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Becoming Animal of Philosophy: Pragmatism, Programmatology, Speculative Pragmatism

Abstract: I argue that American pragmatism can be understood as an effort to recuperate a sense of the animality of thought and thus as an example of what Deleuze and Guattari call a “becoming animal” within the field of philosophy. At issue in this becoming animal of pragmatism is the influence of Charles Peirce’s theory of abduction on the history of pragmatism from its origins to its more recent reception within Jacques Derrida’s (pra)grammatology and Brian Massumi’s speculative pragmatism. Predicated on the evolutionary notion that animal instinct is the source of language, thought, and inquiry, Peirce’s theory of creative inference, or “abduction” as he called it, has allowed generations of pragmatists to begin “shaking philosophy’s dust off their feet and following the call of the wild” (James); to recognize in the origin of their thought something like “the movements of a wild creature toward its goal” (Dewey); to define intellectual inquiry as “doing what comes naturally” (Fish), and to pursue such inquiry “without method” (Rorty). Emerging under the ostensible heading of a new “humanism”, pragmatism exceeds what Derrida calls “the anthropological limit” from the very start, relieving humanism of its exclusive claim to logocentrism by reinscribing the question if not the origin of the logos within the animal kingdom. Yet unlike Derrida, whose rejection of biological continuism in the name of difference prevents him from committing fully to the logic of abduction, Massumi is able to rehabilitate Peirce’s theory of abduction as the foundation for his speculative pragmatism as a result of his commitment to a processual ontology that rejects binary oppositions in favor of “disjunctive syntheses” and “zones of indiscernibility.”

Keywords: pragmatism; deconstruction; speculative pragmatism; abduction; becoming animal; metaphor.

To return to the dog.
– C. S. Peirce

Introduction

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari introduce the idea of “becoming animal” as a response to the problem of what they call an Oedipal model of human subjectivity predicated not only on the repression of desire but on the

negation of animality more generally.¹ They inherit the problem of Oedipal subjectivity from French modernists like Blanchot and Bataille who, motivated by Kojève's reading of Hegel, had developed a range of literary and philosophical projects intended to recuperate human animality from its long subordination to reason, which Giorgio Agamben has discussed in *The Open: Man and Animal*.² For Deleuze and Guattari, the process of becoming animal describes a line of flight by means of which humans may enter into “a circulation of impersonal affects, an alternate current that disrupts signifying projects as well as subjective feelings, and constitutes a nonhuman sexuality; and [...] an irresistible deterritorialization that forestalls attempts at professional, conjugal, or Oedipal reterritorialization.”³

Because this process of becoming animal also entails a displacement or “becoming other of the animal” according to Deleuze and Guattari, it has attracted considerable interest from within the burgeoning field of animal studies, which seeks among other things to rethink if not collapse the animal / human distinction.⁴ As a philosophical recuperation of animality, animal studies grows out of the work of theorists like Giorgio Agamben, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, Donna Haraway, Peter Singer, and Cary Wolfe among others. Yet its historical roots can be traced back to the tradition of American pragmatism. Charles Peirce, William James, and John Dewey, for instance, begin the work of rethinking the boundary between animal and human during the nineteenth century. Starting out “from a picture of human beings as chance products of evolution”, American pragmatism begins as a Darwinian inquiry into the animality of thought itself and thus already approximates what might be called a becoming animal of philosophy.⁵ This work begins with Charles Peirce who develops a process ontology called “synechism” predicated on continuity within the natural order and thus communication between animals and humans. Such continuity is evident for instance in Peirce's theory of abductive inference (or simply abduction) according to which the faculty of animal instinct, shared by animals and humans alike, constitutes the source of creativity, language, conjecture, inquiry, thought and indeed pragmatism itself, long before our current vogue for animals.

Because of the perceived eccentricity and the very real complexity of Peirce's thought, the reception of his work has been slow and its assimilation within philosophy remains ongoing. What interests me in what follows is the circuitous path by which Peirce's theory of abduction is assimilated first within poststructuralism and more recently within animal studies, exerting influence on questions concerning the animality of writing and thought that are being debated today. Drawing on the tradition of American pragmatism and specifically on Peirce's theory of abduction, Jacques Derrida and

¹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 232–309.

² Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

³ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 238.

⁵ Richard Rorty, “Remarks on Deconstruction and Pragmatism,” in *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*, ed. by Simon Critchley and Chantal Mouffe (New York: Routledge, 1996), 15.

Brian Massumi develop theoretical projects, pragmatology and speculative pragmatism respectively, which remain in dialogue with their pragmatist sources and inspirations. In this article I argue that American pragmatism initiates an effort to recuperate a sense of the animality of thought, that it constitutes a philosophical example of the process that Deleuze and Guattari call “becoming animal”, and that its progress along these lines can best be seen within Massumi’s speculative pragmatism.

Peirce and abduction

While the American pragmatists eagerly imported Darwin into the field of philosophy in order to apply evolutionary theory to the topic of intellectual inquiry and of thought more generally, it was Charles Peirce who developed the first evolutionary model of thinking. An early critic of anthropocentrism, Peirce was convinced that philosophy had overestimated the value of human reason and that animals could reason just as well as, if not better than humans:

Man is so vain of his power of reason! [...] Those whom we are so fond of referring to as the “lower animals” reason very little. Now I beg you to observe that those beings very rarely commit a mistake, while we – ! We employ twelve good men and true to decide a question, we lay the facts before them with the greatest care, the “perfection of human reason” presides over the presentment, they hear, they go out and deliberate, they come to a unanimous opinion, and it is generally admitted that the parties to the suit might almost as well have tossed up a penny to decide! Such is man’s glory!⁶

Having little patience for philosophy’s long history of denying reason to animals, Peirce viewed thought as an emergent property of matter itself that was distributed throughout the natural world. He famously claimed that “thought is more without us than within”, emerging first in the non-organic world and spreading from there throughout the organic world (from the growth of crystals to the work of bees and beyond).⁷ As farfetched as the idea may appear, Peirce’s attribution of the quality of mind to matter, known as panpsychism, has a long history dating back to the pre-Socratics and has become prevalent again more recently in the various theoretical movements devoted to material agency that have come to be known collectively as the new materialisms.⁸

⁶ Charles S. Peirce, “Philosophy and the Conduct of Life,” in *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings, Volume 2 (1893–1913)*, ed. The Peirce Edition Project (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 31.

⁷ *Collected Papers of Charles S. Peirce*, eds. Charles Hartshorne, Paul Weiss, and A. W. Burks (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931–1961), 8.256 and 4.551.

⁸ See Steven Shaviro, “Consequences of Panpsychism,” in *The Nonhuman Turn*, ed. Richard Grusin (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 19–44.

This panpsychism serves as the foundation for Peirce's instinctual theory of abductive reasoning, which he refers to as our "mysterious guessing power", "our scent for the truth", our "process of forming an explanatory hypothesis", and "the only logical operation which introduces any new idea."⁹ It constitutes "the first stage of all inquiries" and is considered by Peirce "the very essence of pragmatism."¹⁰ Within the larger architecture of Peirce's philosophical system, abduction describes the process by which his emergent model of panpsychic thought expresses itself in both animals and humans in the speculative form of guesses, insights, conjectures, hypotheses, and predictions about the world. Our "faculty of divining the ways of Nature" operates not by means of reason or logic, according to Peirce, but by means of "perceptive judgments" that resemble "the instincts of the animals" in "surpassing the general powers of our reason and [...] directing us as if we were in possession of facts that are entirely beyond the reach of our senses."¹¹ Indeed, in "The Nature of Meaning", Peirce turns to the example of dogs and "the laws of caninity" to illustrate the abductive power of perceptive or perceptual judgments to generate new notions, conceptions and generalities.¹²

What complicates an already ambitious evolutionary model of the emergence of thought is the way in which Peirce conceives of it as a vast semiotic system of proliferating signs or semiosis: "We think only in signs. These mental signs are of mixed nature; the symbol parts of them are called concepts. If a man makes a new symbol, it is by thoughts involving concepts. So it is only out of symbols that a new symbol can grow. *Omne symbolum de simbolo.*"¹³ In this semiotic system, abductive conjectures take the form of what Peirce calls "iconic" signs that generate "every concept, every general proposition of the great edifice of science" as their "logical interpretants."¹⁴ Because abductive conjectures take the form of iconic signs, they function according to a logic of similitude and are thus associated with the "hypoicons" of image, diagram, and metaphor.¹⁵ And they are experienced not as conscious thoughts, but as spontaneous "act[s] of insight" that come to us "like a flash."¹⁶ Notable examples include the chemist August Kekulé's dream of the serpent or ouroboros that reveals the cyclic structure of benzene, Thomas Kuhn's "flashes of intuition through which a new

⁹ *Collected Papers of Charles S. Peirce*, 6.530, 6.531, 5.171.

¹⁰ Peirce, "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God," in *Charles S. Peirce: Selected Writings*, ed. Philip P. Wiener (New York: Dover, 1958), 371; Paul Weiss, "The Logic of the Creative Process," in *Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce*, eds. Philip P. Wiener and Frederic H. Young (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), 166.

¹¹ Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles S. Peirce*, 5.173.

¹² Peirce, "The Nature of Meaning," *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings, Volume 2 (1893–1913)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 222–3.

¹³ *Collected Papers of Charles S. Peirce*, 2.302.

¹⁴ Peirce, "Pragmatism in Retrospect: A Last Formulation," in *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, ed. Justus Buchler (New York: Dover, 1955), 280.

¹⁵ *Collected Papers of Charles S. Peirce*, 2.277; Douglas Anderson, "Peirce on Metaphor," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 20, 4 (Fall 1984): 453.

¹⁶ *Collected Papers of Charles S. Peirce*, 5.181.

paradigm is born”, and the metaphors of Richard Rorty’s neopragmatism that “come out of nowhere, lightning bolts which blaze new trails.”¹⁷ Thus, the kind of conjectural or speculative function of metaphor in the pragmatic theories of knowledge of Vico, Nietzsche, Blumenberg, and Rorty, for instance, would seem to have already emerged, according to the logic of Peirce’s theory of abductive reasoning, within the animal kingdom, since the instinctive conjectures of both animals and humans occur by means of perceptive judgments predicated on a speculative mobilization of metaphor.

Peirce’s radical insight into the foundational role of such instinctive ideas in the practice of intellectual inquiry has enabled multiple generations of pragmatists to begin “shaking philosophy’s dust off their feet and following the call of the wild” in the words of William James alluding to Jack London’s novel of the same name.¹⁸ It has allowed later pragmatists to recognize in their thought something like “the movements of a wild creature toward its goal” and to pursue intellectual inquiry “without method.”¹⁹ Peirce’s theory of abductive conjecture reaches “beyond the human to situate representation [and thought] in the workings and logics of a broader nonhuman universe out of which humans come.”²⁰ Thus, while it emerges under the ostensible heading of a new “humanism”, pragmatism has always exceeded what Derrida calls “the anthropological limit” from the very start, relieving humanism of its exclusive claim to logocentrism by reinscribing the question if not the origin of the *logos* within the animal kingdom.²¹

Derrida and pragmatology

Peirce’s theory of abduction surreptitiously enters the contemporary field of animal studies by means of a long detour through Derrida’s 1967 *Of Grammatology*. In this early text, Derrida takes on not only the ascendant structuralism of the day but the tradition of Western metaphysics more generally, arguing that language originates not as speech but as writing which had been “denounced from Plato to Saussure.”²² In what has come to be known as the “deconstruction of the sign”, Derrida rejects Saussure’s “thesis of the arbitrariness of the sign”, objecting to the assumption that a sign accrues meaning by convention alone, arguing that such a culturally determined notion of the sign presupposes a stable “opposition between nature and convention”

¹⁷ *Ibid.*; Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Rorty, “Philosophy as Science, Metaphor, Politics,” in *Essays on Heidegger and Others* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 17.

¹⁸ William James, *Pragmatism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 18.

¹⁹ John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigee Books, 1980), 33; Rorty, “Pragmatism without Method,” in *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 63–77.

²⁰ Eduardo Kohn, *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 7–8.

²¹ James, *Pragmatism*, 115–30; Rorty, “Remarks on Deconstruction and Pragmatism,” 15; Derrida, *Aporias*, trans. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 41.

²² Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press), 70.

that he finds untenable.²³ In his push beyond Saussure, beyond structuralism, and beyond modern linguistics more generally, Derrida argues for replacing Saussure's concept of semiotic immotivation with a more diachronic insistence upon a process of "becoming unmotivated", or "becoming-sign of the symbol."²⁴

It is in this context that Derrida turns to the semiotic work of Charles Peirce who "seems to have been more attentive than Saussure to the irreducibility of this becoming unmotivated."²⁵ Peirce's diachronic view of the proliferation of signs and symbols growing out of each other certainly reflects an appreciation for the dynamism and indeed vitalism of language that seem to be lacking in Saussure.²⁶ Yet Derrida's interest in Peirce's semiotics is due to the way Peirce anchors his concept of the sign in what Derrida calls an "anterior [...] order of signification" rather than a "ground of nonsignification", in which "the thing signified may be allowed to glow finally in the luminosity of its presence."²⁷ By recasting the "thing itself" as a sign and the natural order as irreducibly semiotic, in other words, Peirce not only lays the foundation for the argument Derrida advances in *Of Grammatology* but for entirely new disciplines like biosemiotics, zoosemiotics, and phytosemiotics, and for a strain of panpsychism within American philosophy that has become "especially relevant today" in the context of the new materialism.²⁸

In spite of his interest in Peirce, Derrida stops short of elucidating the precise nature of the "anterior [...] order of signification", in which Peirce's signs are ultimately grounded. Instead he introduces the neologism "*archi-écriture*" – or originary writing – to differentiate this order of signification from the empirical or "vulgar concept of writing"²⁹. And as this term gives way over the course of Derrida's text to a series of related terms ("*trace*", "*différance*", and so forth) that reference both an order and a process of signification, the original Peircean context of this anterior order of signification is all but forgotten.³⁰ Yet an examination of Peirce's work reveals that the order of signification in question derives from Peirce's theory of abductive reasoning which is predicated on "the instinctive ideas of animals" that function as "signs". Derrida's decision to forego a discussion of Peirce's theory of abduction in *Of Grammatology* is hardly surprising in light of the theory's long history of marginalization even in the

²³ Ibid., 44–5. See also Geoffrey Bennington, *Derridabase* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 42.

²⁴ Ibid., 47.

²⁵ Ibid., 48.

²⁶ Samuel Weber, "Texts/Contexts: Closure and Exclusion," in *Institution and Interpretation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 10.

²⁷ Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 48–52.

²⁸ Ibid., 48–9; Steven Shaviro, "Consequences of Panpsychism," in *The Nonhuman Turn*, ed. by Richard Grusin (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 20.

²⁹ Ibid., 48, 56.

³⁰ Jacques Derrida and Maurizio Ferraris, *A Taste for the Secret* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 76; Michael Syrotinski, "Origins: 'The Most Original and Powerful Ethnocentrism,'" in *Reading Derrida's Of Grammatology*, eds. Sean Gaston and Ian Maclachlan (New York: Continuum, 2011), 6.

field of Peirce studies.³¹ Yet in praising Peirce for having gone “very far in the direction that I have called the de-construction of the transcendental signified”, Derrida acknowledges Peirce as an intellectual precursor who challenged the entrenched conceptual divide between nature and culture, animal and human, and instinct and intelligence in order to advance a theory of creative inference, of concept formation and of intellectual inquiry more generally on the foundations of a semiotic recuperation of the instinctive ideas of animals.³²

Unsurprisingly, the instinctual foundation of Derrida’s concept of *archi-écriture* or originary writing has received little critical attention. And while Peirce’s theory of abduction is never explicitly mentioned in *Of Grammatology*, Derrida’s interest in instinct is evident throughout the text, which began as a review of André Leroi-Gourhan’s book *Gesture and Speech*.³³ In this work of paleontology, Leroi-Gourhan argues that we become human by exteriorizing the “operational programs” of instinct into a range of prosthetic technologies, from chipped-flint tools to systems of language and writing.³⁴ For Leroi-Gourhan, the exteriorization of instinct into writing liberates human memory and the human brain more generally from the immediacy of “lived experience.”³⁵ Instead of being bound to behavior dictated by the operational programming of instinct, individuals develop a new “capacity to store [...] [multiple] operating sequences in the memory” and “to choose between sequences.”³⁶ We become human by “placing outside ourselves what in the rest of the animal world is achieved *inside* by species adaptation”, an idea supported by research in fields like sociobiology and epigenetics that posit a “coevolutionary” relationship between genes and culture in which cultural forms and practices are understood as playing “the role of genes in nongenetic evolutionary processes.”³⁷ Leveraging the work of Peirce and Leroi-Gourhan who develop theories of instinct as a form of inscription or programming that becomes “unmotivated” (Peirce) or “liberated” (Leroi-Gourhan) in the process of its exteriorization, Derrida makes his case in *Of Grammatology* that language originates as an exteriorization of a form of originary writing, inscription, or programming whose vast history subtends and encompasses the evolutionary history of life itself, “regulating the behavior of the amoeba or the annelid up to the passage beyond alphabetic writing to the orders of the logos and of a certain *homo sapiens*.”³⁸

³¹ For more on this history of marginalization, see João Queiroz and Floyd Merrell, “Abduction: Between Subjectivity and Objectivity,” *Semiotica* 153, 1 (2005), 1–7.

³² Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 49.

³³ *Ibid.*, 323; note 1.

³⁴ André Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech*, trans. Anna Bostock Berger (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993), 219–35.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 227.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 220–7.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 235; E. O. Wilson, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* (New York: Vintage, 1999), 35.

³⁸ Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 84.

It is not until the late 1990s that Derrida finally turns to the subject of animals more directly in a series of lectures published posthumously as *The Animal that Therefore I Am*, a work generally regarded as an outline of a larger project that was never brought to fruition. In this late work, Derrida offers an account of his long interest in animals dating back to 1968; a sweeping critique of philosophy's disavowal of the animal from Aristotle to Heidegger; an effort to rethink animals in relation to qualities and characteristics that philosophy had reserved as exclusively human, including speech, reason, and culture; and some reflections on the arrogance of what calls itself man to reserve for itself precisely those qualities and characteristics it denies to animals.³⁹ Over the course of his discussion Derrida frequently returns to the subject of animals and language.⁴⁰ In response to philosophy's categorical denial of language to animals, he suggests not "giving speech back' to animals" but thinking "the absence of the name and of the words [...] as something other than privation."⁴¹ And while he appears to have in mind an olfactory notion of the trace in his discussion of the instinctive ability of animals to find their way on the basis of scent, his discussion of the olfactory trace never advances beyond questions of auto-affection, animal narcissism, and the Lacanian mirror stage, which evoke Derrida's discussion of Leroi-Gourhan and the emergence of human subjectivity in *Of Grammatology*.⁴²

It is likely that Derrida's failure to develop his ideas further was due to his inability to see this project through before his untimely death. Yet, it is also possible that his passionate rejection of "biologistic continuism" or "homogeneous continuity" between animals and humans prevented him from openly addressing the logic of abduction given its relation to Peirce's continuist ontology of synechism.⁴³ Whatever the case may be, Derrida's relation to Peirce seems ambiguous at best since Derrida advances his theory of *archi-écriture* or originary writing in *Of Grammatology* with the help of Peirce's theory of abduction which is predicated on the very continuism that Derrida later rejects. In any event it may turn out that Derrida's methodological insistence on difference is simply less productive for rethinking the animal / human distinction than, as Matthew Calarco suggests, setting aside "the concern with anthropological difference(s) – at least temporarily – in order to develop alternative lines of thought."⁴⁴

³⁹ Derrida, *The Animal that Therefore I Am*, trans. David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 135.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 50.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁴⁴ Matthew Calarco, *Thinking Through Animals* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 51.

Massumi and speculative pragmatism

In contrast to the paradigm of “difference” into which Derrida’s work falls, a new approach is currently emerging within animals studies under the heading of “indistinction” predicated on the possibility of a non-anthropocentric continuity between animals and humans.⁴⁵ Deleuze and Guattari’s idea of becoming animal has become the emblem of this new impulse. Scholars working within this emergent paradigm like Donna Haraway and Brian Massumi, for instance, make a point of embracing the idea of continuity between species and affirming, in the words of Haraway, “the pleasure of connection of human and other living creatures.”⁴⁶ Of particular interest in this context is the work of Massumi whose “speculative pragmatism” combines evolutionary and processual thinking from various thinkers and traditions, from Peirce and Whitehead to Deleuze and Guattari, which allows him to circumvent the animal/human distinction in the interest of developing Deleuze’s ideas of “disjunctive syntheses” and “zones of indistinction” between animals and humans.⁴⁷ Massumi does not hesitate to acknowledge the importance of Peirce’s theory of abduction for speculative pragmatism. Indeed, Peirce’s model of abductive inference or conjecture represents an early precursor to the posthumanist model of speculation on which Massumi’s speculative philosophy is predicated. It serves as the template for Massumi’s theory of primary consciousness which is a noncognitive and nonsubjective “immanent in-between”, mediating instinct and experience that is common to animals and humans alike.⁴⁸ Massumi’s signature methodological gesture of merging the speculative and the pragmatic in a disjunctive synthesis of the theoretical and the practical – his re-situation of the theoretical within the practical – revises and updates Peirce’s theory of abduction for an emergent epistemic paradigm predicated on process, immanence, and nonhuman agency. It is worth noting, however, that where Peirce ultimately describes abduction as a process by which metaphor (as *hypoicon*) mediates the relation between the deeper reserve of instinctual knowledge and lived experience, Massumi focuses on the immanence of abduction as “thought that is still couched in bodily feeling” and “as an immediately lived ‘hypothesis.’”⁴⁹ What remains unclear is whether the rhetorically mediated conjectures and speculations of Peircean abduction can be accommodated within a philosophical framework predicated on immanence. It is telling that this impasse becomes most pronounced in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, for whom the process of becoming animal is something like the inverse or

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 34–51.

⁴⁶ Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 152; see also Calarco, *Thinking Through Animals*, 52.

⁴⁷ Brian Massumi, *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 49; Calarco, *Thinking Through Animals*, 48, 58.

⁴⁸ Brian Massumi, *What Animals Teach Us about Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 36.

⁴⁹ Brian Massumi, *Politics of Affect* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 9; Massumi, *What Animals Teach Us*, 107; note 41.

the opposite of metaphorical territorialization and for whom immanence is not only incompatible with metaphor, but in fact “the abolition of all metaphor.”⁵⁰

I would like to suggest that Massumi’s discussion of animal communication in *What Animals Teach Us about Politics* may help to resolve this theoretical difficulty. In this work Massumi argues that the concept of instinct has been neglected for far too long by the theoretical disciplines and should be recovered from the “dust bin of natural history” in light of its pragmatic relation to creativity, elasticity, improvisation, and sympathy.⁵¹ Drawing on earlier work by Gregory Bateson and others on nonverbal communication in animals, Massumi describes the instinctive behavior of animal play as a kind of gestural language, in which participants use feigned or play bites as “play signals” that communicate to their partners that their behavior is not aggressive. Following Bateson and Haraway, Massumi interprets such play bites as “implicit metastatements” that negate their own denotative meaning of aggression and fighting. In the very act of biting, in other words, the play bite must make the “gestural statement ‘this is not a bite’”, negating its own denotation, in order to communicate its more playful intention.⁵² Massumi refers to this gestural language as an “enactive pragmatics of lived abstraction”, a performative model of signification mediated through action, gesture, and touch rather than speech.⁵³ While Massumi explicitly follows Deleuze and Guattari in their insistence on the “abolition of metaphor” in the process of “becoming animal”, the fundamentally analogous relation between the instinctual behaviors of fighting and play suggests the possibility of conceiving of the play bite as a gestural metaphor, in which the literal or denotative “meaning” of the bite is negated or suspended in its figural application.⁵⁴ In this case, in which the animal instinct for fighting is mobilized metaphorically in play, one might rather speak of an “enactive *metaphorics* of lived abstraction.” Such an immanent or gestural model of abductive metaphor common to both animals and humans would go far in reconciling Peirce with Deleuze and Guattari in Massumi’s work.⁵⁵ It would also shed light on Massumi’s suggestions that “animal play creates the conditions for language” and that “it is actually in language [and more specifically in writing] that the human reaches its highest degree of animality.”⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Massumi, *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 98, 179–180; note 8; Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 69. See also Daniel Smith, “Sense and Literality: Why There Are No Metaphors in Deleuze’s Philosophy,” in *Deleuze and Guattari’s Philosophy of Freedom: Freedom’s Refrain*, eds. Dorothea Olkowski and Eftichis Pirovolakis (New York: Routledge, 2012), 44–67.

⁵¹ Massumi, *What Animals Teach Us*, 117.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 6–7.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁵⁵ On the role of the body in Peirce’s abductive metaphor, see Bent Sørensen, Torkild Thellefsen, and Morten Moth, “Metaphor and Cognition from a Peircean Perspective,” *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society: A Quarterly Journal in American Philosophy* 43, 3 (2007), 572–3.

⁵⁶ Massumi, *What Animals Teach Us*, 8.

Conclusion

Ultimately, Derrida and Massumi share a deep appreciation of the value of Peirce's theory of abduction in their efforts to rethink the relation between animals and language. Derrida uses Peirce's work to advance his theory that writing emerges from within the natural realm (in the form of *archi-écriture*) long before humanity makes its evolutionary appearance, while Massumi teases out its more immanent, gestural elements in order to advance his ideas about enactive pragmatics, lived abstraction, and the animality of writing more generally. And yet profound differences between them remain. Has our animality long since withdrawn from us in the process of its exteriorization in writing, as Derrida's work suggests? Or is it rather precisely in language and writing that we reclaim our animality, as Massumi's work suggests? Is writing, in other words, an instance of "following animal" or "becoming animal"? And when we turn from philosophical abstraction to living experience in order to follow "the call of the wild" in the words of William James invoking Jack London, are we on the trail of an animality that ranges far beyond us or one that is immanent within us?

I am struck finally by the extent to which such questions concern the contested place of metaphor in the process of becoming animal. Interpreting the history of American pragmatism as a process of becoming animal means acknowledging of the metaphoricity of abductive conjecture from Peirce to Rorty and beyond, while the process of becoming animal that originates in the work of Deleuze and Guattari demands "the abolition of all metaphor." In his embrace of Peirce and Deleuze and Guattari, Massumi seems to be operating on both sides of this debate. While I have tried to suggest here, however briefly, that Massumi's conception of animal communication is not incompatible with Peirce's abductive metaphor, more work remains to be done to determine whether metaphor and immanence can be reconciled, whether they can enter or perhaps even inhabit a zone of indistinction of their very own.

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