is with Kant and for obvious reasons. Bergson argues that in order to reach the mode of intuition it is not necessary, as Kant supposed, to transport ourselves outside the domain of the senses:

> After having proved by decisive arguments that no dialectical effort will ever introduce us into the beyond and that an effective metaphysics would necessarily be an intuitive metaphysics, he added that we lack this intuition and that this metaphysics is impossible. It would in fact be so if there were no other time or change than those which Kant perceived…. (Bergson 1965: 128)

By recovering intuition Bergson hopes to save science from the charge of producing a relativity of knowledge (it is rather to be regarded as

approximate) and metaphysics from the charge of indulging in empty and idle speculation. Although Kant himself did not pursue thought in the direction he had opened for it – the direction of a 'revivified Cartesianism', Bergson calls it – it is the prospect of an 'extra-intellectual matter of knowledge by a higher effort of intuition' that Bergson seeks to cultivate (Bergson 1983: 229). Kant has reawakened, if only half-heartedly, a view that was the essential element of Descartes' thinking but which the Cartesians abandoned: knowledge is not completely resolvable into the terms of intelligence. Bergson does not, let it be noted, establish an opposition between sensuous (infra-intellectual) intuition and intellectual (what he calls an 'ultra-intellectual') intuition but instead seeks to show that there is a continuity and reciprocity between the two. Moreover, sensuous intuition can be promoted to a different set of operations, no longer simply being the phantom of an inscrutable thing-in-itself:

> The barriers between the matter of sensible knowledge and its form are lowered, as also between the 'pure forms' of sensibility and the categories of the understanding. The matter and form of intellectual knowledge (restricted to its own object) are seen to be engendering each other by a reciprocal adaptation, intellect modelling itself on corporeity, and corporeity on intellect. But this duality of intuition Kant neither would nor could admit. (1983: 361)

For Kant to admit this duality of intuition would entail granting to duration an absolute reality and treating the geometry immanent in space as an ideal limit (the direction in which material things develop but never actually attain).

Deleuze thinks we can learn some valuable philosophical lessons from Bergson on intuition, so I shall now draw on his account. He argues that we go wrong when we hold that notions of true and false can only be brought to bear on problems in terms of ready-made solutions. This is a far too pre-emptive strategy that does not take us beyond experience but locks us in it. This negative freedom is the result of manufactured social prejudices where, through social institutions such as education and language, we become enslaved by order-words that identify for us ready-made problems that we are forced to solve. True freedom lies in the power to constitute problems themselves. This might involve the freedom to uncover certain truths for oneself, but often discovery is too much involved in uncovering what already exists, an act of discovery that was bound to happen sooner or later and contingent upon circumstances. Invention, however, gives Being to what did not exist and might

never have happened since it was not destined to happen: there was no pre-existing program by which it could be actualized. In mathematics and in metaphysics the effort of invention consists in raising the problem and in creating the terms through which it might be solved, but never as something ready-made. As Merleau-Ponty notes in a reading of Bergson, when it is said that well-posed problems are close to being solved, 'this does not mean that we have already *found* what we are looking for, but that we have already invented it' (Merleau-Ponty 1988: 14). For Bergson, the genuine philosopher, as opposed to the amateur, is one who does not accept the terms of a problem as a common problem that has been definitively posed and which then requires that she or he select from the available solutions to the problem (the example Bergson gives to illustrate his point is that of Samuel Butler rejecting Darwin's solution in favor of Lamarck's) (Bergson 2002: 370).

A second rule of intuition is to do away with false problems, which are said to be of two kinds: firstly, those which are caught up in terms that contain a confusion of the 'more' and the 'less'; and, secondly, questions which are stated badly in the specific sense that their terms represent only badly analyzed composites. In the first case the error consists in positing an origin of being and of order from which nonbeing and disorder are then made to appear as primordial. On this schema, order can only appear as the negation of disorder and being as the negation of nonbeing (see Bergson 1983: 222). Such a way of thinking introduces lack into the heart of Being. It more or less errs in not seeing that there are *kinds* of order and forgetting the fact that Being is not homogeneous but fundamentally heterogeneous. Badly analyzed composites result from an arbitrary grouping of things that are constituted as differences in kind. Bergson wants to know how it is that we deem certain life forms to be superior to others, even though they are not of the same order, and neither can they be posited in terms of a simple unilinear evolutionism, with one life form succeeding another in terms of a progress towards perfection in self-consciousness. Life proceeds neither via lack nor the power of the negative but through internal self-differentiation along lines of divergence. Indeed, Bergson goes so far as to claim that the root cause of the difficulties and errors we are confronted with in thinking creative evolution resides in the power we ascribe to negation, to the point where we represent it as symmetrical with affirmation (Bergson 1983: 287). When Deleuze says that resemblance or identity bears on difference *qua* difference, he is being faithful to Bergson's critical insight into the character of negation, chiefly, that it is implicated in a more global power of affirmation.

It is through a focus on badly analyzed composites that we are led, in fact, to positing things in terms of the more and the less, so that the idea of disorder only arises from a general idea of order as a badly analyzed composite. This amounts to claiming, as Deleuze cognizes, that we are the victims of illusions that have their source in aspects of our intelligence. However, although these illusions refer to Kant's analysis in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where Reason is shown to generate for itself – in exceeding the boundaries of the Understanding – inevitable illusions and not simple mistakes, they are not of the same order. There is a natural tendency of the intellect to see only differences in degree and to neglect differences in kind. This is because the fundamental motivation of the intellect is to implement and orientate action in the world.

To bring into play a different kind of intelligence is to introduce the critical element into philosophy that will enable us to go beyond the human condition and to widen the canvas of its experience. It is intuition that allows this critical tendency to express itself through two procedures: the discovery of differences in kind and the formulation of criteria for differentiating between true and false problems. But at this point things get even more complex. If intuition is to be conceived as a method that proceeds via division – the division of a composite into differences of kind – is this not to deny that reality is, in fact, made up of composites and mixtures of all kinds? For Bergson, Deleuze argues, the crucial factor is to recognize that it is not things that differ in kind but rather tendencies; a thing in itself and in its true nature is the expression of a tendency before being the effect of a cause (see Deleuze 1999). In other words, what differs in nature are not things (their states or traits) but the tendency things possess for change and development. A simple difference of degree would denote the correct status of things if they could be separated from their tendencies. For Bergson the tendency is primary not simply in relation to its product but rather in relation to the causes of productions in time, causes being retroactively obtained starting from the product itself. Any composite, therefore, needs to be divided according to qualitative tendencies.

Again, this brings Bergson close to Kant's transcendental analysis, going beyond experience as given and constituting its conditions of possibility. However, these are not conditions of all possible experience but of 'real' experience (for example, the experience of different durations). Bergson thinks that all the great masters of modern philosophy are thinkers who have assimilated the material of the science of their time. He adds that the partial eclipse of metaphysics in recent times can be explained by the fact that today it is a difficult task to make contact

with a science that has become scattered. However, the method of intuition, which is to be attained by means of material knowledge, is something quite different to a summary or synthesis of scientific knowledge. Although metaphysics has nothing in common with the 'generalization of experience', it is possible to define it 'as the whole of experience' (*l'expérience intégrale*) (Bergson 1965: 200).

Intuition is not duration, but rather the movement by which thought emerges from its own duration and gains insight into the difference of other durations within and outside itself. It both presupposes duration, as the reality in which it dwells, but it also seeks to think it: '…to think intuitively is to think in duration' (Bergson 1965: 34). Without intuition as a method duration would remain for us a merely psychological experience and we would remain prisoners of what is given to us. Informing Bergson's thinking, therefore, is a philosophical critique of the order of need, action, and society that predetermine us to retain a relationship with things only to the extent that they satisfy our interest, and of the order of general ideas that prevent us from acquiring a superior human nature.

Bergson insists that his method of intuition contains no devaluation of intelligence but only a determination of its specific facility. If intuition transcends intelligence this is only account of the fact that it is intelligence that gives it the push to rise beyond. Without it intuition would remain wedded to instinct and riveted to the particular objects of its practical interests. The specific task of philosophy is to introduce us 'into life's own domain, which is reciprocal interpenetration, endlessly continued creation' (1965: 115). This is different to what science does when it takes up the utilitarian vantage point of external perception and prolongs individual facts into general laws. The reformed metaphysics Bergson wishes to awaken commits itself to an intellectual expansion of reflection – intuition is, in fact, intellectual sympathy.

For Bergson, then, the key move for thought to make lies in the direction of sympathy. By means of science intelligence does its work and delivers to us more and more the secret of life's material or physical operations. But this gives us only a perspectivism that never penetrates the inside, going 'all round life, taking from outside the greatest possible number of views of it…' (Bergson 1983: 176). By contrast, metaphysics can follow the path of intuition, which is to be conceived as the disinterested instinct that is now 'capable of reflecting upon its object and enlarging it indefinitely' (ibid.). Bergson concedes the obvious point, namely, that this philosophy of life will never obtain a knowledge comparable to that which science acquires: 'Intelligence remains the luminous

nucleus around which instinct, even enlarged and purified into intuition, forms only a vague nebulosity' (ibid.). In default of knowledge properly so-called, however, intuition provides us with a supplement that enables us to grasp that which intelligence fails to provide. More than this, it is intuition that can disclose to us in a palpable form what the discoveries of modern biology have established.

Just what this means is explained well by David Lapoujade in an incisive treatment of intuition and sympathy in Bergson (Lapoujade 2004). I will draw on his inquiry and cover only the essential points. Intuition is a reflection of the mind upon itself and there is no intuition of the material or vital as such. Given this constraint, how can we, with the aid of intuition, open ourselves up to different levels of reality and enlarge our perception of life? This is where sympathy intervenes and assumes an important role. Lapoujade argues that sympathy is not a fusion without distance and so cannot be crudely assimilated to some miraculous intuitive act. Rather, it relies upon reasoning by analogy. The reasoning Bergson has in mind here is not one that appeals to fixed terms but rather to movements. One way to think this is in terms of an analogy between tendencies, in which the 'structure' at work is not one of what is similar but of what is common. So, it does not work through an exterior relation of resemblances, but rather through 'an interior *communication* between tendencies or movements' (Lapoujade 2004: 8). Analogy comes into play for us between the movements of our own interior existence and those of the universe, and we uncover ourselves intuitively as material and as vital through a series of explorations into ourselves. Bergson expresses it in just these terms in his lecture of 1911 on 'Philosophical Intuition':

> ... the matter and life which fill the world are equally within us; the forces which work in all things we feel within ourselves; whatever may be the inner essence of what is and what is done, we are of that essence. Let us then go down into our own inner selves: the deeper the point we touch, the stronger will be the thrust which sends us back to the surface. (Bergson 2002: 299)

As Lapoujade pithily expresses it, for Bergson, 'we are analogous to the universe (intuition), and inversely, the universe is our analogue (sympathy)' (2004: 9). In making the effort, then, to think beyond the human condition we come into contact, through intuition, with movements, memories, and non-human consciousnesses deep within us. Deep within the human there is something other than the human. This means

that for Bergson the 'sources' of human experience are more obscure and distant than both common sense and science suppose; these are sources that, Bergson contends, Kant failed to penetrate in his attempt to philosophize about the conditions of the possibility of experience. In essence, this is what Bergson means when he writes of 'dissolving into the whole' and experiencing 'the ocean of life'. Although this dissolving experience may approach the insights of poetry or mysticism Bergson is after philosophical precision and clarity. He never ceases to emphasize the extent to which intuition requires long and stubborn effort.

As Lapoujade further notes, Bergson is according primacy in reality to alterity: 'it is because the other is within us that we can project it outside us in the form of "consciousness" or "intention"' (2004: 11). What we project onto the world is our own alterity. However, it is clear that for Bergson when we experience sympathy it is not merely sympathy for others we subject ourselves to, but equally sympathy for one's self and recognition of the alterity that lies concealed within ourselves: '... one thing is sure: we sympathize with ourselves' (Bergson 1965: 136). Such an insight perhaps allows us to reconfigure the 'in-itself': 'The in-itself no longer designates the way in which things will never be "for us" but the way in which, on the contrary, things will be very much within us' (Lapoujade 2004: 12).

To conclude this section: intuition is the primary method of philosophical thinking for Bergson, and from sympathy it gains an extension that enables it to be deployed as a general method. Intuition puts us into contact with other durations and ensures that we do not exist simply or only as internal duration.

Contingency and human evolution

Bergson configures the question of a creative evolution in terms of the relation between matter and consciousness, maintaining that matter is always in descent and is only prevented from achieving a complete descent into stasis owing to an inverse process. It is beyond question, he argues, that the evolution of life on earth is attached to matter. Pure consciousness would be pure creative activity lacking in invention. In being riveted to the organism evolutionary life is subjected to the general laws of inert matter. To conceive of the evolution of life we need only speak, says Bergson, of a certain retardation in which life is seen to follow from an initial impulsion that has brought into being more and more powerful explosives. These explosives can be construed as amounting to a storing-up of solar energy in which its degradation

meets with a provisional suspension 'on some of the points where it was being poured forth' (Bergson 1983: 246). It is the organism, therefore, that represents an arrest of this dissipation of energy. 'The evolution of living species within this world represents what subsists of the primitive direction of the original jet, and of an impulsion which continues itself in a direction the inverse of materiality' (1983: 247). He wishes to stress that the life of species is often a determined life, in contrast to that of the creation of a world which exceeds the limits of species and which is always a free act. There is always the reality creating itself in the reality that desires to unmake itself. It is inevitable, he suggests, that each species will behave as if the general movement of life came to an end with it, instead of passing through it. The notorious struggle for existence results as much from the limited perspective of each species as it does from the brutal character of life, he speculates.

Deleuze is especially good in drawing out the complexity of Bergson's conception of creative evolution. Although life is movement it alienates itself in the material form that it actually creates: in differentiating and actualizing itself it loses contact with the rest of itself. We see this with the evolution of species where every species amounts to an arrest of movement. Deleuze notes two important points: first, that the living being turns in on itself and closes itself; second, that it cannot be any other way since 'the Whole' is only ever virtual and divides itself by being acted out. Thus, an 'irreducible pluralism' reigns in nature, with as many worlds as there are living beings, all closed on themselves. Thus, 'the Whole does not assemble its actual parts that remain external to one another. The Whole is never 'given'" (Deleuze 1988: 104). For Deleuze, then, it is legitimate to speak of a 'Whole' of durational evolution, only that we have to acknowledge that it is virtual and actualized according to divergent lines that do not form a whole and in no way resemble what they actualize. This can only mean that differentiation and actualization amount to a genuine creation. Life does not evolve without finality or directionality. However, 'there is no "goal" because these directions do not pre-exist ready-made, and are themselves created "along with" the act that runs through them' (1988: 106).

What though of the role played by contingency in evolution? Bergson notes contingency applies both to the forms adopted and invented, and to the obstacles that are encountered at any given moment and in any given place. The only two things required for evolution to take place are: firstly, an accumulation of energy; and, secondly, an 'elastic canalization of this energy in variable and indeterminable directions' (Bergson 1983: 255). This is certainly how living systems have evolved on earth, but,

as Bergson correctly points out, it wasn't necessary for life to assume a carbonic form. He is prepared to go as far as to assert that it was not even necessary for life to become concentrated in organisms as such: that is, in definite bodies which provide energy flows with ready-made and elastic canals.

Bergson reaches the conclusion that there has not been a project or plan of evolution. The human is neither pre-figured in evolution nor can it be deemed to be the outcome of the whole of evolution. It is also the case that the rest of nature does not exist for the human. It is the divergent character of evolution, the fact that it has taken place on many diverse lines, which is decisive. It is only in a special sense that man can be considered to be the end of evolution. The interesting question to be posed is why life has assumed the forms it has (plant, animal, vegetable). Bergson answers by suggesting that life is an accumulation of energy that then flows into flexible channels and performs various kinds of work. It is this activity of energy that the vital impulse would 'fain to do all at once', were it not for the fact that its power is limited: 'But the impetus is finite ... It cannot overcome all obstacles. The movement it starts is sometimes turned aside, sometimes divided, always opposed; and the evolution of the organized world is the unrolling of this conflict' (1983: 254). Bergson insists that all that is necessary for creative evolution (the generation of free acts) is the accumulation of energy and the canalization of this energy in variable and indeterminable directions. In the lecture on 'Life and Consciousness' which opens *Mind-Energy* Bergson expresses it as follows: 'But life as a whole, whether we envisage it at the start or at the end of its evolution, is a double labour of slow accumulation and sudden discharge' (1975: 19).

Whereas it is the examination, in palaeontology and comparative anatomy, of material forms that revealed contingency, it is the examination of organisms in terms of their function, and specifically their relation to energy, that allows Bergson to attribute significance to the human. For Bergson, and as we have just seen, life as a whole is a double labor of slow accumulation and sudden discharge of energy. It is along these lines that he distinguishes plant and animal life, which 'develop two tendencies which at first were fused in one' (Bergson 1983: 76). The accumulation and release of energy 'at first completed each other so well that they coalesced', but in the history of evolution we see that 'the animal evolved ... toward a freer and freer expenditure of discontinuous energy' while 'the plant perfected rather its system of accumulation' (ibid.). Their tendency to emphasize different aspects of energy flow leads to the development of different modes of feeding, of movement,

and ultimately of consciousness in the plant and the animal. However, his characterization of the evolution of animal life in terms of an increasing ability to use energy leads Bergson into a direct confrontation with the second law of thermodynamics, which states that all energy tends to degrade into heat, which is distributed throughout matter in a uniform manner. Bergson considers this to be 'the most metaphysical of the laws of physics' because it attempts to describe the very direction of existence (1983: 156). While it may apply within a closed material system – which Bergson describes as 'a thing unmaking itself' (1983: 157) – it does not apply to life, in which we find an effort to remount the incline that matter descends and which in its creative passage through matter is 'a reality which is making itself in a reality which is unmaking itself' (1983: 159).

Bergson maintains that, from the fact that the brains of human and ape are alike, 'we cannot conclude that consciousnesses are comparable or commensurable' (1983: 263), because from the limited to the unlimited there is all the distance between the closed and the open (in fact, what we have here is a difference of kind and not merely degree). Unlike the case of the animal, the powers of invention within the human are not simply variations on the theme of routine. Rather, we have a machine that has the potential to triumph over mechanism and closure. The human is not a captive of the mechanisms its brain has set up. Bergson duly notes the importance of the role played by language, social life and technics in the creation of this 'exceptional life' of the human animal (elsewhere Bergson calls man 'the sporting animal' and conceives the brain as an organ of sport).[3] The complication of the brain, for Bergson, is an effect of evolutionary freedom as much as a condition of human freedom. The development of the brain itself is contingent upon the excess of energy that allows the development of free action along the animal line of evolution:

> Things have happened just as though an immense current of consciousness, interpenetrated with potentialities of every kind, had traversed matter to draw it towards organization and make it, notwithstanding that it is necessity itself, an instrument of freedom. But consciousness has had a narrow escape from being itself ensnared. Matter, enfolding it, bends it to its own automatism, lulls it to sleep in its own unconsciousness. ... So, from the highest rung of the ladder of life, freedom is riveted in a chain which at most it succeeds in stretching. With man alone a sudden bound is made; the chain is broken. (Bergson 1975: 19)

However, the human form is not pre-figured in the evolutionary movement and cannot be said to be the outcome of the whole of evolution since this has been accomplished on several divergent lines, and the human species is simply at the end of one of them: '[man] does not draw along with him all that life carries in itself' (1983: 266). Nevertheless, for Bergson man is more significant than the species that occupy the other lines of vegetable and animal evolution because he is the being in whose freedom the creative nature of evolution is made most evident. This point is worth stressing so that Bergson is not misheard when he advances these kinds of insights. It is not the specific form of man but his function as a free and creative being that constitutes his significance. It is as if '*a vague and formless being*' (*un être indécis et flou*) – call it, Bergson says, man *or* superman – had sought to realize itself but could only succeed in this effort by abandoning parts of itself in the process: such losses are represented by the animal and vegetable worlds and what is positive in them.

Deleuze on creative emotion and the problem of human society

Deleuze writes in *Bergsonism*:

> Duration, Life, is in principle (*en droit*) memory, in principle consciousness, in principle freedom. 'In principle' means virtually. The whole question (*quid facti?*) is knowing under what conditions duration becomes *in fact* consciousness of self, how life *actually* accedes to a memory and freedom of fact. (Deleuze 1988: 106)

This is an important acknowledgement on Deleuze's part since it means that he clearly recognizes, for all his emphasis on the virtual, especially evident in his reading of Bergson, that the realization of freedom within and through the human being must assume an *actual* form and be an *actual* condition. And what he is addressing in this part of *Bergsonism* is the problem, or set of problems, that Bergson confronts in his final text of 1932 on the sources of morality and religion. Let me now turn in the final section of my essay to illuminating these problems and to showing the way Deleuze resolves them.

Although Bergson thinks the future of the evolution of life is open-ended, and posits it as such in CE, by the time of his final work, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, it is clear that he does not wish to be ethically and politically naïve with respect to human existence. He is now

keen to show that so-called advanced or 'civilized' societies remain closed societies. In this work he discloses and attends to his chief concerns, such as the problem of over-population, our addiction to pleasure (as opposed to joy) through consumption, and the continuation of the war instinct. He seems to anticipate the creation of the atomic bomb. The significance of this is that it means that Kant's teleology is over: nature does not know better than man what humanity needs and war cannot any longer be said to be a ruse of reason (see Soulez 2012: 111). It is for this reason that Bergson holds that humanity is confronted with the need to make a fundamental decision:

> ... whether we go bail for small measures or great, a decision is imperative. Humanity lies groaning, half crushed beneath the weight of its own progress. Human beings do not sufficiently realize that their future is in their own hands. Theirs is the task of determining first of all whether they want to go on living or not. Theirs the responsibility, then, for deciding if they want merely to live, or intend to make just the extra effort required for fulfilling, even on their refractory planet, the essential function of the universe, which is a machine for the making of gods. (Bergson 1977: 317)

In *Bergsonism* Deleuze is well aware of these problems of the human. In the final chapter of the text, which provides a treatment of CE with the *Two Sources*, Deleuze focuses on the question of how the privilege of the human comes about in which the human has the chance to access durations inferior and superior its own and so express naturing Nature. Deleuze conceives of the potentiality of the human in the following terms: 'Man therefore creates a differentiation that is valid for the Whole, and he alone traces out an open direction that is able to express a whole that is itself open' (Deleuze 1988: 107). It is this insight that is informing his claim that whereas on the other lines of evolution there is closure and a going round in circles, with a distinct plane of nature corresponding to each one, in the case of the human there is the potential of 'scrambling the planes', of going beyond the human plane as part of our own condition (ibid.). The reality of the human, however, is complicated by the fact that it dwells in closed societies and these societies are no less closed than animal species. Deleuze writes of these societies:

> ... they form part of a plan (*plan*) of nature, as much as animal species and societies; and man goes round in circles in his society just as much as the species do in theirs or ants in their domain. Nothing

> here seems to be capable of giving man the previously mentioned exceptional opening, as the power of going beyond his 'plane' (*plan*) and his condition. (1988: 109)

Deleuze recognizes that Bergson posits the human as the purpose of the process of evolution in a special sense. This is the sense in which the actual becomes adequate to the virtual, that is, the creative vital impetus '"gets through"' on the line of the human and assumes self-consciousness, that is, it makes of matter an instrument of freedom (the machine that triumphs over mechanism). But this is only in principle, as Deleuze repeatedly stresses. We do not know yet how the virtual becomes something *actual*. Initially we can think this in terms of the production of an interval taking place between excitation and reaction in which, over and above the merely physico-chemical properties of complicated matter – 'Even in his dreams' man 'rediscovers or prepares matter', Deleuze notes (1988: 107) – 'the whole of memory descends into this interval, and that becomes actual' (ibid.). But even here we are largely dealing with a utilitarian memory in which useful recollections are actualized in a cerebral interval and intelligence becomes an organ of the domination of nature and the utilization of matter. Humans form societies on the basis of this domination, in which they provide an intelligent comprehension of needs and a certain rational organization of activities, as well as subsisting through absurd and irrational factors (obligation exists, for example, without ultimate rational ground: the whole of obligation, or having the habit of contracting habits, is a requirement of nature in our case, existing as a kind of virtual instinct). However, when we consider this human sociability and intelligence nothing justifies the privilege of the human simply because the societies that are formed in evolution and history are first and foremost closed societies. For Deleuze, this insight necessitates the search for a different kind of 'interval', one existing at a different level of being and of freedom.

This does not take place on the level of intelligence, since although intelligence hesitates and rebels it does so in the name of egoism, one that it endeavors to preserve against social requirements such as conformity and identity. Deleuze holds that something appears in the interval between intelligence and society, and this is not intuition but emotion. This is not just any emotion but what Bergson calls 'creative emotion' and that is the emotion of an open soul. Egoism produces emotions, of course, but it is always connected to a representation on which the emotion is supposed to depend. For Bergson it is not simply a question of replacing egoism with altruism; it is not simply a question

of the self now saying to itself, I am working for the benefit of mankind since the idea is too vast and the effect too diffuse. In the closed morality the individual and social are barely distinguishable: it is both at once and at this level the 'spirit' moves around a circle that is closed on itself. Can we say that operative in the open soul is the love of all humanity? This does not go far enough since it can be extended to animals, plants, and all nature. It could even do without them since its form is not dependent on any specific content: '"Charity" would persist in him who possesses "charity", though there be no other living creature on earth' (Bergson 1977: 38). It is a psychic attitude that, strictly speaking, does not have an object. It is not acquired by nature but requires an effort. It transmits itself through feeling: think of the attraction or appeal of love, of its passion, in its early stages and which resembles an obligation (we must because we must); perhaps a tragedy lays ahead, a whole life wrecked, wasted, and ruined. This does not stop our responding to its call or appeal. We are entranced, as in cases of musical emotion that introduces us into new feelings, 'as passers-by are forced into a street dance'. The pioneers in morality proceed in a similar fashion: 'Life holds for them unsuspected tones of feeling like those of some new symphony, and they draw us after them into this music that we may express it in action' (1977: 40). We obey the call or appeal of love, and this shows us the passion of love or a great emotion, for good or ill.

Does Bergson show himself to be an irrationalist here? His argument is against intellectualism: 'It is through an excess of intellectualism that feeling is made to hinge on an object and that all emotion is held to be the reaction of our sensory faculties to an intellectual representation' (1977: 40). Take the example of music: are the emotions expressed linked to any *specific* objects of joy, of sorrow, compassion, and love, or is not the case that in listening to music we feel as though we desire only what the music is suggesting to us and in which we become what the music expresses, be it joy or grief, pity or love? 'When music weeps, all humanity, all nature, weeps with it' (ibid.). The difference Bergson is getting at is a radical one and it is between an emotion that can be represented (in images and objects) and the creative emotion that is beyond representation and is a real invention. States of emotion caused by certain things are ordained by nature and are finite or limited in number; we recognize them quite easily because their destiny is to spur us on to acts that answer to our needs.

Bergson is not blind to the illusions of love and to the psychological deceptions that may be at work. He maintains, however, that the effect of creative emotion is not reducible to this. This is because there are

emotional states that are distinct from sensation: that is, they cannot be reduced to being a psychical transposition of a physical stimulus. There are two kinds: (1) where the emotion is a consequence of an idea or mental picture; (2) where the emotion is not produced by a representation but is productive of ideas (Bergson calls them infra- and supra-intellectual, respectively). A creative emotion informs the creations not only of art but of science and civilization itself. It is a unique kind of emotion, one that precedes the image; it virtually contains it, and is its cause. This position is not equivalent, Bergson insists, to a moral philosophy of sentiment, simply because we are dealing with an emotion that is capable of crystallizing into representations, even into an ethical doctrine. It concerns the new.

As Deleuze points out, what makes the emotion 'creative' is that, (1) it expresses the whole of creation; (2) it creates the work in which it is expressed; (3) it communicates something of this creativity to spectators or hearers (Deleuze 1988: 110–111). More than this, the creative emotion has nothing to do with either the pressures of society (towards closedness) or with the disputes of the individual (against society). This unique kind of emotion is what Deleuze calls 'a cosmic Memory, that actualized all the levels at the same time, that liberates man from the plane (*plan*) or the level that is proper to him, in order to make him a creator, adequate to the whole movement of creation' (1988: 111). It is here, then, that we can posit the *actuality* of going beyond the human condition and in which we learn what exactly or precisely such going beyond means and amounts to:

> This liberation, this embodiment of cosmic memory in creative emotions, undoubtedly only takes place in privileged souls. It leaps from one soul to another … crossing closed deserts. But to each member of a closed society, if he opens himself to it, it communicates a kind of reminiscence, an excitement that allows him to follow. And from soul to soul, it traces the design of an *open* society, a society of creators, where we pass from one genius to another, through the intermediary of disciples or spectators or hearers. (1988: 111)

Notes

1. It is the only text, for example, that Leonard Lawlor does not treat in *The Challenge of Bergsonism* (2003). In her book on Bergson, *Thinking in Time*, Suzanne Guerlac attends only to *Time and Free Will* and *Matter and Memory* (2006). An exception is the work of Elisabeth Grosz (2004).

2. Bergson's work did figure in books of the time on the philosophy of biology. See, from 1914, James Johnstone, *The Philosophy of Biology*, and that Cambridge University have published in a new edition in 2014.
3. See Bergson, 'Psychophysical Parallelism and Positive Metaphysics,' in Gutting, (2005), p. 68.

Works cited

Bergson, Henri (1965) *The Creative Mind*, trans. M. L. Andison (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams & Co.).
—— (1975) *Mind-Energy*, trams. H. Wildon Carr (London: Henry Holt).
—— (1977) *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press).
—— (1983) *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (Lanham, MD: University Press of America).
—— (2002) *Bergson. Key Writings*, eds. Keith Ansell-Pearson and John Mullarkey (London: Bloomsbury Press, revised edition 2014).
Deleuze, Gilles (1988) *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books).
—— (1988) *Le Bergsonisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France).
—— (1999) 'Bergson's Conception of Difference', trans. Melissa McMahon, in *The New Bergson*, edited by John Mullarkey (Manchester: Manchester University Press).
—— (2007) 'Lecture Course on Chapter Three of Bergson's *Creative Evolution*', trans. Bryn Loban, *Substance* 36(3): 72–91.
Grosz, Elisabeth. (2004) *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press).
Gutting, Gary, ed., (2005) *Continental Philosophy of Science* (Malden, MA: Blackwell).
Guerlac, Suzanne (2006) *Thinking in Time: An Introduction to Henri Bergson* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press).
Johnstone, James (1914) *The Philosophy of Biology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
Lapoujade, David (2004) 'Intuition and Sympathy in Bergson', *Pli: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy* 15: 1–18.
Lawlor, Leonard (2003) *The Challenge of Bergsonism* (London: Bloomsbury Press).
Merleau-Ponty, Maurice (1988) 'Bergson', in *In Praise of Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. John Wild and James Edie (Evanston: Northwestern University Press), 9–33.
Soulez, Philippe (2012) 'Bergson as Philosopher of War and Theorist of the Political', in *Bergson, Politics, and Religion*, eds., Alexandre Lefebvre and Melanie White (Durham, NC: Duke University Press), 99–126.
Whitehead, A. N. (1934) *Nature and Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
—— (1978) *Process and Reality* (New York: The Free Press).

6

Insects and Other Minute Perceptions in the Baroque House

Undine Sellbach and Stephen Loo

I

In a fold on the plateau, stands a house with two floors. The house once belonged to a philosopher, long dead, whose work was said to be as Baroque as the decorations of his house.

The lower floor is a wide and horizontal hall. Veins of luminous marble cover the walls and encircle five windows to the outside. Vividly patterned upholstery – wallpaper, carpet and ceiling frescos – fill the room with Baroque twists and turns. A grand curved stair leads to a private room upstairs where black marble folds refuse to reflect the light. The room is decorated by drapery, 'diversified by folds', that spill down to the lower level, its cords dangling out the windows.

In the great hall below, a magnificent Baroque *soirée* is being held, with guests, human and nonhuman. The folds of the curtains are rippling with fish, foaming like waves, spilling into the space like a horse's mane. As an ecological swarm, the revelers renew the turbulence of the house through their visible movements and melodic cries.

A butterfly, a fly, a worm and a tick make their way to the house, captivated by the magnificent sights and sounds. They enter the hall, 'through "some small openings" that exist on the lower level'. As they do so the 'lower extremity of the cords' begin to oscillate, translating the visible and audible gestures of the guests downstairs into strange harmonies above. Blind, deaf and closed, the folds of the curtains in the upper chamber are like a 'living dermis', faintly sensing the vibrations of the world below.

II

Deleuze's work has enabled new ways of perceiving the philosophical and ethical problematics constituting the boundaries of human and nonhuman life within the world. *The Fold*, Deleuze's interlocution with the philosophy of Gottfried Leibniz, is part of an overarching project of resistance to a unified conception of the world, where life is partitive, multiple and chaotic rather than teleological, regimented and predictable. Leibniz provides Deleuze with an ontological 'sense of the affinity of matter with life' (Deleuze 2006: 7), without eliding the specificity of matter and organism, body and mind, material expression and immaterial metaphysics.

Leibniz's philosophy of the fold is one of the key armatures of Deleuze's interrogation of what is it to be human. Tom Conley, in his foreword to *The Fold*, proposes that in the process an ecologically oriented ethics is opened up, which attends to matter and topples hierarchical orderings of life. He writes 'Leibniz points towards an ethics that appends the science of ecology. In his turn, Deleuze suggests that an at once abstract and tactile sense of matter must figure at the crux of any social practice' (Conley in Deleuze 2006: xv).

The following essay is a close reading of *The Fold*, in particular the 'Baroque' philosophical maneuvers of its enigmatic first chapter, to lend weight to Conley's assertion that Deleuze has an ecological dimension. What is different about our reading, however, is our invocation of the biology of Jakob von Uexküll – who was influential on Deleuze, and who in turn was influenced by Leibniz – via an imaginative engagement with the insects hidden in *The Fold*.

III

Deleuze stages his conversation with Leibnizian philosophy on the complex relations between human and nonhuman, matter and soul (mind), organic and inorganic, using the allegory of a Baroque House. Architecturally, the house is marked by the spatial and decorative traits characteristic of the Baroque period.[1] There is a wide lower floor with small openings to the outside. The large hall below, akin to a 'common room' (*pièces communes*), is highly ornamented with folds of stone and fabric. Stairs lead up to a private room that is closed, darkened by what seem like curtains in Deleuze's hand drawn diagram, that flow downstairs and to the outside. In the allegory, the lower floor is filled with pleats of matter 'that surround living beings held in the mass', while the upper

floor is comprised of folds of the soul with their inner unities[2] (Deleuze 2006: 4). Both floors are equally labyrinthine. Downstairs the pleats of matter fold infinitely, without dissolving into the infinity of points of a Cartesian schema. Upstairs, the soul is 'a dark room or chamber decorated only with a stretched canvas "diversified by folds" ... Placed on the opaque canvas, these folds, cords, or springs represent an innate form of knowledge' (Deleuze 2006: 4).

The Baroque House, with its two levels or stages, becomes the setting for a fantastical concert, where Leibniz's two infinites of matter and soul play out in unknowing harmony.[3]

> Leibniz constructs a great Baroque montage that moves between the lower floor, pierced with windows, and the upper floor, blind and closed, but on the other hand resonating as if it were a musical salon translating the visible movements below into sounds up above. (Deleuze 2006: 4)

The scene amplifies the distinctness of matter and soul, played out in terms of a shift in registers from the visible realm of the senses downstairs, to an invisible realm of innate ideas upstairs. The concert is performed and *felt* differently on both floors. The lower floor is opened to all five senses, including audible sound, which is nevertheless staged via a visual schema; upstairs is 'blind and closed' yet the vibrations from below are still *heard*, for the folds of the soul are a 'living dermis', akin to an inner sense (Deleuze 2006: 4).

In later chapters of *The Fold*, Deleuze likens the music of the lower floor to a part of the material world revealed to us. This melody is a bodily articulation of the intelligible immaterial realm of the soul above, the tiny part of the great *harmony* of the universe, which has been selected to be expressed. This distinction is in keeping with a conventional Leibnizian schema that would explain the relations between floors by emphasizing that the material bodies downstairs are projections of souls with their internal unities upstairs.

Without ever refusing this, Deleuze nevertheless begins his study of Leibniz by working the other way. For in his allegory, it is the innate ideas of the soul, represented as a multitude of 'folds, chords or springs', that are 'solicited by matter' and 'move into action. ... Matter triggers "vibrations or oscillations" at the lower extremity of the chords, through the intermediary of "some little openings" that exist on the lower levels' (Deleuze 2006: 4). Although the soul upstairs is sealed off from external

influence, vibrations from the material realm below animate the folds of the canvas upstairs.

By staging Leibnizian philosophy through a melody and harmony that interact with the architectural space of the house, a feeling of 'correspondence' or perhaps even 'continuity' between the two realms starts to emerge. As Hélène Frichot points out, Deleuze hints at a liminal zone that exists between the floors, a 'third fold, in between floors, which like a tympanum or ear-drum transfers vibrations between these chambers … a complicated interleaving of the sensible and the intelligible' (Frichot 2013: 83–84).

IV

In Leibniz's metaphysics, the unity of body and soul, in the form of a singular substance, is called a *monad*. For Leibniz, each monad acts as 'a living mirror representing the universe according to its point of view, and above all with respect to its body' (Heller-Roazen 2007: 193). Thus a monad indistinctly reflects, but does not directly express, all the variable relations with others in its series, which make up the universe (Deleuze 2006: 28). In Leibniz's words, 'folded up' within each monad, are all properties of the world in 'virtual' form, some of which 'unfold' when there is sufficient reason (Leibniz 1698: 61).

Leibniz distinguishes four main types of monad – human, animal, plant and inorganic – each with distinct modes of folding and unfolding, although within these categories there are an infinite number of variations. A monad is a soul that mirrors the whole world from the distinct point of view of the capacities of its body. For Leibniz, all monads have perceptions (in the sense that even an inorganic body has a distinct internal organization that reflects external relations without need for cognition or awareness); all organisms have substantial forms and thus appetition; animals and humans have memory; humans alone have reason (Leibniz 1698: 18–19, 29). In Deleuze's reading of Leibniz, different monads can be told apart by virtue of 'their zone of clear, remarkable, or privileged expression' (Deleuze 2006: 104). But importantly, this zone is not an autonomous state, but rather a threshold of notable sensation and bodily expression, emerging out of a realm of dim, confused perceptions, which Deleuze describes as 'the obscure dust of the world, the dark depths every monad contains' (Deleuze 2006: 102).

Now the Baroque House, with its two levels, gives Deleuze two ways of staging Leibniz's monadology. Upstairs the monad is imagined, as

if from the inside, as a singular self-sufficient unified soul that dimly perceives all the possibilities of the world, and selects from this a clear zone of expression. Downstairs the material bodies are projections of the unity of souls upstairs, expressed through their distinct capacities, orientations and perceptions. But whereas an idealist reading of Leibniz renders these bodily projections illusions, derivative of the immaterial soul, Deleuze insists that Leibniz's matter has a stage of its own. He quotes Leibniz: 'each portion of matter may be conceived as a garden full of plants, and as a pond full of fish. But every branch of every plant, every member of each animal, and every drop of their liquid parts is in itself like-wise a similar garden or pond' (Leibniz quoted in Deleuze 2006: 10).

Here we may say that Leibniz's monadology is staged as if from without, in the sense that matter is fundamentally a conglomerate of different monads – inorganic and organic, plant, animal and human. This is why Deleuze insists that there are sensate souls already on the lower floor, each with a distinct motif, or mode of bodily expression, which enters into unknowing attunements with others around it.

To reflect on the presence of sensate souls downstairs, Deleuze distinguishes between two different folds that correspond to inorganic and organic matter. External or 'elastic' folds are 'simple and direct', determined by environmental pressures, where as organic or 'plastic' folds are composite and indirect, always mediated by an interior site (Deleuze 2006: 10). 'Elastic forces', act on matter 'from without' (Deleuze 2006: 7–8), compressing and deforming a body as well as determining its curvilinear movement and its cohesion of its parts. Organic matter, on the other hand, is organized by folds that are always already within bodies. They arrive from the body's own internal cohesion via machine-like folds, that refer only to adjacent folds but to no other more minimal unit,[4] and are the motivating force that allows the continued genesis of a species. According to Deleuze, this suggests that for organisms matter is 'folded twice': once in the sense that all bodies (inorganic or organic) are subject to forces from outside; a second time via the distinct plastic forces internal to each organism. He insists that these two material forces have discrete evolutions, so that 'one is not able to move from the first to the second' (Deleuze 2006: 10).

On the one hand, we can say that the distinction Deleuze makes between plastic and elastic forces echoes the distinction Leibniz makes between bodies and souls. But on the other hand, by introducing a division between organic and inorganic bodies internal to the material realm, Deleuze also creates a device that allows him to

speculate on the transition from material bodies to immaterial souls. Working from the bottom floor of the Baroque House upwards in order to think the transposition between matter and soul, Deleuze proposes that organisms are those material bodies that best illustrate a level of internal *synthesis* that gestures towards the immaterial principle of life governing being.

V

If we look closely, the organisms that Deleuze relies on in order to illustrate how internal plastic forces anticipate an immaterial soul are mostly insects and other invertebrates. 'Just as the butterfly is folded into the caterpillar that will soon unfold', Deleuze tells us, every animal is a 'heteromorphic creature' (Deleuze 2006: 9) such that every 'fold always ensues from another fold' (Deleuze 2006: 11). For Deleuze, the folding and unfolding of different potentials internal to simple organisms produces 'an organic synthesis', which in turn assumes 'the soul as the *unity of synthesis,* or as the "immaterial principle of life"' (Deleuze 2006: 12). In this regard plastic material forces 'explain everything except for the variable *degrees of unity* to which they bring the masses they are organizing (a plant, a worm, a vertebrate ...)' (Deleuze 2006: 11–12).

Here we start to see why the butterfly and worm are helpful for Deleuze. Situated in between inorganic and vegetable life on the one hand, and the higher animals and human beings on the other, according to a conventional hierarchy of life, invertebrates are paradigmatic of a liminal zone between matter and soul. Tiny, machine-like and at the edges of sentience, they belong in the pleats of matter; but at the same time their internal organic unities gesture towards an immaterial principle of unity that is the soul.

The Baroque House, with its hierarchical structure, allows Deleuze to dramatize the ascent from the pleats of matter to the folds of the soul, in terms of degrees of unity. Beginning with simple organisms such as insects and progressing to higher vertebrates, the nonhuman animals appear in the service of an understanding of the imbrication of the human soul with matter. According to Deleuze, there are certain animal souls on the lower level, that exhibit a complexity of organization such that they have not only sensations and memories, but are 'chosen to become reasonable, thus to change their levels' (Deleuze 2006: 13). 'And when the hour comes for them to unfold their parts, to attain a degree of organic development proper to man, or to form cerebral folds, at the

same time their animal souls become reasonable by gaining a greater degree of unity (mind)' (Deleuze 2006: 12).

Although Deleuze is commonly characterized as a philosopher concerned with the nonhuman, the central focus of *The Fold* seems to be to rethink human life. Through his allegory, the human body, as part of the world of matter, is shown as marked with a fate of 'organic development' that is specific to being human; and to form 'cerebral folds' as part of the world of higher level unities of a reasonable soul (Deleuze 2006: 12).

To help stage these entanglements, Deleuze introduces insects into the Baroque House. Like laboratory animals, which give a simplified picture of human life, insects are cartographers for Deleuze: 'A "cryptographer" is needed, someone who can at once account for nature and decipher the soul, who can peer into the crannies of matter and read into the folds of the soul' (Deleuze 2006: 3). But in the process, the hierarchy of life is unsettled, for insects are also en-souled, suggesting that nonhuman life forms have immaterial unifying principles of their own.

VI

Alongside the butterfly and the worm, there is also a fly in the Baroque House. Deleuze names this fly the 'first fly', because it 'contains the seeds of all flies-to-come, each being called in its turn to unfold its own parts at the right time' (Deleuze 2006: 9). Now, there is a distinct resemblance between the 'first fly' and the 'primal image' of a fly as described by the 1930s biologist Jakob von Uexküll in his essay 'A Theory of Meaning'. For Uexküll, the 'first fly' is not a model that determines all future flies, but rather a *virtual* fly, in the sense that it contains, folded up within it, all potential fly articulations. In esthetic tropes at once musical and pictorial, Uexküll imagines:

> ... a primal score for the fly just as there is one for the spider. And I now assert that the primal score of the fly (which one can also designate its primal image) affects the primal score of the spider in such a way that the web spun by the latter can be called 'fly-like'. (Uexküll 2010: 160)

While Uexküll is recognized as an important interlocutor for Deleuze, in *The Fold* he is not named, and Deleuze does not directly theorize his work. Nevertheless, we can speculate that the 'first fly' has somehow escaped Uexküll's laboratory and has found its way into the Baroque

House, perhaps through the tiny openings on the lower level. The presence of this Uexküllian fly inside Deleuze's allegory brings to the fore questions regarding the relation between Uexküll and Leibniz's thought. Indeed, we can go so far as to propose that the 'first fly' has an affinity with a Leibnizian monad as elaborated by Deleuze, because the potentiality of all flies-to-come (epigenesis) resides within the material form of the fly's organic folds, in what appears to be an immaterial principle of unity. That is, virtuality is a continuation of the thinking of the soul, driven from the pleats of matter upward and not a bodily projection of the soul downwards.

If we turn to Uexküll scholarship, the influence of Leibniz on his biological accounts is often noted. Like a monad, Uexküll posits that every animal is a living subject that 'contains a view, albeit particularized, of the entire world' (Dorian Sagan in Uexküll 2010: 21). In Uexküll's biology, this means that even the smallest life form is a subject of a unique bubble world or *Umwelt*, with distinct perceptions and spatial and temporal orientations. Each bubble world is in turn, a reflection of a more abstract material universe – a web of relations that all living things participate in but only have limited access to. In language reminiscent of Leibniz, Uexküll imagines a vast 'symphony' of nature, where each individual creature plays a distinct motif that harmonizes with the other living and non-living things it encounters in ways that help build ecological relations (Uexküll 2010: 180–199).

And this brings to the fore a series of connections, both in terms of the fly's participation in a symphony of nature, and its distinct *Umwelt*, which mirrors the world from a point of view so radically different from our own, that orderings familiar to humans disappear.

So, we can say the presence of Uexküll in the Baroque House gives us a way to think about the nonhuman elements of the Baroque House that does not entirely serve the main focus of Deleuze's humanist project, namely the problematization of 'vertiginous animality' particular to the human – its corporeality that cannot be disassociated from its cerebral realm which continuously drops human life back down into the realms of matter. For Uexküll all living things have their own distinct perceptions, appetites and orientations which, if taken seriously, break away from anthropocentric, hierarchical orderings of degrees of unity. And the setting of the Baroque House allows for a proximity of Leibniz and Uexküll, whose projects do not entirely align, the ambiguity of and slippages between which we intend to use performatively to build a picture of the ecological dimension of Deleuzian ethics.

VII

The butterfly, the fly and the worm are Uexküllian clues that go unconsidered in commentaries on *The Fold*. However, a growing body of research in the post-humanities focuses on the contribution that Uexküll makes elsewhere to Deleuze's philosophy, including Elizabeth Grosz's *Becoming Undone*, Brett Buchanan's *Onto-Ethologies* and Ronald Bogue's *Deleuze on Music, Painting and the Arts*. Deleuze explicitly draws on Uexküll's work to theorize concepts such as affect, territorialization, becoming, assemblages, lines of flight, planes of immanence and ethology in works including 'Spinoza and Us', *A Thousand Plateaus* and *What is Philosophy*? In *Onto-ethologies*, Buchanan describes how Deleuze praises Uexküll for 'elaborating a theory of 'Nature as music' that attends to rhythms between organisms and their milieus 'as well as a greater melodic landscape that connects different stratified bodies' (Buchanan 2008: 177).

In spite of this, Buchanan argues, nowhere does Deleuze thematize the concept *Umwelt*, even though this is the 'most obvious aspect of Uexküll's thought', and central to biosemiotics, as well as theorists such as Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Agamben (Buchanan 2008: 177). In Buchanan's eyes, the elision of *Umwelt* is deliberate on Deleuze's behalf because it enables a shift focus from questions of environment, organisms and phenomenology to the theorization of 'affective bodies' and with this 'a specifically musical connotation of nature' (Buchanan 2008: 177). What is most crucial in Deleuze's reading of Uexküll, according to Buchanan, is not the bubble worlds of different animal *Umwelten*, but rather, 'what an animal can do', which, to put this in terms of Spinoza, means the affects a body is capable of (Buchanan 2008: 156).

According to Buchanan, for Deleuze, ethology is always a matter of 'counting affects' (Buchanan 2008: 156). As his example, he relates Deleuze's account of Uexküll's tick given in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Deleuze reduces the life of the tick to 'three affects: the first has to do with light (climb to the top of the branch); the second is olfactory (let yourself fall onto the mammal that passes beneath the branch); and the third is thermal (seek the area without fur, the warmest spot)' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 257).

In Buchanan's words:

> ... the life of the tick is composed of a procession ... in sequential order, irrespective of what happens in between. The tick might live in a dormant state for many years between the first and second affect;

> between affects, literally nothing affects it. Each affect instantiates a new 'becoming' in the tick's life. (Buchanan 2008: 157)

For Deleuze, affects are not properties or relations that are measurable but rather intensities opened up by a body's capacity to enter into compositions with other bodies and undergo transitions. Buchanan's argument is that by eschewing *Umwelt*, Deleuze is able to bring affiliations between heterogeneous entities the fore. Deleuze (and Guattari) reframes ethology as:

> ...a very privileged molar domain for demonstrating how the most varied components (biochemical, behavioral, perceptive, hereditary, acquired, improvised, social, etc.) can crystallize in assemblages that respect neither the distinction between orders nor the hierarchy of forms. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 414–415, 336)

The Uexküllian example that perhaps best serves Deleuze's account of ethology is the flower and the bee, two organisms that enter into an unknowing musical duet, such that the motif of the flower becomes 'bee-like' and the bee 'flower-like' (Uexküll quoted in Buchanan 2008: 180). As Buchanan points out, the orchid and the wasp, Deleuze and Guattari's famous example of affect in terms of 'an assemblage between heterogeneous terms', was most likely inspired by this account (Buchanan 2008: 179–180). Nevertheless, for Buchanan, there is an important difference between Uexküll's own ethological project, and Deleuze's appropriation of this. For Uexküll, 'the orchid and wasp would still be caught within their own bubbles, albeit in a manner in which each is significant for the other. With Deleuze and Guattari on the other hand, the bubbles have burst due to the lines of flight that carry each term of in new directions' (Buchanan 2008: 180). By bursting Uexküll's bubbles, Buchanan suggests, Deleuze is then free to pursue the musical dimensions of Uexküll's ethology, describing how assemblages between unlike entities form 'melodic compounds' which in turn participate in an 'an infinite symphonic plane of composition' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 185).

VIII

There is also a tick in the Baroque House, it appears quite late in Deleuze's book *The Fold*, in a chapter titled 'Perception in the Folds':

> In most cases, the soul gets along quite well with very few clear or distinguished perceptions: the soul of the tick has three, including a perception of light, an olfactory perception of its prey, and a tactile perception of the best place to burrow, while everything else in the great expanse of Nature, which the tick nevertheless conveys, is only a numbness, a dust of tiny, dark, and scattered perceptions. (Deleuze 2006: 105)

Although Uexküll is not named, this tick is very similar to the one that Buchanan describes, and thus is most likely drawn from the biologist's work. But for one difference, in the case of this tick there is an *in between* of affects. While in Conley's translation this equates to a 'numbness'. Daniel Smith , in his forthcoming translation, uses the word 'dizziness': '... everything else in the immensity of Nature, which the tick nonetheless expresses, is simply a dizziness [*étourdissement*], a dust of obscure and non-integrated minute perceptions' (Deleuze, translation modified, 118).[5] While `numbness' marks a generic absence of sensation, dizziness suggests a condition at the edges of sentience.

What difference do these 'scattered perceptions' make to the tick, and what kind of ecological project does this open up? For Leibniz, whose thought is brought into uncanny proximity to Uexküll's through the allegory of the Baroque House, minute perceptions play a central role. 'There is at every moment', Leibniz writes 'an infinity of perceptions in us, unaccompanied by awareness and unaccompanied by reflection; that is, modifications in the soul itself of which we are not aware' (Leibniz quoted in Heller-Roazen 2007: 188). This brings the distinctiveness of Leibniz's account of matter to the fore. Whereas Descartes sees matter in terms of definable infinitesimals that are concretized into bodies governed by mechanical laws, for Leibniz the tiny vibrations that comprise matter cannot be assigned discrete co-ordinates because they are always in motion and relation. Leibniz proposes that the 'insensible movements' (Heller-Roazen 2007: 184) of matter with correlates in the soul as 'minute perceptions' are sensations that are 'too weak to be noticed, although they are always retained, and this amidst such a heap of infinite other small perceptions that we have continually' (Heller-Roazen 2007: 184). In this way, for Leibniz, all matter has a tactile or felt dimension, although for the most part, this tactility remains below the threshold of recognition.

Via tiny perceptions, too faint and confused to register as clear sensations or discrete ideas, Leibniz likens a monad to a mirror, which indistinctly reflects (but does not directly express) all the variable relations which make up the universe. In Deleuze's words: 'All monads express the

whole world darkly, even if not in the same order. Each one encloses in itself the infinity of minute perceptions' (Deleuze 2006: 104). According to Deleuze each monad selects a 'zone of clear, remarkable, or privileged expression' (Deleuze 2006: 104) which is articulated through the distinct capacities and orientations of its body. It is only by virtue of this clear zone of expression, he insists, that it is possible to distinguish between monads. Reflecting on this, we can say that his reading of Leibniz lays the groundwork for an account of the visible and discernable capacities and behaviors that build compossibilities, which he elaborates via Spinoza and Uexküll. But we can also say that in the company of Leibniz, this task of 'counting affects' is complicated, for they are always emerging out of, and folding back into, a realm of more indistinct perceptions.

For the most part, Deleuze does not consider the potential agency of minute perceptions, beyond their role in the formation of a clear zone of expression. He writes: 'an infinity of minute perceptions subsist in [the monad] without at all assuming relations' (Deleuze 2006: 103). Nevertheless, at times he speculates something else: namely, that in between perceptions that are too obscure to be distinguished, and a monad's zone of clear expression, every monad entails a unique threshold of tiny prickling sensations:

> Tiny perceptions are as much the passage from one perception to another as they are components of each perception. They constitute the animal or animated state par excellence: disquiet. These are 'pricklings', or little foldings that are no less present in pleasure than in pain. The pricklings are the representative of the world in the closed monad. The animal that anxiously looks about, or the soul that watches out, signifies that there exist minute perceptions that are not integrated into present perception, but also minute perceptions that are not integrated into the preceding one and that nourish the one that comes along … . (Deleuze 2006: 99)

These 'animal' 'prickings', the correlates of tiny vibrations of matter, help us understand why for Deleuze the human soul discovers a 'a vertiginous animality, that gets it tangled in the pleats of matter' (Deleuze 2006: 12). But importantly, as Heller-Roazen points out, for Leibniz it is not just humans but all living creatures, which, each in their own way have such a threshold[6] (Heller-Roazen 2007: 198):

> In the transition from the absence of awareness to its presence, such intermediaries, by definition, would belong neither to the obscurity

> of 'mere perceptions' nor to the clarity of 'sensation'. They would be reducible neither to the drowsy state nor the lucidity of the waking mind. No longer 'small but not yet 'large', they would be perceptions on the threshold of being noticed: thorns almost felt but not as such, their sharp edges barely beginning now to prick. (Heller-Roazen 2007: 209)

If we follow this trail that Deleuze hints at, but does not fully pursue in *The Fold*, and take seriously the affinity he allows between monad and *Umwelt*, then it becomes possible to ask if there might be particular ways that the tick indistinctly perceives the world.[7] And this gives rise to a fantastical speculation, that in between the 'dizziness' of the tick and its 'distinct bodily capacities', it too may have sensations that are on the edge of being felt.

IX

In recent years Deleuze's philosophical engagement with Uexküll has been influential in the emergence of new ways of thinking about ecologies, including Code's account of 'ecological thinking', (Code 2006) and Stengers' 'ecology of practices' towards a cosmopolitics (Zournazi 2002). By focusing on the harmonic and melodic dimensions of Uexküll's biology, Deleuze provides these new philosophical approaches to ecology with an account of affect, where the amplification of productive capacities between different bodies, is independent of characteristics in common or relations of cause and effect.

But as new ecological philosophies also bring to the fore, we live in a world where we cannot rely on the stability of relations. Through our dominant patterns of production, consumption, thought and imagination, humans have helped unleash rapid environmental changes that we cannot predict or control. Both Stengers and Code emphasize that in this complex, often highly asymmetrical web of relations, it is human modes of life that need to change, not by mastering nature, but by cultivating new modes of thought, action and imagination attentive to the different kinds of differences ecologies entail.

This complicates Deleuze's account of affect in two key ways. On the one hand, by making symbiotic processes in biology a paradigm for affect, the risk is that pressing questions concerning the orientation and comportment of human *Umwelten* are ignored, and with this the ethical implications of our relation with the nonhuman world. On the other hand, we can also say that Deleuze's account of affect seems to

miss the powerfully decentering implications of Uexküll's speculative accounts of the phenomenal worlds of insects and other small creatures for a human-centered world. This potentially productive instability may be lost if we think only in terms of legible bodily capacities, and allow the distinct bubble worlds of other animals to vanish.

What difference might the proximity between monad and *Umwelt* (that we have elaborated through the allegory of The Baroque House) make to an understanding of Deleuze's philosophy, and its implications for an ecologically oriented ethics? If ecologies are all about affects, this supposes a particular account of the 'tactility of matter' in terms of a realm of humanly discernable capacities and behaviors in and by bodies. To be able to discern affective capacities necessitates clear qualifications of perception and behavior and the concomitant variations and transformation – of speed and slowness rather than functions – peculiar to bodies and the relations they have with other bodies. In this way, Deleuze's ethology – with its valorization of affects in terms of the capacities of bodies to affect and be affected by other bodies in productive alliances (Deleuze 1992: 257) – has shifted the philosophical discussion, as mentioned, from 'what is a body?' to 'what the body can do'.

But through his wanderings with Leibniz in company with Uexküll, Deleuze also has the potential to ask another question: 'what *is* the body when it does not yet do?' Between the tick's three affects, Deleuze notes, as mentioned above, a 'dizziness' of 'non-integrated minute perceptions' (Deleuze, translation modified, 118). It is by virtue of these 'non-integrated' perceptions that the tick in *The Fold* distinguishes itself from the ticks that occur elsewhere in Deleuze's work, and acquires an *Umwelt*. Here *Umwelt* is to be understood in the Leibnizian sense to entail an infinity of tiny perceptions, correlates of the vibrating matter of the world.

This gives us a different way of thinking the infinitesimal differentials at an ontological level within and between entities. Each monad-*Umwelt* has a clear zone of expression, but also a periphery which deforms and folds as it rubs up against other peripheries, which have an influence back to the center, but not in the form of causality. A different kind of calculus is operating here where minute perceptions maintain differentiations that are proper to the monad-*Umwelt*. This occurs firstly between the clear perceptions leading to expressions of the world and the minute perceptions within a monad; and secondly between the minute perceptions at the periphery of one monad to another, interacting while maintaining their discreteness.

For us, this suggests that ecologies entail, not only affects, but also minute perceptions, some of which are on brink of being felt, by humans and by other nonhuman life forms. We believe this different way of thinking the tactility of matter brings with it new modes of attention and comportment for an ecologically oriented ethics.

As Buchanan points out, Deleuze praises Uexküll for 'elaborating a theory of "Nature as music"' (Buchanan 2008: 177). But in the present context of increasingly environmental instability, where many relations are passing, partial, improvised and only dimly felt, these musical tropes may not always be adequate. For Buchanan, Deleuze responds by bursting Uexküll's bubble worlds to purse an ethology of affects, but at another level, Deleuze's use of Uexkull's 'symphony' of nature goes unexamined.

Our account complicates Buchanan's reading of Deleuze in two ways. On the one hand, we are showing that Deleuze does draw on *Umwelt*, all be it indirectly via the example of insects that inform his reading of monads. On the other, we are asking if the melodies, rhythms and harmonies that Deleuze appropriates from Uexküll in his direct engagement with his work, begin shifting in the ecological philosophy of *The Fold*. What might musical accords turn into when there is a radical unknowability and potential incompossibility – a non-patternable out-of-phaseness – between different *Umwelten*?

At the end of *The Fold*, Deleuze hints at the difficulties surrounding the differentials between monads (and as we have argued, by implication *Umwelten*), when he describes a world where the clear and distinct zone of expression each monad fashions begins to vanish, leading to a situation where 'not only are dissonances excused from being "resolved," divergences can be affirmed, in series that escape the diatonic scale where all tonality dissolves' (Deleuze 2006: 157). Now if dissonances are allowed, then the 'symphony of nature' may be turning into a different kind of performance, where a monad may be 'in tune with divergent series that belong to incompossible monads' so that 'astraddle over several worlds the monad is kept half open as if by a pair of pliers' (2006: 157). Half open, a monad is no longer hermetically sealed from the outside, as Leibniz posits, but still half closed, its 'bubble world', to borrow from the language of Uexküll, has not burst but instead has become less distinct, shifting, so that monads enter into partial attunements with one another.

While the symphony of nature, with its smooth harmonies between diverse entities, remains Uexküll's most influential metaphor for

ecologies, on occasions he too speculates about the affects of ecological instability. In *A Theory of Meaning*, Uexküll wonders want might happen to the 'clavier of life' if moths were lost through extinction:

> Let us suppose that moths have become extinct because of some natural event and we were faced with the task of replacing this loss on the clavier of life with the help of natural technology. How would we proceed in this case? We would probably take a butterfly and retrain it for nocturnally blooming flowers, in which case the development of the olfactory feelers would have to take priority over the development of the eyes. (Uexküll, 2010: 206–207)

Uexküll seems to be confidently asserting that 'natural technology' will replace the lost moth, with a butterfly that has been augmented to perfectly mimic the moth's melodic part in the symphony of nature. But the *ad hoc* adaptations the butterfly must undergo seem far from a harmonic orchestration; instead this is a partial, improvised attunement of organisms, or parts of them – particularly their perceptual apparatus. This view of ecology is quite a distance from that of the co-affecting relations between the orchid and the wasp. An account of affect in terms of an assemblage of distinct bodily sensations and capacities does not quite capture the out-of-phase material and sensate development of the butterfly moth, and thus the potential for compossible relations between different organisms.

But through Leibniz's account of minute perceptions on the brink of being felt, it may be possible to attend to the dissonances and partial tunings of ecologies as well as melodious co-formations. For us, the proximity between Leibniz and Uexküll, opened up through Deleuze's allegory of the Baroque House, suggests that every *Umwelt* has not only a melodic center in the form of distinct sensations and bodily capacities, but a periphery which deforms and folds as it rubs up against other peripheries. That is, the bodies, whose individuation for Deleuze is based on their expressed capacities, in fact also contain at their peripheries, certain indistinct, shadowy sentience of relations, which are not quite affects, but which has an important status in the processes of individuation. As Dan Smith in his new translation of *The Fold* says 'It is because there is an infinity of individual monads that each one requires an individuated body, this body resembling the shadow of other monads cast upon it'.

Minute perceptions maintain differentiations that are proper to the *Umwelt*, first between the clear perceptions leading to expressions of the world and the minute perceptions within an *Umwelt*, and second between the minute perceptions at the periphery of one *Umwelt* to another, interacting while maintaining their discreteness. In this calculus, which is also the symphony of nature, the shifts between the affects of the butterfly and the affects of the moth are not just minute transitions of matter, but minute shifts in perception, which lie in potential – a Deleuzian virtuality – of un-anticipatable configurations and expressions of the world.

X

The insects from Uexküll's laboratory enter the Baroque House and are greeted by the revelers in the great hall with a symphony of strange cries, the exquisite gossamer curtains undulating in harmony out the windows.

The butterfly is so taken by the sight of the ornate decor of the room that it flaps its wings vigorously, wafts of air vibrating the curtains ever so slightly upwards. But something, almost nothing, like an appetite it once felt when it was a very hungry caterpillar, is goading it into the folds, following the vibrations upstairs.

The fly, caught up by the melody of the ball, finds in horror that its wings are caught in the weave of the curtains, a vision of fates to come in web-like worlds. But something, almost nothing, like a dim shadow warning its future progeny, urges the fly to map the space between the threads as if a spider.

The tick does not see or hear a thing, captivated in its own waiting for the right feel of heat and smell of sweat. The symphony of nature was merely something, almost nothing, a prickling at the edges of its numb life that connects it to the cosmos.

The butterfly, now in perfect camouflage with the elaborate decoration of the curtains, disappears like a moth. Losing sight of itself and the visible world, it borrows the impulse to climb upwards from the tick, and the fly's cryptographic yearnings. As the butter-moth-tick-fly ascends the curtains, an appetite for textile, carried in the deepest folds of its being since childhood, takes hold. With its newly grown mouthparts, it eats the pleats of matter as it climbs up – throwing nature's symphony into the slightest of discordance, irrigating the folds of the soul with faint new light.

Notes

1. Although for Deleuze, the Baroque is much more than an essence represented by a style, but an 'operative function', a total mode of thinking and production that is always already inherent in, and stretches over, stylistic periods of the Classical, East, Gothic, Romanesque. etc. (Deleuze 2006: 3).
2. Deleuze says elsewhere that the upper floor *is* the soul. 'The soul itself is what constitutes the other floor or the inside up above, where they are no windows to allow entry or influence from without' (Deleuze 2006: 14).
3. Rejecting Descartes' attempts to explain the relationship between extended bodies and immaterial souls thorough causal interaction, Leibniz posits a harmony between these distinct realms, divinely established yet independent of ongoing upkeep or principles in common. Leibniz writes: 'To employ a likeness, I would say that this concomitance that I maintain is much like that between different groups of musicians or choirs, who, separately playing parts while positioned in such a way so as not to see each other or even to hear each other at all, nevertheless succeed in being perfectly in harmony by simply following their notes, each one his own, so that the one who hears them all finds there to be a marvelous harmony there, much more surprising than if there had been a connection between them' (Heller-Roazen 2007: 194).
4. If there was a theory of pre-formation, it would be an already composed series of folds and not a more fundamental reduced entity upon which epigenesis occurs (See Deleuze 2006: 10).
5. All references to a modified translation of *The Fold* refer to a new unpublished version of the text, translated by Daniel W. Smith.
6. So we can say that in Heller-Roazen's reading of Leibniz, it would 'sensations on the threshold of being noticed', more so than that distinct zone of affect that Deleuze emphasizes, where by different monads represent 'the created world in its totality, but only indistinctly, from its own point of view and, above all, with respect to its body' (198).
7. According to Uexküll, the tick 'intuits' the human as an 'undifferentiated mammal' (Uexküll 2010: 178).

Works cited

Bogue, Ronald (2003) *Deleuze on Music, Painting and the Arts* (London: Routledge).

Buchanan, Brett (2008) *Onto-Ethologies: The Animal Environments of Uexküll, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Deleuze* (New York: State University of New York Press).

Code, Lorraine (2006) *Ecological Thinking: The Politics of Epistemic Location* (New York: Oxford University Press).

Deleuze, Gilles (1992) 'Ethology: Spinoza and Us' in *Zone 6: Incorporations*, eds. Jonathan Crary and Stanford Kwinter (Cambridge: MIT Press).

—— (2006) *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (London and New York: Continuum).

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophreni*a, trans. Brian Massumi (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press).

—— (1994) *What Is Philosophy?* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press).

Frichot, Hélène (2013) 'Deleuze and the Story of the Superfold' in *Deleuze and Architecture*, ed. Hélène Frichot and Stephen Loo (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press).

Grosz, Elizabeth (2011) *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics and Art* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press).

Heller-Roazen, Daniel (2007) *The Inner Touch: Archaeology of a Sensation* (New York: Zone Books).

Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (1698) *Monadology*, trans. Robert Latta, available at http://home.datacomm.ch/kerguelen/monadology/monadology.html (accessed 17 October 2014).

Uexküll, Jakob von (2010) *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans* and *A Theory of Meaning*, trans. Joseph D. O'Neil (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press).

Zournazi, Mary (2002) 'A Cosmo-Politics – Risk, Hope, Change: A Conversation with Isabelle Stengers,' in *Hope: New Philosophies for Change* (Annandale: Pluto Press Australia).

7

Iqbal's Becoming-Woman in *The Rape of Sita*

Simone Bignall

Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalytic philosophy unearths a power of delirium to liberate *a life*. Their method is pragmatic, problematizing and political because it locates paths of release from entrenched and powerful structures, which constrain possibilities for diversifying existence and limit the creative potential for innovation. Literature is a natural ally of schizoanalysis, in so far as both are involved in the diagnosis of social malaise and the creative labor of the invention of alternative worlds. Literature often imagines characters involved in finding lines of flight from the problematic situations that confine them, and so can open up for the reader new ways of understanding worldly situations as assemblages of desire and power, and new ways of experiencing their own being in time as a moment of actual capture and a set of virtual escape strategies.

This chapter explores themes of social oppression and human liberation in *The Rape of Sita*, written by the post-colonial feminist author Lindsey Collen.[1] Banned in Mauritius upon its publication in 1993, her book tells of a traumatic process of subjective capture and collapse – accompanied by a willful process of transformation and self-renewal – experienced by the protagonist Sita when she recovers a suppressed memory of a rape endured a decade earlier while visiting the French colony of Reunion. Although Sita is the heroine of this story, the work tells of the affective communities traversed by Sita and the narrator Iqbal, who is drawn into a process of becoming-woman capable of disrupting the problematic forms of gendered subjectivity that make rape possible. For Collen, both sexual and colonial violence rely upon powerful technologies of desire and satisfaction that operate by degrading the humanity of women and subjugated peoples and thereby denying them full admittance to the category of the human. She mobilizes feminism and post-colonialism as

tools of intervention that are at once critical and reconstructive, capable of expanding and renewing conceptualizations of human existence that have been corrupted by masculinism and colonialism. Collen is a 'political author, prophet of the future world' and *The Rape of Sita* is a work of minor literature that translates and disassembles dominant mechanisms of desire and power (Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 41, 47). It thereby creates new possibilities for transforming human life in the world of the reader, where desire is captured by ingrained forms of dehumanizing power that perpetuate capitalist, colonial and sexual violence – just as it is in the fictional world inhabited by Sita and Iqbal.

Desire and delirium

For Deleuze and Guattari (1983), human subjectivity does not correspond with an ontological void at the heart of being: desire is not well conceived as the longing of a bereft psyche and does not spring from a formative experience of alienation that summons forth a movement of subjective reconciliation and repletion. For them, desire is not the felt effect of a formal absence, but is the affective force related to a presence: it is a virtual force-relation combining co-present substances to actualize new assemblages. Desire, then, is not primarily individual or personal, but rather is social or associative. It is not in the first instance a property possessed subjectively, so much as it is an extra-human intensity that invests a social field to bring individual and social properties into being.

Schizoanalysis is a diagnostic and programmatic technique that refers to the sociality of desire and to the complex process whereby individuation takes place through relations: the specific way in which the abstract and virtual force of desiring-production is 'coded' in a society, or by a group influences, and how it may become vested in actual individuals and concrete social formations. The primary purpose of schizoanalysis is to reveal the 'libidinal investments in our cultural and social milieu' (1983: 175), such as those made by the normative Western model of Oedipal subjectivity. Which alternative organizations of desire are repressed? Which established order is preserved by a particular repression of desire? Taking the causal negativity of desire-lack as a normative starting point for understanding self and society results in an emphasis placed upon the achievement and conservation of identity and stability; satisfaction is then defined in imperial terms of acquisition and possession. Deleuze and Guattari therefore suggest: 'Oedipus is always colonisation pursued by other means, it is the interior colony, and [...] it

is our ultimate colonial education' (1983: 170). According to Robert Young, their argument is useful for the critical analysis of colonialism because of the way in which 'philosophy, psychoanalysis, anthropology, geography, economics et al. are all brought together in one interactive economy and shown to be implicated in capitalism's colonizing operations' (1994: 19). In *The Rape of Sita*, Lindsey Collen shows how rape is a mode of systemic violence also implicated at the heart of capitalist and colonial operations. In fact, although the phenomenological experience of rape cannot be reduced to that of colonization, when analyzed at the functional level of libidinal investment in a social formation 'they are the same thing' (149; see also Deer 2009; Sharpe 1993; Smith 2005; Tschofen 1995; c.f. Koopman 2012)[2]. Like capitalist accumulation that proceeds by way of alienated labor and elite control of production and profit, and like the colonial appropriation of territory, resources and labor, the sequestration and rape of women by men is a systemic solution to the problematic experience of (masculine) desire coded as lack. Rape is an act of appropriation and possession; it is a tool of social control that works by dehumanizing the subjective lives of women, making us permanently fearful of the potential for male violence and perversely ashamed of our vulnerability.

The rape of Sita takes place when she visits a colleague, Rowan Tarquin, in the former slave colony of Reunion. Rowan is an 'ordinary colonizer' (57), marked by a paranoid style of desire reflecting his permanent fear of defeat and rejection. He defensively blinks backwards behind his glasses, like a child frequently smacked in the cradle by a brutal father (67, 192). He routinely violates the teenage girls placed in his care in his role as a probation officer. He is 'sometimes cruel' towards his wife, but in his view this cruelty doesn't count as rape: 'Because, he said, you can't rape your own wife. She's yours' (57, 67). Rowan admires Sita, who is a respected activist in the women's and socialist movements in Mauritius; but as a misogynist he simultaneously resents her for being the source of his unwanted esteem. He is competitively jealous of her partner, Dharma: '"Why should she accept him and not me?," he raged inside himself. "There's nothing inferior about me"' (67). Although the very thought of raping Sita makes his head split (just like his namesake, Tarquin, when contemplating the rape of Lucrece), Rowan feels he cannot bear to 'risk the refusal', should he proposition her for sex. And like Shakespeare's Tarquin, Rowan is 'madly tossed between desire and dread', but finally decides to rape Sita. Forced to protect her female dignity and preserve her life, she stops struggling against his weight, removes her own clothes and submits woodenly to his will. After her escape, she buries

the memory of the rape and her unbearable murderous rage towards Rowan deep inside herself and, for a long while, resumes her usual life without revealing to anyone (not even to herself) the gaping wound at the tender core of her being.

Collen defines her villain in terms of his paranoid and Oedipal desires, which characterize him as being in a 'woman-hating state. A state. The state. The colonial state. The capitalist state. The state of power. The state of repression. The patriarchal state. The state. *Something rotten in the state*' (149, original emphasis). By comparison, the hero Dharma is characterized by an alternative set of desiring-practices and affects, and by his contrasting embodiment of a process model of masculine self-in-relation. Unlike the colonizer Rowan and the governing elite of Mauritian bankers and sugar plantation owners, Dharma is 'part of the planet' because he is 'part of the social fabric of [a] place' (73). His 'whole body touches the earth'. He is 'one of the people. Among them all' (75). If Rowan's desiring-relations are characteristically closeted, paranoid, controlling and Oedipal, Dharma is Dionysian: an anti-Oedipus. His relations are expansive, multifaceted and widely social: they are not circumscribed by bourgeois familialism; and they act usually in the service of his socially transformative agenda as a war machine, directed against the colonial-capitalist state. In his immediate relations with others, he practices contextually the principles of the fair and free society he is committed to create. Dharma and Sita meet one another as human equals, in an affective combination that is compatible because each recognizes and respects the other honestly, to acknowledge and affirm their differences and appreciate how they can relate in a joyful manner (77–78). By blocking her memory of the rape, Sita accordingly feels she has not only betrayed her feminist self and the social justice she pursues in her professional political activities, but also that she has deceived Dharma: realizing she has been lying to herself, she finds she does not know herself adequately, and the foundation of honesty and trust characterizing her relationship with Dharma is simultaneously called into question. Thus experiencing herself as uncomfortable and her important relationship with Dharma as problematic (without knowing or remembering exactly why), Sita determinedly begins a process of experimental self-recovery and renewal. This 'fear, flight, dismantling' (Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 46) involves her in the 'three tasks of schizoanalysis' described by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*.

The first task of schizoanalysis is critical and deconstructive (1983: 311 ff.). It calls upon a person to 'undo the trap' that is the mode of selfhood into which they have been snared by a constituting set of

passive or unquestioned desires. When Sita realizes she has 'hours missing' from the time of her overnight stay in Reunion, and that this lost time is somehow connected to a deception or a duplicity, to the fearful word 'burying' and to an inexplicable feeling of anger at Dharma, she doggedly begins 'diving into that opaque, dark murky underworld' of her unconscious (32). She finds there a shocking, vertiginous hole, a 'heavy, dense … presence of an absence': the sensation of a 'wild anger so terrible and a murderous rage so ferocious as to make her tremble' (35–36). Remembering this buried fury, and feeling it affect her once again, her hands itch to commit violence. Then she becomes aware of a second recollection: her hands pinioned, and a feeling of being imprisoned, impotent: 'she saw herself trapped, or was it locked up, or tied down physically, or hand-cuffed, or ball-and-chained, or paralyzed, or perhaps with a rock on her chest under water. Or being buried alive. A weight on her' (37). Diving deep to unearth her buried soul, Sita 'goes by way of destruction – a whole scouring of the unconscious, a complete curettage' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 311). She proceeds 'with great patience, great care, by successively undoing the representative territorialities and reterritorializations through which [she has passed] in [her] individual history' (1983: 318). Where she had previously thought of herself as fearless, compassionate and competent, now she discovers herself composed by affects of unspeakable shame, murderous violence and impotent fury. To her horror, she finds a raw, all too human, wound deep within herself: '*The rage of the history of wounded womankind. And with it: Slavery. The slavery of humans historically doomed to be unable to move*' (37, original emphasis). Thus deterritorialized, Sita reaches the point of self-criticism that completes the first task of schizoanalysis and opens onto the second: 'where the structure, beyond the images that fill it and the Symbolic that conditions it within representation, reveals its reverse side as a positive principle of nonconsistency that dissolves it: where desire is shifted into the order of production, related to its molecular elements, and where it lacks nothing' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 311).

A person engaging the second task of schizoanalysis swoons into delirium (1983: 322 ff.). Having examined herself carefully and acknowledged that some of her most significant constituting affects are the product of unwanted and unchosen desires imposed upon her by the rapist Rowan, for three days and three nights Sita experiences a kind of madness as she contemplates her options. In her catatonic state of shocked psychosis, these waver predominantly between suicide and murder; however, in the delirium that she experiences as a state of 'pure

power' without subjective or moral constraint, Sita comes to understand that her responsive options are open and numberless (Deleuze 2005: 30). 'Desire is agape' and 'delirium is first of all the investment of a field that is social, economic, political, cultural, racial and racist, pedagogical and religious'; this is evidenced by Sita's mad and ironic petition to God for guidelines or rules women should live by, to responsibly avoid being raped[3] (187–190; Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 274, 347). In delirium, Sita experiences herself as 'a life', a pure potentiality that has not been condensed into subjective action. Knowing herself as wounded by desires forcibly encountered enables Sita to sense the machinic operation of virtual desiring-production that rumbles beneath her actualized life-form. In her deterritorialized state of delirium, Sita discovers the nature, the formation and the functioning of her own desiring-machines: her own situated constitution in a complex network of associations. Closer scrutiny of her own desiring-machines reveals not only the nature of those repugnant connections she has been forced to endure and would never choose for herself or for others, but also those existing connections she affirms and those positive styles of association that may lead to welcome relationships not yet encountered in fact. The ecstasy of pure immanence that is unfettered desiring-production plunges her into a 'global field of coexistence' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 274) in which any connections and all social forms become possible once more; their actualization in fact is dependent only upon the judicious selection and operation of a carefully constructed desiring-machine. In turn, this creates in her a new awareness of the pure virtuality of desiring-production as an unlimited and untapped reserve of power or potential to create associations. She comes to understand how she may yet draw upon this virtual potential to constitute herself anew as an actively willed assemblage of desiring-relations; and so to emerge healed.

This, then, is the third task of schizoanalysis: to cultivate knowledge how every association, every minor engagement, is itself an investment in a molar formation (1983: 340). Sita cannot act upon her virtual desire to exact a murderous revenge on Rowan Tarquin without actualizing herself as a killer. Worse, by acting to harm him and to diminish his power she would embody a violent and reactive desire for control over life, thus reinforcing the particular coding of desire that invests the socio-political formations of patriarchy, colonization and capitalism she despises. Sita seeks a revolutionary solution to the social problem of rape, which calls for the invention of a new world and the creation of a people. This cannot be found by eliminating the individual pathology of Rowan the rapist; it requires social intervention at the constitutive

level of desiring-production, with the selection and general operation of a desiring-machine that actualizes alternative social formations in which rape becomes inconceivable. Sita's response to the problem of rape is to affirm the existence of this desiring-machine in her own molecular associations and in her collective work with women against the forces of sexist, colonial and capitalist oppression. These forces degrade the universality of human being, rendering some classes of people insecure in their humanity by subjugating them under the globalizing normative power of the white, male, capitalist individual. Whereas women, colonized peoples and workers have been socially constituted as 'subjugated groups', Sita will instead forge 'group-subjects', defined by 'coefficients of *transversality* that ward off totalities and hierarchies' (Deleuze 2004: 197; Deleuze and Guattari 2003).

The revolutionary becoming-woman of womankind, as an active departure from our systematic determination by masculine (Oedipal) desire instituting male power and interest, begins with the feminist organization of women as group-subjects. This is the sense in which 'woman as a molar entity *has to become-woman*' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 275, original emphasis). To be genuinely revolutionary, feminism must be capable of resisting the reterritorialization of its productive desires into hierarchies that reify the privileged interests of some classes of women at the expense of others. It should not reinstate the libidinal conditions of the power structure it opposes (1983: 348–349; 366–367; Deleuze 2004: 193–203; Goulimari 1999; MacCormack 2009). However, we know rape is particularly a problem of masculine subjectivity. It is the effective tool of male desire investing in a patriarchal control society. To counter rape, womankind 'has to become-woman, but in a becoming-woman of all man' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 292). The actualization of new social formations in which rape is rejected as an option therefore additionally requires the becoming-woman of man in a molecular unmooring of his majoritarian form (1987: 291). This is the process experienced and activated by Iqbal of Surinam as he narrates the story of the rape of Sita.

Becoming-woman

Referencing transmutation, rebirth, animal affections and becoming-woman, Iqbal begins his story:

> I, the teller of this tale, must almost become the heroine. Like it's a mask, or a character, take it on. And it's difficult, this metamorphosis. This reincarnation. A Beatles tune suddenly started to run around

> inside my head, like a rat. *Jojo was a man who thought he was a woman*, but instead of Jojo the word Iqbal rang in my head, *Iqbal was a man who thought he was a woman* (8).

This song line becomes a refrain that echoes throughout the text, subtly changing form and appearing whenever Iqbal reflects upon his actions, his alliances or his creative 'midwife' roles as a storyteller and social activist. However, while Iqbal certainly admires Sita, his taking on the mask of the heroine and becoming-woman does not proceed by imitation. In fact, as Deleuze and Guattari insist, becoming does not concern identification but rather involves a passage 'between' identities. It takes place 'before' individuals and 'beneath' subjective forms (1987: 239), and in this sense all becomings are 'non-human'. Although becoming-woman, like all becomings, is a 'non-human' becoming, this concept should not be thought to debase the humanity of woman: what is non-human in a becoming is the process itself, and never the subject who 'becomes otherwise'. Becoming is 'non-human' because it does not bear upon an individual (human) form in its entirety, but instead concerns mobile forces affecting parts of bodies joined in relations. The forces involved in a 'becoming' are desires that produce molecular associations to constitute and individuate forms, but for Deleuze and Guattari, desire is not an individual or a human property so much as it is a field of intensity that invests creative processes.

The nature of Iqbal's becoming-woman can therefore be appreciated only if we understand how Collen constructs Iqbal's character as multiple and molecular. Like a story or a society, he is an assemblage of part-relations: a complex self, like a 'bunch of grapes' (5, 197). Similarly for Deleuze and Guattari (drawing from Spinoza, Nietzsche, Bergson and Simondon), an individual is a complex assemblage defined entirely by its relations (1987: 253 ff.). Iqbal is characterized by elements, which combine to define his internal constitution: male, Mauritian, descended from Indian slave labor, born out of wedlock, observant, bike-riding, fair-minded umpire, gifted orator, social activist. But Iqbal himself is also an element in a dense network of social relations, which likewise constructively defines his character and includes his family and friends, his village community, his colleagues in the workers' movement, the plantation owners and policemen he regularly confronts as part of his activist work, and so forth. However, within this wide and diverse milieu, he enjoys especially significant relationships with 'exceptional individuals' in his life (1987: 243). These include Sita, Dharma, Ton Tipyer, Sita's mother Doorga, and her father Mohun Jab. While each of these figures plays an

important shaping role in his character development, Iqbal never identifies with them in entirety. Each of these relationships affects him partially and in a piecemeal way, each affection furnishing select aspects of his identity as it develops over time. From Sita's father Mohun Jab, he learns the importance of 'powers of reasoning' and persuasion, which inform good story-telling and political practice (10). From Sita's mother – the warrior Doorga who proudly gives birth alone and beats men up – Iqbal learns to respect the power of the feminine, to stand up independently to authority, and to appreciate that force is sometimes required 'as a last resort' to 'make history move forwards' (61). Particularly from Dharma, Iqbal takes up the quality of commitment to a cause, and an expansive style of social engagement linked with creative transformation. Especially in the context of his close relationship with his childhood companion and life-long friend Sita, Iqbal develops a sense of the political involving collaboration, compassion and empathy.

Each of these figures appears regularly in the text to combine with Iqbal in productive ways that help shape his personality, but Ton Tipyer is perhaps the most influential force in Iqbal's character development. He plays the role of 'the chorus' (as in Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece*), appearing like a soothsayer at crucial turning points in the story. An itinerant and bacchanalian character, Ton Tipyer is a figure of transmutation. Iqbal worships him like a God (41). He appears first as a stonemason known as 'the Rock', then as a motorbike rider known as 'the Horse', and finally as a musician *Bolom Laflit*, 'the Flute'. (We might note how this life trajectory moves from a fixed and sedentary form of being, through the speed and mobility of an animal-becoming, to the fluid and light form of wind-music). As a stonemason, he sculpts forms and cleaves solid rocks by hand, first in two, and then into the particulate form of gravel (46). To Iqbal, Ton Tipyer meant:

> that mankind could form his destiny; he meant man could cleave rock; he meant tools; [...] he meant transformation of nature; he meant creation; he meant birth of new life out of rock. He was a man like a woman: he could do with his own hands what women do with their bodies: produce, reproduce, create, make, invent. (41)

Above all else, Ton Tipyer is a philosopher and a storyteller: he thinks the nature of life as a process of eternal change, and he teaches this insight to others by relating classic tales. As a child, Iqbal learns from him how to tell old stories anew, to 'make them more true' (8, 93, 118). While he is not formally part of the socialist movement, Ton Tipyer presents

activists with concepts that may be put to use as tools in transformative practices. For example, he explains how societies, like the sand dunes on the Mauritian coast, are always slowly on the move. With the south-east trade winds relentlessly blowing, entire sand mountains shift shape and new dunes form where before there were none. And societies have watershed moments, like when a single extra drop of water causes an entire dam to 'hover with surface tension and then cascade down in a waterfall' (64). He says: 'Everything you do can be with the trade winds, in which case you have a helping hand, or against them, in which case you are wasting your time [...] Find out about the trade winds in society and work together with them [...] Study what moves in a good direction. Feel it. Know it. And then lean on it [...] Help it along' (63, 64).

Iqbal's character is derived from his multiple and diverse relations formed with communities of belonging in general, and with these 'exceptional individuals' in particular, when select elements are snatched from his constitutive relations with the molar identities forming his affective neighborhood. Iqbal is thus a 'molecular' assemblage: a complex organization of elements bonded in differential force relations, which shift contextually and multiply his identity according to the situation of his activity. His molecular nature means that Iqbal is constantly becoming: every time he encounters a person or a situation and some of his constituting relations shift, there occurs in him 'a flutter, a vibration in the form itself that is not reducible to the properties of a subject' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 253). And he causes the becoming of others every time he comes into contact with them, since constitutive relations are shared. 'This is the sense in which becoming is the process of desire': Iqbal perpetually affects others because he emits particles in a 'principle of proximity', resulting in 'unnatural nuptials' and 'creative involutions' when his body combines with others in part-encounters at particular sites of affection (1987: 272). Sometimes these affections can be radically transformative and consciously felt when they bring about watershed molar changes that affect individuals in entirety; more often they are subtle and imperceptible, like a sand dune on the move, impacting in partial and piecemeal ways on particular elements at the grainy, molecular level of a 'pre-individual' or a 'non-subjective' self.

Molecular transformations bear upon molar entities, sweeping them into 'uncontrollable becomings' as an inevitable effect of common immersion and affective contagion. Accordingly, there is no becoming-man because man is an archetypical molar entity that constitutes the standard upon which the normative, dominant and 'majoritarian' identity is based: white, male, adult, rational, autonomous, 'the average

European, the subject of enunciation' (1987: 292). For this reason, Deleuze and Guattari insist 'all becomings begin with and pass through becoming-woman. It is the key to all other becomings' (1987: 277)[4]. While processes of becoming are never predictable and fully controlled – being somewhat the unchosen consequence of chance encounters – they can be willfully influenced. Women can enter into relations with men (and with women) in orchestrated becomings that deliberately transform the molar identity of 'man' by contaminating him with feminine part-relations, making use of 'love itself [as] a war machine endowed with strange and somewhat terrifying powers' (1987: 278). And men can enter purposely into relations with women (and with men) that enable them to take on feminist affects, not by 'imitating or assuming the female form, but emitting particles that enter the [...] zone of proximity of a microfemininity, in other words, that produce in us a molecular woman, create the molecular woman' (1987: 275).

How will this politics of becoming proceed? Deleuze and Guattari point to certain 'criteria' that should be observed (1987: 251; see also 160 ff.). Of these, the primary objective is to make desire active and purposeful. Although being unbiased and impartial is sometimes required of umpires when mediating political conflicts, it is not enough for a political practitioner to remain a neutral and detached observer of proceedings (as is Iqbal the umpire, before he becomes actively involved in the socialist movement). Transformative politics calls for active commitment to a progressive cause. Making desire active allows one to 'participate in history' and make it move forwards in a preferred trajectory (94–95, 61). From the perspective of schizoanalysis or desiring-production, making desire active involves combining knowledgably and deliberately with others as much as is possible, to advance compatible relationships and promote positive social outcomes, such as sexual equality. This should not be taken to mean that women who are raped are somehow 'responsible' for this act of male violence. Indeed, rape is typically an act of violent possession properly associated with masculine desire and male behavior, but the act of rape is not the result of individual pathology alone. The act of rape becomes possible when men act out relationships in accordance with a 'rape script' that structures a social grammar of violence, a 'grid of comprehensibility', which permits the very thought of rape as a social possibility (Marcus 1992: 390). If a 'grammar' is a set of rules conditioning relations between linguistic elements, then a 'social grammar' is a set of laws or norms governing relations between bodies. Accordingly, to say that the power to commit an act of rape is conditioned by a social grammar is 'to say that what a body can do

is determined, at least in part, by its relations with other bodies' and by the norms of sociability, or desiring-production, that govern these relations (Gatens 1996: 178). Countering rape requires an ethological 'politics of prevention' (Gatens 1996: 182) that acts upon the compositional forces of social desire (desiring-production) to revalue bodies. As Marsden (2004: 318) points out: 'Unlearning fear is not a rational or merely cognitive exercise. It is an exercise in material transformation. It is by embodying new values that vulnerable and violated bodies can be reconfigured. One cannot easily unlearn fear but one can become alert to codes of the social script and work tactically to reconfigure them'. A feminist etho-politics will use desire as a powerful force to recode and reconfigure the material determinations of bodies and their powers, to impart feminist values towards the formation new sociabilities in which women will no longer have to fear male desire and will no longer abhor their own bodies as potentially vulnerable sites of violation.

If the first objective of becoming is to make desire active, the second is to make desire `partial' and selective by cultivating molecular desires as `biased evaluating intensities' operating at specific sites of affective engagement (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 309). Illustrated in the case of Iqbal, transformational combinations with others take place molecularly. Individuals do not affect one another as molar entities, but as molecular configurations. Thus, compatibility with others will not be enjoyed entirely – as a function of perfect co-identification between individuals – but will instead be forged at the pre-individual or elemental level of relations between complex beings who do not agree in all respects. Encounters between diverse individuals take place 'bit by bit' at selective sites of elemental engagement (Deleuze 1990: 286): for example, Iqbal shares Mohun Jab's love of reasoned discourse but avoids his compulsive anti-capitalist criminality. This, then, is the second objective for a politics of becoming: to understand the complex configuration of desire in an association by cultivating an adequate knowledge of self and other as complex assemblages. To assist the becoming-woman of a man, his partners will find particular sites of feminist compatibility in their relationships with him, and reinforce these through affirmation. And his partners will discover where incompatibilities lie in the relationship as a result of his patriarchal tendencies – identifying those aspects of their union where he tends to dominate her – and she will strive to transform them or to suppress their effective presence in the association.

> However modest this may sound, such minor victories have a pleasure yield, a joyous effect. Through repetition, such tactics can become

> learned reflexes. In short, the body begins to feel differently. This is what it means to incorporate active values. (Marsden 2004: 318)

The third 'criterion' for a politics of becoming-woman is to appreciate how desire invests the social field, and to regulate micropolitical encounters towards the establishment of macropolitical feminist outcomes for society. Institutional structures in a society emerge from the repetition over time of habitual associations. Gradually, with sustained effort, regular modes of identification and styles of engagement become formalized as the principles and practices of a political community. Doorga advises Sita: 'Understand things, as much as you can, and what does not augur well for the future, you must oppose it. Never give in. [...] In good time, the others, if you are right, will stand up too' (94). One must identify what doesn't bode well for future society and oppose it in one's own relations. And one must find and affirm what feels right and just: those aspects of a relation which bring the superior political experience of common joy that corresponds with mutual enhancement. This contrasts with the solitary feeling of power or pleasure that is enjoyed by one individual, to the detriment of the relationship that defines and sustains him. The mutually rewarding experience of positive relationship may be communicated by example and by education, and is widely reinforced when communities establish institutional supports to regularize patterns of association that are understood to be joyful.

This, indeed, is how Iqbal gradually activates his becoming-woman. His contagion with feminist particles begins passively, when at the age of three he unthinkingly 'takes his mother's side' against patriarchal moralizing (29). It becomes more thoughtful when he observes sexist patterns of social interaction until he understands when and why women fear men; and he empathizes. It becomes conscious and directed when he begins to work collectively with others agitating for social justice, and he sits in the public gallery with the village women supporting a victim appearing in court to prosecute her rapist. It becomes intelligent when he asks critical questions about the relative responsibilities of men, women and communities involved in sexual violence. And it becomes social when he tells us the story of the rape of Sita, and urges us to interrogate our own assumptions, choices, practices and desires to decide if they are complicit with the attitudes of engagement that permit the act of rape. Finally, it becomes pedagogical when he observes instances of positive relationship between women and men. He instructs how compatibility can be forged in relations – even when partners are very diverse and do

not agree in many ways – by selecting and reinforcing sites of positive affection, and so building solidarity founded upon the mutually joyful experience of molecular friendship.

> And since writing this story, dear, dear reader, the endless song has stopped running around in my head. I no longer sing to myself *Iqbal was a man who thought he was a woman*. Progress has therefore been made. I am a man now. And I am a woman. Like we all will be. With the good trade winds, and with the fine water that falls from the heavens. [...]
>
> And we will have wanted to be free. Freedom. And then we will be free. And we will have wanted to be equal. Equality. And then we will become equal. (197)

Fabulating humanity

For Collen, there is nothing essential about being human; 'equality' and 'liberty' are not given human qualities, but must be *wanted* and constructed as part of an orchestrated experience of human life. If the concept of becoming-woman makes possible a feminist reinvention of man and of the experience of human being, then fabulation – 'telling tales' – plays a vital role in this process of renewal, because this is how 'a minority discourse takes shape' (Deleuze 1995: 125; see Bogue 2010; Flaxman 2012). Like Deleuzian philosophy, literature is a 'method of dramatization' of Ideas such as 'Freedom' and 'Equality' (Deleuze 2004: 94–103; see MacKenzie and Porter 2011). In the theater of philosophy, virtual Ideas are actualized by the 'performance' or creative enactment of concepts: to philosophize is 'to give form' to an Idea, rather than 'to discover' its pre-existing form in its representative or true concept. In a literary work, the virtual Idea is actualized in the process of story-telling: in the creative performance of writing. Considered in this way, the virtual Ideas of Freedom and Equality are ancient and eternal in themselves, but are forever being caught up in new determinations according to the processes of dramatization that actualize them in particular performances. Similarly, the Ideas of Man and of Woman are constantly subject to processes of redefinition and renewal. For example, they are given a particular formalization in patriarchal sagas of sequestration and rape, and a contrasting expression in accounts of matriarchal power and feminine triumph. The story of the rape of Sita is itself an old story made new by Lindsey Collen: Sita's story is also the tale of

Lucrece ravished by Tarquin; and it is the saga of the Ramayana – the age-old story of a woman 'stolen' by a man, from another man to whom she 'belongs'. This time, however, as she tells the story anew, Collen changes its content by dramatizing the becoming-woman of Iqbal, and so transporting previous actualizations of the Ideas of Man and Woman by giving them a new determination, a new expression.

As he commences his narration of the rape of Sita, Iqbal says: 'Talk is, when the story starts, in all directions' (7). The task of the author is to impose order upon this differential field: to determine logos from chaos; to bring about a sensible and artistic organization of language from the garbled nonsense of undifferentiated signs; to determine a set of virtual Ideas by expressing them as forms of experience that define characters in the context of a series of actualizing events. 'All these conditions define dramatization, and its attendant questions: *in what case? who? how? how much?*... a drama beneath every logos' (Deleuze 2004: 103). Pertaining to the various stories of man–woman relation, we might ask: *In what case* does this particular conceptualization of 'man' and of 'woman' apply? *Who* enjoys 'freedom' in this case? *How* is 'equality' experienced? *How much* force is required to establish the 'truth' of this case? These are diagnostic questions relating to values and interests empowered (consciously or subconsciously) by an author in the course of a work's construction; dramatization is a process of desire, or of desiring-production. Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between 'a desire that is already submissive and searching to communicate its own submission', and a desire that is nonconformist and seeks to recreate its own process of experimentation (Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 10). In the first case, desire is reactive because it is already determined by an existing regime of power that constrains its expression according to established channels; in the second case, desire is active because it is immediately involved in the productive process of creative expression. In the first case, an established regime of power directs the production of desire; in the second case, desire creates and transforms structures of power. Although every established regime of power is produced by forces of desire and so is never ontologically given, a reactive form of desire characteristically reinvests its productive potential in the regime of power it mistakes for the source of its determination as such. A reactive mode of desire both proceeds from and fortifies the law, established structures of organization, existing forms of content, and so forth. By contrast, an active force of desire is characteristically invested in the primary causal force of desiring-production itself: its interests lie in the processes of association, experimentation and creative expression that produce new

orders. For Deleuze and Guattari, 'these oscillations of the unconscious, these underground passages from one type of libidinal investment to the other – often the coexistence of the two – form one of the major objects of schizoanalysis' (1983: 278).

Accordingly, the schizoanalysis of literature compares the way desire is invested – reactively or actively – in 'major' and 'minor' styles of writing. Whereas 'major' literature takes its determination from an established regime of power materialized in a given form of content and style of expression, a 'minor' literature determines new forms of content by experimenting with the virtual conditions of creative expression: a minor literature begins by expressing itself and doesn't conceptualize until afterwards' (Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 28; see Tynan 2012). *The Rape of Sita* is a fine example of minor literature. Iqbal explains the procedure of his story-telling: 'The words come first, then the knowledge, to storytellers like me' (118). Collen makes deliberate use of language affected with a high coefficiency of deterritorialization in which words are severed from usual semiotic formulations, producing a linguistic 'stuttering' or 'strobing' that renders signification open, unfinished and mobile: 'between the devil and the deep blue.'; 'like a fish out of.'; 'Into the heart of.' (see Deleuze 1997: 107–114; 2004: 230–232). And in those moments when her characters are immersed in shared movements of creative becoming – for example, when Sita and Dharma make love – she makes use of a fluid flux of 'language torn from sense, conquering sense, bringing about an active neutralization of sense' (Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 21). Collen uses literature to connect with Life as a force of pure potentiality: the creative delirium of unrestrained desiring-production (Deleuze 1997: 1–6; see Lambert 2000). She employs a linguistic delirium in her writing for the purpose of accessing the productive desiring-machines that rumble beneath every actualized form of content and expression. If delirium is the virtual memory of non-formalized, pre-individual or 'extra-human' being, then retrieving this memory becomes the source of invention: 'story-telling is itself memory, and memory is invention of a people' (Deleuze 1989: 223). By disrupting and dismantling the rules of signification used by 'major literature' – the literature of the establishment – to consolidate conventional forms of content and expression, a minor writing connects immediately to politics and to political assemblages. By challenging the conventional sense of 'Man' and of 'Woman', and plugging the diabolical character of the man–woman Iqbal into 'real assemblages that are in the process of coming into shape' (Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 41), Collen dismantles influential significations

supporting established forms of colonial, capitalist and patriarchal power. In this way, Collen's writing does not simply represent a given reality, but rather creates a new humanity: 'it is the task of the fabulating function to invent a people' (Deleuze 1997: 4).

As part of this procedure, the work forms an assemblage with the reader and draws them into the creative process of a becoming. In fact, everything in the work takes on a collective value and enunciation. The narrator Iqbal does not 'represent' Collen and does not 'imitate' Sita; rather, the story is propelled by a non-subjective assemblage of collective enunciation comprising the complex Collen–Iqbal–Ton Tipyer–Sita–Dharma …, and drawing from the various communities of influence experienced constitutively by each individual.[5] *The Rape of Sita* is a 'people's concern' (Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 18). In the process of collective fabulation – in the procedure of writing as a dramatizing method of assemblage – this author complex 'continually tap[s] into and emit[s] particles that enter the proximity or zone of indiscernibility of women. In writing, they become-women' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 276). However, whereas writers like Proust, Lawrence or Miller begin writing as men and use their literary characters and the process of writing itself to sweep their own masculine subject-selves into a becoming-woman, Collen contaminates her characters and her readers with her own molecular 'atoms of womanhood capable of crossing and impregnating an entire social field, and of contaminating men, of sweeping them up in that becoming. Very soft particles – but also very hard and obstinate, irreducible, indomitable' (1987: 276).

By writing a becoming-woman of man, Collen poses the diagnostic and experimental questions of desire and dramatization (*in what case? who? how? how much?*) to the social problem of rape and to the potential for sexual equality in future assemblages of humanity. Indeed, if we are to actualize new forms of society no longer determined by the Oedipal coding of desire-lack that results in a possessive style of satisfaction manifest in men's political control over women; and if we are therefore to create alternative social practices and political institutions in which fear and rape are not typical and pervasive, then

> *These are the questions we all have to answer, dear reader, for what if we were one of those men? Would we be among them? Would we be like them? Are we, by chance, them?*
>
> And this is when the song words came back: *Iqbal was a man who thought he was a woman*. Is this not the song all men should sing. Until men can be men. (171)

Notes

Thanks to Moira Gatens for advice on an earlier version of this paper, and to Jon Roffe and Hannah Stark.

1. On the links emerging between Deleuze and the study of postcolonial literature, see Burns and Kaiser (2012) and Burns (2012).
2. All page citations unaccompanied by author name or publication date are references to Collen's work, *The Rape of Sita*.
3. 'Bluntly speaking, are we allowed out? [...] From whom should we seek permission? [...] Are houses really jails run for the government by individual men? [...] Is night time illegal? This makes much work illegal? And makes hospital emergencies illegal? [...] The question is, do we need permits to break a curfew when we go out at night? Or must we be chaperoned by a prison guard? "What", said the defense lawyer in the rape case, addressing two adult women, "were you doing on your own out at night?" Our own. Would fifty women also be "on their own" at night?' (188). 'Trespass laws for women only. Don't go out at that time, nor to that place [...] Don't wear this, nor that. Don't be young nor old. Don't be late, for God's sake. And don't take short cuts' (192).
4. Early feminist readings of 'becoming-woman' tended to be highly suspicious of its value for feminist strategizing and of the apparent masculine-identification of its process using the figure of woman as a support for the becomings of man (Colebrook 2000; see Jardine 1985; Braidotti 1991). More recent feminist interpretations of Deleuzian philosophy give a more positive appraisal of becoming-woman as a resource for feminist politics (see Marsden 2004; Braidotti 2003; Conley 2000).
5. For a discussion of Collen's own communities of influence, see the 'Afterword' to the text, written by Tuzyline Jita Allen (2004).

Works cited

Allen, Tuzyline Jita (2004) 'Afterword' to *The Rape of Sita* (New York: The Feminist Press) 199–232.

Bogue, Ronald (2010) *Deleuzian Fabulation and the Scars of History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press).

Braidotti, Rosi (1991) *Patterns of Dissonance*, trans. E. Guild. (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Braidotti, Rosi (2003) 'Becoming-Woman, Or Sexual Difference Revisited', *Theory, Culture & Society* 20(3): 43–64.

Burns, Lorna (2012) *Contemporary Caribbean Writing and Deleuze: Literature Between Postcolonialism and Post-continental Philosophy* (London and New York: Continuum).

Burns, Lorna and Kaiser Birgit M. (2012) *Postcolonial Literatures and Deleuze: Colonial Pasts, Differential* Futures (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).

Colebrook, Claire (2000) 'Introduction' in *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*, eds. Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), 1–17.

Collen, Lindsey (2004) *The Rape of Sita* (New York: The Feminist Press).

Conley, Verena (2000) 'Becoming-Woman Now' in *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*, eds. Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), 18–37.
Deer, Sarah (2009) 'Decolonizing Rape Law: A Native Feminist Synthesis of Safety and Sovereignty', *Wicazo Sa Review* 24(2): 149–167.
Deleuze, Gilles (1989) *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (London: Athlone).
—— (1990) *Spinoza: Expressionism in Philosophy*, trans. M. Joughin (New York: Zone Books).
—— (1995) *Negotiations*, trans. M. Joughin (New York: Columbia University).
—— (1997) *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. D. Smith and M. Grego (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press).
—— (2004) *Desert Islands and Other Texts*, trans. M. Taormina (Los Angeles: Semiotexte).
—— (2005) *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, trans. A. Boyman (New York: Zone Books).
Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari (1983) *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem and H. Lane (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press).
—— (1986) *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans D. Polan (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press).
—— (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. B. Massumi (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP).
Flaxman, Gregory (2012) *Gilles Deleuze and the Fabulation of Philosophy* (Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota UP).
Gatens, Moira (1996) 'Through a Spinozist Lens: Ethology, Difference, Power' in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. Paul Patton (London: Blackwell), 162–187.
Goulimari, Pelagia (1999) 'A Minoritarian Feminism? Things to do with Deleuze and Guattari', *Hypatia* 14(2): 97–120.
Jardine, Alice (1984) *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press).
Koopman, E. (2012) 'Incestuous rape, abjection, and the colonization of psychic space in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night*', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, iFirst article, 1–13.
Lambert, Gregg (2000) 'On the Uses and Abuses of Literature for Life', in *Deleuze and Literature*, eds. Ian Buchanan and John Marks (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP), 135–166.
MacCormack, Patricia (2009) 'Feminist Becomings', *Australian Feminist Studies* 24(59): 85–97.
MacKenzie, Iain and Robert Porter (2011) *Dramatizing the Political: Deleuze and Guattari* (London: Palgrave Macmillan).
Marcus, Sharon (1992) 'Fighting Bodies, Fighting Words: A Theory and Politics of Rape Prevention' in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, eds. Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (New York: Routledge), 385–403.
Marsden, Jill (2004) 'Deleuzian Bodies, Feminist Tactics', *Women: a Cultural Review* 15(3): 308–319.
Shakespeare, William (1986) 'The Rape of Lucrece' in *Collected Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 237–256.
Sharpe, Jenny (1993) *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of the Woman in the Colonial Text* (Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press).

Smith, Andrea (2005) *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (Cambridge, MA: South End).

Tschofen, Monique Y. (1995) 'Post-colonial Allegory and the Empire of Rape', *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 22(3–4): 501–515.

Tynan, Aidan (2012) *Deleuze's Literary Clinic: Criticism and the Politics of Symptoms* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press).

Young, Robert (1994) 'Colonialism and the Desiring-Machine' in *Liminal Postmodernisms*, eds. T. D'haen and H. Bertrens (Amsterdam & Atlanta: Rodopi Press), 11–34.

8

Becoming-Animal Is a Trap for Humans: Deleuze and Guattari in *Madagascar*

Timothy Laurie

If you were introducing Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) to a seven-year-old who found *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) boring, you might say that the sequel has more animals. Deleuze and Guattari make only few, scathing references to pets, but they do make frequent mention of horses (81 times, to be exact), as well as ticks, birds, rats, Moby Dick and groups marked by animal names: leopard-men, crocodile-men, and – borrowing from Sigmund Freud – the Wolf Man and his wolf packs. Unlike Guattari's later publication, *The Three Ecologies* (Guattari 2005 [1989]), *A Thousand Plateaus* does not advance any arguments about contemporary environmental issues or the treatment of nonhuman animals. There are no demands for the recognition, recovery, or recuperation of Nature, and the book continues to extend the formulas outlined in *Anti-Oedipus*: 'Nature=Industry, Nature=History' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004 [1972]: 26).

Our token seven-year-old would not easily confuse *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* with the second group of texts considered in this essay, DreamWorks Animations' *Madagascar* (2005) and its two sequels. The *Madagascar* trilogy is not about nonhuman animals. It does not take an interest in lions or zebras or giraffes or hippopotamuses. DreamWorks' nonhumans are situation comedy archetypes, lightly sprinkled with hooves, stripes and whiskers. Furthermore, setting aside the abundance of lemurs, nothing in *Madagascar* indicates an interest in Madagascar.

Nevertheless, this essay argues that Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'becoming-animal' offers a supple framework for reading the nonhumans in *Madagascar* outside the templates provided by psychoanalysis and structuralism. At the same time, I argue that 'becoming-animal'

entraps the reader at the very moment that it acquires any normative force, because the will to 'become-animal' pre-supposes a modality of narcissistic ego-formation that Deleuze and Guattari criticize elsewhere.

The essay begins by exploring the implications of anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism for animated feature films, focusing on Jack Halberstam's queer critical commentary on Pixar Studios. A reciprocal exchange is then staged between Deleuze and Guattari and the *Madagascar* trilogy, in order to interrogate three kinds of investment in the nonhuman. First, I follow Deleuze and Guattari in questioning narcissistic investments in personhood that turn some nonhumans into 'pets'. Secondly, I question geo-political investments in both the 'human' and 'nonhuman' as structural articulations of community and belonging, taking as an example the racial logics of the *Madagascar* franchise. Thirdly, the essay examines Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'becoming-animal', and the attendant notion of the 'anomalous', in relation to King Julien, a lemur who becomes the focal point for the various racial and sexual anxieties played out in *Madagascar*. The essay concludes by arguing that distinctions are needed between arguments for or against humanism as an ideological system, and the pragmatics of humanism as a dialogic structure, which involves hailing a reader as always-already invested in a project of improving human beliefs and practices.

Two humans

Humanism fabricates the human as much as it fabricates the nonhuman animal. Although the term 'humanist' has enjoyed a variety of usages since its inception in the nineteenth century (see McNeil 2005: 166), its 'modern' or 'post-Kantian' articulations broadly conform to Ian Hunter's following definition: 'It proposes that human attributes and dispositions, together with the forms of social and political life, have a single normative foundation' (Hunter 1992: 480). The human is split in two: on the one hand, there is the species called *Homo sapiens* that exists on a continuum with a variety of other organisms, some with greater or fewer anatomical resemblances; on the other hand, there is the moral subject defined as possessing 'the ability to reason, self-awareness, possessing a sense of justice, language, autonomy, and so on' (Singer 2006: 4). The 'human' becomes a placeholder for a range of attributes that have been considered most virtuous among humans (e.g. rationality, altruism), rather than most commonplace (e.g. hunger, anger) (Singer 2006: 4). This moral humanism can have direct political consequences. The 'single normative foundation' of humanism can be used to disqualify

some human beings as less qualified to self-governance than others, based on culturally specific criteria for virtuous human behavior. For example, the development of liberal humanism in European political discourses during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be linked to the popular notion of the 'civilizing mission' used to legitimate colonial expansion (see Gilroy 2000).

Humanism requires a narcissistic self-versioning of the human: if humans are rational, how do we know that we are being rational? If humans communicate, how do we know that we are communicating? If the human is moral, do we have proof that we have ourselves been moral?

The splitting of the 'human' and its attendant narcissisms come into sharp relief in discussions of nonhuman animals. Peter Singer defines 'speciesism' as 'the idea that it is justifiable to give preference to beings simply on the grounds that they are members of the species *Homo sapiens*' (Singer 2006: 3; see also Lamarre 2008). An indirect articulation of 'speciesism' is 'ethical anthropocentrism', which allows for the provisional inclusion of nonhumans as moral persons, but where 'mere images of other animals' and domesticated animals 'remain the principle focus, because they are, misleadingly, held out as representative or the paradigm of *all* nonhuman lives' (Waldau 2006: 78, emphasis in original).

Contemporary blockbuster animations that foreground sympathetic and charismatic nonhumans provide important opportunities to think through humanism as a *narrative* about humans, one that has implications for nonhumans also. Since the resurgence of Disney feature films with *The Little Mermaid* (1989), high-budget animations have become part of the Hollywood box office furniture, with phenomenal successes from Pixar Studios, DreamWorks Animations and more recently, Blue Sky Studios. This family film industry has been buoyed by high-grossing releases like *The Lion King* (1994, Disney), *Toy Story* (1995, Pixar), *Shrek* (2001, DreamWorks), *Ice Age* (2002, Blue Sky), *Wall-E* (2008, Pixar) and *Frozen* (2013, Disney). In each case, a visual staple has been the inclusion of nonhuman characters with human traits: toys, mammoths, dragons, monkeys, snowmen, monsters, and so on. Such narratives are conspicuously 'anthropocentric'. Recent Pixar films, such as *Cars* (2011), *Planes* (2013) and *Planes: Fire & Rescue* (2014), not to mention the unwieldy *Transformers* franchise (2007–present), permit hulking machines to acquire 'humanizing' facial traits by delimiting a field 'that neutralizes in advance any expressions or connections unamenable to the appropriate significations' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004 [1980]: 186). Bold facial features – big eyes, yawning laughs, diminutive or obese noses – reorient

surrounding surfaces, limbs, attachments and gestures back towards the reciprocated human gaze. Through the face things abandon their thingness and become human, but the process is hardly a secret; indeed, it forms a major plot point in many contemporary animated features. *Madagascar* (2005; 2008; 2012) extracts serial laughs from the discovery that the Central Park Zoo is populated by New Yorkers; in *Toy Story* (1995), the commercial standardization of children's toys is resisted by plastic heroes who prove their human worth as moral individuals; *Cars* and *Planes* suggest to open-minded viewers that cars or planes may turn out to be young male heterosexuals.

The issue here is not simply misrepresenting nonhumans. Anthropocentrism, and its sibling, anthropomorphism, imply an 'anthro' to which a given representation would be 'centric' or 'morphic'. We know that a laughing hippopotamus is anthropomorphic because its laugh is human. But not all humans laugh – some may never laugh. For nonhuman animals to resemble human animals, the human itself must undergo a transformation. 'Laughter' signifies something about the hippo but also something about desirable qualities in humans. It's a trivial example, of course. Anthropomorphic representations of heterosexual romance can be more troubling. The trans-species appeal to heterosexuality as a *humanizing* quality is what enables Disney films like *The Lion King* (1994) or *The Princess and the Frog* (2009) to absorb any ambiguities around sexuality that could be raised when, say, a male meerkat and a male warthog become life-partners, or when two ex-humans resign themselves to shared intimacy as frogs.

In *The Queer Art of Failure* (2011), Jack Halberstam criticizes 'gross and crude forms of anthropocentrism' (33) where the human 'projects all of his or her uninspired and unexamined conceptions about life and living onto animals, who may actually foster far more creative or at least more surprising modes of living and sharing spaces' (Halberstam 2011: 34). In particular, Halberstam notes that the function of transsexual, hermaphroditic, non-monogamous and homosexual animals 'has been mostly misunderstood and folded into rigid and unimaginative hetero-familial schemes of reproductive zeal and the survival of the fittest' (Halberstam 2011: 39). The zealous gendering of the Pixar and DreamWorks universes also conforms to clichés well-documented in live-action cinema. Simply consider the middling narrative contributions of Little Bo-peep in *Toy Story* (1995, 1998, 2010), the female secretary in *Monster's Inc.* (2001), Gloria the hippopotamus in *Madagascar* (2005), the undervalued co-chef in *Ratatouille* (2007), Kitty Softpaws in *Puss In Boots* (2011), and the Lois Lane-inspired reporters in *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* (2009) and

Megamind (2010). The inclusion of female characters in these studios' narratives is mostly dependent on their functions within romantic subplots, and these storylines are themselves the objects of casual ridicule.

However, by making the labor of 'humanizing' the human more visible, films otherwise guilty of anthromorphism can produce unexpected openings. This may be exactly what *children* want. Halberstam suggests that '[animated] films are for children who believe that "things" (toys, nonhuman animals, rocks, sponges) are as lively as humans', and that to 'captivate the child audience, an animated film cannot deal only in the realms of success and triumph and perfection' (27). Responding to the specificity of childhood experiences, Pixar Studios' successful run of animated films 'question and shift the location, the terms, and the meanings of the artificial boundaries between humans, animals, machines, states of life and death, animation and reanimation, living, evolving, becoming and transforming' (Halberstam 2011: 33). From an aesthetic viewpoint, an 'animated self allows for the deconstruction of a timeless and natural humanity', and from a narrative viewpoint, the Pixar films 'connect individualism to selfishness, to untrammelled consumption, and they oppose it with a collective mentality' (47). Furthermore, insofar as this 'collective mentality' involves preferences for 'diverse communities' over families or 'extraordinary individuals', Halberstam argues for queer readings of significant animated texts (47). These include *Chicken Run* (2000), featuring a collective of proletarian hens escaping captivity (32); *Monster's Inc.* (2001), in which the 'human-monster bond is queer in its reorganization of family and affinity' (44); and *Robots* (2005), where the 'labour of producing the baby is queer in that it is shared and improvised, of culture rather than nature, an act of construction rather than reproduction' (45).

The Queer Art of Failure tends to assume that multiple transgressions will coincide through a snowbaling effect. Crossing the line between human and nonhuman will denaturalize familial sentiments; these in turn will dismantle binary gender-norms and heteronormativity; and finally, having removed the obstacle of coupledom, these transgressions will contribute to collectivist ideals amenable to revolutionary *praxis*. Unfortunately, these transgressions are criss-crossed with fault lines. To take familiar examples, proletarian collectivism has long (albeit mixed) histories of homophobia and xenophobia (Roediger 2005), while the dramatization of cultural 'improvization' and 'construction rather than reproduction' is a genre staple of romantic comedies like *Love Actually* (2003) or even *Knocked Up* (2007), where heteronormativity thrives through *ad hoc* solutions to profound failings in the nuclear family form.

Furthermore, Halberstam seems to suggest that distinctly 'childish' attachments to animals will emanate directly from a given period of human biological maturation. From a historical perspective, the quality and duration of childhood is more likely shaped by social policy, political opportunism, pedagogical institutions, and youth-specific market segmentation (see Driscoll 2002). *The Queer Art of Failure* assumes that the ideal viewer of animated films, The Child, will sift through the clutter of bombastic gestures, songs, and jokes, and discover enduring human values: 'collectivity', 'diversity', 'sharing'. These pedagogical norms have been tirelessly heaped onto children's media well before Pixar's mid-1990s debut. What makes these new animated films so curious is that the 'human' is now able to become a site of amoral disturbance, rather than – or at least, in addition to – being a model of exemplary behaviour for junior audiences.

Three films not about Madagascar

There is a film called 'Madagascar' that is not about Madagascar or Madagascans, and that continues to be called Madagascar in two sequels that do not take place in Madagascar. I will briefly describe the skeletal plots of DreamWorks Animations' *Madagascar* (2005), *Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa* (2008) and *Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted* (2012), then spend some time hovering over the flesh.

Madagascar introduces four animals living in New York's Central Park Zoo: Alex the lion, Marty the zebra, Gloria the hippopotamus and Melman the giraffe. Approaching his birthday, Marty is anxious about the prospect of interminable captivity. Through a series of mishaps, Marty, Alex, Gloria and Melman find themselves in Madagascar. The local lemur inhabitants, led by King Julien, are threatened by fossas, who are 'always annoying us by trespassing, interrupting our parties, and ripping our limbs off'. As possible fans of Akira Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* (1954), the lemurs recruit the New York 'freaks' as protectors. At the same time, Alex the lion becomes delirious and desperate for New York steaks, so much so that friends are mistaken for walking and talking steaks, making Alex a danger to the Americans and lemurs alike. In keeping with the genre form of the family film, the resolution of both narratives provides opportunities to recapitulate the values of friendship, trust and social harmony.

Madagascar derives its lion's share of humor from the following question: how will four New Yorkers solve problems introduced by an exotic

non-Western locale, where tacit social rules and routines are no longer available?

After leaving Madagascar and a crash landing in any-African-nation-whatsoever, *Escape 2 Africa* finds the Central Park Zoo ensemble, together with King Julien, wandering onto a bustling wildlife reserve. With giddy convenience, the reserve is Alex's former homeland. However, through the exploitation of a local custom, Alex's uncle usurps the king, and forces Alex and his parents into exile. An ecological crisis caused by human tourists is subsequently averted by Alex and Marty, thus restoring the lion's hereditary 'entitlement' to his homeland. The franchise's third feature, *Europe's Most Wanted,* thrusts the mammals into the Monte Carlo Casino. A chase ensues with a French Animal Control Officer, Captain Chantel Dubois, who follows the New Yorkers to the end of the film. Along the way, they join and purchase a traveling circus, populated by a 'United Nations of funny-accented talking creatures', as one *Guardian* commentator put it (Rose 2014). The escape from Dubois is coupled with the challenge of rejuvenating the circus, a task that is met with large servings of personal growth and side dishes of overcooked romance.

The *Madagascar* franchise is proudly anthropocentric. The Central Park Zoo travelers are voiced by humans, animated for optimal facial legibility, and pursue goals familiar to human viewers. The nonhuman protagonists in *Madagascar* conform to genre-based social types found in slapstick comedies and children's television programming. The nonhumans are semantically 'human' because they know the New York subway system; because they sing along to the 'Theme from *New York, New York'* (1977); and because zebras, like 'us', have birthdays filled with mixed feelings. I want to suggest, though, that the difference between the human and nonhuman still performs significant narrative functions in each film, even if these are not narratives that tell us much new about nonhumans. To do this, I want to pass by way of three versions of the 'animal' outlined by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*.

The first: celluloid pets

In the tenth plateau of *A Thousand Plateaus,* '1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible…', Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between three kinds of animals. The first animals belong to Freud:

> 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*. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004 [1980]: 265, emphasis in original)

Deleuze and Guattari don't like pets. But what – or who – is a pet? A pet certainly cannot be defined in terms of character traits. Pets occupy positions that can only be defined in relation to the non-pet (the *Homo sapien*) with varying degrees of domestication, obedience and interdependency. Sentimental investments in dogs, cats, rabbits, and other household 'companions' can trap the nonhuman in an Oedipal loop, for which the human ego still provides the signifying center: 'There is always the danger of finding yourself "playing" the animal, the domestic Oedipal animal, [Henry] Miller going bowwow and taking a bone…' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004 [1980]: 287). Of course, humans can be objects of narcissistic self-gratification for other humans. Nevertheless, nonhumans provide a malleable resource for the fantasy of an Other unmediated by the Self.

Lions make easy examples. *Madagascar* calls into question the superficial signifiers of identity, only to reaffirm the primacy of interpersonal bonds under the patriarchal sign of the male feline. Throughout each film, the viewer is encouraged to identify with Alex as the natural center of power and enjoyment, a gross patriarchal entitlement softened by the consonance of the cat as a reliable domestic friend. In the first film, steak is Alex's object of enjoyment. A glistening red steak is first introduced as Alex's object-choice when sleep-talking in New York: 'Come on now baby, my little fillet'. Later on in Madagascar, Marty is misrecognized by Alex as a steak, and receives a midnight bite on the buttocks. The drama of misrecognition opens up possibilities of non-Oedipal relations – transpecies homoerotic fondling, for example – only to foreclose them as transgressions recuperated by the film's sanguine conclusions. Alex will now eat sushi, he and Marty recalibrate their friendship, and the lion is offered King Julien's crown. Formerly castrated as a compliant performer at the Central Park Zoo, Alex gains control over his adolescent desires – red steak, the homosexual slip – and assumes his proper place as king and protector of the lemurs and the New Yorkers. These themes are revisited in the sequels, albeit with the unsuccessful intrusion of rival patriarchs. The central conflict in *Escape 2 Africa* is organized around an exchange of power between Alex, his father and his uncle, while

in *Europe's Most Wanted*, Alex flexes his superior leadership skills over and against Vitaly, a moody Siberian tiger. Throughout, the violence of the intruder – Alex in Madagascar, on the African continent, in the European circus – is ameliorated by the naturalization of a dominant male identity within a familiar and trustworthy feline form.

The symbolic organization of gender and power in *Madagascar* should not distract us from the imaginary component that sustains the narrative. While these plot devices provide clear evidence of an anthropocentric worldview, the most slippery moment is the corollary inversion, wherein viewers come to believe that the 'real' story of lions – or zebras or lemurs – is being withheld and still waiting to be told. The desire for real stories about real lions is not disrupted by, but rather cultivated through, the abundance of fictionalized narratives about wildcat adventures. Whether digitally animated in three dimensions or pursued by a HandyCam on the back of a truck, the on-screen animal cannot refuse what we ask of it. And sometimes we ask a lot. Lion and zebra can always become predator and victim, the community and its vulnerable outsider, or the father and his unloved son.

That *Madagascar* is open to Oedipal readings should not surprise us. We might be more surprised by Deleuze and Guattari's other animals.

The second: myth-animals

Deleuze and Guattari introduce a second animal that I will call 'myth-animals'. These include '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' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004 [1980]: 265). Myth-animals do not require direct interpersonal identification. Instead, 'natural' classifications are organized in oppositional structures homologous to 'cultural' classifications, in such a way that a 'theoretically infinite number of slates will be generated, each one slightly different from the others' (Lévi-Strauss 1955: 443). Deleuze and Guattari provide a concise summary:

> When analysing the institution of the totem, we do not say that this group of people identifies with that animal species…. A man can never say: 'I am a bull, a wolf…' But he can say: 'I am to a woman what the bull is to a cow, I am to another man what the wolf is to the sheep.' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004 [1980]: 260)

For Claude Levi-Strauss, myth-animals belong to the shared social logic of the myth, the purpose of which 'is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction (an impossible achievement if, as it happens, the contradiction is real)' (Lévi-Strauss 1955: 443). Operations embedded within animal myths provide opportunities to resolve collective problems of classification and hierarchy, marking the lines between the inside and the outside, the Law and its exceptions, those who belong and those who do not. Examples include US propaganda representing the Japanese as 'gorillas', 'apes' or 'vermin' during World War II, or the quotidian use of speciest words like 'bitch', 'chick' or 'cow' to insult and infantilize women (see Lamarre 2008: 75; Dunayer 1995). In each case, social differences based on conflict and contradiction are naturalized and made less 'contestable' through the classificatory matrix of human and nonhuman relations.

The *Madagascar* trilogy produces more subtle examples of conflict and contradiction mediated by the mixed significations of the nonhuman. The scenario of the lion eating the zebra can be revisited in this context. On Madagascar, Alex is both the force of the Law (protection from the fossa) and the object of a prohibition (imprisoned for trying to eat everyone). His 'natural' role as a lion is undermined by the 'unnatural' effects of travel: the good colonialist is turned bad by impoverishments – here, lack of steaks – that provincial locals cannot understand. This contradiction is articulated, but not resolved, through a ritual of cultural re-emplacement. In the midst of Alex's delirium, Marty sings the 'Theme from *New York, New York'* (1977), a song introduced in Central Park Zoo. Alex shortly springs to action as a restored member of the moral community. *Madagascar* provides a lesson about the inviolable laws of social reciprocity that are presumed to underpin the urban cosmopolitan modernity of 'New York' with which the film begins.

Although 'Madagascar' is the elusive and fantastical brand for the DreamWorks franchise, the mythical locality that anchors *Madagascar* and its sequels is actually New York. There are constant in-jokes about New York as the 'other scene' to the action on-screen. Alex turns off ambient music in his enclosure because he prefers police sirens; when the animals look up at the stars in the sky, they remark 'It's like billions and billions of helicopters'; and on Madagascar, a Statue of Liberty is reconstructed on the beach and succumbs to fire, opening onto a *Planet of the Apes* (1968) pastiche that wryly aligns *Madagascar* with a long line of melancholic narratives about a lost New York. The film can easily be read a story about animals from New York discovering that they are, indeed, from New York.

This is not a stable narrative premise. What could make New York unique, if not its history as a colonial and migrant city that has long been part African? The *Madagascar* trilogy is founded on a structural contradiction. For DreamWorks Animations, New York and Madagascar are different because New York is urban and dominated by 'human' culture, and Madagascar is not urban and is dominated by nonhuman (lemur) culture. Except that the real Madagascar contains human culture and urban spaces, and the United States' urbanism cannot be separated from the forced labor and cultural influences of its African diaspora, including ongoing links with Madagascar (see Feagin 2004; Zeleza 2005). The same histories that have produced 'Madagascar' as a cognizable, if mysterious and seductive, object for many Anglo-American viewers, have already produced a *relationship* between Madagascar and the United States that does not conform to neat cultural taxonomies.

The problem is partly that Madagascar is being presented from an American perspective, but the language of perspectivism is already misleading. 'Perspective' implies a relativist model that begins with unmixed cultural essences, rather than with really-existing mixtures and hybridities. The contradiction is that, like any modern mythology about the 'pre-modern', *Madagascar* presents evidence of contact between different cultural groups, while simultaneously denying any such contact in its construction of the following oppositions: New York and Madagascar (*Madagascar*), America and the African continent (*Escape 2 Africa*), America and Europe (*Europe's Most Wanted*). In the paradox of nativism that generates so much humor in *Madagascar,* people belong to fixed cultural locales, but this belonging is only visible in cross-cultural encounters. Migration provides the proof that culture does not travel.

Pan-African mammals with distinctive American accents are used to naturalize this contradiction. *Madagascar* tropes racial types already familiar to viewers of American film and television: Marty as a hysterical black American man; Gloria as a voluptuous and sassy black American woman; Melman as a Jewish hypochondriac ('I can't be transferred, I have an appointment with doctor Goldberg at five'); and Alex as relatively unmarked protagonist (see Rose 2014). With some distress, these characters all discover their species kin in *Escape 2 Africa*. Personality traits previously presented as uniquely *American* are now coded as part of being 'a lion' or 'a zebra' or 'a hippopotamus'. This opens up two opposing readings of the *Madagascar* mythology. On the one hand, the rediscovery of American stereotypes on a continental African wildlife reserve transforms these 'racialized' traits into timeless social archetypes. Just as nature produces the hippo and the giraffe, so too does culture

produce the Black American Woman and the Jewish Hypochondriac. On the other hand, the Central Park mammals learn that their cultural identities actually belong to a global diaspora that crosses geographical and political boundaries. *Madagascar* is simultaneously an American film about discovering the rest of the world is like America, and a transnational film about American travelers discovering that they have always-already been cosmopolitan.

African mammals equipped with 'American' culture solve a contradiction that human actors would make glaringly visible. The Central Park Zoo animals both signify African 'nature' and American 'culture', without confronting the historical fact of African peoples and cultures as *part of* American 'culture' or American cultures as *part of* contemporary African modernities. The separation of black America (Marty, Gloria) as innately urban and modern from 'Africa' as a symbol for nature and the pre-modern would be politically untenable outside the anthropomorphic strategies employed by DreamWorks Animations.

There is, however, a remainder in this equation: King Julien. In the following section, I want to introduce Deleuze and Guattari's third animal, before revisiting *Madagascar* by way of the despotic lemur.

The third: becomings-animal

The third animal is entirely different. There are many of them – packs, bands, gaggles, swarms. Deleuze and Guattari are most interested in the animality of populations and in qualitative changes within and between populations. These are 'more demonic animals, pack or affect animals that form a multiplicity, a becoming, a population, a tale…' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004 [1980]: 265). To account for these populations, two objects of analysis require re-examination.

Firstly, the body changes. Deleuze and Guattari's body has, according to their particular reading of the Dutch philosopher, become Spinozist:

> In the same way that we avoided defining a body by its organs and functions, we will avoid defining the body by Species or Genus characteristics; instead we will seek to count its affects. This kind of study is called ethology… A racehorse is more different from a workhorse than a workhorse is from an ox. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004 [1980]: 283)

Bodies are not defined according to genetic origins or formal traits, except insofar as these shape the *capacities* of a body, including its

capacity to differ from itself. For example, the distinction between a blue whale and a goldfish could be made in terms of blood temperature ('warm-blooded' and 'cold-blooded') or genus (the *balaenoptera musculus* is a *balaenoptera* whale, while the *carassius auratus auratus* is a *carassius* fish). For ethological purposes, however, it matters more whether or not each can *swim*.

Secondly, movements are now analyzed differently. Deleuze and Guattari define 'becomings' in the following way:

> Starting from the forms one has, the subject one is, the organ one has, or the functions one fulfils, becoming is to extract particles between which one establishes the relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness that are *closest* to what one is becoming, and through which one becomes. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004 [1980]: 300–301, emphasis in original)

'Becoming' serves as a placeholder for events that appear to involve multiple things – an individual, a cat's paw, garbage, adolescence – without it being possible to formalize relations between these things. Dissecting Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* (1968) and attaching a loose limb to *A Thousand Plateaus*, we might say that a 'becoming', like an event, possesses 'a secret coherence which excludes that of the self; that they turn back against the self which has become their equal and smash it to pieces, as though the bearer of the new world were carried away and dispersed by the shock of the multiplicity to which it gives birth' (Deleuze 2004: 112). A 'becoming' is a way of thinking through changes that modify multiple bodies (organic and non-organic) at once, without conforming to pregiven structures of identification, representation, resemblance or contradiction (see Deleuze 2004).

Becomings-animal provide an alternative schema for explaining transformations of the human in relation to nonhuman animals (Deleuze and Guattari 2004 [1980]: 307). Becomings-animal do not begin with the objectification of the animal (Freudian pets) or the animal as a semiotic placeholder (Levi-Straussian myths): the nonhuman is neither a site of identification nor an expression of latent social contradictions. Here Deleuze and Guattari toy with the imperative:

> Do not imitate a dog, but make your organism enter into composition with *something else* in such a way that the particles emitted from the aggregate thus composed will be canine as a function of the relation of movement and rest, or of molecular proximity, into

> which they enter. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004 [1980]: 302, emphasis in original)

Becomings-animal are intrusions of other ways of being into the *habitus* of the human, and they produces unexpected movements, desires, and transformations (286). With some consternation, Donna Haraway correctly observes that no concrete knowledge about nonhumans is required for one to 'become-animal' in Deleuze and Guattari's schema (Haraway 2008: 27–29). This is because becomings-animal are events with a causality exterior to individual intentionality. We cannot say that *at the beginning* there was a human animal and a nonhuman animal, that the human apprehended and wanted to become the nonhuman ('dog', 'whale'), and that *in the end,* there was a becoming-animal ('becoming-dog', 'becoming-whale'). This implies a ready-made structure of recognition linking the human to the nonhuman. The specificity of the other species would still be mediated by the desire to see oneself as Human and the other as Not-Human. One cannot desire to 'become-animal' without over-determining the animal as a means to one's own ends. Becomings-animal happen to us, not us to them.

Who is the anomalous?

We have not yet encountered any `becomings-animal' in Madagascar. Our travels so far have produced only a sentimental feline patriarch and well-rehearsed postcolonial contradictions. What can Deleuze and Guattari tell us that we do not already know?

A Thousand Plateaus follows a pattern. For every collective movement there is always an exceptional and radical term: the inhuman face, Robert Schumann's refrain, the line of flight. The tenth plateau is no exception. Here we have the 'anomalous' position in relation to a collective or pack – it could be a leader, despot, loner or demon (Deleuze and Guattari 2004 [1980]: 268). Anomalies are neither inside nor outside a given order. Rather, they describe a type of movement that may hold together 'becomings', but also open them onto something else:

> It is evident that the Anomalous, the Outsider, has several functions: not only does it border each multiplicity, of which it determines the temporary or local stability… not only is it the precondition for the alliance necessary to becoming, but it also carries the transformations of becoming or crossings of multiplicities always farther down the line of flight. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004 [1980]: 275)

An example is given: Moby Dick, a sizeable whale with few attractive personal qualities, sweeps up Captain Ahab in a 'becoming-whale' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004 [1980]: 268). Moby Dick is an object of desire and revenge, certainly, but also produces ancillary desires, bodily transformations and contiguous assemblages: knee and jawbone, harpoons and lance, trumpet, shoe-nail stub, carcass and oil, the coffin. What individuates Moby Dick is a becoming that encircles, but never collapses into, the pleasure of 'having caught a whale'.

King Julien in *Madagascar* is an anomaly worth spending time with. His movements cannot be explained by the Oedipal schema of repressed object-choices, or the structural schema of ambivalent classifications. King Julien's ontology is *gestural*. He is defined less through the identity he assumes than through the events that his actions make possible and the journeys that he embarks on. Julien plays at being king with pomp and ceremony, regardless of whether he's in Madagascar or the African continent or Europe, and with indifference to the responses of onlookers. Julien readily gifts his crown to Alex, making sure to add: 'That's okay, I've got a bigger crown. It's got a gecko on it'. The mute gecko will later become king. In *Escape 2 Africa*, Julien decides to become a love guru for Melman:

> King Julien: You've got to march right up to this woman. Look her right in the eye. Lean forward. Just a little, or almost all the way. Then you let her lean forward a little until you're … just lips' distance away from each other. Then you tell her how much you hate her.
>
> *Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa*

King Julien does recognize the difference between love and hate, but he is less attentive to the objects people *want* than to the elaboration of the *gestures* of wanting. These gestures could serve any function or no function whatsoever.

Julien is a superbly performative and opportunistic character, quite unlike any of the 'timeless and natural' souls that continue to dominate recent Disney features like *Tangled* (2010) and *Frozen* (2013). In *Escape 2 Africa*, Julien jumps out of a cake with coconuts on his chest and shouts: 'I'm a lady! Not really! It's me, King Julien! Which of you is attracted to me? Hands up!'. But Julien is not *transgressive*. He makes pacts, he invents rituals, he repeats what he enjoys: Julien is motivated by the Law of genre. Or rather, the lemur king undermines the Law only insofar as he reworks roles and practices to have contradictory or nonsensical

meanings. In *Escape 2 Africa*, Julien fabricates a volcano sacrifice to bring water. The King's right-hand lemur Maurice asks 'Does it work?' and Julien shouts 'No!'. He does it anyway and the water comes. In *Europe's Most Wanted,* Julien falls in love with a mute bear called Sonya:

> Has anyone ever told you that you look like a supermodel? Albeit a fat, hairy one who smells. Whoo-hoo! Oh, you have a very hairy back. I like that in a woman.
>
> *Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted*

There could be allusions here to bears in global gay male cultures. But the joke is never that Julien is secretly gay – these jokes are reserved for Julien's petit admirer, Mort. What matters is the *genre* of the utterance ('Has anyone ever told you…?', 'I like that in a woman…') and the *gestures* of romance. Julien's courtship with Sonya winds its way through Rome in vignettes lifted from *Roman Holiday* (1953). A bear in a ballerina's dress rides a scooter with a lemur who mines overworked Hollywood clichés about Italian courtship. King Julien follows the rules of heterosexual romance with expert fidelity, but the result is not a clearly heterosexual one.

Is King Julien queer? Following Halberstam, we could show that King Julien `allows for the deconstruction … of a timeless and natural humanity' (2011: 46). But Julien does not deconstruct his own identity. Instead of embodying queerness, he spends time making it difficult for other characters to be straight. After first meeting the New Yorkers, King Julien dubs them 'just a bunch of pansies'. The irony is that Julien's own hysterical affectations and public embarrassments conform to long enduring stereotypes of the 'pansy' in Hollywood cinema (see Russo 1987). One must choose between being flamboyant like King Julien or being a pansy, but neither option is readable as 'straight'. Later, when Alex bites Marty on the buttocks, King Julien queers the transgression: 'What is the simple bite on the buttocks among friends?' Finally, in the Valentines' Day special *Madly Madagascar* (2013), Julien's dispersal of a magical love potion disarms the viewer's confidence in heterosexual courtship: true love is a chemical that Julien sells at a marked-up price.

However, while King Julien participates in the 'queering' of *Madagascar,* he is not a queer hero. The anomalous is neither a friend nor an enemy: he may even be a demon. For Deleuze and Guattari, the demon inhabits the pack formation of becomings-animal: 'Therefore it is certain that the demon performs local transports of all kinds. The Devil is a transporter;

he transports humors, affects, or even bodies… But these transports cross neither the barrier of essential forms nor that of substances or subjects' (279). King Julien willingly offers his admirer Mort as a sacrifice to Alex the lion, and in *Europe's Most Wanted*, throws Mort to Dubois the Animal Control Officer. Julien promptly leaves Madagascar to find 'spoils from the new country', an ambition that is facetious and immediately forgotten. At an odd moment, Maurice the lemur looks pleased that Julien has died, and is disappointed to find that Julien cannot be killed.

Two competing readings of King Julien are therefore available. We could show that he retains the structural functions of Brutus Jones (played by Paul Robeson) in *The Emperor Jones* (1933). King Julien is the implausible leader of an implicitly 'non-white' political order perceived to have been utterly compromised by jungle rhythms, with Jones' nightmarish 'tom toms' being replaced by 'I Like To Move It' (1993) by New York duo Reel 2 Real. He then arrives in Monte Carlo on a floating duck complete with fireworks and entrance music: C&C Music Factory's `Gonna Make You Sweat (Everybody Dance Now)' (1990), another 1990s club hit. Borrowing from Homi K. Bhabha, we could say that this stereotype 'is not a simplification because it is a false representation of a given reality', but rather 'because it is an arrested, fixated form of representation' (Bhabha 1994: 75). Julien is outside time, outside reason, outside humanity: he is arrested in 1990s pop, in his contrived nobility, in the repetition of anachronisms.

But King Julien also animates the paradox of cultural locality identified earlier. I have already suggested that while characters are defined in and through their 'native' localities, *Madagascar* provides ample evidence of cultural mixing. To know that King Julien is a stereotype, we would need to know where and who he is. If dancing to C&C Music Factory with fireworks is queer or demonic, then is King Julien queer and demonic as a Madagascan lemur, or queer and demonic as a New Yorker? Does the anomaly not call into question the contrasts between America and not-America, modernity and tradition, that otherwise center the *Madagascar* franchise?

Both readings could be persuasive. As Homi K. Bhabha notes, an important difference when critiquing racial and cultural stereotypes is the 'politics of point of view', especially when, '*at other times and places*, the same stereotype may be read in a contradictory way or, indeed, be misread' (Bhabha 1994: 70, emphasis in original). To say that King Julien is a stereotype, we would need to know something about the audience for which he is recognized as such. A Madagascan reading of King

Julien may produce an entirely different result, not because Madagascar is culturally 'Other' to the West, but because it has a different relationship to the transnational cultural flows that make *Madagascar* a film entirely about 'New Yorkers' and simultaneously global in scale (see Jayamanne 2001 on cross-cultural film criticism). And to say that King Julien is 'becoming' – becoming-queer, becoming-animal – we would need to know something about where these referents come from: queer from where? 'Animal' in relation to which humans?

In the final section, I want to reflect on what Deleuze and Guattari ask of their reader in the concept of 'becoming-animal', and will argue that they cannot be given what they ask for.

Playing the Deleuzoguattarian

Pets, myths, becomings, anomalies: how do we decide the difference? How can we be sure that King Julien is not just playing the stereotype? Or, for that matter, the pet?

For Deleuze and Guattari, becomings-animal cannot be predicted in advance nor exhaustively understood in retrospect. The '1730 … ' plateau opens by raising two important questions:

> Are there Oedipal animals with which one can 'play Oedipus', play family, my little dog, my little cat, and then other animals that by contrast draw us into an irresistible becoming? Or another hypothesis: Can the same animal be taken up by two opposing functions and movements, depending on the case? (Deleuze and Guattari 2004 [1980]: 257–258)

The reader anticipates that the second hypothesis will be accepted and the first rejected. But this is not how the plateau reads.

Deleuze and Guattari's prose is *leading*. Their philosophical arguments do not coincide with the precipitous rhetorical mode. As Haraway notes, the discussion of becomings-animal is bluntly gendered: 'Ahab's Moby-Dick is not like the little cat or dog owned by an elderly woman who honors and cherishes it' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004 [1980]: 269). On the side of becomings-animal, Deleuze and Guattari cite 'hunting societies, war societies, secret societies, crime societies' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004 [1980]: 267); they discover the 'man of war' inside 'Wolf-men, bear-men, wildcat-men, men of every animality, secret brotherhoods' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004 [1980]: 268); and there seems to be something of 'becomings-animal' in 'wildmen of all kinds' (Deleuze and

Guattari 2004 [1980]: 270). This gendered facet of *A Thousand Plateaus* has already been discussed at length elsewhere (see Laurie 2012). My suggestion here is simply that the masculinization of 'becoming-animal' adds a heroic dimension that distracts from important ambiguities in the concept of the pet itself. This gendered prose naturalizes what is an otherwise spurious distinction between that which attracts narcissistic Oedipal investments and that which does not.

Deleuze and Guattari have already told us that pets 'are the only kind of animal psychoanalysis understands', and then that 'the psychoanalysts… did not understand, or did not want to understand.… They saw nothing.' What have Deleuze and Guattari seen that psychoanalysts have not? Once we adopt an ethological understanding of bodies, we realize that our own capacities to see differences between the 'human' and 'nonhuman' will be entirely relative to our own affectations. We may be undergoing 'becomings-animal' that we have not yet noticed; or, if we notice them too much, they might already be botched. Self-consciousness is a very Freudian habit. Without the security of the 'pet' as a tacit signal for improper animals, how would a discourse on 'becomings-animal' select its proper objects, its adequate bodies, its true becomings?

Becoming-animal is a trap for humans. The reader must refuse what is given to him or her or else it doesn't *work*. Deleuze and Guattari's playful use of imperatives ('Do not imitate a dog') signals this fraught interpellative situation. How could 'becoming-animal' be anything but an idea destined for other humans? As soon as one recognizes oneself as a subject in their discourse, one may find oneself wanting to 'play' the animal.

This problem has not been invented by Deleuze and Guattari. Any critique of humanism in the name of the 'nonhuman' assumes a variation of this contradiction. To the person who insists on abandoning the human as a normative category of ethical inquiry, the armchair logician can simply reply, 'if you really did not believe in the human, we would not be having this conversation'. And the person in the armchair will be right – humanism has a dialogic structure, and the concept of 'becoming-animal' already presupposes some traction on this dialogue. Writings about humanism, posthumanism, and trans-humanism presuppose, perhaps somewhat optimistically, a reliable anthropocentric conversation within which to persuade others of claims relating to human or the nonhuman. Both humanism and the critique of humanism can participate in the centering of the human as a moral subject, whether 'for' or 'against' human interests.

To believe that 'becoming-animal' is destined for us, that we know how to do it – would not this be another narcissistic versioning of the human? A nonhumanist reading of *A Thousand Plateaus* would be one that does not assume anything in advance about what its authors want, and that does not assume oneself as the ideal subject of their discourse. It may be that those who never read Deleuze and Guattari are best equipped to `become-animal'. King Julien has not read them and doesn't need to: he effortlessly *ad libs* the situations that Deleuze and Guattari have helped us to unpick. But this does not make Julien a pedagogue. We are not required to sift through his gestures to discover collectivity or diversity or sharing. The common problem in the *Madagascar* franchise and *A Thousand Plateaus* is the distinction between moral figures that insist on being repeated and a-moral figures that call into question repeatability itself. Nobody can become-animal and nobody can become King Julien. The merit of *Madagascar* is not that it provides progressive moral lessons, but that its moral universe is coupled with someone unassimilable – a dancer, a killer, a demon. The implication is never than "humanism" is a bad ideology, but that the one who seeks to *repeat* human gestures may be the most estranged from morality, society or identity. Julien is perfectly versed in the generic rituals of human conduct, and this does more to explode the coherence of intra-species belonging than a transgressive character ever could.

Works cited

Bhabha, Homi K. (1994), *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge).

Deleuze, Gilles (2004) *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London, UK: Continuum).

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix (2004 [1972]) *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (London: Continuum).

—— (2004 [1980]) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Continuum).

Driscoll, Catherine (2002) *Girls: Feminine Adolescence in Popular Culture and Cultural Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press).

Dunayer, Joan (1995) 'Sexist Words, Speciesist Roots', in Carol Adams and Josephine Donovan, eds., *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press), 11–31.

Feagin, Joe R. (2004) 'Documenting the Costs of Slavery, Segregation, and Contemporary Racism: Why Reparations Are In Order For African Americans', *Harvard BlackLetter Law Journal,* 20: 49–81.

Gilroy, Paul (2000) *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press).

Guattari, Félix (2005) *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (London and New York: Continuum).
Halberstam, J. Jack (2011) 'Animating Revolt and Revolting Animation', *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham and London: Duke University Press), 27–52.
Haraway, Donna (2008) *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota).
Hunter, Ian (1992) 'The Humanities Without Humanism', *Meanjin,* 51(3): 479–490.
Jayamanne, Laleen (2001) *Toward Cinema and Its Double: Cross-Cultural Mimesis* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press).
Lamarre, Thomas (2008) 'Speciesism, Part I: Translating Races Into Animals in Wartime Animation', *Mechademia* 3(1): 75–95.
Laurie, Timothy (2012) 'Epistemology as Politics and the Double-bind of Border Thinking: Lévi-Strauss, Deleuze and Guattari, Mignolo', *Portal Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies,* Transcultural Mappings Special Issue 9.2.
Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1955) 'The Structural Study of Myth', *The Journal of American Folklore* 68(270): 428–444.
McNeil, Maureen (2005) 'Human', in Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meaghan Morris (eds.), *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing), 164–167.
Roediger, David R. (2005) *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White* (New York: Basic Books).
Rose, Steve (2014) 'Repressed Brits, Evil Mexicans, Arab Villains: Why Are Hollywood's Animated Movies Full of Racist Stereotypes?', *The Guardian,* April 7.
Russo, Vito (1987) *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies* (New York: Harper & Row).
Singer, Peter (2006) 'Introduction', in Peter Singer (ed.), *In Defense of Animals: The Second Wave* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing), 1–10.
Waldau, Paul (2006) 'Religion and Animals', in Peter Singer, ed., *In Defense of Animals: The Second Wave* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing), 69–83.
Zeleza, Paul Tiyambe (2005) 'Rewriting the African diaspora: Beyond the Black Atlantic', *African Affairs* 104(414): 35–68.

9

The Companion Cyborg: Technics and Domestication

Ronald Bogue

Donna Haraway's 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century', first published in the *Socialist Review* in 1985, is by far her best-known work.[1] Her proposal to displace the feminist myth of the goddess with that of the cyborg, 'a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction' (1991: 149), signaled her commitment to a socialist-feminism that is neither technophilic nor technophobic but fully engaged with the problematics of the interpenetration of nature and culture in such diverse realms as biology, ecology, cybernetics, economics, politics and ethics. In *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (1991), which included a revised version of 'A Cyborg Manifesto', and in *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium. FemaleMan© Meets_OncoMouse™: Feminism and Technoscience* (1997), Haraway continued her exploration of these issues in rhetorical terms largely consonant with those of the 'Cyborg Manifesto'. In 2003, however, she adopted a new master trope and discursive idiom in *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*, upon which she expanded in her 2008 study, *When Species Meet*. In these last two books, her focus is not on cyborgs but on dogs, and specifically her passionate participation in 'the dog-human sport called agility' (2008: 26). Haraway claims that there is continuity in her work, saying in her 2003 manifesto, 'I have come to see cyborgs as junior siblings in the much bigger queer family of companion species' (2003: 11), but the later work's incessant doggy-talk reports from dogland often make it hard to retain awareness of the cyborg connection. My object here is to put Haraway's cyborg and companion species tropes in relation to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'becoming', and thereby explore the contours of Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the nonhuman.

Becoming and becoming-with

Upon a first reading of Haraway's 'Cyborg Manifesto', those familiar with Deleuze and Guattari might well surmise that Haraway herself had been aware of their work when she composed the essay, given how similar her positions in the 'Cyborg Manifesto' are to those of Deleuze and Guattari, especially as articulated in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. It would hardly be surprising, for example, to find this sentence in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*: 'The cyborg is a creature in a post-gender world; it has no truck with bisexuality, pre-oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labor, or other seductions to organic wholeness' (1991: 150). When Haraway says that 'the cyborg has no origin story' (1991: 150), one cannot help but recall Deleuze and Guattari's repeated insistence that 'a line of becoming has neither beginning nor end, departure nor arrival, origin nor destination…. A line of becoming has only a middle' (1987: 293). In the cyborg, says Haraway, 'the boundary between human and animal is thoroughly breached' (1991: 151), a remark that echoes Deleuze and Guattari's lengthy treatment of the boundary-breaching process of 'becoming animal' in *Kafka: Toward and Minor Literature* and in Plateau Ten of *A Thousand Plateaus*. Haraway's declaration that the cyborg undoes the distinction 'between animal-human (organism) and machine' (1991: 152) is fully compatible with the 'machinic' alternative to vitalism and mechanism that informs both volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. When reading that the cyborg blurs 'the boundary between physical and non-physical' (1991: 153), one might think specifically of Plateau Four's 'incorporeal transformations', but in general of Deleuze and Guattari's exploration of the nuances attendant on the immanence of the virtual and the actual. That the cyborg's identity 'is fully political' (1991: 155) seems a reiteration of Deleuze and Guattari's assertion throughout *Anti-Oedipus* that all desiring-production is immediately social and political; and that cyborg identity is constructed out of 'otherness, difference, and specificity' (1991: 155) sounds like a variation on themes in all of Deleuze and Guattari's works, both those jointly and those separately written.

These striking parallels, however, are apparently coincidental. In a 2006 interview, Haraway said that she had not read Deleuze and Guattari before 2005 (Gane 2006: 156).[2] And when she did so, she was enraged by their approach to animals in Plateau Ten of *A Thousand Plateaus*. After pointing out the limitations of Derrida's thought about animals, Haraway remarks that

> Deleuze and Guattari are much, much worse. I think their becoming-animal chapter (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 232–309) is an insult because they don't give a flying damn about animals—critters are an excuse for their anti-oedipal project. Watch the way they excoriate old women and their dogs as they glorify the wolf pack in their 'horizon of becoming' and lines of flight. Deleuze and Guattari make me furious with their utter lack of curiosity about actual relations among animals and between animals and people, and the way they despise the figure of the domestic in their glorification of the wild in their monomaniacal anti-oedipal project. And people pick them up as if they were helpful in figuring sociality beyond the human. Nonsense! (Gane 2006: 143)

In *When Species Meet*, Haraway expands on these sentiments in a four-page critique that maintains the same tone of outrage and anger (an attack, to my knowledge, unequaled in intensity elsewhere in her writings). Haraway does claim that 'there is much that I love in other work of Deleuze' (what work she does not specify), and she says she 'is indebted to Deleuze and Guattari, among others, for the ability to think in "assemblages"' (2008: 314) – a concession muted in its generosity, given that Deleuze and Guattari *invented* the concept of the assemblage. But in the becomings plateau she finds 'little but the two writers' scorn for all that is mundane and ordinary and the profound absence of curiosity about or respect for and with actual animals, even as innumerable references to diverse animals are invoked to figure the authors' anti-Oedipal and anticapitalist project' (2008: 27). The becomings plateau articulates 'a philosophy of the sublime, not the earthly, not the mud' (2008: 28). She finds offensive Deleuze and Guattari's assertion that '*anyone who likes cats or dogs is a fool*' (1987: 240; emphasis in original), but their most egregious statement is that 'Ahab's Moby Dick is not like the little cat or dog owned by an elderly woman who honors and cherishes it' (1987: 244). Haraway comments, '[t]he old, female, small, dog- and cat-loving: these are who and what must be vomited out by those who will become-animal. Despite the keen competition, I am not sure I can find in philosophy a clearer display of misogyny, fear of aging, incuriosity about animals, and horror at the ordinariness of the flesh, here covered by the alibi of an anti-Oedipal and anticapitalist project' (2008: 30).

Haraway reads a lot into one sentence. Misogyny? Agreed, Deleuze and Guattari at times lapse into inadvertent sexism, and this reference to the *vieille dame* and her pet is a particularly insensitive instance of it. But the aims of their project are hardly misogynistic. They privilege 'becoming-

woman', saying 'all becomings begin with and pass through becoming-woman. It is the key to all other becomings' (1987: 277). And whatever one makes of this controversial concept, the motivation behind the concept is scarcely misogynistic. Ageism? The dog-loving '*vieille dame*' is opposed to Captain Ahab, who at age 58 and a veteran of 40 years at sea (and an amputee, let us remember) is hardly young, especially by the standards of the nineteenth century. *Fear* of aging and *horror* at the ordinariness of the flesh? It's hard to know how to respond, since there are no signs of fear or horror in the sentence that so offends Haraway, and I find no such fear or horror anywhere in the works of Deleuze or Guattari. Contempt for cat and dog lovers? It is interesting that Haraway quotes Deleuze and Guattari's dismissal of this group as fools, but not the ensuing passages in which they argue that '[t]here 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 ... Even the cat, even the dog' (1987: 241). Clearly, Deleuze and Guattari's target is the sentimental infantilization of animals, something Haraway herself castigates as 'the neurosis of caninophiliac narcissism' (2003: 33). Incuriosity about animals and scorn for the ordinary? I cannot agree, but I will return to these questions in a bit.

In addition to what she sees as 'the systematic nausea D&G let loose in their chapter in response to all that is ordinary', Haraway is concerned by the incessant talk of multiplicities, metamorphoses and lines of flight. Real animals are individuals, she insists, and her effort is to 'own up to the fraught tangle of relatings called "individuals"'. What she calls 'becoming-with animals' is not the same as becoming-animal. 'I think of all the conversations among humans watching their canine buddies at an ordinary dog park that lead them to a larger civic and artistic world, as well as exchanges about poop bags and dog diets. These are not becoming-animal, but they are about ordinary, daily becoming-with that does not seem very Oedipal to me' (2008: 314–315).

Haraway is correct that her becoming-with animals is not the same as Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-animal, but the difference is subtle. Most often when Haraway discusses becoming-with animals, she focuses on human–dog partners who live together and change one another through their ongoing daily interactions. This is the domain of the ordinary, the mundane, the earthly, the mud, which, according to Haraway, Deleuze and Guattari scorn. And indeed, Deleuze and Guattari show no interest in detailing the dynamics of such human–animal interactions. (Whether this stems from scorn for domesticated animals I will address

later.) But in the broadest sense, Haraway's becoming-with denotes symbiotic, co-evolving relations of otherness that bring multiple species together in complex combinations. Deleuze and Guattari in fact make reference in the becomings plateau to several instances of such becoming-with that Haraway would recognize: orchid-wasp, cat-baboon-C virus, roots-microorganisms (1987: 238), truffle–tree–fly–pig (1987: 242), tick–mammal (1987: 278). She derides the ecstatic sublimity of Deleuze and Guattari's description of becoming's proliferation via 'contagions, epidemics, battlefields and catastrophes' (1987: 241), but Deleuze and Guattari also forgo such rhetorical flourishes at times and simply speak of alliances (1987: 233, 238, 243–244, 246–249, 278, 291) and symbiosis (1987: 242, 249–250, 258), terms Haraway herself uses. To my mind, Deleuze and Guattari's references to various symbiotic relations hardly suggest an 'incuriosity about animals', and their talk of orchids, ticks, pigs, plant roots and viruses is scarcely symptomatic of 'a philosophy of the sublime, not the earthly, not the mud' (2008: 28).[3]

What sets 'becoming with animals' apart from becoming-animal is that in Haraway there is no distinction between the virtual and the actual, between de- and re-territorialization, whereas in Deleuze and Guattari the distinction is fundamental. Misreadings of Deleuze and Guattari, such as Haraway's, arise because the concept of 'becoming-other' (a term I'll use to cover the gamut of specific becomings) is mistaken for 'becoming', as it is construed in the traditional opposition of being and becoming. Haraway, Deleuze and Guattari all embrace a general ontology of becoming, but for Deleuze and Guattari that sense of 'becoming' characterizes the real, both actual and virtual, whereas 'becoming-other' pertains to the virtual alone. Deleuze and Guattari are fascinated by the *noce contre nature* of orchid and wasp, the strange alliances of truffle–tree–fly–pig and tic–mammal, but their focus is on the becomings immanent within these assemblages, the zones of indiscernibility that make possible the relatively stable relations among species in long-term alliances. Not all aspects of a given species-alliance are becomings, although becomings are always immanent within every alliance.

The concept of 'becoming-other' identifies something extracted from the real, a dimension with a different time and different identities and modes of relation. Deleuze and Guattari's attention is directed to moments of transition, mutation and metamorphosis – not so much moments within the general flow of common-sense time (becoming writ large) as moments 'between time', in a floating time of the infinitive, whose real-world extension may be as fleeting as a nanosecond or as prolonged as an hour, a season, a life, or an epoch. The identity

of a becoming-other is that of an atmosphere, an aura, a 'thisness' ('haecceity'), and this identity is constitutively multiple. What Haraway derides as Deleuze and Guattari's ecstatic sublime is rather a rhetoric designed to evoke a qualitatively 'other' world, one that indeed is dramatically figured in Ahab's becoming-whale, but that is also evoked in the quiet of *Mrs Dalloway*'s walk through the streets of London (1987: 263) or the subtleties of James's becoming-woman in *What Maisy Knew* and *Daisy Miller* (1987: 290). If a genuine becoming-other were to transpire in what Haraway terms a becoming-with, say between her and her dog, Haraway and dog would enter a zone of indiscernibility in which, immanent within the dog, would be both a pack and an anomalous individual (and a pack and anomalous individual immanent within Haraway). In no way does this virtual becoming-other ignore the actual individuality of Haraway and her dog. It simply names something else, a mode of existence that at its highest level of deterritorialization may be characterized only in terms of configurations of speeds and intensities on a plane of consistency.

At the species level, Haraway's 'becoming-with' comes closer to Deleuze and Guattari's 'becoming-other'. Companion species, she says, 'is a permanently undecidable category [...] that does not predetermine the status of the species as artifact, machine, landscape, organism or human being', that has 'the relation as the smallest unit of being and of analysis' and that is at once singular and plural, for 'every species is a multispecies crowd' (2008: 165). But there is also a moment in *When Species Meet* when Haraway describes an experience with her dog that Deleuze and Guattari would label a genuine becoming-dog. Haraway describes this moment in terms of the joy of purposeless play, a moment that only emerges fully in such rare performance-events as a flawless agility-run in a competition. 'Unexpected conjunctions and coordination of creatively moving partners in play take hold of both and put them into an open that feels something like an eternal present or suspension of time, a high of "getting it" together in action, or what I am calling joy' (2008: 241). It is only in this unfolding continuum of floating time, differential speeds and intensive affects that Haraway sets forth on a genuine becoming-dog.

Domestication

Despite Haraway's objections, I find complementarity in her becoming-with and Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-other, with no inherent conflict between her concern with interspecies symbiosis and the

quotidian relations between humans and animals and Deleuze and Guattari's interest in the creative becomings of art that emerge in human–animal zones of indiscernibility. Haraway claims that Deleuze and Guattari despise the domestic and glorify the wild, and hence that her becoming-with is antithetical to their becoming-other, but even this distinction is not so certain. For Haraway, a supposed valorization of wolves over dogs in *A Thousand Plateaus* is paradigmatic of Deleuze and Guattari's scorn for the domestic, but dogs, Deleuze and Guattari assert, may be partners in a becoming-other, and indeed, they speak at several points of a process of becoming-dog (1987: 29, 34, 36, 244, 249, 258–259, 268, 274–275, 278). Sometimes they stress the wild side of dogs (Penthesilea's joining her hunting dogs in devouring Achilles, for example), but sometimes not. True, Deleuze and Guattari consistently use the words 'domestic', 'domesticated', and 'domestication' to denote negative processes of control, restriction, repression and limitation, but domestication may be construed in a way that Deleuze and Guattari could affirm as a positive process. And such a construal, surprisingly, is that of domestication as a process of 'becoming-with'.

Haraway says that she adapts the term 'becoming-with' from Vinciane Despret (2004: 308), who develops a new definition of domestication in her article 'The Body We Care For: Figures of Anthropo-zoo-genesis' (2004). Despret opens her essay with a reflection on the famous case of 'Clever Hans', the horse who supposedly could perform mathematical calculations and signal his answers by tapping his right hoof on the floor. Oskar Pfungst, who published the results of his careful study of Hans in 1911, concluded that the horse was not a gifted mathematician but a discerning reader of human movements. Pfungst discovered that humans who elicited correct responses from Hans involuntarily bent their heads and trunks toward Hans the moment Hans's tapping reached the correct answer. Despret remarks that 'the horse could not count, but he could do something more interesting: not only could he read bodies, but he could make human bodies be moved and be affected, and move and affect other beings and perform things without their owners' knowledge' (2004: 113). From Pfungst's account of his experiments, Despret deduces further that Hans not only could respond to involuntary human movements, but also could teach humans how to respond to his tapping. Humans who initially could not elicit correct responses from Hans, but who persisted in working with Hans, eventually became successful partners by learning via Hans's cues to nod in the appropriate manner. Hans 'made them move otherwise, he changed the habits of their bodies and made them talk another language. He

taught them how to be affected differently in order to affect differently' (Despret 2004: 116).

The relationship between Hans and his partners, Despret argues, is a specialized version of the relationship between horse and rider that emerges over time as the two become attuned to one another. Citing the work of the ethologist Jean-Claude Barrey, Despret notes that skilled riders unconsciously develop movements that are analogs of their horses' movements, such that 'talented riders behave and move like horses'. When humans and horses have reached mutual attunement, 'human bodies have been transformed by and into a horse's body'. Who influences and who is influenced, however, is undecidable. 'Both, human and horse, are cause and effect of each other's movements. Both induce and are induced, affect and are affected' (2004: 115). What distinguishes Hans from other horses is that he 'was able to switch from one sense (the sense of kinaesthesia) to another: the visual. Talented horses generally read through their skin and their muscles. Hans could read all these signals visually. Hans was truly talented' (Despret 2004: 115).

The case of Clever Hans is usually cited to caution researchers against unconscious bias in experimentation with animals, but Despret argues that the ideal of pure objectivity in such experimentation misconstrues the relationship between researchers and their animal subjects, in which both parties affect, and are affected by, one another, even in the laboratory. To support this claim, Despret reviews Rosenthal's 1966 experiment with rats designed to confirm the existence of the 'Clever Hans effect', whereby animal researchers unconsciously influence experimental results. Rosenthal divided a class of students into two groups, giving each student a rat whose task was to learn to negotiate a maze. One student group was told that their rats were selectively bred to be especially intelligent, the other group that their rats were especially dull. In fact, the rats had been bred under identical conditions. As Rosenthal expected, the 'bright' rats performed well, the 'dull' rats poorly. The object of Rosenthal's study, however, was not simply to confirm the Clever Hans effect, but to determine the causes of the result, and in this, Despret finds Rosenthal wanting. Rosenthal's ideal experimenter, he said, would be an automaton – someone incapable of being affected, and hence able to test rats without personally affecting them – and his assumption was that students alone produced the results. But Despret sees evidence in Rosenthal's own report that students and rats together participated in a process of mutual attunement. The students 'put their trust in their rats, emotional trust, trust that is conveyed in gestures, in students' bodies, in all these rats' bodies that were manipulated, caressed, handled, fed and

encouraged'. The result was that 'the students succeeding in attuning their rats to their beliefs', and 'these beliefs brought into existence new identities for the students and for the rats' (Despret 2004: 122).

The emotional relations between students and rats, 'made of expectations, faith, belief, trust' (Despret 2004: 122), are representative constituents of the practice that Despret calls 'domestication'. Domestication, she says, is 'an "anthropo-zoo-genetic practice", a practice that constructs animal and human'. In the case of Rosenthal's experiment, 'the rat proposes to the student, while the student proposes to the rat, a new manner of becoming together, which provides new identities' and opportunities 'to disclose new forms of "being together"' (Despret 2004: 122). Crucial to this 'becoming together', says Despret, is belief, which she defines as 'what makes entities "available" to events' (2004: 122). What Rosenthal's experiment showed was 'how an affected and affecting student makes himself available to the "becoming" of the rat, as well as how the rat makes itself available to the "becoming" of the student' (Despret 2004: 123). Despret cautions, however, that 'becoming available' is not the same as 'being docile'. Becoming available entails the possibility of resistance, whereas being docile does not. Becoming available is the process Despret labels domestication. Despret does not name the process that creates docile beings, but it seems to conform to the common notion of domestication as subjugation. I would argue, then, that the distinction between becoming available and being docile invites us to differentiate between positive and negative domestication, the one grounded in mutuality and freedom, the other in domination and subservience.

The similarities between Despret's domestication and Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-animal are striking. First is the obvious Spinozist orientation that Despret shares with Deleuze and Guattari. All three define bodies in terms of their affects – their powers of affecting and being affected. Clever Hans possessed an unusual power of being affected by humans, but he in turn 'taught them how to be affected differently in order to affect differently' (Despret 2004: 116). Likewise, Deleuze and Guattari look at various animals in terms of 'the active and passive affects of which the animal is capable in the individuated assemblage of which it is a part' (1987: 257). Second is the authors' close association of affects with becoming. For Deleuze and Guattari, of course, affects are central to becoming – indeed, 'Affects are becomings', they say, and 'the reality of a becoming-animal ... is affect in itself' (1987: 256, 259). In the case of Despret, the process of mutual becoming between animals and humans pervades her analysis, as when she discerns in Rosenthal's experiment 'how an affected and affecting student makes himself available to the

"becoming" of the rat, as well as how the rat makes itself available to the "becoming" of the student' (Despret 2004: 123). Third is the emphasis the authors place on the event. For Despret, domestication requires belief, which she defines as being available to events. For Deleuze and Guattari, becoming-other discloses *Aion*, 'the indefinite time of the event', 'the time of the pure event or of becoming', 'something that is of the order of the event, of becoming or of the haecceity' (1987: 262–4).[4] Finally, Despret's domestication and Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-animal open possibilities for alternative modes of existence. For Despret, domestication discloses 'a new manner of becoming together, ... provides new identities ... new forms of "being together"' (2004: 122). In Deleuze and Guattari, implicit throughout the becomings plateau is a valorization of becoming-other as a means of inventing new possibilities for life, something they make explicit later in *What Is Philosophy?*, where they associate becoming with the creation of a 'new earth' and a 'new people' (1994: 99, 101, 108–110, 112).

Clearly, the range of phenomena included within Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming-animal is much broader than that encompassed in Despret's notion of domestication, but the similarities suggest that the investigations of Despret, and those of Haraway, complement rather than clash with those of Deleuze and Guattari. The work of Despret and Haraway explores in detail aspects of human–animal relations that Deleuze and Guattari ignore and that deserve consideration within their category of becoming-animal. Despret's positive characterization of domestication invites us to consider human relations with what are commonly called domesticated species as alliances and symbiotic relations equally demonstrative of a becoming-animal as those between orchid and wasp, or humans and wolves. Despret's and Haraway's attention to the gentle affects attendant on the care, trust, belief and availability of 'becoming-with' offers a necessary corrective to the assumption that Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-animal is inherently violent – something their rhetoric at times invites, as when they speak of becoming-animal as proliferating through 'contagion, epidemics, battlefields, and catastrophes' (1987: 241). And Despret's distinction between 'becoming available' and 'being docile' offers a useful means of understanding Deleuze and Guattari's statement that any animal may be treated as a pet, and any pet may give rise to a genuine becoming. In Despret's terms, the question for Deleuze and Guattari would not be whether an animal is wild or domestic, but whether it is engaged by humans in a process of mutual becoming-available, or one of subjugating the animal and making it docile.

Cyborgs and technics

In her 2003 manifesto, Haraway says, 'I have come to see cyborgs as junior siblings in the much bigger queer family of companion species' (2003: 11). Before considering the implications of this reclassification, I would like to return to Haraway's concept of the cyborg and use it to explore another dimension of Deleuze and Guattari's approach to the nonhuman. As noted above, one may find echoes of all the cyborg's primary characteristics in Deleuze and Guattari, but Haraway's object of analysis differs greatly from that of Deleuze and Guattari. Her interest is in the human-machine-organism interface of what she calls 'technoscience', a sociocultural coalescence of technology and science that emerges in the nineteenth century and becomes dominant in the late twentieth century. Deleuze and Guattari, by contrast, are focused on machines in the broadest sense of the term, especially in *Anti-Oedipus*, where everything is treated as a machine. Desiring machines are what interest Deleuze and Guattari, not machines in the ordinary sense of the term, whether high-tech or primitive, which they label 'technical machines' (1983: 141). As a result, the specifics of modern technology per se are seldom addressed in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. For those who study Deleuze and Guattari, then, Haraway's work on cyborgs and technoscience maps territory they never explored and that deserves further consideration from a Deleuze-Guattarian perspective. It also points to a larger topic that Deleuze and Guattari scarcely address, and one that Haraway herself shies away from – that of technology in the broadest sense of *tekhnē*, or 'technics'. Haraway's 'cyborg story', she says, 'is a fairly historically limited one' (Gane 2006: 146) and she resists subsuming the cyborg within a general account of humans' relationship to technics. Yet that relationship, I believe, is one that needs further elaboration, both in Haraway and in Deleuze and Guattari.

Here, Bernard Stiegler's philosophy of technics offers a useful means of connecting the ubiquitous desiring machines of *Anti-Oedipus* and the historically delimited cyborgs of technoscience. For Stiegler, the evolution of homo sapiens and the development of *tekhnē* are inseparable, and in that sense technics are constitutive of human being. Stiegler calls technics 'tertiary retention', a concept he derives from Husserl. Husserl identifies primary retention as the synthesis of time that establishes the present as a flow, and secondary retention as memory in the common sense of the term. Husserl insists that the secondary retention of memory is internal to consciousness and in no way dependent on anything external to it, but Stiegler argues that all memory requires some external

support, some element outside consciousness that functions as a tool, a prosthesis that humans create and that simultaneously creates them. Such an external support is a 'tertiary retention', an external collective memory whose fundamental components are tools and language. 'A tool is, before anything else, memory' (1998: 154), the simplest, most primitive flint shard retaining the memory of its social construction. Likewise, language is a tool, in that it, too, retains in its signs the memory of its social, cultural and historical construction. *Logos* and *tekhnē*, far from being opposed, are simply different modes of tertiary retention. Humans and their tools form a single evolutionary complex, and it is via collective memory and its socio-material supports that humans are able to evolve in a fashion unlike that of other species.

Stiegler identifies three periods in the history of technics and society: artisanal culture, industrial culture, and hyperindustrial culture (2011: 4). In artisanal cultures, the tool is a material retention of its invention, construction and previous implementation, but its use is dependent on the artisan's know-how, which is developed through a social memory passed on from artisan to artisan. In industrial cultures, artisanal tools give way to industrial machines, which incorporate in their workings the know-how that formerly belonged exclusively to the artisan. Artisans are 'proletarianized', de-skilled, deprived of their *savoir-faire* and reduced to being ancillary operators of tools rather than active users (2010: 37). In hyperindustrial cultures, the proletarianization of machine operators continues, but a new form of proletarianization emerges as well, a universal de-skilling that induces a loss of both *savoir-faire* and *savoir-vivre* – the knowledge of how to live (2010: 27). Central to the formation of hyperindustrial culture is the thorough integration of consumption with capitalist production and the emergence of what Stiegler calls the 'consciousness market' or the 'programming industry' (1998: 73–4). Through mass media, saturated with the values of consumerism manufactured by the programming industry, the collective tertiary retention of social memory is synchronized, standardized and made a functional component of capitalist production.

There is no clear conceptual counterpart to Stiegler's tertiary retention in Deleuze and Guattari, but Stiegler's history of technics does resonate with passages in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Stiegler relies on Henri Leroi-Gourhan's account of hominid evolution to support his argument that technics are constitutive components of human evolution, and Deleuze and Guattari make use of the same account in their description of the 'alloplastic' stratum of human culture (1987: 60). Leroi-Gourhan argues that bipedalism freed human hands from their locomotive function and

thereby made possible the invention and manipulation of tools, while simultaneously freeing the mouth from its grasping function to allow the development of language. For Stiegler, Deleuze and Guattari, the emergence of the hand-tool and face-language couples is decisive in human evolution. Stiegler's distinction between artisanal and industrial culture is also echoed in Deleuze and Guattari's differentiation of 'machinic enslavement' and 'social subjection'. In pre-industrial cultures, humans are components of social machines and hence subject to 'machinic enslavement'. With the advent of industrial culture, however, humans become adjuncts to the machine, 'no longer a component of the machine but a worker, a user ... subjected *to* the machine and no longer enslaved *by* the machine' (1987: 457). In the contemporary age of 'cybernetic and informational machines' (1987: 457), a new order emerges in which machinic enslavement and social subject coexist, as media and markets subsume humans within a general culture of 'processes of normalization, modification, modeling and information' (1987: 458).

Deleuze and Guattari's account of industrial social subjection and the cybernetic and informational conjunction of social subjection and machinic enslavement is complementary with Stiegler's characterization of technics in industrial and hyperindustrial cultures. And Deleuze, Guattari and Stiegler all view the emergence of the hand-tool and face-language couples as constitutive of human beings as a species. This suggests, I would argue, that through Stiegler's philosophy of technics we may expand upon the implications of Deleuze and Guattari's approach to 'technical machines' within their general machinics. And via Stiegler's technics we may situate Haraway's cyborg as a specific configuration of human and nonhuman elements within the species-constitutive process of prosthetic tertiary retention.

Cyborg or dog?

Haraway's treatment of the cyborg, then, when situated within Stiegler's philosophy of technics, may be used to determine the specific ways in which technics and technoscience might function as means of becoming-other within Deleuze and Guattari's conceptual framework. And her work on human–dog relations, when filtered through Despret's notion of domestication, helps suggest dimensions of becoming-animal in Deleuze and Guattari that were never developed in the writings. But Haraway proposes to collapse the distinction between cyborgs and human–dog couples by including 'cyborgs as junior siblings in the much bigger queer family of companion species' (2003: 11). What makes this subsumption

possible is the adoption of a very broad definition of 'species': 'By species I mean, with thanks to Karen Barad's theory of agential realism and intra-action, a kind of intra-ontics/intra-antics that does not predetermine the status of the species as artifact, machine, landscape, organism, or human being' (2008: 165). Haraway's dominant focus in *When Species Meet* is on human–dog relations, and hence the implications of this broad definition of species are not always apparent. But in a chapter devoted to her father and the prostheses that enabled him to lead a full life, the wide range of Haraway's category of 'companion species' is made evident. As a child, Haraway's father developed tuberculosis, which calcified his hip joints and permanently limited his mobility. Nonetheless, with the aid of a wheelchair he was able to play baseball as a boy, and with crutches he was able to become a successful sports writer as a man. When he was young, the 'wheelchair was in a companion-species relation to the boy; the whole body was organic flesh as well as wood and metal; the player was on wheels, grinning' (2008: 167). For her father, 'To be in a companion-species relationship was the viable way of life. He was lucky to have a concatenated series of partners, including the wheelchair, the crutches, and the attention and resources of his parents and friends' (2008: 170–171).

According to Haraway's earlier terminology, her father clearly would have qualified as a cyborg, and I question whether his relation to his wheelchair and crutches should be included within his relation to parents and friends as so many configurations of companion species. Better, I would argue, would be to view the conjunction of boy–wheelchair–crutches–parents–friends as an assemblage, and to preserve the figures of both the cyborg and companion species as potential constituents of various assemblages. The concepts of cyborgs and companion species each serve important functions. The notion of companion species is grounded in the human–dog relation, and that relation, when properly enacted, may give rise to an ethics of care, respect and responsibility for otherness that entails the same responsiveness toward every species, whether 'artifact, machine, landscape, organism or human being' (Haraway 2008: 165). The cyborg, by contrast, emphasizes the interpenetration of humans, machines and natural systems and an attendant oppositional politics of 'otherness, difference and specificity' (Haraway 1991: 155). The two models reinforce one another, but each does a different kind of work, and in very different rhetorical terms. Both the conceptual movement from dogs to cyborgs and the movement from cyborgs to dogs strain in the middle, and that tension is valuable. Becoming-machine and becoming-animal may interpenetrate, but their specificity should be maintained.

The question, finally, is whether any master trope should be used to characterize all cosmic processes of becoming. I believe not, and for that reason I would reject Haraway's companion species model, as well as the machine model that Deleuze and Guattari adopt in *Anti-Oedipus*. It is better to employ multiple figures and discursive registers to describe the cosmos. This is precisely what Deleuze and Guattari do in *A Thousand Plateaus*, and the terms and language they use, in my judgment, are more advantageous for a comprehensive philosophy of the real than those of cyborgs and companion species. The language of *A Thousand Plateaus* is insistently abstract yet figural – planes of consistency, speeds and intensities, abstract machines and assemblages, haecceities, lines of flight, refrains, rhizomes, strata, smooth and striated space and so on – and such language opens a conceptual space within which thought may traverse received categories in ways that are not afforded by the concepts of cyborgs and companion species. Within this space, various becomings may be traced, each of which opens a zone of indiscernibility between the human and nonhuman, between the animal and machine, the vegetable and mineral, the organic and inorganic.

Haraway's extended meditations on cyborgs and companion species suggest significant ways in which Deleuze and Guattari's thought might be extended into areas they left largely unexamined, specifically the dynamics of becoming-other in technoscientific culture and animal domestication. Haraway's concept of the cyborg, when conjoined with Stiegler's philosophy of technics, offers a means of mapping a becoming-machine specific to what Deleuze and Guattari call 'technical machines'. And her concept of companion species, when combined with Despret's notion of domestication as 'anthropo-zoo-genesis', helps chart a becoming-animal midway between the wild and the docile. It is unfortunate that Haraway so thoroughly misreads Deleuze and Guattari and hence never genuinely encounters their work. But that should not prevent students of Deleuze and Guattari from reading Haraway, for she has much to offer in exploring the paths of becoming-other in Deleuze and Guattari that lead from the human to multiple domains of the nonhuman.

Notes

1. Grebowicz and Merrick have shown in great detail the extent to which the influence of the 'Cyborg Manifesto' has overshadowed that of the rest of Haraway's work. See especially pp. 147–164.
2. Haraway's reasons for not reading Deleuze and Guattari are curious. Late in the interview, after having lambasted Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'becoming animal,' she remarks: 'I refused to read Deleuze and Guattari until last year. I'm

a very recent reader, and now I know why I refused to read them. Everyone kept saying I'm a Deleuzian, and I kept saying "no way". This is one of the ways women thinkers are made to seem derivative of male philosophers, who are often their contemporaries – made to seem derivative and the same, when we are neither' (Gane 2006: 156). Apparently she knew she was not Deleuzian without having read Deleuze, and she refused to read Deleuze and Guattari for reasons only revealed after she had read them ('and now I know why I refused to read them'). It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Haraway was far from a sympathetic reader when she finally examined their texts.

3. Had Haraway continued reading beyond the becomings plateau, she would have found in 'Plateau 11: Of the Refrain' substantial evidence that Deleuze and Guattari are very much interested in animals, with passages devoted to the relationship between spiders and flies and between bumblebees and snapdragons (1987: 314) the mating dance of the stickleback fish (1987: 317), the function of the grass stem in several species of Australian grass finches (1987: 324–325), the migratory behavior of salmon, locusts, chaffinches, lobsters (1987: 326), and the complex assemblage of territorial components of the stagemaker bird (1987: 315–316, 331, 336).
4. Despret's notion of 'being available to events' also resonates with remarks Deleuze made in the first section of the film interview *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*, 'A is for Animal.' There Deleuze spoke of always being 'on the lookout' [*aux aguets*] for encounters, and he associated this process of being '*aux aguets*' with animals. See Beaulieu (2011: no pagination), and Stivale (2014: 69–71, 78–80).

Works cited

Beaulieu, Alain (2011) 'The Status of Animality in Deleuze's Thought', *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* 9(1–2): n.p.

Deleuze, Gilles (1995) *Negotiations: 1972–1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press).

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari (1983) *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press).

—— (1986) *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press).

—— (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press).

—— (1994) *What is Philosophy?,* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (London and New York: Verso).

Despret, Vinciane (2004) 'The Body We Care For: Figures of Anthropo-zoogenesis', *Body & Society* 10(2–3): 111–134.

Gane, Nicholas (2006) 'When We Have Never Been Human, What Is to Be Done? Interview with Donna Haraway', *Theory, Culture and Society* 23(7–8): 135–158.

Grebowicz, Margret and Helen Merrick (2013) *Beyond the Cyborg: Adventures with Donna Haraway* (New York: Columbia University Press).

Haraway, Donna (1985) 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century', *Socialist Review* 80: 65–108.

—— (1990) *Primate Visions: Gender, Race and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge).
—— (1991) *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Free Association Press).
—— (1997) *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium. FemaleMan©Meets_OncoMouse™: Feminism and Technoscience* (New York: Routledge).
—— (2003) *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press).
—— (2008) *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press).
Stiegler, Bernard (1998) *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, trans. Richard Beardsworth and George Collins (Stanford: Stanford University Press).
—— (2010) *For a New Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Daniel Ross (Cambridge: Polity Press).
—— (2011a) *The Decadence of Industrial Democracies*, trans. Daniel Ross and Suzanne Arnold (Cambridge: Polity Press).
—— (2011b) *Technics and Time, 3: Cinematic Time and the Question of Malaise*, trans. Stephen Barker (Stanford: Stanford University Press).
Stivale, Charles J (2014) '*Etre aux aguets*: Deleuze, Creation and Territorialization' in *The Animal Catalyst: Towards Ahuman Theory*, ed. Patricia MacCormack (London: Bloomsbury), 69–80.

10
Deleuze and Critical Plant Studies

Hannah Stark

While much philosophical work on the nonhuman has focused on animals, objects, forces, as well as the monstrous and the divine, it is only recently that scholarly attention in the Humanities has been directed toward plants. The last few years has seen the eruption of a vigorous and intensifying debate about the place of plants in human systems of meaning, including their cultural life, their discursive framing in academic and popular understandings, and their philosophical meaning. Adopting many of the same agendas as critical animal studies, critical plant studies challenges the privileged place of the human in relation to plant life and examines this through a series of lenses: ethical, political, historical, cultural, textual and philosophical. The implications of critical plant studies are significant: it has an impact on the understanding of plant life and of human/plant relations in a diverse set of arenas including plant science, agriculture, food practices and politics, forestry, gardening, and environmental ethics. Much of the current critical attention directed at plants coalesces on Michael Marder's *Plant-Thinking: A Philosophy of Vegetal Life* (2013), which is emerging as the seminal text in critical plant studies.[1] This book is a provocation to account philosophically for plant ontology and to cultivate a new respect for plant life. The emerging philosophical interest in plants can be contextualized with broader discussions such as the Swiss Federal Ethics Committee on Non-Human Biotechnology's publication of a document on the dignity of plants (2008), as well as the popular considerations of plants that have been occurring for some time, exemplified in the sustained work of Michael Pollan (1991, 2003, 2011).[2] Cultural work on plants has emerged against the backdrop of the shifting understanding of the human in relation to nonhuman others as can be seen in the various branches of animal studies, and the intensification of

the fields of ecophilosophy and ecocriticism. This chapter begins with a consideration of Marder's text in order to outline the contour of the debate about plants. Of particular interest is the Deleuzian inflection of many of Marder's ideas. Taking this as a departure point, this paper then examines how the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari more broadly expands our resources for considering vegetal life. It then turns to the example of the corn plant (*Zea mays*) to explore how Deleuze's work might be mobilized to engage with the problematic of the non/human through thinking critically about plants.

Thinking plants

Marder advances a radical philosophical position in relation to plants in *Plant-Thinking*. He argues that plants have historically been considered a lower life form and have been thought of as inert, passive, background objects. This has made their subjection to human intervention, control and consumption easy to justify. His agenda is to challenge the assumption that plants are unreservedly available for human use. This can be understood in relation to emerging work on plants, which asks not only how we can think about the relationship between humans and plants but also what plants mean for our philosophical systems, and specifically how we conceive of the human and the nonhuman within these systems. Marder's work exemplifies this when he argues that plant ontology actually troubles metaphysics. He writes: 'Plants are the weeds of metaphysics: devalued, unwanted in its carefully cultivated garden, yet growing in-between the classical categories of the thing, the animal, and the human' (2013: 90). If plant life is a blind spot in Western metaphysics, taking plants seriously invites us to re-evaluate the categories and hierarchies that compose our systems of thought.

Critical plant studies continues the destabilization of the category of the human and its hierarchical relation to other forms of being, which has been central to the different branches of animal studies. Marder alludes to Derrida's argument that the binary human/animal not only positions the human outside of the category of the animal but also elides the diversity of animal life (Marder 2013: 52; Derrida 2008: 47). He argues for a vegetal democracy based on the notion that plants and animals can all be thought of as part of the diversity of growing things (2013: 51–52). However, the comparison of animal and plant studies brings crucial differences to light. For example, much of animal rights discourse is based on the notion of what human and nonhuman animals have in common. This can be seen is Peter Singer's call to extend

the principle of equality to nonhuman animals by appealing to both common interests and the capacity for suffering that sentient beings share (2009). The notion of commonality on which his brand of animal ethics rests needs to be clarified because it is constructed on a differential scale and is premised on the exclusion of non-sentient animals and other nonhumans such as plants. Sharing some similarity with Singer, Derrida emphasizes a common mortality when he evokes the 'the finitude that we share with animals' (2008: 28). From Singer to Derrida, then, considerations of human and nonhuman animals stress proximity in terms of the capacity to experience similar things. This is a notion of closeness that is also figured in ontological terms. Karen Houle suggests that humans and animals are actually afforded a special closeness in the very systems of Western philosophy that have elevated the human. Cartesianism has, she writes, 'created and sustained for animality a unique proximity to the human which is especially *non-abyssal*' (2011: 90, emphasis in original). Plants, on the other hand, are fundamentally foreign in both experiential and ontological terms. Despite Marder's call for a vegetal democracy based on a common 'participation in life' (2013: 52) and, like Derrida, a relation to mortality, he also outlines the 'ontological particularity' (2013: 93) of plants. This includes the specificity of plant growth, their rootedness in space, their structure, their experience of temporality and their response to seasonal change.

One of the critiques directed at critical plant studies has come from the perspective of animal rights activists who argue that focusing on plants undermines hard won advances in the ethical treatment of animals. Gary Francione, a legal scholar and animal rights activist, argues against Marder: 'I reject completely that we have direct moral obligations to plants. I reject completely that plants have any interests whatsoever' (2013: n.p.). He derides Marder's ethical position asserting that 'the primary audience for [*Plant-Thinking*] will not be vegans who want to ponder whether they are under-inclusive ethically, but those who claim that we should skip over the interests of the cow and worry about whether the carrot had a tough harvesting season' (2013: n.p.). Francione's comments typify the notion that ethical engagement with plants is staged in relation to debates about food politics. Indeed, nowhere is the difference between plants and animals starker for humans than in the ethical positions that can be arrived at in relation to diet. While eating meat is a choice for many people in the Western world, rather than a necessity, eating plants is somewhat more difficult to avoid. Marder's proposal is not that we need to stop eating plants but that we need to 'eat like a plant' (2013: 185). On the one level this

involves cultivating an understanding of eating as a rhizomatic human/plant assemblage in which the otherness of the plant is maintained. On a more practical level it includes being wary of genetic modification and industrial food production, both of which are fundamentally inimical to the ethics of plant being that Marder is proposing. This leads to the necessarily moderate ethical position that he reaches at the end of *Plant-Thinking*, which amounts to espousing that we eat locally, eat sustainably, eat respectfully, and don't eat too much – a position strikingly similar to Michael Pollan's food politics, and that of much of the Western, middle-class, left-leaning, urban-dwelling, food-obsessed, population (myself included).

However, Marder's plant ethics go beyond food. In fact one of his ethical injunctions is that humans need to overcome their instrumental relationship to plants in which they are positioned as no more than resource for human needs and desires. The nature of this relationship stops us from truly encountering plants both ethically and in a way that recognizes their diverse modes of being. Marder asks how the human treatment of plants is symptomatic of some of the more problematic aspects in Western metaphysis. This includes the obvious anthropocentrism that forms the basis of the human's relationship to plants, and which is exacerbated in agriculture, and also the privileged place of the human in the hierarchical structures of being that are used to justify speciesism. But it also includes reading practices such as monocrop agriculture, as evidence of the prevalence of the principle of identity and the inability to account for alterity, a convincing argument when you consider the use in industrial agriculture of genetically modified species which can result in entire fields of genetically identical plants. Marder writes, '[t]he loss of plant varieties and biodiversity is a symptom of a much more profound trend – the practical implementation of the metaphysics of the One (the Hegelian becoming actual of the rational and becoming rational of the actual) in human and nonhuman environments' (2013: 55).

What Marder arrives at is that re-thinking plants enables us to cultivate a *new attitude*: 'a drastically different comportment toward the environment, which will no longer be perceived as a collection of natural resources and raw materials managed, more or less effectively, by human beings' (2013: 31). This is particularly important since the plant often operate as a placeholder for nature itself. Thinking about plants offers a challenge to Western metaphysics because it invites us to rethink the place of the human in relation to other forms of life. Marder's text reminds us to find value in nonhuman life that escapes the equation

of human wants and needs. However, his focus is very much on the human systems of meaning and value that re-thinking plants could effect. This is the impasse that recent work on the nonhuman, broadly conceived, has been trying to overcome: just because we can never truly access the world of a plant, does this prevent us from speculation? And concomitantly, where is the line between speculation and appropriation? This is something that Marder foregrounds in *Plant-Thinking*, when he contrasts his position with Jakob von Uexküll's invitation, in *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans,* to 'walk into unknown worlds' (Marder 2013: 9; Uexküll 2010: 41). As Marder suggests, the world of plants is one that we cannot entirely access. The encounter with plants is an encounter with alterity and there are aspects of plant being that will always remain untranslatable to us. 'All we can hope for', he writes, 'is to brush upon the edges of their being … and in so doing to grow past the fictitious shells of *our* identity and *our* existential ontology' (2013: 13, emphasis in original). However, in this sentence he reorients the discussion of plants in terms of human use and benefit, this time couched in philosophical terms.

Marder's book has a particularly Deleuzian inflection. On the one hand he rejects Deleuze and Guattari's privileging of the rhizome over the tree. He claims that in their assertion of the hierarchical and bifurcating structure of the tree's branches and roots, they ignore the capacity of the tree's leaves to detach and renew, a marker of the temporality specific to the plant. For Deleuze and Guattari the leaves of a tree are an example of the 'infinitely reproducible principles of *tracing*' (2004: 13, emphasis in original), that is, of the repetition of the same. For Marder, on the other hand, leaves overcome the distinction between copy and original and are iterations (2013: 85). The tree itself is a multiplicity – a non-totalizible assemblage of parts composing a body without organs, which he calls a 'collective being' (2013: 85). In the end, however, Marder becomes Deleuzian in his valuing of the rhizome as the figure *par excellence* of vegetal being, a sentiment that inverts Deleuze and Guattari's injunction: that the vegetal (conceived of in the broadest sense) exemplifies the rhizome.

It is not surprising that Marder would point us to the work of Deleuze and Guattari as he, like Deleuze, is trying to articulate a form of non-representational thinking, which he feels is exemplified in plant life. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze is working to liberate thought from the constructive positing of human consciousness as a horizon of thought and to develop an understanding of the way that thought works in the world as a force that brings things into being. The new image of thought

that he articulates is one that positions thought as a creative and involuntary act that is not confined to either the subject or the human but occurs through the differential processes by which problems emerge. Within this configuration, a problem is not a particular and unresolved question that the human must ponder but is present in the structures of the world. For example, Deleuze describes an organism as 'nothing if not the solution to a problem, as are each of its differenciated organs, such as the eye which solves a light "problem"' (1994: 211). In *Plant-Thinking* Marder draws on this in his investigation both of how plants 'think' and how humans can participate in plant-thinking. He suggests that plants offer an 'essentialism-free way of thinking that is fluid, receptive, dispersed, non-oppositional, non-representational, immanent, and material-practical' (2013: 152). This shares Deleuze's project of offering a version of thought which is rhizomatic and dispersed and which, importantly, would be non-anthropocentric. Deleuze and Guattari's figure of the rhizome, which is central, both to their model of thinking and philosophy more broadly, suggests that they may always have offered a specifically vegetal philosophy. Marder's book provokes us to think more fully about what Deleuze and Guattari offer in relation to the question of vegetal life.

'Follow the plants'

Within Deleuze and Guattari's work, there are rich resources for thinking about plants. Most obviously, their figure of the rhizome, so important to *A Thousand Plateaus*, is vegetal, with their favorite examples being the potato plant and couch grass (the 'best' and the 'worst') (2004: 7). Deleuze and Guattari are doing more than evoking a plant-based metaphor here. The rhizome is a way of being in the world. They assert: 'the question is whether plant life in its specificity is not entirely rhizomatic' (2004: 7). For them there is something about plant being itself, which mobilizes the principles of the rhizome: connection, heterogeneity, multiplicity, rupture and cartography. Plants, whether or not they are rhizomes in the conventional botanical sense, have the capacity to form a rhizome assemblage with the soil, nutrients, wind, water and climate that constitute their environment. We could look, for example, at the case of a domestic crop plant to extrapolate their idea. The figure of the rhizome assemblage in this case includes the conditions specific to its location such as the fertilizers in the soil and the rainfall, but also other non-local actors such as the economic system that gave rise to industrial agriculture, the company who own the field, the machine that processed the

seed or tuber, the human who planted it. The rhizome extends beyond the figuration of the environment of the plant to include the other actors involved in its proliferation: a capitalist/industrial/plant rhizome, giving rise to a human/plant rhizome, producing a root/soil/fertilizer rhizome and so on through the consolidation of endlessly transforming, non-hierarchical networks which are both actual and virtual. The rhizome here provides the conceptual structure to map the oscillating network of transversal connections between what might otherwise be disparate things. But this structure, with its capacity to facilitate new connection between dissimilar things, is also what allows the plant to become other through entropy, growth and metamorphosis, through the production of new offshoots and new plants. Deleuze and Guattari refer to this as the 'wisdom of plants' (2004: 12). They implore us to '[f]ollow the plants: you start by delimiting a first line consisting of circles of convergence around successive singularities; then you see whether inside that line new circles of convergence establish themselves, with new points located outside the limits and in other directions' (2004: 12).

'Becoming', a concept that Deleuze and Guattari mobilize to challenge the primacy of identity in Western metaphysics, takes up the vegetal structure of the rhizome. In the tenth plateau of *A Thousand Plateaus* 'Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible…', Deleuze and Guattari address plants directly. They outline the continuum of becoming which begins with becoming-woman, passes through becoming-child, becoming-animal, becoming-vegetable, and ends with more abstract becomings: becoming-elementary, becoming-cellular, becoming-molecular and finally becoming-imperceptible (2004: 274). Becoming is not an imitation, by which the mimicry of animal characteristics would be the method through which one could enact the becoming-animal. Instead, it is the novelty that is generated when heterogeneous things enter into relation. Becoming requires the assemblage of disparate entities into a collective. It offers a way to think through the relationship between individuals of different biological classifications: bringing together not only the organic and the inorganic, but also members of different species, orders and kingdoms. In this way their model of becoming is based on alliance rather than filiation or descent. 'If evolution includes any veritable becomings', Deleuze and Guattari write, 'it is in the domain of *symbioses* that bring into play beings of totally different scales and kingdoms, with no possible filiation' (2004: 263; emphasis in original). On one level this resonates with the concept of symbiosis as it is deployed in the work of Lynn Margulis (1998) in that it examines the way that things become other through their relation to

entities that are different. This is in contrast to the common notion of evolution as occurring through the violent struggle for survival whereby those species less fit to their environment are less likely to survive and pass on their genes. However, Deleuze and Guattari distance their idea of becoming from evolution. This concept is not a synonym for evolution because of its preference for alliance. Becoming does not necessarily move in a linier or progressive direction; it is, rather, creative and unpredictable. For these reasons they prefer the term 'involution' to evolution (2004: 263).

The privileging of alliance over filiation also resonates with Donna Haraway's work on the co-evolution of 'companion species'. This is particularly interesting since Haraway remains critical of Deleuze and Guattari's work, and sets her concept of 'becoming with' at odds with their notion of becoming-animal (2008: 27).[3] She is angry at the romanticized notion of the animal that she feels exists in their work at the expense of ordinary animals, and, in particular, family pets (2008: 29). This critique of Deleuze and Guattari is unsurprising as both of Haraway's books on this topic, *The Companion Species Manifesto,* and *When Species Meet*, contrast the relationship between individuals to that between species. In her work, Haraway vacillates between the situated companion animal, a specific domestic animal such as her dog Cayenne Pepper, and a companion species such as the domestic dog, with her particular interest being Cayenne Pepper's breed, the Australian Shepherd. In *The Companion Species Manifesto* she writes: '"Companion species" is a bigger and more heterogeneous category than companion animal, not just because one must include such organic beings as rice, bees, tulips, and intestinal flora, all of whom make life for humans what it is – and vice versa' (2003: 15). Companion species is a particularly useful notion when examining a domesticated plant because it provides a way to approach this domestication without falling back on the problematic configuration of humans as agents and nature as a passive substance awaiting human intervention. Instead, agriculture and domestication is shown to involve multiple actors: human and plant, and other nonhuman entities.

Deleuze and Guattari do not elaborate on the becoming-plant to the extent that they do the becoming-animal. In fact, in the tenth plateau, references to plants pale in comparison to the sheer volume of references to animals. However, the figure of the becoming-animal gives us some clues as to what would constitute the becoming-plant. Alain Beaulieu, drawing on Deleuze's *Abécédaire* interview, suggests that one of the most important aspects of Deleuze's work on animals is that he privileges

an antihumanist framework and insists that we should cultivate relationships with other animals in animal rather than human terms. This avoids casting the animal as a member of the Oedipal family unit (2011: 70). Deleuze and Guattari, he writes, 'are looking for a way to radically de-hierarchize the relationships between the realms of the living' (2011: 85). The nonhuman becoming that becoming-plant requires stages a similar challenge to the established hierarchy of the human and the nonhuman. Becoming-plant also needs to be envisaged beyond our anthropomorphic understanding of plant life. As Marder's work has suggested, plant being is fundamentally different in ontological terms. Becoming-plant evokes a nonhuman becoming which undermines the stability of the subject, and also creates lines of flight away from the human. In this way Deleuze and Guattari resonate with Irigaray, who, in *Elemental Passions*, also evokes the de-subjectification that becoming-plant enables: 'How can I abandon my love of the vegetal?' she asks, 'Would you become a plant? Or are you too attached to yourself to become anything at all?' (1992: 33). To extrapolate from this, becoming-plant would be a vegetal becoming which would take us away from the conventional understanding of sentience, to new forms of relation and growth.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, there are several direct references to becoming-plant and in particular to becoming-grass. Because of their capacity to grow in between things, to rupture order, and to appear in cracks, grasses and weeds have a special place in this text. They quote Henry Miller on grass: 'Grass only exists between the great non-cultivated spaces. It fills in the voids. *It grows between – among the other things*. The flower is beautiful, the cabbage is useful, the poppy makes you crazy. But the grass is overflowing, it is a lesson in morality' (Miller quoted in Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 30; emphasis in original). In addition to the morality that Miller evokes, in which he frames positively the persistent growth of grass and its capacity to excessively fill vacant spaces without cultivation, becoming-plant has political ramifications. Grass is used as a prime example, not only of the rhizome structure but also the nomad and the minoritarian. What is common to all becomings is that they function to undermine the position of privilege that is occupied by the majority: 'white, male, adult, "rational," etc., in short, the average European, the subject of enunciation' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 322). Becoming entails undermining the macro structures of coherence that determine the subject of liberal humanism through processes of de-subjectification. From this, it would seem that the project of becoming-minoritarian was human-focused, and that it ignored the capacity for

nonhuman entities to become other. However, we need to remember that liberal humanism is only one macro structure which will eventually be overcome and give rise to other structures of meaning and value. For example, within this particular system, becoming-woman exists rather than becoming-man because women hold a subordinated place within patriarchy, not because of a particular essence that could be attributed to all women. There can be no becoming-man because this figure is majoritarian within this particular social system. Similarly, becoming-animal mounts a challenge to the anthropocentrism of Western metaphysics, which privileges the human in structures of meaning and value. Because humans are already animals, and as such becoming-animal is only an alliance across species, becoming-plant, which is after all a coalition across kingdoms, is potentially more radical.

In Deleuze and Guattari's figuration of ecology, identity gives way to assemblages. Their notion of interkingdoms suggests the complexity of interspecies relationships. Despite Haraway's critical attitude toward Deleuze and Guattari, they share a common interest in the project of challenging human exceptionalism and the categories on which it rests: self/other, human/animal, human/nonhuman. In this way they all work to undermine the fiction that the human is bounded and coherent and suggest a much closer proximity to otherness than we might imagine.[4] For Deleuze and Guattari, the notion of interkingdoms enables them to acknowledge the way that beings of different taxonomical classifications exist in structures of relation. They describe these in terms of 'unnatural participation', writing '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' (2004: 285). As examples they list the grouping of the truffle, tree, fly and pig (2004: 267), which are brought together in truffle harvesting. Or we could recall their famous example of the wasp and the orchid in which the orchid, displaying similar characteristics to female wasps, lures the male wasp to move from flower to flower, attempting copulation. Through this process pollen is inadvertently transferred between orchids in a wasp/orchid orgy. Deleuze and Guattari stress that the orchid is not simply imitating the wasp. Instead they describe this as 'a becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp' (2004: 11). This 'unnatural participation' becomes a wasp/orchid assemblage in which their respective bodies find new functions – the wasp as a vehicle for the pollination of the orchid and the orchid as facilitator of the sexual activity of the wasp. In this example the sum becomes more than its parts and something new is produced (notably in a reproductive sense

through the transfer of pollen and the fertilization of the plant). This is a wholly nonhuman, trans-kingdom becoming in which importance is placed on the new functions that the assemblage gives rise to rather than the identity of the actors involved. Deleuze and Guattari describe the dynamic assemblages formed by the wasp and the orchid in terms of deterritorialization, which maps the way that the assemblage moves. The orchid finds a new function by deterritorializing into the image of the female wasp. The male wasp's (mis)recognition of the orchid as wasp stages a reterritorialization, but the wasp itself is simultaneously deterritorialized in becoming a reproductive organ. The orchid is reterritorialized by the wasp when it transfers its pollen (2004: 11).

Becoming-corn

Humans also participate in interspecies relationships that replicate the structure of the wasp and the orchid. One such example is the significant relationship between humans and the plant variously know as *Zea mays*, maize or corn. This is a particularly interesting plant for analysis because it is a symbol of US industrial agriculture more broadly. The human/corn interface, which is illustrative of the structures of interdependence that humans and plants share more broadly, can be envisaged in relation to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of interkingdoms and the 'unnatural participations' central to the ecology present in *A Thousand Plateaus*. As species, corn and humans have coevolved into a situation of significant mutual dependence. Corn is the third biggest cereal crop in the world (behind rice and wheat) and the most widely grown (FAO 2003: 7). It is a particularly important crop not only for North America but also for Latin America, Europe and sub-Saharan Africa where it is a staple food. The domestication of corn reveals that it is an adaptable and versatile plant: it grows in variety of climates, it requires less water to photosynthesize than most plants, and it is particularly easy to hybridize. The domestication of corn and its movement throughout the world is intimately tied to the history of human conflict, settlement and diaspora. It was the Native American people who, having a long and established relationship with corn, taught the European settlers how it was grown. This, in turn, provided the settlers with an efficient food source that enabled them to increase their population and push back the frontier. Because corn could be dried, it was an important market commodity. It was used as a currency to purchase the slaves that were brought to the New World from Africa and was also one of the food sources that enabled their transportation. These trade routes, in turn,

brought corn to the Old World, beginning its own process of conquest and colonization (Pollan 2011: 26; Warman 2003).

However, while corn has played an important role in human history and the development of modern industrial food production, corn has come to rely on humans to facilitate its propagation (Boutard 2012: 5). Corn no longer exists in the wild but only as a hybridized cereal crop. Through domestication corn has developed a structural problem. While the ancestor of corn, a grass called teosinte, had small cobs that would shatter into individual kernels, enabling them to reproduce, modern corn ripens in a leaf sheaf, which wraps itself tightly around these precious kernels. If the whole corncob was to find its way into the ground, the density of the kernels would produce such overcrowded plants that they would struggle to survive (Fussell 2004: 20–21). The species co-dependence that is illustrated here is far from unique – we only need to think of the special role that bees play in the pollination of a variety of plants. This trans-species relationship replicates the deterritorializing courtship of the wasp and the orchid. In this situation the corn deterritorializes into an industrial product, and the human reterritorializes it through its involvement in its reproduction and cultivation.

Corn provides a literalization of the becoming-plant that Deleuze and Guattari evoke. In *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, Pollan describes how the Mexican descendants of the Mayan people refer to themselves as 'corn people' (2011: 19) because of the significant place of corn in their lives. They mean this literally: corn is such a substantial part of their diets that it can be detected in the carbon profile of human cells. Corn is particularly easy to detect at a cellular level because unlike most plants, corn makes four rather than three carbon atoms during photosynthesis (2011: 21). This enables corn to be extremely efficient at energy production and storage. Being a greedy photosynthesizer, corn takes in more C13 isotopes than other plants. Pollan argues that due to the prevalence of corn in their diet, contemporary North Americans can now also be thought of as 'corn people' in a literal and embodied sense. This is largely due to two factors: the inclusion of high-fructose corn syrup in a variety of processed foods, and the use of corn as animal feed in meat production. He quotes Todd Dawson, a biologist from Berkeley, who suggests that when considering the isotope ratios in the cells of North Americans they 'look like corn chips with legs' (quoted in Pollan 2011: 23). Similarly, in her cultural history of corn, the food writer Betty Fussell describes the prevalence of corn in the American diet, writing that her 'very flesh was compacted of corn' (2004: 7). The strange 'becoming-corn' which this stages is one in which the presence of corn isotopes in

human cells undermines greatly the notion that the human is an impermeable structure. Similarly, it destabilizes the idea of the ontological abyss between humans and plants. While corn certainly demonstrates the old adage that 'you are what you eat', the human encounter with corn goes beyond ingestion. In Pollan's book he describes a visit to the supermarket where corn exists not only in processed food but also in the wax that coats the fresh produce, the plastics used for packaging, and the building materials used in the construction of the building itself, not to mention its role in the production of meat and the transportation of commodities (2011: 15–19).

The human/corn interface is an excellent example of what Deleuze and Guattari mean when they talk about becoming and the assemblages of different entities that it requires. Thinking through the human/corn assemblage brings to light the multiple actors (human and nonhuman) that are involved not just in corn propagation and growth but also in the machinery of the industrial food chain. Therefore, Deleuze and Guattari could offer us new ways to think through the complex set of relations, processes, and interests at work in industrial agriculture. Deleuze and Guattari offer rich resources for thinking through how the human is implicated in structures of relation with plant life. In *A Thousand Plateaus* they undermine the systems and structures of human privilege and offer a trenchant critique of anthropocentrism. They also break down the distinctions between nature and artifice, subject and object, and, of course, human and nonhuman. This enables us to engage with plants in a way that acknowledges that they too are actors in human/plant assemblages not just a resource for human ends.

The example of corn reminds us of the intimate nature of our relationship with plants, and more broadly with the nonhuman. Corn makes us attentive to the ways that the nonhuman subsists in the human, moves through the human, and requires that we rethink the human/nonhuman opposition. This reminds us that humans are not, and never were, an isolated species but are involved in structures of relation that dramatically compromise the notion of human autonomy. Anna Tsing suggests that we fail to see the necessity of human interdependence with other species because of our belief in human exceptionalism and the accompanying framing of the relationship of humans and nature in terms of control and impact (2012: 144). In fact, Tsing emphasizes that these interspecies relationships are constitutive of the human. She remarks: '*Human nature is an interspecies relationship*' (2012: 144, emphasis in original). The intimate role of humans in corn reproduction stages a dramatic interface in which the plant is literally able to exist

through a human/corn assemblage. What Deleuze and Guattari offer is a way to think about this as a complex structure beyond conventional understandings of agriculture in which humans control plants to their own ends.

We see this impetus to move beyond the human perspective, for example, in Pollan's work when he inverts the structure of domination in the relationship between humans and corn. In his 'plant's-eye view'[5], it was edible grasses such as corn that made humans cut down the forests so that they would have more space to grow (2003: xix). '[A]griculture', he writes, is 'something the grasses did to people as a way to conquer the trees' (2003: xx). Here he reverses the traditional assumption that human occupy the subject position while plants exist as mere objects for their manipulation, affording to plants the subject position and allowing for nonhuman agency. We see this in his repeated reference to corn as a 'coloniser' (2011: 119) and to its 'conquest' (2011: 15). When Pollan attributed to corn the subject position he does so by casting it in human terms. This is evident in his subheadings such as 'Corn Walking' (2011: 19) and 'Married to Man' (2011: 26), and in anthropomorphic descriptions of corn growing 'shoulder to shoulder' (2011: 30) and 'uniform as soldiers' (2011: 30). Pollan also describes the corn's occupation of space in terms of human living arrangements when he writes 'modern hybrids can tolerate the equivalent of city life, growing amid the multitudes without succumbing to urban stress' (2011: 30).

Although placing the human in the context of a more-than-human world, Pollan's work, like Marder's, necessarily restabilizes on the place and perspective of the human. Pollan purportedly offers a 'plant's eye view of the world', but actually focuses entirely on the place of plants in human systems of agriculture and domestic cultivation, told largely (and necessarily) from a human perspective. Corn is only afforded the subject position when it is in its living plant form. Once it is harvested and processed, the narrative positions corn as an object in the machinery of industrial agriculture, referring to the 'corn river' at the mill (2011: 86). This anthropocentrism is particularly pronounced in the case of corn, perhaps because it is humanoid in height and structure. The impact of this on the human imagination can be seen in dramatic terms when Garrison Wilkes, a botanist quoted by Fussell, evokes the humanoid qualities of the corn plant: 'When you're working with a wheat plant, who cares? But when you're dealing with a corn plant, it's different. It's of human height, and you can look it in the eye. It's one on one' (Wilkes quoted in Fussell 2004: 21).

Conclusion

As Marder's *Plant Thinking* illustrates, there is much at stake in recent debates about plants. In particular, taking plants seriously in philosophy contributes to the growing critique of liberal humanism and the paradigm shift to the post-human and post-humanities. Deleuze and Guattari do indeed offer a vegetal philosophy in their privileging of the rhizome as the model for thought. Their work holds rich resources for the growing body of interdisciplinary work on vegetal life. However, Marder's ethical agenda to overcome the human instrumentalization of plant life is more difficult to realize. While there is certainty scope to change the way that plants are treated so that their existence is not reduced to exploitation for human needs, the reorientation of the debate in the philosophical arena is also a necessary reorientation to the human. Deleuze and Guattari, like Marder, want to overcome the systems of meaning and value that privilege the human; however, all of their work, and this chapter itself, dwells on the meaning of plants for *our* philosophies. Despite this central irony that work on the nonhuman must always confront, there is value in thinking about plants in more complex ways. We are, after all, yet to see what taking plants seriously will do to our philosophies.

Notes

1. Marder's work can be situated in relation to other recent publications concerned with re-thinking plant life in a range of disciplines such as Matthew Hall's *Plants as Persons: A Philosophical Botany* (2011), John C. Ryan's *Green Sense: The Aesthetics of Plants, Place and Language* (2012), Eduardo Kohn's *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human* (2013) and Randy Laist's edited collection *Plants and Literature: Essays in Critical Plant Studies* (2013) (the first in Rodopi's new 'Critical Plant Studies: Philosophy, Literature, Culture' series) and also the work of Karen L. F Houle (2011) and Anna Tsing (2012).
2. See also the work of Daniel Chamovitz (2012) and Damon Young (2012).
3. For an extended discussion of Haraway in relation to Deleuze see Ronald Bogue's piece in this collection.
4. For example, Haraway evokes the presence of otherness within the human body itself highlighting the fact that the human assemblage resides only ten percent in the genome of the cells in the human body, leaving 90 percent to 'the genomes of bacteria, fungi, protists, and such, some of which play in a symphony necessary to me being alive at all, and some which are hitching a ride and doing the rest of me, of us, no harm' (2008: 3–4). For Haraway the human is always a compromised category, which is besieged by nonhuman

others. Her version of the human is situated in messy entanglements of co-evolution.

5. While this is Pollan's stated intention in *The Botany of Desire*, this can be understood as the overarching project of much of his work.

Works cited

Beaulieu, Alain (2011) 'The Status of Animality in Deleuze's Thought', *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* 9(1–2): 69–88.

Boutard, Anthony (2012) *Beautiful Corn: America's Original Grain from Seed to Plate* (Gabriola Island: New Society Publishers).

Chamovitz, Daniel (2012) *What a Plant Knows: A Field guide to the Senses* (New York: Scientific American/Farrar, Straus and Giroux).

Deleuze, Gilles (1994) *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia UP).

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari (2004) *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (London and New York: Continuum).

Derrida, Jacques (2008) *The Animal That Therefore I Am,* trans. David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press).

Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) (2003) 'Maize: Post-harvest Operations', http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/inpho/docs/Post_Harvest_Compendium_-_MAIZE.pdf, date accessed June 4, 2014.

Francione, Gary and Michael Marder (2013) 'Michael Marder and Gary Francione Debate Plant Ethics', http://www.cup.columbia.edu/static/marder-francione-debate, date accessed October 2, 2013.

Fussell, Betty (2004) *The Story of Corn* (Albuquerque: New Mexico University Press).

Hall, Matthew (2011) *Plants as Persons: A Philosophical Botany* (Albany: SUNY).

Haraway, Donna (2003) *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press).

—— (2008) *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis and London: Minnesota University Press).

Houle, Karen (2011) 'Animal, Vegetable, Mineral: Ethics as Extension or Becoming? The Case of Becoming Plant', *Journal of Critical Animal Studies* 9(1–2), 89–115.

Irigaray, Luce (1992) *Elemental Passions,* trans. Joanne Collie and Judith Still (London: Athlone).

Kohn, Eduardo (2013) *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human* (Berkeley, LA and London: California University Press).

Laist, Randy (2013) *Plants in Literature: Essays in Critical Plant Studies* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi).

Marder, Michael (2013) *Plant-Thinking: A Philosophy of Vegetal Life* (New York: Columbia University Press).

Margulis, Lynn (1998) *Symbiotic Planet: A New Look at Evolution* (New York: Basic Books).

Pollan, Michael (2011) *The Omnivore's Dilemma: The Search for the Perfect Meal in a Fast-Food World* (London: Bloomsbury).

—— (2003) *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World* (London: Bloomsbury).

—— (1991) *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education* (New York: Grove).
Ryan, John C. (2012) *Green Sense: The Aesthetic of Plants, Place and Language* (Oxford: TrueHeart).
Singer, Peter (2009) *Animal Liberation: The Definitive Classic of the Animal Movement*, Updated edn. (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics).
Swiss Federal Ethics Committee on Non-Human Biotechnology (2008) 'The Dignity of Living Beings with Regard to Plants', http://www.ekah.admin.ch/fileadmin/ekah-dateien/dokumentation/publikationen/e-Broschure-Wurde-Pflanze-2008.pdf, date accessed May 27, 2014.
Tsing, Anna (2012) 'Unruly Edges: Mushrooms as Companion Species', *Environmental Humanities* 1: 141–154.
Von Uexküll, Jacob (2010) *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans: with a Theory of Meaning*, Trans. Joseph D. O'Neil (Minneapolis and London: Minnesota University Press).
Warman, Arturo (2003) *Corn and Capitalism: How a Botanical Bastard Grew to Global Dominance*, trans. Nancy L. Westrate (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press).
Young, Damon (2012) *Philosophy in the Garden* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing).

11

Mechanosphere: Man, Earth, Capital

Arun Saldanha

This chapter will elaborate on a concept mentioned a few times in *A Thousand Plateaus*, mechanosphere, which will be refashioned in order to obtain a politics worthy of the Anthropocene. Deleuze and Guattari did not know the extent to which global warming and resource depletion would come to dominate the already crisis-ridden global economic and geopolitical system. In Deleuze and Guattari's geophilosophy, following Nietzsche, any nonhumanist return to body, matter, life, or things has to contend with the disruptive and uncontainable powers of the planet. More concretely, following Marx, the immense capacity of capital to de- and reterritorialize almost everything cannot be absent from any critical mapping of the predicament of the human (and most other) species at the start of the twenty-first century. As biogeochemistry, as pioneered by Vladimir Vernadsky and James Lovelock, makes inroads into the humanities and the global public sphere, geophilosophy provides the best conceptual framework for researching the capitalist catastrophes coming our way. In the place of the lingering ideological notion of man, who rearranged earth for exploitation along colonial and patriarchal lines, mechanosphere is a newly materialist concept for becoming-revolutionary in a heterodox Marxist sense. The earth is no objective realm to be known and mastered, but has always imperiled human production as much as it has subtended it.

Anthropocenic beginnings

The term 'biosphere' was introduced by Austrian geologist Edward Suess around 1875 to distinguish the stratum of life from the atmosphere and the lithosphere. It was the Russian geochemist Vladimir Vernadsky, however, who consolidated the concept in his 1926 book

The Biosphere (1998). Vernadsky introduces a new kind of thinking about life, which stresses its globe-like and thermodynamic physicality, greatly expanding on what Darwin and Lyell had written about evolutionary and geological process. On Vernadsky's view, the history of the earth has been profoundly affected by that of life. Life is not just an entanglement of genetic lines but a planet-spanning system, one immense singular spherical assemblage of flowing matter and energy. As system, life derives its energy almost exclusively from the heat and light of the sun, its nutrients from surrounding lithospheric and hydrospheric strata, and its oxygen and other gases from the surrounding atmosphere. Photosynthesis makes it possible for animals to breathe. Dead matter flows back into the other earthly spheres and sediments as soil, chalk, coal and petroleum.

Vernadsky's conceptualization of the biosphere is widely celebrated as a precursor to both Gaia theory, as propounded from the 1970s by James Lovelock (2000) and Lynn Margulis (1998) and the more mainstream earth systems science more recently. He is mentioned as such in the seminal statement on the Anthropocene (Crutzen and Stoermer 2000: 17). A key difference between Vernadsky's biosphere and the Anthropocene, however, is the latter's direct moral purchase. Greenhouse gases at a two-million-year high, a sixth mass extinction, the end of fossil fuel and rare metal ores and rain forests, nuclear waste, ocean acidification, building sprees, rising seas, a haywire nitrogen cycle: it is impossible to think or study earth history now without granting humans a determining role in the material economy of the planet's crust. The Anthropocene concept takes a step further than Vernadsky, therefore: another step away from mechanistic epistemology and detached science. Not only does the tightly interconnected web of living things always already affect the other earthly strata, but one species has wrought unprecedented havoc in an unprecedentedly short time, inaugurating a new geological epoch in a matter of centuries and perfectly capable of extinguishing itself along with most other species.

How does philosophy respond to this situation? As concept and reality the Anthropocene triggers another Copernican turn: the world revolves around us, even depends on us, only not the way Kant thought (see Clark 2011). Human geological agency is discovered and simultaneously feared, as the earthly spheres are not amenable to intentional rectification in any straightforward sense. The age of man is also the age of realizing that the nonhuman encroaches the human to such an extent it can wipe out humans as quickly as they emerged as the thinking species, as the self-appointed gardeners and engineers of earth, which

has after all seen 99.99% of species appear and perish over 3.5 billion years. With earth temperatures plausibly the highest in 30 million years this century (in the case of a +5ºC scenario), any smart extraterrestrial observer would consider humans done for. The harsh irony of global warming, well known to environmentalists (McKibben 1989), is that it exposes the immensity of human interference in 'nature' far too late to even fathom some pre-human equilibrium. In fact, even with global warming and the geopolitical impasse in doing something about it more visible every year, the primary driver is still barely acknowledged: the dominant economic system's relentless imperative to exploit, accumulate and consume.

After the Second World War and after Hiroshima, Fairfield Osborn in *Our Plundered Planet* (1948) was one of the first to decry the dangers of man's geological forcefulness (although better known pioneering environmental theorists, Rachel Carson and Aldo Leopold had a less geological perspective). In contrast to Osborn's Malthusian and eugenic line, the idea of an earth system became more mystical in the writings of the French Jesuit paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Following in the footsteps of vitalist thinkers popular in early twentieth-century Europe – such as Henri Bergson – Teilhard (1964: 149ff) optimistically suggested there is a *noosphere* (*noösphère*), the stratum of mind (*nous*), which enables our species to usher earth history into a new and final phase of perfection. Teilhard believed biosphere and noosphere proved the whole universe grows towards an 'Omega point' of maximum complexity and self-transparency. This marriage of Christian spirituality and scientific materialism heralded a still-continuing series of more or less wacky futurological hypotheses about cosmic evolution. The proximity of earth systems science to eschatological concerns from both Malthusian and mystical corners points to the inexorability of a fundamental question: what should *anthropos* do with this Anthropocene he begot?

The collaborative work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari provides in many ways the best coordinates for formulating a philosophical rejoinder to the catastrophic reality that is the age of man. Uniquely, their work follows in the footsteps of vitalist philosophies such as Bergson's and Teilhard's in order to critique the death-bound tendencies of capitalism. Instead, many contemporary approaches to the traversing of the human by the nonhuman have come from a broadly phenomenological tradition running from Kant, who first posed the question of phenomena, as well as the related question 'What is man?', in light of the inherent limits to knowing (see Kant 1992: 538),

through Heidegger and Derrida, who dissected Kant's anthropocentrism and Husserlian phenomenology by showing their continuing reliance on the category of 'man', a presumed essence of humanity. A growing number of environmental and posthumanist thinkers build on Heidegger's keen sense of worldliness and the deconstruction of the man/nature dyad (see for example Foltz 1995; McWorther and Stenstad 2009; Wolfe 2009). Graham Harman's original reconstruction (2009) of the Heideggerian return to the ancient problem of being has been gaining a substantial following under the flag of object-oriented ontology (OOO), which also has affinities with the equally fashionable but very different anti-Kantian projects of Bruno Latour (1993) and Quentin Meillassoux (2008).

While the increase in theoretical de-centerings of man is to be welcomed, these philosophies offer little to *analyze* the uneven material imbrication of social formations in the earth. Mostly these posthumanisms are piously quiet on matters political and ideological. Typically they examine human-size contrivances, organisms and places, instead of the constantly evolving, intricately stratified, uncannily *intimate* biosphere (what is man if his guts alone contain 100 trillion microorganisms? See Margulis 1998; see also Fortey 2005). I would like to suggest the category of the post- or nonhuman, even the critique of humanism, is secondary to an affirmation of, a *staying true* to, the earth qua ancient capricious planet. Circumventing both scientific reductionism and New Age mysticism, Deleuze and Guattari devise a machinic approach to render philosophy adequate to the creative-destructive potentiality of a tightly interconnected globality in which human will-to-power is always-already ensnared, like nutrients in a rhizome: 'the Mechanosphere, or rhizosphere' (1987: 74). The concept of mechanosphere shall be focused on as exemplary for a philosophical truth of, from and for the earth. And for an Anthropocenic politics, I will argue that understanding the inhuman and psychotic agency of capital is central.

Capital

Capitalism and Schizophrenia develops a non-linear framework of three interacting modes of production, savage, despotic and capitalist, by virtue of which actual geosocial formations cohere. Deleuze and Guattari hold that in any socius it is the most deterritorialized and deterritorializing vector that matters most. For archaic empires, that is writing. For primitive tribes, the vector of deterritorialization is what *Anti-Oedipus* calls the earth, the movements of animals, plants and their

spirits. For capitalism, obviously, it is capital. Imperial despotism and primitive magic are not stages superseded in a progressive movement towards capitalism (or communism, for that matter), but are retained and given new functions. Guattari speaks of *Integrated* World Capitalism (IWC) because capital requires formations such as spirituality, erogenous zones, nation-states, the countryside, racial identities and bureaucracy, which are themselves not exclusively capitalist but must be recoded for wage-labor to take place. This is why he says (2009: 244) capital is the 'integral', in the mathematical sense, of power formations.

As theorized in the ecosocialist literature, pollution, scarcity, extreme weather and war are inevitable effects of the logic of capital itself (Foster 2000). Ecosocialism does not, however, have a clear sense of how the biosphere's material and energetic flows are integrated into accumulation, owing to a nebulously dialectical concept of 'nature'. Capitalism is a geography. Unproductive surpluses have to be canalized and fixed into particular regions, cities and routes, for which violence is never shunned. The Anthropocene is at basis the result of *pure quantitative excess* frantically, addictively, searching for a sinkhole. Once manufacturing is exhausted, construction, real estate and affiliated financial instruments become indispensable outlets, as do knowledge production and entertainment. When physical landscapes cannot suck up any more investments, money makes *itself* productive: Amsterdam, Manhattan, Hong Kong, Dubai, Las Vegas. Since the early 1970s the mind-boggling ascendency of finance – derivatives were worth some 600 trillion dollars just before the 2008 crash – has been the primary pseudo-solution of crises in production, energy and employment. To a large extent the Anthropocene is but the 'landscapification' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 181ff) of the crazy greedy feedback loop that is capital. There is preciously little rationality involved here.

What David Harvey calls the 'capital surplus absorption problem' (2011: 26) can be understood as a problem in the sense of Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* (1994), a virtual tension permeating a system to which actual arrangements are the developing answer. It is seldom noted that Deleuze follows Althusser (2006) in defending Marx's often-misunderstood determination 'in the last instance' of society by economic practices. 'In all rigour, there are only economic social problems, even though the solutions may be juridical, political or ideological, and the problems may be expressed in these fields of resolvability', which 'is why "the economic" is never given properly speaking, but rather designates a differential virtuality to be interpreted' (Deleuze 1994: 186). Social formations are defined by their 'structure', a set of disparities

of ownership and power, which is merely one particular solution to the conundrum of too much fluidity. Ideological practices then hide the absurdity of the system's fundamental impetus. Deleuze hints at the equally misunderstood concept of 'false consciousness' in Georg Lukács (1971: 50ff): 'While it is in the nature of consciousness to be false, problems by their nature escape consciousness' (1994: 208).

In contradistinction to the tradition of so-called cultural Marxism since Lukács, Gramsci and the Frankfurt School, Deleuze and Guattari's *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project can be seen as a rejoinder to Althusser's 'return to' Marx: a return, that is, to the philosophical conceptualization of capital (see Deleuze and Guattari 1977: 230). However, under the influence of Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari also stress that capitalism necessarily involves chimera and whim and is heavily constrained by the moralizing impositions of debt and the infantilizing and segregating pleasures of consumption. Capitalism is astoundingly stupid. Economic behavior follows from bovine or lupine will-to-power, not selfish calculation. Money penetrates, dismantles, conjoins, etherealizes all other flows and meanings so it can keep thriving. Money x yields more money $x + dx$, where d comes from the exploitation of surplus value as obscured source of profit. Deleuze and Guattari (1977: 228) argue the quasi-biblical 'filiative' retroaction of capital (money 'begets' more money, Marx's M–M', 1959: 146ff) has to be rethought as a 'surplus value of flux'. Capital's self-propelling machinic fluidity is axiomatic in the literal mathematical sense, requiring no proof yet enabling endless further formal elaboration.

Previous power structures required ideological codings specific to local regimes. By contrast, capitalism's plane of operation encompasses, or tends to encompass, the entire biosphere, lithosphere – and even extraterrestrial space. Capital's very essence is to deterritorialize, because it has from its beginnings consisted of the conjunction of two deterritorialized and quantifiable flows.

> Capitalism is in fact born of the encounter of two sorts of flows: the decoded flow of production in the form of money-capital, and the decoded flow of labor in the form of the 'free worker'. Hence, unlike previous social machines, the capitalist machine is incapable of providing a code that will apply to the whole of the social field. By substituting money for the very notion of a code, it has created an axiomatic of abstract quantities that keeps moving further and further in the direction of the deterritorialization of the socius. (Deleuze and Guattari 1977: 33)

Capital was fought for in the contingent conditions of late-feudal Europe and has had to be violently imposed on population after population ever since (through what Marx calls primitive accumulation). As Marx belabors, once accumulation consolidated itself on the basis of appropriating surplus value from the laboring body, it could start retroactively enhancing its own conditions of possibility. Capital never succeeds in fully controlling what it capitalizes on, however, which is precisely why it is so mobile, always running behind what it unleashes.

Capitalism proper requires that a certain desire for transcendence and innovation inhabit the conjunction of capital and labor flows. Closely following Marx and world-systems theory, Deleuze and Guattari argue the flows of commodities, technology, industry, cash and armies in China and India, or the Roman Empire long ago, were never allowed 'to stream together' (1987: 452). Capitalism emerges where and when labor is deterritorialized from serfdom and village, and capital from land and market squares, and these two flows are conjugated through the equivalence granted by a uniform system of prices (including wages) and exchange rates. The machinic entangling of raw materials, money, tools, invention and labor-power in the farms and factories of late-eighteenth-century Lancashire is the archetypical conjugation of Deleuze and Guattari's theory of flows. *Conjugation is what flow aims at.* The new frenetic and lucrative form of exploitation of industrial manufacturing subsequently spread by conjugating and deterritorializing one commodity circuit after another, so that Marx and Engels (2002: 223) would soon be awed by a 'world market'.

Unlike the social morphologies of antiquity and feudalism, capitalism strives to absorb, overcode and subsume every population and loyalty on earth. Now 'we can depict an enormous, so-called stateless, monetary mass that circulates through foreign exchange and across borders, eluding control by the States, forming a multinational ecumenical organization, constituting a de facto supranational power untouched by governmental decisions' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 453). While Harvey (2011: 184ff) stresses the earth's finite capacity to soak up monetary hyperfluidity and the many contradictions within capital itself, Deleuze and Guattari insist on the quasi-automatic ways capital succeeds in overcoming any setbacks. In fact, in retrospect human history appears to have always tended towards the insane deterritorialization and wanton expenditure that is capitalism. 'If capitalism is the exterior limit of all societies, this is because capitalism for its part has no exterior limit, but only an interior limit that is capital itself and that it does not encounter, but reproduces by always displacing it' (1977: 230–231). Or again: 'Capitalism is

indeed an axiomatic, because it has no laws but immanent ones ... capitalism confronts its own limits and simultaneously displaces them, setting them down again farther along' (1987: 463). Against the utopian idea that capital's contradictions will eventually impair it, Deleuze and Guattari remind us that Marx himself said that axioms thrive in war and crisis. Likewise, Naomi Klein (2014) has been showing how capitalism's disasters are themselves very nice business opportunities (think of 'sustainable development' and 'corporate ethics'). Most proposed solutions to climate change involve technological and technocratic fixes based on the same myopic premises which brought earth systems into disarray in the first place.

For Naomi Klein, ecosocialists and the burgeoning climate justice movement (as it would have been for Deleuze and Guattari), climate change is the most pertinent political problem ever to confront humanity. The existential choice is between extinction under capital or rebuilding solidarity under something else. The way out of a growth-machine ceaselessly overcoming its own limits is extremely tough, but an obvious place to start thinking afresh is the earth itself.

The meaning of the earth

Geophilosophy is the name Deleuze gives, at the end of his life, to the thought of thought as itself nonhuman, that is, precariously emergent from the material world. Geophilosophy can be, and is often, considered the name for Deleuze's peculiar materialism. It harks back to Greek mythologies around autochthony, Kant's immanence and Nietzsche's antihumanism, even as it opposes Heidegger who also construed a philosophy of the earth inspired by these three predecessors.

The earth continuously ungrounds itself, and this vortex is what thinking must delicately surf. Geophilosophy abhors the ideology of *Blut und Boden*, soaked in resentment, self-righteousness and negativity. In this regard Heidegger is the most controversial and embarrassing exemplification of how the earth is misapprehended in post-religious thought, all the more fascinating for partially following Nietzsche (see Vycinas 1961). Heidegger's initially promising ungrounding becomes immediately reterritorialized, however implicitly, onto racial destiny. Heidegger orients thought to 'the wrong people, earth, and blood', as Deleuze and Guattari put it. 'For the race summoned forth by art or philosophy is not the one that claims to be pure but rather the oppressed, bastard, lower, anarchical, nomadic, and irremediably minor race' (1994: 109). A return to immanence and ontology must avoid reintroducing even the slightest

desire for origins and boundedness. *Heimat*, community, Mother Earth, ecopoetics and the phenomenological exultation of the ordinary and the fleshy merely evince a peculiarly European nostalgia for the sacred, for transcendence. If it is consistent, atheism has to break with a strong tendency in sedentary civilization to look for the elusive authenticity of humanness. For Deleuze as for Zarathustra, thinking is becoming-unhinged, becoming-animal in dangerous contact with atmospheric, solar and gravitational forces: the thinker as eagle. 'And as strong winds will we live above them, neighbours to the eagles, neighbours to the snow, neighbours to the sun: thus live the strong winds' (Nietzsche 1930: 106, 'The rabble'). Heidegger is not nostalgic for *Gemeinschaft* in an immediately fascist way, of course, but he heeds little of Nietzsche's attacks on herd mentality.

For politics, Nietzsche has to be filtered through Marx and Kant (see Deleuze 1983: 89ff). From its Athenian origins critical thinking has been fraternal and universalizing – even Descartes thinks in order to write, not simply to be. Thinking necessarily strives to pry open its own geohistorical conditions of possibility. Such a returning to the earth yields not a stronger territory but deterritorialization, not stronger individuals but a revolutionary becoming. 'Revolution is absolute deterritorialization even to the point where this calls for a new earth, a new people' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 101). Despite inventing geophilosophy, Nietzsche's hatred of democracy stands in the way of seizing the creative power of thinking. Philosophy is immanent insofar that it plugs into collective movements to create new worlds. But the global public sphere, ruled by opinion, factoid and emotion intrinsically suppresses thinking (see Flaxman 2012). Despite or rather thanks to its social-democratic adjustments and fine rhetoric of human rights, IWC coheres as 'world' axiomatically blocking out the imagination of an entirely different system. Hence the slogan of the World Social Forum, 'Another world is possible'.

Capital deterritorializes brains and language only relatively, that is, to reterritorialize them onto the profit motive. Communication consists almost entirely of processable data and regurgitated perspectives. Polls, lobby machines, talk shows, ads and elections are effective insofar as they ward off the discovery of the machinic and unconscious nature of capital, insofar as they repress a belief in the world's reconstructibility. Given Guattari's keen interest in the environmental destructiveness of consumerism and militarism, aiming at a critical approach he called ecosophical (2006), he would have been horrified by the spatial and temporal scale of the infiltration of the biosphere by the capitalist

semiotic. Like all environmentalism until the 1990s, ecosophy worried about how ecosystems were under threat from toxins, urbanization and extraction. The Anthropocene names a situation far more serious. It puts an ultimatum on thinking itself qua constructive critique.

Nietzsche understood well how the overman – the invention of new values and new peoples – cannot afford to resurrect transcendence and concomitant moralism. To 'remain true' to its earthly embeddedness, thinking has to abandon its conventional adherences to myth and essence. Man, democracy, the reasonable individual, community, life as harmonious and nurturing, nature, Gaia: modernity is still replete with Platonic ideals repressing truly critical and immanent thought. Of course, Nietzsche is intentionally mysterious as to what exactly of 'the earth' is to be affirmed. Instead, the earth concept in Deleuze and Guattari denotes a real materiality, which necessarily accompanies philosophy. A different Anthropocene, an unheard-of universality, is definitely possible, it is necessary, and in fact already subsists virtually in activist, pedagogical, artistic, research and therapeutic praxis. For Deleuze and Guattari the earth is a concrete substratum of human agency, and therefore infinitely more than the mere opposite of heaven. Their machinic ontology will help us ascertain, more precisely than Nietzsche could, the ethico-political sense of the earth.

Mechanosphere

There are five concepts implied by the mechanosphere that are essential to a thinking and a politics of the earth: assemblage, abstract machine, strata, evolution and consistency.

> The most important problem of all: given a certain machinic assemblage, what is its relation of effectuation with the abstract machine? How does it effectuate it, with what adequation? Classify assemblages. What we call the mechanosphere is the set of all abstract machines and machinic assemblages outside the strata, on the strata, or between strata. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 71)

The earth's surface consists of assemblages, more or less what scientists call systems. Guattari (1984: 111ff) introduces the machine concept into his psychiatric practice of the 1960s to account for local and temporary interlockings of disparate constituents – institutional arrangements, money, ideologies, alienations, desires – irreducible to signifiers or their lack. A car, a pond, a factory, a city, a national economy, a soldier: an

assemblage is both unique and individuated from a multiplicity of similar others (no city without other cities). An assemblage (*agencement*) is necessarily 'machinic' (*machinique*), productive by virtue of its functional heterogeneity and immersion in an 'abstract machine' or range of tendencies. An assemblage is therefore defined, not only by what it *actually* consists of (metal, rubber, lights, leather, driver), but by its *virtual* shadow: the capacities, latencies, regularities it has developed over time. The earth consists of extremely diverse multiplicities at every scale, each accompanied by a specific topology of possible trajectories (called phase space in physics, fitness landscape in biology, etc.). Guattari insists assemblages reveal an efficaciousness thanks to their more-than-empirical nature, their capacity to become abstract and their singularity, not their adaptation to stable objective background conditions of possibility.

For Deleuze the 'most important problem of all' is how to think the virtual and the actual together. An assemblage necessarily 'effectuates' an abstract machine with varying degrees of correspondence or 'adequation', or it would not be able to obtain an impact or even sustain itself. A simple assemblage like a tick in a tree hardly secretes novelty. In contradistinction, capital, to be effective, constantly requires an enlarging and deepening of its deterritorializations through axioms which resemble each other only in creating profit. The differences between abstract machines then permit 'classifying' assemblages: territories, faces, apparatuses, the despotic body, the anorexic body, a veritable taxonomy of assemblages constituting *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. What allows such classification is the mechanosphere itself, the earth as massive difference engine existing independently of the various strata.

Strata are horizontal and hierarchical agglutinations of assemblages. In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari make a distinction between three fundamental strata: the physicochemical (inorganic, crystalline), the organic (vital, biochemical) and the anthropomorphic (human). Though conventional enough, what allows their distinction is not a priori essences, or even level of complexity, but the way content relates to expression, following the Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev. On the physicochemical stratum expression can only be a jump in scale. Particles accumulate and resonate to express a new entity at a higher scale. The organic stratum has a different kind of articulation. Expressivity becomes autonomous from the physical input (content), enabling all the irreversible chemical processes we think of as *life*: reproduction, ingestion, energy transport and storage, perception, evolution, death and decay. There is a threshold of deterritorialization separating an enzyme or

virus or cell or coral from a crystal, as the latter is constrained by its territory while living things have to be mobile and metabolic (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 57–60). As materialists we should be cautious of the vitalist belief in a unified life-force transcendent to organisms, a belief which some have read into Bergson's work. Biological emergence does not contradict the laws of physics; 'there is no vital matter specific to the organic stratum, matter is the same on all the strata' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 45).

The anthropomorphic or alloplastic stratum is the most dynamic ('alloplastic' seems to comes from psychoanalysis, wherein it refers to a neurotic's remolding of her or his external environment under stress; more recently it appears in physiology). The human species qua geological layer – what could be called the anthroposphere – derives as all strata do from the condensation, induction, folding of elements from adjacent strata. A building is redistributed clay and metal. Human speech emerged by deterritorializing lips and throat. While ethologists have shown all mammals and birds exhibit surprising behavioral and phenotypic plasticity, it is only human milieus which are 'overcoded' (akin to Althusser's 'overdetermined'), notably through that most expressive of strata, language (see Laland and Galef 2009). Even then, everything about the human species, even language, fully retains animal, vegetal and geophysical strata as deterritorialized, as expressed. Hands are deterritorialized paws (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 61). Typing, fingers express digital codes, still more deterritorialized, which set in motion an atomic bomb rejiggering the organic and inorganic strata: 'The third stratum sees the emergence of Machines that are fully part of that stratum but at the same time rear up and stretch their pincers out in all directions at all the other strata' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 63). Capitalism, obviously, is where the anthroposphere reaches its formidable apex, a megamachine for unprecedented interpenetration and acceleration of strata and assemblages.

Deleuze and Guattari's is a unique contribution to thinking the earth without anthropocentrism yet from the vantage point of a species that has rashly changed its milieu to the extent every other milieu is threatened. The Anthropocene is when the alloplastic stratum, thinking itself omnipotent through the name 'man', jeopardizes its own substrata. Against teleological notions of the universe reaching a pinnacle what should be stressed is that *strata are not stages*. No stratum is higher, more perfect than another, though this does not mean they are interchangeable. Deleuze and Guattari are resolutely Darwinian in embracing randomness. Against Teilhard, they would agree with Richard Dawkins

(1986) that there can be no blueprint prior to speciation, no smugness about the emergence of humans, no final purpose or Omega point towards which life grows or tends.

> It is difficult to elucidate the system of the strata without seeming to introduce a kind of cosmic or even spiritual evolution from one to the other, as if they were arranged in stages and ascended degrees of perfection. Nothing of the sort. The different figures of content and expression are not stages. There is no biosphere or noosphere, but everywhere the same Mechanosphere. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 69)

Now, emphasizing randomness at the level of DNA should never detract from understanding the phenotypic creativity which is basic to evolution. If it is 'difficult' not to reintroduce vitalism into the theory of machines, the tendency towards mechanism is still more pernicious. Guattari's Hjelmslevian semiotic of content and expression encapsulated in the assemblage approach is at sharp odds with the hegemonic (capital-friendly) obsession with natural selection as found in Dawkins. Bergson (2005: 32ff) already argued there is a strange complicity between mainstream Darwinism and finalism, both supposing adaptation is a rather slavish adjustment of organism to environment *so as to* secure survival of the species (or its genome). Bergson says evolution is neither mechanical nor purposeful – it is creative in every instant. The 'programs' or abstract machines for development and behavior are not given before a particular problem (like how to move towards light) presents itself, but experimentally and incrementally precipitated *within* habitual action.

Bergson is central to Deleuze's philosophy of life, of course, and they both do obviously flirt with vitalism. Still, Deleuze's decision to continuously emphasize the machinic aspects of the earth, to substitute *mehkane* (device, means, Proto-Indo-European root **magh*, capacity) for *bios*, and to hail new possibilities of the age of 'the Machine' like the electronic music of Varèse (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 343), clearly departs from the residual humanism of Bergson and Teilhard (and Heidegger). The mechanosphere concept does not smuggle metaphysical psychology into evolutionary and developmental biology, as Bergson does, but civil engineering and metallurgy into political ontology.

The last concept presupposed in the notion of mechanosphere is consistency. Guattari was working on what he called the plane of consistency (1984: 120–134) for a while before *Anti-Oedipus*. He was seeking to generalize from his machinism by positing a kind of *logic* underpinning socio-ecological processes that could account for the holding-together

of a multiplicity without having to resort to the logical or mathematical notion of set. Instead of the austere formalism of set theory and semiotics Guattari's concept of consistency is fully materialist, conjuring an evolutionary continuum or 'machinic phylum' permeating all abstract machines and thereby allowing for the deterritorialization of the strata. Any becoming requires passing through this plane of consistency.

> Everything becomes imperceptible, everything is becoming-imperceptible on the plane of consistency, which is nevertheless precisely where the imperceptible is seen and heard. It is the Planomenon, or the Rhizosphere, the Criterium (and still other names, as the number of dimensions increases). At *n* dimensions, it is called the Hypersphere, the Mechanosphere. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 252)

Mechanosphere becomes a quasi-synonym for plane of consistency when there are many 'dimensions' involved, say Deleuze and Guattari. But what on earth could the value of *n* be in the quote above? If there are still more names for the plane of consistency according its number of dimensions how do we know when to use 'mechanosphere'? The at times frustrating proliferation of partially overlapping concepts in *A Thousand Plateaus* should not be allowed to foreclose its fundamental ethico-political aim, which is to critique the insanity of capitalism as *the* system of deterritorialization on earth. The rhizomatic or hyperspherical nature of the machinic phylum becomes most intense when philosophers follow poets, guerrilla fighters, climatologists and so on to theorize *their own becoming* as one inescapable dimension of the plane of consistency they are thinking. When the immanence of geophilosophy comes to loggerheads with the immanence of capital and cybernetic reductionism, then we speak of a mechanosphere. Mechanosphere is a critical and transcendental yet antihumanist and evolutionary concept. As such it is perfectly suited to start conceiving theoretical responses to the twisted reality of the Anthropocene.

Communism

As the 'set of all abstract machines' holding together and prodding the various strata, the mechanosphere is the earth's virtual reality – or at least its crust's, for let us not forget the ineffably immense terranean middle, whose effects we only perceive during volcanoes and earthquakes. Mechanosphere seems to be the only concept available in philosophical discourse which can measure up to the simultaneous dependency

of humans on geophysical processes and the technoscientific entrapment of ecosystems and geochemical cycles over the last two centuries. We have been forced to 'enter the age of the Machine, the immense mechanosphere, the plane of cosmicization of forces to be harnessed' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 343).

We have seen that *Anti-Oedipus* offers a theory of primitive magic as a kind of libidinal cartography of the 'full body of the earth' – the mysterious propensities of the universe, through intense intimacies which were largely lost once the assemblages of the state and capital supplanted it (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 145ff). In our age of machines, it is not that assemblages and psyches are shut off from the rest of earth or 'nature', banging their heads against a metaphysical wall of their own making, orphaned from an authentic relationality, as decried in the ecophenomenological literature (for instance, Abram 2011). On the contrary, the immense plasticity of the alloplastic stratum means it participates as never before in the other strata. The Anthropocene therefore summons a new *responsibility* to negotiate the 'plane of cosmicization', to restrain and direct ('harness') the forces constituting our very earthly positionality (note, however, Deleuze and Guattari in the quote above are not talking about ethics but Varèse). Responsibility becomes feeble when framed through mystico-evolutionist terms such as noosphere or *élan vital*. The theory of strata and assemblages shows precisely how stratification hence responsibility are extremely uneven. To be blunt, the rich world has benefited from a global racial division of labor, from burning through the planet's fossil fuels, and from continuing to insist on the same neoliberal axioms which have always disadvantaged the poor masses. Real justice will require the global bourgeoisie to take initiative in harnessing new mechanospheric forces to wean itself off its historical selfish privilege.

For Deleuze and Guattari (1994) concepts work in so far as they are *political*: that is, as they jam capitalist democracy's circuitries to make them constitute, from within themselves, new collectivities and environments. Eschewing any immediate relationship to 'community', inner being or cosmic destiny, geophilosophy and ecosophical militancy push capital's self-contradictions beyond a systemic threshold. Preventing an apocalyptic Anthropocene requires not a new man quest for an always-lost ecological equilibrium ('sustainability'), 'local' and 'organic' self-sufficiency, universal human spirit or any other cliché of post-secular modernity. 'Philosophy takes the relative deterritorialization of capital to the absolute; it makes it pass over the plane of immanence as movement to the infinite and suppresses it as internal limit,

turns it back against itself so as to summon forth a new earth, a new people' (1994: 99). Philosophical concepts are worthy of nothing less than the absolute deterritorialization of the mechanosphere towards a new planetary economy.

This aim is traditionally called communism. From Marx and Engels (2002) onwards, communism has been conceptualized as a uniquely *creative* project which can only be global (internationalism) and which can only be simultaneously collective and subjective. Against the triumphalist denunciation of this name during upcoming neoliberalism and the degeneration of the USSR in the 1980s, Guattari and Toni Negri sought to 'save it from its own disrepute' (1990: 7). They envisaged a globally integrated system in which everyone works in order to consume (and pump carbon into the atmosphere), machinic enslavement and self-surveillance are automatically secured, and everyone conforms to the mediocrity of a globally enforced standard of human being. Guattari and Negri remind the left of communism's original transversal and liberatory impulses, however tainted it might have been already in the Bolshevik pragmatics of power, but remaining immanent as possibility in the deterritorializing capitalist machine ever since. Against the top-down ossification and imposition of sameness which most associate with the concept, Guattari and Negri argue emphatically that communism brings *freedom* or it is another ploy of the system.

> We rather envisage an imaginative, creative process at once singular and collective, sweeping the world with a great wave of refusal and of hope. Communism is nothing more than a call to life: to break the encirclement of the capitalist and socialist organization of work, which today leads not only to a continuing surplus of repression and exploitation, but to the extinction of the world and humanity with it. [...] Extermination or communism is the choice – but this communism must be more than the sharing of wealth (who wants all this shit?) – it must inaugurate a whole new way of working together. (1990: 10–11)

Now, communism has always distinguished itself from utopian socialism in that its movements and constituents are entirely *immanent* to capitalism; it is not a telos transcendent to the infrastructures inherited from the many centuries of legislation, Oedipalization and creative destruction. There is no doubt Alain Badiou (2010) is the most sophisticated theorist of communism today, and he justly challenges the celebration of desire in *Anti-Oedipus* and the absence of politics as a form of thinking in the schema of art-science-philosophy in *What is Philosophy?* Badiou

helps ensure the critique of capitalism and state apparatuses does not land us in some kind of anarchist aestheticism. But like most in the Marxist tradition, Badiou has nothing whatsoever to say about the earth. For Guattari communism is no intuition or disembodied hypothesis, but commences from affectively acknowledging the plundering, the misery and the runaway chaos which Integrated World Capitalism (including, of course, Soviet state-communism and China's autocratic growth-machine) has wrought on this planet. Hence communist invention has to spring from within capital's unmooring of the geo- and bio-sphere.

Deleuze and Guattari never seek to vilify the stability of strata or to naturalize anarchy: 'we cannot content ourselves with a dualism or summary opposition between the strata and the destratified plane of consistency' (1987: 70). Though they do privilege the liberation of creativity from the strata back into the immanence of the earth, they also point out that intentional destratification usually tumbles into failure, fascism or psychosis, a warning often cited but seldom developed theoretically:

> Every undertaking of destratification (for example, going beyond the organism, plunging into a becoming) must therefore observe concrete rules of extreme caution: a too-sudden destratification may be suicidal, or turn cancerous. In other words, it will sometimes end in chaos, the void and destruction, and sometimes lock us back into the strata, which become more rigid still, losing their degree of diversity, differentiation, and mobility. (1987: 503)

Insofar as it exposes the contingency of human geosocial formations at timescales from the tectonic to the nanotechnological, stratoanalysis is directly revolutionary. Yet it understands that terrestrial habits are not easily overturned, and that capitalist biopower is exceedingly adaptable. Revolutionary becoming is not spontaneous or terrorist, then, but proceeds through what Guattari and Negri call machines of struggles (1990: 110ff) immanent to the intolerably stratified landscapes which prevent counterhegemonic conceptions of collectivity and justice.

A Thousand Plateaus ends thus:

> Every abstract machine is linked to other abstract machines, not only because they are inseparably political, economic, scientific, artistic, ecological, cosmic – perceptive, affective, active, thinking, physical, and semiotic – but because their various types are as intertwined as their operations are convergent. Mechanosphere. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 514)

If the last word of this most geographical of philosophical books has any sense at all, it is to call for a radical rethinking of the terrain proper to politics, even as politics fuses with the other creative endeavors of the human species. This terrain is earth itself. Henceforth politics will be the discipline of seizing abstract machines which far surpass the limits of petty anthropocentric common sense, of attaining the plane of consistency and reinventing the machinic biosphere to create an altogether new socius. For a very long time civilization has been coterminous with an insane overexploitation of environments and labor-power and a concomitant negation of the utter contingency and injustice of its own power, and both according to a deeply ingrained belief in transcendence. As environmentalists ominously declare the Anthropocene as humanity's time of reckoning, they underestimate the extent to which values will have to be overthrown. The dangerous folly of a *longe durée* of denigrating the earth continues to weigh upon all humanity. Only a veritable revolution in values can bring some new sense to the world.

> Not only the rationality of millennia – also their madness, breaketh out in us. Dangerous is it to be an heir.
>
> Still fight we step by step with the giant Chance, and over all mankind hath hitherto ruled nonsense, the lack-of-sense.
>
> Let your spirit and your virtue be devoted to the sense of the earth, my brethren: let the value of everything be determined anew by you! Therefore shall ye be fighters! Therefore shall ye be creators! (Nietzsche 1930: 81, 'The bestowing of virtue')

Works cited

Abram, David (2011) *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology* (New York: Vintage).

Althusser, Louis (2006) *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster. (London: Verso).

Badiou, Alain (2010) *The Communist Hypothesis* (London: Verso).

Bergson, Henri (2005) *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell. (New York: Barnes & Noble).

Clark, Nigel (2011) *Inhuman Nature: Sociable Life on a Dynamic Planet* (London: Sage).

Crutzen, Paul J. and Eugene F. Stoermer (2000) 'The "Anthropocene"', *Global Change Newsletter* 41 (May): 17–18.

Dawkins, Richard (1986) *The Blind Watchmaker* (New York and London: Norton).

Deleuze, Gilles (1983) *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press).

—— (1990) *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press).

—— (1994) *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Athlone).
Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari (1977) *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (London: Athlone).
—— (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).
—— (1994) *What is Philosophy?,* trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press).
Flaxman, Gregory (2012) *Gilles Deleuze and the Fabulation of Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).
Foltz, Bruce V. (1995) *Inhabiting the Earth: Heidegger, Environmental Ethics, and the Metaphysics of Nature* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press).
Fortey, Richard (2005) *Earth: An Intimate History* (London: Viking).
Foster, John Bellamy (2000) *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature* (New York: Monthly Review).
Guattari, Félix (1984) *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (London: Penguin).
—— (2006) *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (London: Athlone).
Guattari, Félix and Antonio Negri (1990) *Communists Like Us*, trans. Michael Ryan (New York: Semiotext(e)).
Harman, Graham (2009) *The Quadruple Object* (Winchester, UK: Zero Books).
Harvey, David (2011) *The Enigma of Capital and the Crises of Capitalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
Kant, Immanuel (1992) *Lectures on Logic*, ed. and trans. J. Michael Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
Klein, Naomi (2014) *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate* (New York: Simon & Schuster).
Laland, Kevin N. and Bennett G. Galef, eds. (2009) *The Question of Animal Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
Latour, Bruno (1993) *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
Lovelock, James (2000) *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*, third edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
Lukács, Georg (1971) *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press).
Margulis, Lynn (1998) *Symbiotic Planet: A New Look At Evolution* (Amherst: Basic Books).
Marx, Karl (1959) *Capital*, 3 vols., ed. Friedrich Engels, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House).
Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich (2002) *The Communist Manifesto*, trans. Samuel Moore, ed. Gareth Stedman Jones (London: Penguin).
McKibben, Bill (1989) *The End of Nature* (New York: Random House).
McWorther, Ladelle and Gail Stenstad, eds. (2009) *Heidegger and the Earth: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, second edn. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press).
Meillassoux, Quentin (2008) *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, trans. Ray Brassier (London: Continuum).
Nietzsche, Friedrich (1930) *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, trans. Thomas Common (New York: Modern Library).
Osborn, Fairfield (1948) *Our Plundered Planet* (London: Faber & Faber).

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre (1964) *The Future of Man*, trans. Norman Denny (New York: HarperCollins).
Vernadsky, Vladimir (1998) *The Biosphere*, ed. Mark A.S. McMenamin, trans. David B. Langmuir (New York: Copernicus).
Vycinas, Vincent (1961) *Earth and Gods: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff).
Wolfe, Cary (2009) *What is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).

12
Who Comes after the Post-human?

Claire Colebrook

To anticipate the answer to the question of who comes after the post-human, I will give a one-word answer: the pre-human. I also want to begin by recalling the question that I have varied for the title of this essay. In 1991, in a profoundly deconstructive manner, Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor and Jean-Luc Nancy posed the question, 'who comes after the subject?' Implicit in the phrasing is that the very possibility of the question entails a subject, or a 'who'. To think about what might be other than the thinking subject is both the most Cartesian of gestures (allowing for a subject or question beyond the given), and already post-Cartesian in striving to think beyond the subject. As both Derrida (1969) and Deleuze and Guattari have argued: the supposed ultra-humanism of Descartes was also a hyperbolic surpassing of the human, either by way of a doubt that destroys the concrete existence of 'man' or by the creation of a 'persona' that has little to do with the living human being: 'Even Descartes had his dream. To think is always to follow the witch's flight' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 41). Part of the force of deconstruction lay in this strangely inhuman border of the inescapably human: if there is such a thing as the human that exists beyond the level of species being, or defines humans as a species, it is a certain capacity to negate or question whatever is given as their humanity.

In this respect, as Heidegger insisted, humans are beings who question. It was in this sense that Heidegger criticized the Cartesian subject as *subjectum* or *hypokeimenon*; rather than think of a privileged, higher or exceptional being or substance, one needs to escape from humanism and think about this 'being' who is nothing other than a question or relation to whatever appears as being (Heidegger 2010: 92). Anything other than 'the subject' or 'man' would be not so much a thing as a mode of questioning. As Derrida argues in his response to the twentieth-

century declaration of the overcoming of the being of man, the human has always been post-human, always declaring itself to be other than any determined end (Derrida 1969). In this respect Heidegger's criticism of humanism and the subject is one more instance of human self-surpassing. The deconstructive bind is already implicit in Heidegger's own work, and gets repeated insistently in every attempt to surpass the privileged substance of the subject: nothing is more subjective, more Cartesian, more hyperbolically human than a questioning refusal of the Cartesian subject. The question of what is other than, after, or beyond the human is 'definitively' human precisely because the human has always been defined by a refusal of any standard definition. Asking about what comes after the subject is already deploying the position or point of view of one 'who speaks'. Does not any question, any temporality, presuppose one *for whom* there is a world? Can the subject think its own non-being? A Heideggerian tradition would say that this cannot be so: to ask a question is already to be a 'who'.

To ask about *what* might come after the subject (rather than 'who') would be to suggest that the subject might – in the present – think of that which is not, and can not, be present to a subject. The possibility of the non-subjective or the radically inhuman has been posed insistently by Quentin Meillassoux (2009), along with a counter-phenomenological tradition that seeks to think about what might exist in the absence of thinking. These two gestures, though intertwined, are not the same: Meillassoux's emphasis on speculation releases thought from finitude and actual reality, granting a reality to thought. It is speculation or thinking that is fully real and that can surpass the world as it actually happens to be for us in the present. Other modes of post-deconstructive thought place more emphasis on the side of realism: things rather than thinking unfold speculative trajectories (Harman 2005). In both cases what was once coupled – world and intentionality – are disengaged; there can be thought without a subject, and a world without thought.

In this essay I will be pursuing the first of these tendencies, or the possibility of thought released from the world – thought without an image. Even though the other (thingly) strand of speculative realism operates almost as a counter-tendency I will argue that granting thought an inhuman power also allows for the circulation of inhuman things, including thoughts and images. Rather than say that the very possibility of the question – the very possibility of *not* coinciding with one's present – must imply a 'who', various forms of realism have declared the possibility of a radical posthumanism (or a post-posthumanism).

If posthumanism is the dethroning of human exceptionalism, a belief that Cartesian distance was a delusion, and a rejection of the distinction of thought from life and matter, then one might say that the possibility of speculation liberates thinking from the subject, and releases the inhuman from the human. Rather than say that man is not exceptional, that he too is bound up with life and the world, we might consider that there is something in *thought* that survives the merely human, survives the locatedness and individuation of the 'who' and that is able to think beyond 'man'. Post-posthumanism, or inhumanism, would not take the form of man imagining himself to be no longer exceptional, no longer separated from the world as a subject. Rather, to come after posthumanism would be to insist that thinking might imagine what could exist in the absence of thinking.

This is what I take to be the genuinely futural dimension of Deleuze's thought: *not* destroying the ideality and distance of the subject to regain one plane of matter, but of discerning – within what took itself to be human – a power or potentiality to *think* without the ground of a 'who', without a plane within which thought might find a proper relation. This might be defined as thought without a subject: there might be thoughts in the absence of what we have come to think of as thinkers (humans, subjects). In this respect I read Deleuze's work as *in part* a mode of speculative thought, a liberation of thinking from the site of its human emergence. At the same time, there is a crucial difference between the inhuman mode of speculation in Deleuze's thought, and the realist or grounding tendencies of many modes of speculative realism. The latter, after all, are defined squarely against 'correlationism' and this may generate two opposing trajectories: the first would be a form of immediate realism or materialism that would allow thought to emerge from and always remain imbricated in a substantive material life (and there are readings of Deleuze that follow this line); the other, committed to an absolute of some form, would not domesticate thought so much as release *within thought* that which persists and insists beyond any actual thinker.

On the one hand such a gesture of speculation and the absolute would erase the Heideggerian and phenomenological claim that asking a question presupposes a 'who', and yet – on the other hand – the very possibility of speculative realism and the insistence that one may indeed ask questions beyond the purview of the subject grants a power to thought that many forms of posthumanism had sought to erase. Nowhere is this ambivalence of the post-human more evident than in the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari: *A Thousand Plateaus* is

speculative and inhuman in its positing of the prebiotic soup (1987: 4) and the Body Without Organs, just as *Anti-Oedipus* had posited the pre-human or at least a pre-personal 'intense germinal or germinative flow' (1977: 162). Such structuring claims seem to indicate an inhuman but real (really material) plane from which thought emerges, and within which thought has no privileged status; the sign systems and traces of humans are one strata among many, despite human illusions and practices of overcoding. At the same time the ambition of both volumes makes a profound claim for the powers of thinking, creating and imagining well beyond the limits of the subject. The very motif of *anti*-Oedipus performs a seemingly effortless erasure of the 'man' of humanism (who is deemed to be an event within a familial history that has a pre-familial, tribal and ancient past). In this respect, Deleuze and Guattari's thought enables a standard form of posthumanism, where the life of plants, animals and pre-oedipal humans broadens the ways we think about the world beyond the calculative reason of man. Yet one of the challenges of Deleuze and Guattari's corpus to such standard modes of post-humanism lies in the idea of a thought that is liberated from man. Their later *What is Philosophy?*, after all, argues for the existence and creation of concepts, functions and (perhaps most provocatively) affects that are not grounded in the lived. If one mode of post-humanism has taken the form of saying 'no' to everything subjective and Cartesian by insisting that humans are simply one more aspect or expression of a life that is lived, composed and experienced as much by plants and animals as it is by *Homo sapiens*, then we might suggest that a certain *post*-posthumanism is exemplified by Deleuze and Guattari's attempt to sustain all those powers that had once been attributed to the subject in a plane of 'life' well beyond the human organism (and organic life in general).

In posing the question of *who* comes after the post-human I want to suggest that the ambivalence of the post-human in Deleuze and Guattari's work – though expressed vividly in their corpus and its aftermath – is structural to questions concerning the human, and to modes of thinking about anything 'post'-human. That is, to ask about the human (and its possible non-being or surpassing) challenges the privilege of the subject and its containment of the world within the lived and meaningful present. At the same time, questions about life or existence beyond human presence grant a power and range to thought that had perhaps been only momentarily diminished, if at all, in a brief period of domesticating posthumanism that had claimed to be definitively beyond all forms of Cartesian over-reaching.

What comes after the 'post'?

It would therefore be useful to make a distinction between the post-human and the inhuman. The post-human is a form of hyper-humanism (or an extension of a humanism that never really was) insofar as the human has always aimed *both* to be exceptional in not being tied to any determined definition, *and* to be proto-pre-human, always capable or erasing itself, freeing itself from any of its determined and detached figures. Think of Plato's cave allegory: do not be bounded by the human, but think in such a way that your thought might be that of any thinking being. The inhuman – contrasted with this perennial attempt for the human to erase itself and become one with life/being/what is – is the impossibility of self-erasure; it is the unavoidable distance and dehiscence that cannot be willed away.

Every 'post' has its own temporality. For Lyotard something can be modern only after it has been post-modern, only if it claims to update or progress beyond what presents itself as utterly timely. To claim to be modern – to be truly new – is to erase what previously existed as the new (Lyotard 1984). Postmodernism in Lyotard's sense is, then, not so much a timeframe or period as it is an interminable displacement. For Lyotard *the inhuman*, rather than being something one might achieve after the human or the subject has been erased, exists and insists perpetually. In any occurrence of speech, perception or representation there is a singular and intense materiality; these intense singularities cannot provide a new plane of post-human or inhuman freedom from the syntheses of the subject. Rather, one thinks the inhuman – the thought of that which is beyond synthesis and representation – only from the limits of the human (Lyotard 1991). Lyotard's post-modern sublime is therefore a counter-Kantian reversal of the consecration of the human. For Kant, the reach of reason beyond that which can be conceptualized generates a thought of a supersensible subjective power. Thought exceeds (or strives to exceed) that which can be presented sensibly, and in the feeling of this non-presentation, the subject becomes aware of itself as other than the mere world of presentation. By contrast, the material and singular milieu through which synthesis takes place indicates a primarily inhuman condition from which the human emerges. To talk about the inhuman in Lyotard's sense is, then, *post*-post-human in the same manner that the modern comes after the post-modern. The human always defines itself as other than any determined, given or reified figure of man (so that Kant will define the subject as *other than* any of its material or worldly manifestations). The inhuman is the medium, milieu or

intensive flux from which the human emerges as nothing other than its own self-negation. The human has always been post-human, always an erasure of what appears as human. It follows, then, that the return of singularity and materiality (in the thought of Lyotard, Deleuze and Guattari and some strands of new speculative thought) expose the certain incapacity for the human to surpass itself and be nothing more than its own power of synthesis.

One might begin to conclude that the broad temporality of the 'post', marks the structure of what has come to be known as human: the human is not a being or event within time, but is a structure of erasing what has come to appear as human, aiming to be nothing other than an event of erasing its own contaminating and inauthentic past. Simple affirmations of being post-racial, post-feminist, post-colonial or post-secular remain blind to the ways in which figures of race, sex, spirit and humanity operate by self-erasure: nothing is more effectively racial than the claim that there is no such thing as race and that deep down we are all human (all the same, all free from any singular determination). The human – from its very emergence – is post-human, always trying to efface itself in order to find what is not itself and become at one with a life or being that can never be admitted as radically distant and difficult. Here I would like to draw upon a central motif of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy regarding desire and the *oedipal* emergence of man: it is only by way of imagining what must have been lost and prohibited, only by positing a plenitude of Nature that is impossibly pre-political, undifferentiated and radically *pre-human* that 'man' emerges as a being essentially separated from a chaos that he must ward off, mourn, desire but never approach. The human (at least in its oedipal mode) is an effect of positing a lost pre-human that one must strive to regain. In terms of capitalism and the specifically miserable formation of the modern subject, Deleuze and Guattari argue that 'man' becomes the being who (by way of exchange, reason, speech, communication and negotiation) is definitively other than the dark night of undifferentiated becoming. Capitalism is, in this respect, not some order imposed on the earth from above, but is nothing other than a human-all-too-human acceptance that all we have is system and exchange: the negation of something like nature in itself, or the negation of anything not differentiated, calculable or comparable. Here, we might think of Bruno Latour's post-human call for a re-enchantment of the world, as though we might overcome the delusions of modern Cartesian separation and once again find a life of which we are nothing more than aspects of a universal agency (1993). Against this, Deleuze and Guattari argue that what is required is *not* the

destruction of the differentiating structures of capitalism and a return to natural plenitude. Rather, Nature or the pre-human and undifferentiated whole that is sacrificed in the transition from the inhuman to the human *is an effect of the human*. What Deleuze and Guattari will accept from the oedipal diagnosis of Lacanian psychoanalysis is that the structure of the subject (or man) occurs by way of constitutive prohibition, or what Butler will later refer to as a constitutive mourning that cannot know what has been lost (Butler 2006: 22). Against this compulsory and subjectifying mourning Deleuze and Guattari argue that this negation occurs within a history beyond the human:

> The law tells us: You will not marry your mother, and you will not kill your father. And we docile subjects say to ourselves: so that's what I wanted! Will it ever be suspected that the law discredits – and has an interest in discrediting and disgracing – the person it presumes to be guilty, the person the law wants to be guilty and wants to be made to feel guilty? One acts as if it were possible to conclude directly from psychic repression the nature of the repressed, and from the prohibition the nature of what is prohibited. There we have a typical paralogism – yet another, a fourth paralogism that we shall have to call displacement. For what really takes place is that the law prohibits something that is perfectly fictitious in the order of desire or of the 'instincts,' so as to persuade its subjects that they had the intention corresponding to this fiction. This is indeed the only way the law has of getting a grip on intention, of making the unconscious guilty. In short, we are not witness here to a system of two terms where we could conclude from the formal prohibition what is really prohibited. Instead we have before us a system of three terms, where this conclusion becomes completely illegitimate. Distinctions must be made: the repressing representation which performs the repression; the repressed representative, on which the repression actually comes to bear; the displaced represented, which gives a falsified apparent image that is meant to trap desire. (1977: 14)

The subject is effected through the structure of an abandoned and natural innocence that is mourned as no longer present. The Oedipal complex in its narrow sense generates the familial subject by way of prohibition by the father of the maternal object. Deleuze and Guattari place this structure of prohibition within a broader historical logic of capitalism and the signifier. If one imagines Nature as full presence that is then lost, structured and differentiated by an imposed or negating logic and

system of differences, it follows that one might only grasp Nature as already differentiated, as already mourned, as already other than the subject who (in turn) is at once structured by the guilt of being other than nature. It is not only a paradise lost that constitutes man as constitutively separated from nature, but also the imperative and guilt that one's difference from Nature ought to be followed by a due reverence of aiming to re-find, restore or regain the paradise of pre-human life. The oedipal, subjective and human imperative becomes this: act in such a way as to do all you can to redeem what might have been if only the human had not been so destructive, so inhuman. To be human, to be a subject, is to be at once constitutively separated from a world one imagines as present and natural, *and* to embrace a structure of imagining that one might – finally – overcome the human stain and find one's proper post-human being. When Deleuze and Guattari diagnose the relation between capitalism and Oedipus, they are not mourning a world that has been subjected to differentiation and calculation, but criticizing the notion that calculation and capital are the sovereign differentiating systems that master a Nature that has no distance or difference itself.

Only by positing a paradise lost does one become a human subject, or one who wishes that he might become post-human and find Nature again. The Deleuzian challenge would be to think of a world without Nature, without the non-human milieu of life, growth and innocence that is mourned when one becomes a subject cut from the fullness of the Real. Whereas a dominant reading of Lacan would accept that one embrace and enjoy one's symptom – that one accepts that we only have substitute objects that stand in for a plenitude that never was – Deleuze and Guattari place this structure of differential man within history. Rather than think of capitalism and industrialism as modes of subjective, human, anthropogenic violence that came along to destroy a pristine planet, one might say that capitalism operates by way of a structure of difference that already marks the world prior to capital; capitalism's Body Without Organs (or posited plane) is just this presupposed but never graspable undifferentiated Nature that is known or given only in its 'having been'. It is capital that relies on the myth of a pre-differential world, there to be subjected to system and exchange. Rather than see 'man' and structures of exchange and difference as that which violates an otherwise wondrous, lost and transcendent nature, we might move to an innocent immanence in which there has always been nothing other than difference and distance – never a pure absolute or in itself.

All the features that mark the human, and that we would like to see erased in order to achieve the beyond-human or post-human, were

already there in the pre-human. In order to anticipate again, and by way of example, I would cite the concept of the Anthropocene, where humans (supposedly suddenly) realize that they have been non-ecological, world-disturbing animals with a capacity for geological disturbance. This is what Dispesh Chakrabarty refers to as 'negative universal history': rather than say that there *is* a humanity that unfolds itself through time in order to realize itself, we acknowledge that there has been a history of ecological destruction from which the human must acknowledge itself as having a species universality (Chakrabarty 2009: 222). By extrapolation humans mark themselves as exceptional by presupposing a pre-human earth that might have remained as such had 'we' not been so world-disturbing. I would argue, though, that the human geological scar is not something exceptional, or if it is, it is the exception that indicates that life exists only by way of disequilibrium with its milieu. Just as we might deconstruct the notion of pure and absolute presence by saying that writing is the condition for presence rather than its fallen supplement, and just as we can, with Deleuze, argue that difference does not differentiate an undifferentiated world but *reduces* and homogenizes a milieu of difference, so I would say that the scarring humanity that we now wish to erase discloses something proto-human about all life: that life is disturbance or blind inscription. What we took to be accidentally, exceptionally and avoidably inhuman in the human – pollution, destruction, world-blindness – already invades what we dream of as paradisiacally pre-human.

The post-human is the dream that there might be a beyond-human: that, whatever the human is, it might not be or might not have been. But whatever it is that we want to erase in the human is already there in the pre-human: what defines the human is the dream of the nonhuman. Nowhere is this more evident than in a certain 'ecological' conception of nature – a world that is stable, harmonious, unspoiled, and that has a cyclic equilibrium that might have also included a different type of human (one who would not have been a self-enclosed destructive polluter, one freed from death). Such a pre-human paradise is the effect of imagining a pristine reality that exists beyond the human.

Posthumanism is, then, a form of ultra-humanism and needs to be contrasted with what we might refer to as the inhuman. To think about the inhuman is to regard both what we know as man, and what man dreams of as his other post-human future, always relies upon a rogue polluting and inscriptive force that the human has always sought to erase from itself. In this respect, despite differences, we can tie four modes of the post-human together insofar as they tend towards

ultra-humanism. That is, the human is always a dream of surpassing man and arriving at a form of posthumanism freed from the determined limits of the human; man imagines himself as being able to erase himself *as man,* finding himself to be at one with a world, nature or life that he had accidentally lost.

Posthumanism is a humanism

My first example of this posthumanism as ultra-humanism (that imagines it can erase itself in the form of 'man' to achieve a radically liberated beyond) is the type of utopianism found in the work of Nick Bostrom and Ray Kurzweil. For Kurzweil:

> Our civilization will then expand outward, turning all the dumb matter and energy we encounter into sublimely intelligent – transcendent – matter and energy. So in a sense, we can say that the Singularity will ultimately infuse the universe with spirit.
>
> Evolution moves toward greater complexity, greater elegance, greater knowledge, greater intelligence, greater beauty, greater creativity, and greater levels of subtle attributes such as love. (Kurzweil 2005: 389)

For both Kurzweil and Bostrom, the number one concern of humans should be to eliminate death, avoid disaster and aim for maximum and unimpeded (now unimaginable) happiness. We may think there's a dignity or naturalness to suffering and death, but this is not so. If we could think rationally about our position in time and life we would overcome our human limits: 'the demand for therapies that can overcome the suffering, disease, and short lifespans inherent in our version 1.0 bodies will ultimately prove irresistible' (Kurzweil 2005: 415). Bostrom's goal of surpassing the human by maximizing life and happiness is an ultra-humanism, a notion that what stands in our way is our own (too human) limits to imagination and technology. This is given most clearly in Bostrom's fable of the dragon (2005) and in his letter from Utopia (2008). In the fable, there has been a dragon that has always consumed a portion of the population; the dragon's demands have simply been accepted and will be until someone raises an objection to the passive acceptance of this loss. We should feel the same way about death rather than simply accepting the toll it takes on life. We need to overcome our human biological finitude. And as Bostrom's letter from Utopia aims to demonstrate, we should not feel that suffering, death and pain add

poignancy to our lives; our imaginations can, and should, be expanded to consider a utopian existence that was not deluded into believing it was made richer for losses incurred. For both Bostrom and Kurzweil technology is an extension of human life that operates, or should operate, in one direction. Bostrom's fable of the dragon relies on a point of human emergence and exceptionalism, recognizing the human as having a right that extends beyond life. Technology is both what enables us to make this human recognition, and then to surpass this human recognition. Bostrom's writings are themselves technologically generated fables that enable an expansion of our present; his letter from a future post-human Utopia (like his fable of the dragon) is made possible by writing technologies that generate a time and spirit beyond the present. Technology is at once the most human of events, at the same time as it inevitably generates the ultra human and post-human. Bostrom's letter from the future opens a time beyond present finitude by deploying the finite present's genres and inscriptive systems: 'Do you not see it? Do you not feel it, the touch of the possible? You have witnessed the potential for a higher life: you hold the fading proof in your hands. Don't throw it away. In the attic of your mind, reserve a drawer for the notion of a higher state of being, and in the furnace of your heart keep at least one aspiring ember alive' (Bostrom 2008).

In a quite different and almost opposed sense we might think of a strand of posthumanism that does not want to generate hyper- or super-humans who deploy human reason and techne to free themselves from the limits of human finitude. This posthumanism moves in the opposing direction of granting all that we had once bestowed on humans – agency, spirit – to nonhumans. In doing so it overcomes the all too Cartesian split that had severed humanity from life. For Bruno Latour we suffer from a disenchantment of nature that we never fully achieved. The modern divorce reduced nature to a lifeless substance, and mistakenly imagined that the world might be grasped logically and objectively and thereby yield stable truths that were distinct from the subjective values and desires of humans who were the only agents. That modern separation, in which we could imagine a reason of infinite power that would not be impeded by the messiness of the world, has for Latour now come to an end. Climate change and the Anthropocene not only expose that matter is not some infinite timeless substance, but also that humans become who they are in relation to a world that is at once dynamic and volatile in its contribution to the sense we make of the world. Apart from the public relations disaster that follows if science is given the burden of providing pure facts that are distinct from politics,

we need to see that we are not exceptional human subjects, but the 'earthbound'. What we once imagined as an infinite universe – in which we broke free from the notion that nature had its own forces and that they were multiple and never fully discernible, and in which we once thought we were exceptional by being able to intuit universal principles – is no longer an infinite universe but a closed cosmos:

> In order to portray the first new Earth as one falling body among all the other falling bodies of the universe, Galileo had to put aside all notions of climate, agitation, and metamorphosis (apart from tides); to discover the second new Earth, climatologists are bringing the climate back in and returning the Earth to its sublunar, corrupted, and agitated condition…. The European prescientific vision of the Earth saw it as a cesspool of decay, death, and corruption from which our ancestors, their eyes fixed toward the incorruptible spheres of suns, stars and God, had a tiny chance of escaping solely through prayer, contemplation and knowledge; today, in a sort of counter Copernican revolution, it is science that is forcing our eyes to turn toward the Earth considered, once again, as a cesspool of conflict, decay, war, pollution, and corruption. This time, however, there is no prayer, and no chance of escaping to anywhere else. After having moved from the closed cosmos to the infinite universe, we have to move back from the infinite universe to the closed cosmos – except this time there is no order, no God, no hierarchy, no authority, and thus literally no 'cosmos', a word that means a handsome and *well composed* arrangement. (Latour 2014: 4)

Humans and nonhumans are not distinct things that enter into relation, but aspects of a single and dynamic network that we can call Gaia. The great divorce that regarded nature as inert, while humans were agents with values and reason, is over. We need to retrieve a notion of animation in which humans are once again aspects of one interconnected but chaotic cosmos: 'Let's give this new situation its Greek name, that of *kakosmos*. What a drama we have been through: from cosmos to the universe and then, from the universe to the kakosmos!' (Latour 2014: 4). The advent of the Anthropocene gives the lie to one form of human exceptionalism; we can no longer act or think with the illusion that reason might act without material constraints or consequences.

As I have already suggested, what is broadly known as speculative realism harbors two post-human tendencies, both a thingly or object-oriented erasure of reason and the subject as conditions for thought,

and an elevation of thinking beyond the human. Speculation can either aim to think from the point of view of the nonhuman thing, or from the point of an absolute not grounded in any thing. For all the complexities and differences between Alain Badiou and Quentin Meillassoux there is nevertheless an insistence on *thought*, and on a thought that is not of the determined personal and psycho-physical subject bound up with the world. Theirs is not a thought or subject whose desires are part of a network that can never be considered outside the relations through which it is constituted. On the contrary, it is thinking as such, not the thinking of this or that bounded being, but a thought that tears apart whatever presents itself as determined and bounded that creates, for Badiou a subject of thought or, for Meillassoux a non-substantive absolute. While the differences are profound, what I want to draw attention to is a gesture that is one of subtraction or erasure: the subject is not a determined being in the world who thinks (the personal 'I' with this determined life who has this thought as an embodied and relational being). For Badiou, not only is ontology, or the thought of what there is, only possible by way of the mathematical, or the consideration *that there is being* that can be quantified; Badiou's domains of thought – love, politics, science and art – all operate by erasing human or general determination in favor of what destroys the lazy acceptance of the general. I love you not because of the predicates that personalize you, but rather for that absolutely singular event of your existence that is irreducible to determination. Politics occurs not when we accept and include on the basis of already determined notions of the human, but when the very definitional set is torn apart: 'Thought is the one and only uniquely human capacity, and thought, strictly speaking, is simply that through which the human animal is seized and traversed by the trajectory of a truth' (Badiou 2005: 97–98). These events of thinking are what effect subjects who are nothing more than formal operations, who are mistaken if they feel that they might be predicable objects to be known, determined and managed. The posthumanism of this gesture lies in the imperative not to be someone who is having a thought, but to become a thinking that is at odds with the determinations and relations of the world. There would be widespread destruction of the general by the generic. The thought *that there can be something* opens us to a void – *that* there is, not *what* there is. On the one hand this post-human formalism is a break with the history of philosophy, freed from any qualitative or bound condition: to be is to be capable of being included, but being itself has no inclusive set, and thinking properly occurs only with this erasing or subtractive definition. On the other hand, I would suggest that for the most part this formalism

is the very orientation of philosophical thought: the very meaning of truth is that it be true as such above and beyond my simple locatedness. Indeed we might say that what defines humans, from Plato to Kant and also all the erasures of Kant, is a definition of the human as a being that is capable of thinking its non-being. Kant's nature – the stable nature that appears to be created as if in accord with the interests of human morality and knowing – is achieved by erasing the merely human: if I think of myself as part of the world and subject to its causalities and vagueness then even what appears to be true and stable may change. If, however, I recognize that there can only be a nature that appears as lawful because there is a reason that synthesizes nature in accord with its demand for coherence, then I am freed from being bound up with mere life. The human – for Kant – is that being who can imagine a world that has a truth that exceeds the merely human. When Badiou insists upon freeing thought from determined being he too draws on the thought of the subject, a subject that from Kant onwards is not a thing within the world but a condition through which the world is given. If we are to call these gestures humanist, then they are human only insofar as they regard the human as that being who is capable of thinking beyond its worldly being, and ultimately of thinking its non-being. Not only can we (we humans) think about life as such, being as such, nature as such; we also posit that life and being can be thought of as not possessing the inscriptive, anthropomorphic, myopic, self-projecting tendencies of the human.

Finally and far more radically I want to consider the posthumanism of Quentin Meillassoux, who argues that the locatedness, relatedness and 'earthbound' claims for finitude are blind to the very form of their possibility: if we can posit that something is, then we can also think that it might not be. On logical grounds that we already employ there is nothing essential about humans or boundedness or life: everything that is might not be, except for this always-possible annihilation of anything. What is left is an absolute of contingency, and not an absolute of being. For Meillassoux, the one thing we know with absolute certainty is that anything that is might not be, including the being who says this. What is left is the possibility of saying this, the possibility that any thinking being might also entertain its own annihilation. The humanist (or post-humanist who wants to hold on to the embeddedness and dependence of thought) might say that this could only be said because there are human beings – that the *thought* of the non-human is always thought by 'a' human; but to say that a thought depends upon a being for its actual incarnation does not reduce the truth and possibility of the thought.

Defined against a human who can only use and imagine the world as a projection of himself, and who is therefore blind to the truth, reality and autonomy of pure life, there is post-human man who is capable of thinking beyond his own staining self-inscription. It is in this sense, as a procedure that establishes thinking as that which is not caught up with its own dead inscriptions, that the properly human is and always has been post-human. So even if we have starkly divergent forms of post-humanism I would suggest three points: they all rely upon a concept of the human that has mistakenly projected itself on the world and that must therefore overcome, surpass or erase itself in some form of post-humanism that returns the world to a state beyond the human interruption. There is, concomitant with the human, some conception of the world as it would be without humans: a pure world, even if it is Latour's world where everything is an agent. We imagine that there is something non-human – being, networks, agency, life, contingency – that does not suffer what I want to refer to as *climate change*.

Climate change

Returning to Deleuze and Guattari, I want to conclude by arguing that what Deleuze and Guatarri's thought offers us is something like a transcendental or inhuman conception of climate change. Crucial to the definition of both anthropogenic climate change and the Anthropocene is that what was once a stable nature has been destroyed by a humanity that has (exceptionally) violated its milieu. The Deleuzo-Guattarian reversal occurs by considering the human as a metapleptic erasure of the war machine: life is difference or a power for difference that is relatively stabilized by organisms, with such boundedness or relative stability occurring by way of separating a living being from a putatively prior and far more differentiated intensity. In the beginning is volatility, instability and a general extinction *from which* a stable and unchanging Nature is eventually fashioned as the plane of order opposed to chaos. Rather than see climate change as human volatility that destroys natural stability, we might follow Deleuze and Guattari and see the strata of the human, the organic and nature as the rigidification of a far more intense and volatile milieu than Nature could ever encompass. Here I use the term climate change to include (but not be limited to) the change we feel we are witnessing of our own climate and ecosystem. Such an event occurs within a broader volatility that includes the ways humans disturb their milieu, but also acknowledges that what we think of as pre-human (stable nature) is an effect of the human, and that the dream of ecology

and Nature is precisely what generated the history of stability whose end is nigh. Would it not be better to think of stability – of climate – as an exceptional moment of relative inertia in an otherwise chaosmotic milieu of difference?

So this allows me to conclude by turning to my final case of post-human strivings for the pre-human. Here I would suggest that we consider what we are calling the Anthropocene in transcendental or formal terms. Let us say that we see that the planet is now scarred, and this serves as a 'wake-up' call, and we now concede that humans are different after all because they don't simply live and evolve in tandem with geology but become geological. In order for that wake-up call and difference to be epochal, we must imagine a non-human life that is not a geological force (or a humanity that would have evolved otherwise, without the steam engine, nuclear power or without intensified agri-business). We say that nature and climate are *now* changing, and are not the stable natural forms they once were. This position seems both post-human and human and pre-human: only if we posit an epoch prior to the Anthropocene can the human be discerned as an epochal stain. The nature that we once thought of as timeless is subject to history, but it is a history that we know by way of disturbance.

This brings us to the strange torsion of the human, the post-human and the post-post-human: if there is such a thing as 'man' – at least in terms of the Western philosophy against which posthumanism reacts – he is the being who thinks beyond his own being, for he is never simply *this*. At the end of his actual time on earth, 'he' might start to claim that he is not so different after all, and that he is a being within the world, whose thoughts have no more agency or privilege than any other being, and that the modern Cartesian illusion of 'man' as subject is a delusion that fails to attend to the ecology of thinking. But this posthumanism of thinking human connectedness, animality, and non-exceptionalism occurs just as humans start to recognize themselves as being highly exceptional at a geological level. But this thought too, of a 'man' who overcomes his epistemological distance only to find himself different at a geological level, *still* relies on the thought of nature as somehow pre-human or purely outside a human that is that which exempts itself from life.

Humanism has always been a posthumanism, a dream that there might be an existence that unfolds and knows itself in a circle of recognition that does not produce waste. The human is that which erases itself but recalls and inscribes that erasure in a way that is continuous with life. 'Man' imagines a non-violent or absolutely fruitful and productive

nature, where all death and loss passes into fruition. What occurs after the post-human, like the return of the repressed is that all that we had taken as the evil of the human is already there in the pre-human. We act as though the human were an accident, and that the human might recognize its own myopic and self-enclosed violence, and re-inscribe itself by de-inscribing itself.

In his book on Foucault, Gilles Deleuze describes Foucault's archaeology of man, who is not a simple thing or idea but a relation among forces that relies upon stratifying or generating an inside and outside. Deleuze summarizes the trajectory of the human as a relation to the outside as it unfolds in Foucault's *Order of Things*: in pre-modernity humans read the earth and cosmos as if it unfolded to infinity, as if humans were fragments of a cosmic reason they could discern dimly, part of a reason expressed dimly in all things. Everything finite unfolds to infinity. In classicism, by contrast, there is not a closed world but an infinite universe, expressing a single logic or *mathesis* that is true and applies to any possible matter: geometry, logic, mathematics, gravity, or reason are all formal and substrate neutral. The infinite is not God's dimly perceived order where everything has its designated enclosed essence, but one single reason that governs everything equally: 'Classical thought may be recognised by the way in which it thinks of the infinite ... .' (Deleuze 1998: 102). Classicism is marked by a thought of 'infinite representation'; 'the forces within man enter into a relation with those forces that raise man to infinity' (Deleuze 2006: 103). This changes in the nineteenth-century when forces of the outside become forces of finitude: this, in turn, generates the man form: ' ... the forces with man compose a form only by entering into a relation with force from the outside' (Deleuze 1998: 130). Deleuze, moving beyond Foucault, argues for an inhuman future that would no longer imagine a lost infinite, nor one that might be regained:

> It would no longer involve raising to infinity or finitude but an unlimited finity, thereby evoking every situation of force in which a finite number of components yields a practically unlimited diversity of combinations. It would be neither the fold nor the unfold that would constitute the active mechanism, but something like the Superfold, as borne out the foldings proper to the chains of the genetic code and the potential of silicon in third generation machines, as well as by the contours of a sentence in modern literature, when literature 'merely turns back on itself in an endless reflexivity. (Deleuze 1998: 131)

Related to the present, we might say that rather than a 'man' who finds himself by relation to his own outside, or a posthumanism that vanquishes any outside that is not already given in a life, nature or earth to be re-found, we might finally abandon the notion of a proper life that the human has always found by imagining the paradise of its own non-being.

Works cited

Bostrom, Nick (2005) 'The Fable of the Dragon Tyrant', *Journal of Medical Ethics* 31(5): 273–277.

—— (2008) 'Letter from Utopia', *Studies in Ethics, Law, and Technology* 2(1): 1–7.

Butler, Judith (2006) *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso).

Cadava, Eduardo, Peter Connor, Jean-Luc Nancy (1991), eds., *Who Comes after the Subject?* (New York: Routledge).

Chakrabarty, Dipesh (2009) 'The Climate of History: Four Theses', *Critical Inquiry* 35: 197–222.

Deleuze, Gilles (1988) *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand (Minneaopolis: University of Minnesota Press).

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari (1977) *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Viking Press).

—— (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).

—— (1994) *What is Philosophy?* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (London: Verso).

Derrida, Jacques (1969) 'The Ends of Man', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 30(1): 31–57.

Harman, Graham (2005) *Guerrilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things* (Chicago: Open Court).

Heidegger, Martin (2010) *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: SUNY Press).

Kurzweil, Ray (2005) *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology* (London: Duckworth).

Latour, Bruno (1993) *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press).

—— (2014) 'Agency at the time of the Anthropocene', *New Literary History* 45: 1–18.

Lyotard, Jean-François (1984) *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).

—— (1991) *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press).

Meillassoux, Quentin (2009) *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, trans. Ray Brassier (London: Bloomsbury).

Index

This page intentionally left blank

This page intentionally left blank

This page intentionally left blank

This page intentionally left blank