

POSTHUMAN ETHICS



Posthuman Ethics

Embodiment and Cultural Theory

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ASHGATE

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Chapter 1 Posthuman Ethics

Posthuman theory asks in various ways what it means to be human in a time where philosophy has become suspicious of claims about human subjectivity. Those subjects who were historically considered aberrant and our future lives becoming increasingly hybrid show we have always been and are continuously transforming into posthumans. What are the ethical considerations of thinking the posthuman? *Posthuman Ethics* asks not what the posthuman is, but how posthuman theory creates new, imaginative ways of understanding relations between lives. Ethics is a practice of activist, adaptive and creative interaction which avoids claims to overarching moral structures. Inherent in thinking posthuman ethics is the status of bodies as the site of lives inextricable from philosophy, thought, experiments in being and fantasies of the future. *Posthuman Ethics* examines certain kinds of bodies to think new relations that offer liberty and a contemplation of the practices of power which have been exerted upon bodies.

The privileged site of *Posthuman Ethics* is historically and philosophically the oppressed site of life which does not register as entirely viable within humanist operations of knowledge, power and majoritarian systems. Michel Foucault states: 'I wonder whether, before one poses the question of ideology, it wouldn't be more materialist to study first the question of the body and the effects of power on it' (1980, 58). Posthuman Ethics could have been called Posthuman Bodies in reference to the crucial status of bodies in posthuman philosophy. The body, reconfiguring relation and ethical emergences of bodies beyond being received through representation, external and within consciousness negotiating reality through representative perception, is the foundation and the site of the event of the posthuman encounter. Thought and flesh, the distance between bodies, and ethics constituted through aesthetics are three trajectories along which *Posthuman* Ethics attempts to delimit prescriptive relations to formulate joyous extensions of expression and force by encounters with and events of alterity. Benedict Spinoza's ethics directly challenges the Cartesian necessitation of the bifurcation between mind and body which act upon each other in turn. Whichever turn precedes the other, their alienation is complete and thus the distribution from internal body to the body of the polis as the state imposing upon docile bodies and obedient or resistant bodies acting upon the state failed to account for some basic but foundational tenets of the post-human: that there is no body without the mind and that they are not separate, because they are not separate they cannot be ordered hierarchically, that the mind as corporeal thus proves consciousness is not given, thereby will and affects are never entirely accounted for, predictable or discrete. Spinoza pre-empts the posthuman body which exceeds humanism, metaphysics

and God but in its most ethical emergence reminds us all we are is bodies with the capacity for experiencing more and less beneficial affects and degrees of appetite. In Spinoza, will comes from the mind, appetite from the body, but these are different ways of expressing the interactions which occur within and uniquely for each thing. The desire to persist is all that constitutes a thing and that which makes the thing unlike any other, which gives the thing its essence. Between things there is no commonality except a harmony which enhances joy or exercises destruction. Things are specific unto themselves and each interaction between things creates further specificity. The endeavour to exist defines the existence of the thing but the nature of its existence is not transparent. Taking the central notion of desire around which much Continental Philosophy resonates, will of the mind – at once clear, distinct and confused – and appetite of the body:

is, in fact, nothing else but man's essence, from the nature of which necessarily follow all the results which tend to its preservation ... further, between appetite and desire there is no difference ... whatever increases or diminishes, helps or hinders the power of activity in our body, the idea thereof increases or diminishes, helps or hinders the power of thought in our mind. (Spinoza 1957, 36)

Gilles Deleuze summarizes Spinoza's contribution by stating 'what is action in the mind is necessarily an action in the body as well, and what is a passion in the body is necessarily a passion in the mind. There is no primacy of one series over the other' (Deleuze 1988b, 18). A thing's essence comes from its capacity to act as a form of preservation. Preservation is developed by a thing's sustenance of its essence. Preservation is essence and the capacity to act the freedom of the thing as an involution of flesh and mind. The tendency to preservation is what makes each thing a singular event of life, but preservation is of life alone, over its inherent nature or quality. Preservation is active as expressive and is separate from any notion of the preservation of a thing's sameness to itself. For Spinoza thought is a thing's power to increase, that is, to alter, transform, develop and expand, so the differentiation of the thing directly correlates with its liberty. Ethics as a system of relation makes each thing's essence come from preservation irreducibly independent from confirmation of similarity to itself at each moment. The gift of liberty is allowing the power of the other to expand toward unknown futures. To diminish the other's capacity to multiply and extend its capacities is in Spinoza hate. Hate is a form of pleasure - 'he who conceives the object of his hate is destroyed will feel pleasure' (1957, 41). Thus all force, both love and hate, is desire. And all force is affect. But further Posthuman Ethics will base ethics on

¹ Seigworth points to the mistranslation of affect, which, in most English editions of Spinoza translations is 'emotion'. He describes the failure of singular emotion to account for *affectio* and *affectus* and then the soul, which, from two to three become 'multitudinous affectivity' (160) as described by Deleuze. Spinoza defines desire (from which all affects come) as already at least three by which all other emotions arise (1957, 37). It is clear

the premise that all conception is hateful ethics, in a deliberate truncated reading of Spinoza's claim this book will claim that 'he who conceives the object destroys the object', imposing a claim upon a body conditional on monodirectional exertions of perception as conception, limiting expressivity without limit. Ethical encounters are different to Kant's morality of benevolent totalizing ascension without qualification for which aesthetics (and thereby a certain definition of representation and perception) is responsible. The distance, even though unknowable, between things by which Kant and Hegel operate, even taking into account Hegel's criticism of Kant's claim natural beauty is co equivalent with spiritual and artistic, is closed with Spinoza's intimacy of organisms liberated or oppressed by expression of the other by the self and the openings to joy which seek to expand through thought without knowledge.² Serres opposes perception as a war waged against creation as an act of love: 'The text on perception ends with conception' (Serres 2000, 38-39). Further to this Spinoza says 'the world would be much happier if men were as fully able to keep silence as they are to speak' (1957, 30 original emphasis). Bodies in inextricable proximity involve a threefold ethical consideration – the critique of the detrimental effect a claim to knowledge of another body perpetrates; address as creative expressivity opening the capacity for the other to express; acknowledgement and celebration of the difficult new a-system of bio-relations as an ongoing, irresolvable but ethical for being so, interactive, mediative project of desire. Fèlix Guattari calls this 'sense without signification' (2011, 59), a language of sensation between.

Unspoken Friendship

'As the colour of the human soul as well as the colour of human becomings and of cosmic magics, affects remain hazy, atmospheric and nevertheless perfectly apprehensible to the extent that it is characterized by the existence of threshold effects and reversals in polarity' (Guattari, 1996b, 158). Just as Spinoza claims perfection is the finitude of the human mind whereas 'nature does not work with an end in view' (1957, 79), the liberated soul apprehends very well the perfection of something without needing to have made an exhausted judgement. Perfection is found in encounters with the nature of things and their nature is their expansive quality that therefore expands the qualities of thought of we who encounter. For Guattari, this ethics of perfection comes from threshold effects. The liminal encounter with the luminal body both expands a thing's expressivity and allows the other to be without finitude, that is, without knowledge diminishing a thing's capacity to preservation through its own essence free from the bondage of another's

Seigworth, Deleuze and Spinoza each account for desire as expressivity, power, passion and action while attending to its inexhaustible and mysterious multiplicity and mobility.

² Primarily after Deleuze, a new vitalistic triumverate of ethics has been developed of Spinoza, Bergson and Nietzsche.

claim to know that essence. Ethical encounters with liminal bodies (of which our own is also always one) are good for both things. It is an act of love between things based on their difference. Thingness itself is hazy, atmospheric and fuzzy but is connected with and belongs harmoniously to all other planes of expression; 'To assume that there was a power of being affected which defined the power of being affected of the whole universe is quite possible' (Deleuze 1997, 9).

Importantly Deleuze calls Spinoza's a *practical* philosophy; that is a philosophy of practice³, where ethics takes us away from the God toward which humanist metaphysics aspires – be that capital, logic or religious dogma – toward the flesh which constitutes life. The posthuman as an ethical practice is a practice toward life itself, or rather, lives - real, singular and connective, uniquely emergent without predictable development and directly addressed lives for which we seek to expand the capacity to express. 'Spinoza projects an image of the positive affirmative life, which stands in opposition to the semblances that men are content with' (Deleuze 1988b, 12). For humanism's compulsion to taxonomy and hierarchy in science and religion, philosophy and art, semblance often emerges as resemblance. The field of posthuman Ethics deal with life which resembles nothing except itself and not consistent with itself temporally, only tactically. Posthuman ethics sees the dividuation of life in opposition to identity, as it acknowledges the inevitable connection between living bodies as the point of ethical address and, in a seeming postmodern conundrum, the individual is constituted only by its connection to other individuals. The connection is from where the ethical activation of the body is delivered from its place in the taxonomy atop which rides the human occurs. No body without mind, no individuality without connection, no connection without another dividuated life with its own concomitant reality, no affect without expression, will as appetite beyond consciousness and, perhaps most importantly, no thought or theory without materiality. Resonant with Spinozan ethics is Guattari's emphasis on the body as site of machinic operation between knowledge and flesh. Guattari calls the act of interpretation or 'knowing' a body the massacre of the body. He writes:

It is the body and all the desires it produces that we wish to liberate from 'foreign' domination. It is 'on that ground' that we wish to 'work' for the liberation of society. There is no boundary between the two elements. I oppress myself inasmuch as that I is the product of a system of oppression that extends to all aspects of living... . We can no longer allow others to turn our mucous membranes, our skin, all our sensitive area into occupied territory – territory controlled and regimented by others, to which we are forbidden access. (1996a: 30–1)

³ Writing on Deleuze's influence on political activism is increasing. For a number of examples of the interface of the political, activism and Deleuze see Svirsky's edited collection of *Deleuze Studies: Special Issue on Deleuze and Political Activism* (2010).

As a post-structural invocation Continental philosophy's emphasis on desire as constituting the expressive affects of subjectivity replaces volitional will from a self-knowing human with the infinite series' of relational forces. Desiring bodies do not seek an object, but as an ethics of desire, interactive forces seek the best possible affects, those which bring joy. Liberty for the other is the joy of opening the other's capacity for expression without conditional attribution of equivalent qualities which match the self or are subjugated through a failure of equivalence. If deconstruction challenges and critiques the machines that occupy the territories of our appetite-flesh then ethics seeks to resist that compulsion toward the other. Maurice Blanchot describes ethics in this passivity that is constituted not by absence or powerlessness but friendship. Against responsibility for the other that needs to know to what we are responsible, friendship is the response without condition: 'it is in *friendship* that I can respond, a friendship unshared, without reciprocity, friendship for that which has passed, leaving no trace. This is passivity's response to the un-presence of the unknown' (Blanchot, 1995: 27). Passing and passivity evoke encounters beyond demand and within an absolute present/presence with a context defiant of any positive/negative possibility of emergent qualified presence, just presence as un-presence, and thus passivity, open to unknowability, is the ethical activity of passivity. Their subtle relation is of the co-emergent and indivisible. Describing passivity as active shows the dynamism of ethics and the quiet magnificence of grace. Charles Stivale's interpretation of force as affect states: 'The force of "this [Blanchot's] unpredictable" then, would serve paradoxically as much as a potential for grasping the friend's thought as it does to limit that accessibility' (2008, 72) Just as many Continental philosophers have associated creativity, thought and subjectivity beyond subjectification with a kind of madness (schizoanalysis, delirium) Blanchot states:

but when ethics goes mad in its turn, as it must, what does it contribute if not a safe conduct which allows our conduct no rights, leaves us no space to move an ensures us of no salvation? It allows only the endurance of a double patience, for patience is double too – speakable, unspeakable patience. (1995: 27)

Posthuman Ethics share in Continental philosophy's end of master and metanarrative discourse, where the end of discourse opens up to life. In as much as Posthuman Ethics are 'about' certain forms of life, they are ultimately about the end of speaking of life as the beginning of lives being ethically open to living. Opening to bodies considered de-human, devolved, aberrant or outside requires a speakable patience which speaks only its own patience. The other is outside discourse therefore unspeakable. Our own human need for rights to equal some kind of equality pay-off which the other neither wants nor needs if it requires fulfilment of human criteria are *our* need, not that of the other. Blanchot points out that ethics is the madness of the doing/not doing, of passivity of a certain kind as activism, silence as allowing the other to be heard. Posthuman Ethics attend to the turn in Continental philosophy that when we speak of the I/Other we are speaking

of the self as its own othered multiplicity, that dialectics have little relevance and opposition is discarded as inherent in the ethical turn. The space between the I/ Other is one of inevitable connection and we are always and already othered/ otherable, whether we belong to the bodies explored in *Posthuman Ethics*. Indeed it must always be remembered while reading Posthuman Ethics that any and all references to the other body refers to our bodies as those others othered. My use of the external referent is only to avoid essentializing collectives. To be friend to flesh involves being friend to self, if the posthuman body is always taken as specificity, neither lacking nor reducible to its perceived intent, but a kind of remembered present which is also renewed as dissemblance. This act of friendship is to be friend to subjectivity as concept. Experimenting the subject (both as self and concept) constitutes the third and most crucial of Guattari's three ecologies, the others being social relations and environment (2000: 28). Guattari maligns signification as a social(ogical) terror slaughtering the body (1996a: 29). The desire for asemiotic bodies and revolutionary consciousness means 'we want to open our bodies to the bodies of other people, to other people in general. We want to let vibrations pass among us, let energies circulate, allow desires to merge, so that we can all give free reign, to our fantasies, our ecstasies' (1996a: 34). Guattari sees the bodies lived in reality as material of desire because of their materiality; because they can bleed, rupture, suffer and die and because signification can hurt while it oppresses. He does not see aestheticized bodies as more or less revolutionary than minoritarian bodies but part of similar tactics. The posthuman ethical body, ours and others, others as ours and all salient oscillations, need neither be object, problem nor even self-expressive subject but are only and always connectivities. This can be explored through Deleuze and Guattari's idea of the concept when referring to the Other Person.

The concept of The Other Person as expression of a possible world in a perceptual field leads us to consider the components of this field for itself in a new way. No longer being either subject of the field nor object in the field, the other person will become the condition under which not only subject and object are redistributed but also figure and ground, margins and centre, moving object and reference point, transitive and substantial, length and depth. (1994: 18)

Ethical Time

The prefix post- seems to make little sense in contemporary culture. When all is post, post reduces all to a beyond that is both immanently graspable and imminently aspired toward, the human limiting hope against Spinoza's definition of nature. Post theories establish a future-now. Post is what is to come *and* what interrogates what has been and what is. It is duplicitous of and treacherous to its seeming dependence on time. As post takes narrative and linearity as one of its hostages this is not an unsurprising treason. Post is inspired by many frustrations in philosophy – impatience at the speed

with which novelty may be introduced, a need not to further established trajectories but multiply and fracture them, a leap over a chasm for which no paths have yet been built toward a territory with which no one is familiar. In this renegade movement post also interrogates its motives for moving – demarcating the blind spots in theory which are presumed unimportant or non-existent, acknowledging and reworking the conditions under which knowledges emerge, decentring the homogenization and unification of the ordering of ideas and perceived truths. By deconstructing the present and being the nomadic, parentless destiny it refutes taxonomy, genealogy and guaranteed futurity. In its generative, reconnective comings post seeks to disorder the ordering of thought converted to knowledge. Jean-François Lyotard's seminal The Postmodern Condition traces the critics of post, in the case of postmodernism, as crying out for a demand – the demand for a referent, objective reality, sense as transcendence, addressor, addressee and consensus (1984, 73). What amalgamates the disparate critics and their various, not necessarily commensurable demands, is their need for order which expresses as desire for unity, identity, security and a consistent public perception (1984, 73). A conundrum of post already arises here – the criticism of post is already postmodern in its disparity. One of the tactics these critics use is, rather than stand and fight, they liquidate the strengths of the affects of postmodernism's commitment through mixing and merging postmodern experiments and creativity into a homogenous tepid dilution. Lyotard cites the assimilation of the avant-garde heritage by transavantgardism as one example. Again post conundrums emerge. The mixing process Lyotard sees as destroying the avant-garde could be perceived as resonating with the mixing process post culture performs through some of its key buzzwords - bricolage, hybridization, multiplicity. Lyotard's is a crucial warning. Even in its disparity critics are unified, even in the multiplicities created through assimilation radicalism is diluted and unrecognisable, even in a pseudoaddress through so-called new trans movements creativity is purged, and even though the avant-garde has a heritage, its temporality is neither genealogy nor linear. This small example from Lyotard establishes a key premise of post – there is nothing necessarily post in post-theories, and there is nothing inherently anti-post in histories of thought. In this way, there is no time in post, or, rather, post offers a different time.

Time continues to haunt theories of the post. Katherine Hayles' ubiquitous study of the posthuman is defiantly retrospective in its title 'How We Became PostHuman', which coalesces the ironic turn in posthuman theory with the perversion of tracing a retrospective history where the post had already passed. The final chapter of Hayles book is where we receive the definition of the (being of) posthuman where she asks 'what finally are we to make of the posthuman? At the beginning of this book ... at the end of the book ...' (283, my emphasis). Some theorists doubly inverse post theory by their reinvention of (and potentially nostalgia for) humanism and modernism. George Myerson sees ecopathology – a kind of committed new reason deconstructing the destruction of ecologies, from earth to self – as 'a radical potential for an alternative modernism' (56, original emphasis). He titles his book Ecology and the End of Postmodernism. Time is clearly a spectre which haunts post theories through our insistence on reversing

it in our posthuman futures, what we seek to be we have already become, and ending it in order to think anew through what we already thought we had ended. While time is not a major theme of this book, its persistence elucidates that in all criticisms of and questions about the now is the postmodern splintering of grand narratives that have been and, importantly, threaten to be. This comes with the shocking realization that these narratives have always been postmodern in their disagreements and our post futures are not guaranteed to deliver us from unifying discourses but at worst smugly seduce us into seeing anything post as beyond what has been. The ordering of things does not cease in our criticisms of it. Time is not necessarily an important element of post theory, but it seems an important element in how we think we should think about post theory.⁴ From what hopes does this belief come? Here is raised some of the not entirely definable, definitely non-exhaustible, perceived differences in definitions of the primary posts which concern posthuman theory. While Hayles sees the posthuman as already been this should not vindicate, or forget, the irrefutable compulsion to a very specific kind of futurity in posthumanism, namely what has come to be called 'transhumanism'. Many cyber-theorists, and organizations, such as Humanity+ (formerly the World Transhumanist Organization) which attempt to think transhumanist futurity such as that of Extropy ethically and accountably, embody (or disembody) a commitment to the human which has overcome humanness primarily through overcoming finitude. In this way time also ceases to be a spectre, but this futurity necessarily repudiates the now beyond its usefulness for an infinite tomorrow(ing). Extropy could be described as the cyber-biotechnological version of humanist, transcendental practice, while Humanity+ exhibits anxieties about asymmetry in access, distribution and manipulation. Just as certain theorists see the posthuman as coming from an outside imposed upon the base material of the human, so transhumant theory insinuates this cannot be enough, as if there is an inherent flaw in human materiality. A paradigmatic equivalence could be made here between phallogocentric economies of lack, where the absence of the phallus or its threatened truncation or castration misses entirely the multiplicity and metamorphic morphological mucosity of the vulva (Luce Irigaray) and alternate ways of reading the body at all (Antonin Artaud and Deleuze and Guattari).⁵ The symbolic to asignifying genitals (addressing sexual difference as the first step away from the majoritarian human) seem almost quaint when thinking the new grand narrative of the human itself, thinking it in order to unthink it, expunge it from its relationship with the humans who, at worst, question the category of the human only in order to exclude any limitations or accountabilities in reference to immanent existences of other lives, including other 'human' lives, be they considered majoritarian human or minoritarian flesh. In the deification of

⁴ The main alternative to thinking time beyond deconstruction is found on the large body of work on Bergson and Deleuze's Bergsonianism.

⁵ For an attempt to resolve the apparent antagonism between Irigaray's two lips and Deleuze and Guattari's becoming woman see MacCormack's 'Becoming-Vulva' (2010).

biotechnology the cyborg's attractive elements which can be found in the most rudimentary feminist, queer, post-colonial studies – the incomplete, the hybrid, the germinal through denial of access to signifying systems – are offered as a future design for the infinite human. It is as if all the very characteristics which made minoritarians abject have been apprehended by biotechnology with an adamant forgetting of their former use as tools of oppression.

Why signifying systems hated the minoritarian is why they love the cyborg. This is primarily due to the fact that both repudiate the human. Donna Haraway's inception of theories based on equivalences between cyborgs and women and to a speciesist extent, animals) shows that suddenly the monstrous hybrid chimera and the offspring that has no parents because its qualities do not conform to or obey the rules of the human(ist discourse), morally, logically, religiously, phallocentrically, reproductively. Those who were the aberrations of society are now those the human seek to become.

The [Haraway] posthuman is a means to substantiate and anthropomorphise the technological other into something that can be embraced (and embrace back) in light of the 'building out' of skill which characterizes technological development. The resulting 'loss of consent' which occurs only serves to highlight the 'incompleteness' of our bodies ... posthumanism places achieving our full humanity (or full embodied awareness) as conditional to our ability to understand our own information (the data that defines us) – information that can only be uncovered through the right technological system ... the right means of interface as a condition to achieving 'full' humanity. (Miccoli, 26, 40)

The main difference is a difference entirely premised on transcendental and thus pre-post discourse – that of human free will as defining its own self and its future. In *Our Posthuman Future* Francis Fukuyama claims:

Our destiny [is] as creatures who modify themselves ... it is thus impossible to talk about human rights – and therefore justice, politics and morality more generally – without having some concept of what human beings actually are like as a species ... human beings are free to shape their own behaviour because they are cultural animals capable of self-modification. (6, 128)

The issue of time is raised again. In Fukuyama's post-theories will (as transcendent intent, not Spinoza's conscious version of appetite) is retrospective – the regulation of already established technologies – and antagonistic to Lyotard's suggestion of an ethical time. Fukayama, like many post-theories, reduces the future to the way the present deals with technologies already established – technically then the past – as directly and causally necessary as our only possible unfurling destiny. Lyotard states:

obligation is not conditional, but categorical; nor does it condition. Even when taken as an 'effect' of pure will, it cannot in turn be the 'cause' of an effect, of

an act for example which would result from it. Causality through freedom is immediate, that is, without mediation, but also without recurrence ... it will be said *You ought to* awaits a sequel, whether it is obedience or not, and thus sketches out something possible to come, or a future. But this is also the case for many phrases of other regimens ... for instance, for cognitive phrases subjected to the procedure for establishing reality. (1988, 126)

Post theory's manipulation of and confusion over time grapples with this way of thinking the future beyond prescription. Dawne McCance, explains '[The Differend deals] with the problem of writing or speaking after, that is, without any given rules' (43). Time is an immanent now and the obligation to reflection about which one can never speak and the authenticity of which one cannot verify. though speak and verify one must nonetheless do. The event is not the axis, but the definition of speech and verification metamorphose. 'Our Posthuman Future' is somewhat anathema. In posthuman theory we do have an obligation, but it is never what we think it is, because the ethical event cannot be known in advance. Similarly we are not aware of what we are capable of (Lyotard's *I am able to*) in reference to the obligation-capability event but Lyotard emphasizes pure ethical time obliges and enables one within the event of obligation – a singular and unique event – each in their own way. This beautifully simple pure ethics of exceptional moment of the, this, one obligation as acknowledgement of and creativity toward connection coalesces will with ability, thus refuting the idea of human will as coming from a consistent idea of humanness and subjectivity, and obligation with condition, which seems particularly apt in the posthuman terrain where we do not yet know of what we are capable in specific reference to the ways in which we emerge with and as technologies of unpredictable futures. However, and here is both Lyotard's profound posthuman intervention and the premise of *Posthuman* Ethics, this is already the case. Each entity is already that will based on precise ability which cannot be transferred to another entity and which is never clear to the entity itself until the moment of the event of obligation which in turn has never before been witnessed or required. The most 'primitive' or ordinary bodies operate in ethical time as a time never been before which is a postmodern, if not posthuman, apprehension of duration as rupture over chronology. Our anxieties about post theory come from their rapturous effect, so more than displacements, perhaps they are reminders of all the bodies and abilities of entities which the enlightenment, transcendental essence and modernity have needed to repress in order to maintain the integrity of the phantasy of their completion, a future which has not yet but will arrive. Posthuman will, after Lyotard, is that which de-establishes the human as a site both of a certain reality and the way the concept of the human has been privileged in constituting all reality at the expense of those who do not count as human. Ethical time resonates with post theories' confusion, but confusion creates a consistency of ethical creativity and surprise as accountable demand that is not reduced to right or wrong response, correct operation of the awaited sequel, obedience or disobedience, or lament at nonforeclosure or resolution. We do not know what will happen and how we will respond. If posthuman theory has seen this as both a celebration and an anxiety then via Lyotard's ethical time, our celebration may be of incommensurabilities of entities (including the incommensurability of an entity as to how it perceives itself) as flourishing jubilant diversifying potentiality and anxiety as a hope for the best possible force and consequence of creating new openings which allow obligation events that access entities beyond their agreement with categories of the human. Put simply, if, as Fukuyama suggests posthumanism is embraced as a power of human freedom (217) then we must ask, what happens if we were not counted as human in the first place?

In one sense Fukuyama's argument could not be further from post-theory. His configuration of the biotechnological human sees going beyond the human as a human right, human modification as an imperative of being an obedient, sufficient, normal human, and humans as inherently free, thus freedom should focus on further freedom found in extension of capabilities and life. Where Fukuyama's theories are post is that the only thing humans should be thinking about is how to not be mortal humans any longer by being eternal organisms. In stating humans are nothing more than the freedom of force to shape what they are (as a pre-ordained template rather than Spinoza's non-conscious preservation as essence), his elliptical argument risks locating itself in an address to human rights defined by those who have the right to define humans by their capacity to alter them. The evolutionary imperative of nonhuman animal to woman to man to cyborg is explicit – how can a human expect human rights if a human does not see the development beyond humanity as what compels one to be a free human? For those who are yet to achieve the status of human as it is defined legally the idea of having access to technologies which liberate the human enough to count, in Fukuyama's definition, as human is utopian. Fukuyama advocates biotechnological advance being in the power of the state in order for it to be used well. Nothing in Fukuyama's argument demarcates it from enlightenment thought in its essentializing of human subjectivity and those who know best being those who define that subjectivity, its limits and development. Where Lyotard asks 'to what end' Miccoli suggests 'the more obvious critical posthuman answer would be 'to achieve full embodied awareness' (Miccoli, 75). Miccoli's argument is committed to an ethics of rights and his concept of bodily awareness is not transcendental humanism which happens to be trapped in or limited by a body. Rather for him corporeality is simple and evident in that it is all we are and the very site where what we are is contested in brutal, oppressive ways. Full embodied awareness is absolutely present in Fukuyama's dream, but as antagonistic to that dream – we must become posthuman so we can forget that all we are is flesh, that bodies can feel cold, pain, hunger, suffering and ultimately cease us to be. Miccoli's bodily awareness is not what a human body is, but that it is and thus other humans have bodies which express and which affect each other. Their essential qualities and nature do not make up bodily awareness, but the devastatingly simple fact that we should be aware we are bodies is integral to thinking rights, be they human or not. Lyotard's differend embodies the body

that cannot speak in the language of the master, thus cannot be legitimized as a body. If that body speaks in the master's language it concedes to the master ideology. Fukuyama places the use of biotechnology in the hands of the state. The minoritarian has no viable body in the eyes of the state. Postmodernism demands multivocal languages be legitimized, and far from making sure these many vocalities are heard, it accepts understanding leads to legitimation through assimilation, so the best we can do is our ethical best to negotiate (for Lyotard through gaming) multiplicity premised on misunderstanding as creativity between vocalities. In terms of 'sharing', humans share nothing beyond what they can hazard they might share, which, in decidedly posthuman ways, they also share with elements and lives outside of what is considered human. In this sense the posthuman is ethical because it sees the human category as a purpose rather than a thing, and far from wanting to count as human, posthuman ethics seeks to count everything in spite of and in order to liberate life from, not the human or humanity, but the effects of constituting, manipulating and continuing the category, taxonomy and genealogy of the 'human'. The central question 'what is the posthuman' does not ask what it is. We need a new verb, as yet unthought. The posthuman 'is' everything that is not 'human', but it is also a reason the posthuman is a motive, a need, an opening movement.

On Affirmative Vitalism

Posthuman Ethics phrases many of its suggestions tracing first a path along a negative trajectory, or the trajectory of 'not'. As arguably the germinal emergence of post-structuralism, deconstruction delimited monism and constituted a reactive force against the Cartesian bifurcation of the organism and the Hegelian dialectic tradition, elucidating them as arbitrary constitutive forces in the expression of power. The residual gratitude to deconstruction *Posthuman Ethics* gives through the trajectory of 'not' does not seek to validate a philosophy of negation. Posthuman Ethics's 'not' seeks to create affirmative vitalistic distributions which, by their nature, demand the unthinkable. The deconstructive turn to 'not' is one necessary indicator of what is at stake, how it has been constructed and why – leading to the ethics of 'why not', not as a question but as the reason for ethics. For each trajectory of 'not' I have attempted to forge in the following chapters a potential thought. Ideally the 'not' would have a 'not-not' suggestion but the necrophilosophy of some deconstructive 'not' is a lamentation at turns indulgent, or over emphasizing the intervention of sovereign power and the impossibility of ethics within that power beyond a reconstitution of the other through a new overvaluation of the 'I' that mourns its incapacity to act but which attempts to do so nonetheless. Impossibility is a key element of Posthuman Ethics but one which results in imagination and creativity where 'sufficient enough' address isn't enough (vis-à-vis Levinas), and joy comes from both becomings (monster, queer, modified, ecstatic) and from grace (the leaving be of nonhumans). In many ways, the arguments of *Posthuman Ethics* which encourage the leaving be

of the other epistemologically and ontologically results in, for human bodies and for art, irresistible connections with those bodies and materialities, and for nonhumans, liberty for the other by breaking the dialectic of debt of Levinasian-Derridian ethics.

Posthuman Ethics is the jubilant affirmative now-here but nowhere virtualizations unthought make imperative. The population of *Posthuman Ethics* - angels, monsters, art, ecstasies, abstracted planes of flesh, gracious parasites and the dead – are 'what-not-nots'. With responsibility, in affirmative ethics, comes activity, affectivity, creativity and the solicitation of the unpredictable expressivity of other incarnations of life. It is non responsorial but responsible, thus accountable, address. It is Nietzsche's call to create the bridge over the goal, not knowing what will be on the other side, but knowing there is a reason to extend one's own side and remap the cartography of n dimensional non-Euclidean rhizomes. Posthuman Ethics follows a theoretical trajectory which is mediative of, but in other ways particular to, new assemblages of ethical encounters with bodies and entities. Immediately when one thinks ethics in a post world based on Continental philosophy Levinas is foregrounded. For reasons elaborated below Levinas will not be utilized in *Posthuman Ethics*. But this book will also heavily critique other favoured philosophers in order, not to refute their influential and important contribution to the oeuvre, but to offer a different configuration of ways in which certain assemblages and interpretations of ethics can liberate the already-not-human from the traps of human perception, whether that perception is deliberate or incidental. I am not suggesting this can be done and, in some messianic way I am the one to do it. Certain philosophers are more adamant in their attempts to challenge the inevitable operation of human perception, especially those philosophers who are not afraid of giving up perception altogether without giving up interaction and mediation. Just as Lyotard's ethical time knows it can neither succeed nor fail, yet must be executed, the time of my configuration of philosophers and bodies is one which cannot predict its success and it is the very frightening imperative that is the reason for ethics itself. *Posthuman Ethics* shows we cannot 'do' ethics, and evaluate whether something was as ethical or not as we would hope. Perhaps this is why certain parts of the book may even seem mystical,⁶ due to their abstraction which takes the posthuman, like the ecstatic, outside of time into a place of encounter with the imperceptible but materially affective outside. Perhaps also this is why the book will be guilty of what Carey Wolfe states of 'That paradoxical observability of the unobservable, the communicability of the incommunicable ... [which] ought to sound familiar to students of romanticism' (xxxii). Enter Foucault the romantic: 'A manifest truth' writes Foucault

⁶ Mystical is delivered in *Posthuman Ethics* from its religious associations. While some have criticized mysticism as irretrievable from its sentimental Christian associations (see Braidotti 2006, 258) preferring terms such as spirituality, *Posthuman Ethics* will attempt to express mysticism as a secular cosmic force.

disappearing not when it is replaced by another one that is fresher or sharper but when one begins to detect the very conditions that made it seem manifest; the familiarities that served as its support, the darknesses that bought about its clarity, and all those far away things that secretly sustained it and made it 'go without saying'. (1994, 447)

Foucault's claim balances the wonder of the Romantic imperceptible, embracing Outside, with the required acknowledgement that the way reality is constituted, and by whom, is a flawed result of regimes of power and masquerades of observable exteriority. Wolfe tends toward Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler, Bruno Latour and what could be argued a more 'American' theoretical framework. Wolfe, in his discussion of the place of ethics in posthuman theory, explores the status of biotechnology and media in the United States now and this direct application is itself an ethical turn in its material encounter with issues of obligation, neither judgemental (as I perhaps am) nor unconditionally celebratory. Many other posthuman theorists tend toward Levinas, Derrida, Latour, Haraway and Hayles while interestingly those theorists who are more aligned with my framework, such as Rosi Braidotti, Anna Hickey-Moody, Elizabeth Grosz, Claire Colebrook and Felicity Colman seem to shy away from posthuman theory or are more critical of it, emphasizing French feminism and the Nietzschian, Bergsonian, Spinozist and Deleizio-Guattarian line. Posthuman Ethics as a committed work on flesh and embodiment as a prime site of contestation in a posthuman world does not resolve the disparate tendencies but does take a very specific interpretation of the posthuman – those who were already not quite human – and argues it is these bodies which are the matter of another way to think posthumanism.

In reference to the Romantic turn in posthumanism, once again time emerges as an issue, and the time and geography of various movements create their own productive ruptures and fissures. Anne Weinstone's *Avatar Bodies* (2004) is one of the many posthuman texts which exploits the mobility of the concept to bring in seemingly unrelatable elements – here ancient Eastern ideology or theology – to create what she calls an esoteric and exoteric spiritual posthumanism. It does not resound with Orientalist fetishism but acknowledges and delights in its development of proximities of ideas that may be considered with less sympathy by those who wish to maintain a semblance of discursive discretion. Romanticism does share consistencies with posthuman theory especially via Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, Bataille and other key theorists for *Posthuman Ethics* but chronology has been perverted, so this cannot be a criticism. Mysticism, esoteric and other philosophical blasphemies populate *Posthuman Ethics*, but, like avatar bodies, it is hoped it will be no less philosophical for doing so. Returning to the question of 'why not Levinas?' Weinstone calls him 'the philosopher of no contact *par*

⁷ Coincidence or epistemic training may be to blame, but these, as myself, are all Australian feminist theorists. For more on this phenomenon see MacCormack, Patricia (2009) 'Feminist Becomings: Hybrid Feminism and Haecceitic (Re)production'.

excellence' (153). Evoking the transhuman, Barry Rutland (2004) suggests the postmodern ethical subject is a transject. Yet as Levinas, he remains committed to the ethical as responsorial based on the address of the obligation as a demand coming from the face. As privileged plane of subjectivity, even and increasingly in posthuman theory animal subjectivity, the face makes an ethics based on difference, incommensurability and imperceptibility impossible. Simultaneous with the issue of time, Levinas' work raises the issue of space. Posthuman ethics is a negotiation of distance in the ways relation is structured, or destructured. If an entity can face another entity, it can perceive that entity as not it, not part of it and so constituted as perceived by it. Levinasian ethics offer many features of postmodern philosophy's readdressing of encounters with alterity. His claim that transcendence comes from the encounter being based on the fact one can perceive another (without nomenclature of the other), that the other is sufficient enough to count by virtue of being recalls a kind of almost phenomenological differend. Levinas defies ethics based on equivalence and conversion. His refusal of chronocentric causality in the 'face' of the immanent infinite at the encounter of the other is an ethics of time and certainly verges on mysticism as Posthuman Ethics does. The main reason Levinas cannot be justified as integral to posthuman ethics is what (or whom) he considers as counting. The very question of what/who counts or more precisely, never asking for the what or who, is what underpins this book. Whether one validates Levinas' counting other or negotiates it to further include others that may count, this is still a nuanced and refined but nonetheless exclusory ethics of external other, even while one loses subjectivity by placing the self in the position of the other (141). It would be ridiculous to write Levinas off and I do not do so, but there are ways in which his work diverges from ethical posthuman encounters. I would not claim any of those theorists who do inspire Posthuman Ethics would be any better should they be interrogated in reference to, for example, difference feminism or abolitionist animal rights, but theory is, for post theory, what one makes of it, and doing theory is creating theory in posthumanism where flesh and thought, activism and philosophy are not bifurcated. For this reason Continental philosophy, corporeal feminism and ecosophical experimentation refutes Baxi's understandable anxiety that "Theory" remains a suspect term for many social movement and activist folk' (IX). She defines theory as a 'task of analysis' (4) divided into producers and consumers. This creates a false diachrony between theory/practice or theorists/activists. Baxi argues writing on the posthuman from theory is difficult to decipher, and then it defaults to readings of pop culture and sci-fi (201–2). Can ethics evade this false system of antagonism she sets up between theory/activism by the perilous but compelling task to act with theory and theorize with activism? Again we return to the system of relations which is reoriented in Deleuzian/Spinozan ethics. Deleuze explicates Spinozan ethics through the concept of common notions.

In short a common notion is the representation of a composition between two or more bodies, and a unity of this composition ... For when we encounter a body that agrees with ours we experience an affect or feeling of joy-passion, although we do not adequately know what it has in common with us... (1988b, 55, 56)

If 'affects are the becoming inhuman of man' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 169) then man must pass through inhumanity toward ethics. Crucial to Deleuze's definition of ethics borne of common notions is that each element or entity does not come to the relation already fixed in their qualities which will therefore either be or not be clearly commensurable with the other. Deleuze emphasizes that a defining element of the experiencing of affects of joy comes from an encounter even when we do not (or cannot) know the commonality from which the affects arise. This requires we think carefully what is meant by 'commonality'. Refining this ethic, commonality can be interpreted not as resemblance but by the openness of each element to experiencing the other as self and thus self as other. 'Now rejecting this way of defining by kind and specific difference' explains Deleuze

Spinoza suggests a completely different way, linked to common notions; being will be defined by their *capacity for being affected*, by the affections of which they are capable, the excitations to which they react, those by which they are unaffected, and those which exceed their capacity and make them ill or cause them to die. In this way one will obtain a classification of beings by their power. (1988b, 45)

Defining, signifying, classifying and placing into a hierarchy certain kinds of subjects is an act which is based not on the quality or essence of an entity but by the powers which constitute the capacity to define. Enriching ethical encounters are also expressions of power. Affective expressions which elicit joy and novel passions emerge through each entity's capacity to act and be affective not as what they are but that they are. By virtue of openness to the alterity of the other, commonality is reduced to the majestic but simple notion of openness itself. Encounters are not conditional based on pre-conceived definitions of the other to which one comes. This would mean the other is experienced before the event of experience and thus the other as a singularity is denied their specificity. An encounter with the pre-conceived is no encounter, but a reification of self through confirmation of opposition or commonality based on structures that by their very definition cannot locate two entities without one subsuming the other through exertions of the power to define. Ethical encounters are jubilant, joyous encounters of both affectivity and liberty. While earlier I mentioned anxiety is also present in ethics, these two passions are the wonders of ethics in its non-dismembered consistency. A number of constellations initialize this emergence. There is anxiety in forsaking privileged positions and annexations to reliable significations but there is also anxiety in jubilance, trepidation in liberty and in the cliché of fear of the unknown the fear is as exhilarating and creative as the jubilance is frightening by facilitating an encounter with a beyond. Jubilant may sound idealistic and redemptive, anxiety a kind of capital hysteria. The passions and affects of ethics are extensive, rather than leap to overcome them we reel in that we thought we should avoid, because, especially for the oppressed other, there is no luxurious avoidance of diminishing affects. The aim is aimless, the act matters and the matter of the ethics.

Alterity and openness, relinquishing reliance on pre-existent signifiers to become lost in the flows of affectivity, are essential to ethical encounters. Alterity of other catalyses alterity of self. Simultaneously commonality is not recognized through identical resemblance but by a common intensity which is present but not transparent in its meaning or capacity for apprehension. Difference is commonality, commonality a differing and sameness which is imperceptible. If we include desire as an integral part of the ethical configuration alterity is seductive because it is not complementary in its opposition. This would affirm sameness of self to self. Difference is desirable because it is difference which cannot be subsumed, because it is mobile as a protean experience rather than a position occupied and defined by the other. Desire is neither dialectic nor reiterative of self and other. It is an event upon which we can only reflect fleetingly and which cannot be repeated nor predicted. Ethical desire cannot operate in the positioning of two entities aware of themselves as closed subjects. The occupation of space as something is resistant to the mobile affectivity of forces which interact as a mediation of desire and where passion and joy come from the not-knowable of self or other. Yet it is problematic to offer this constitution of ethics as an exploratory future without a social contextualization of the effects of powers of discourse on others in history. Just as 'good' ethics seeks to enhance joy and passions, so 'bad' ethics emphasizes those affects which exhaust or enclose the other, exacerbating their capacity to express. In terms of reflections on specific entities whose capacity to effect have been oppressed through signifying systems, the bodies and entities in *Posthuman* Ethics have been selected for their being at and as the limit of address.



Chapter 2

The Great Ephemeral Tattooed Skin

Tattooing's capacity to make philosophy re-address issues of bodies as intensity and momentum is where its contestation of sites of power is oriented. Deleuze and Guattari claim 'Paintings, tattoos, or marks on the skin embrace the multidimensionality of bodies' (1987, 176). Open thought about the affect of bodies that scatters and fragments is a call to a new dermal vocabulary which embraces the multidimensionality of those bodies that allow us to rethink bodies and their pleated surfaces. The most prevalent and obvious way by which modified bodies have emerged in discourse is as an object of analysis. Traditional biunivocal expressions of the signified body are renegotiated. Racial alterity becomes tribal primitivism in the marking of the body. But as this chapter will attend to the modified body in Western culture which is marked by external forces, imagining volition in the signifiation of the body, territories such as race and gender by which the signified body emerges themselves recede in the face of the body as a hermeneutic object which has suddenly in the moment of marking, created the biunivocality of the modified and the non-modified. The modified body in this chapter will deal primarily with the body that has been volitionally tattooed or pierced, scarred and impregnated with surgically implanted non-human extensions such as coral horns and metal sub-dermal objects. It will focus on modifications as visually perceptible events and so, for the sake of space, will not address modification play such as flesh-hooking, corset training and other modifications designed for experience rather than marking. While attending to other forms of modification I will not be dealing with such modifications as plastic surgery, as the tattooed/scarred/pierced/ coral-metal implanted body present the body as despot because the significations of these modifications, rather than presenting a hyper-active fulfilment of the organized capital body that much plastic surgery facilitates, seem more unstable multiplicities even when they are directed toward fashion or fetishization of transgression. Covertly the 'corrected' body which is created through surgery performed on 'deformities' could be seen as eroding already present despotic modifications and while absolutely resisting any claim that the 'deformed' body should celebrate its alterity in the face of everyday oppression of such a body (an issue dealt with in Chapter 5), it is interesting that such bodies are surgically modified toward a non-deformed body even if that disfigurement or deformity has no physiological threat of harm. Modified bodies represent the impasse between philosophy (the need to create) and sociology (the need to reflect), between volition and fashion, between signification (modifications which symbolize, which mean something) and asignification (modifications which deterritorialize traditionally signified flesh) and between flesh and self (in what ways modifications degender and de-racialize the body) Many theorists have engaged with the notion of tattooing as a mode of empowerment, yet these studies frequently posit the tattooed subject as distinct both discursively and epistemologically (and at worst, intellectually) from the sociologist. The fissure between theorist/sociologist and tattooed subject often presents a tattooed subject as irreconcilable with her or his capacity to know the motivations for tattooing. Yet tattooing itself is as complex as any other form of creativity in that motivation is not clear. The question could be turned from 'Why does one tattoo one's body?' to 'Why do we want to know why we or another tattoos?' Lyotard states:

To ask someone a question is to presuppose that the person understands it and wants to reply ... do we ask this question about ourselves?... Or else they will not reply and the question will remain your business, and you'll have you deal with it without them. (1991, 129)

The results of these questions include arguments that fail to sufficiently problematize the relationship between will and act, and studies that conflate the anthropological with the sociological (hence the term 'modern primitives'). One does not need to replace the question with silence. What is at stake is what is invested in the dialectic structure of enquiry. How can the fissure between questioner and questioned, between bodies themselves, be thought differently? The desire to know becomes a desire to be affected, proximity rather than opposition. The dialectic configuration of the marked and the unmarked fails to address the marking of all territorialization performed upon and organizing bodies by which subjectivity becomes viable. Analysis of the noun 'the marked' and 'modified' body organizes that body. I will argue the modified body can be a means by which bodies in proximity can be made to unravel. The encounter of any other body with the modified body as a plane of indiscernible affectivity creates, beyond a body to study, or Body without Organs, an event of art, body as concept not object, a baroque body, a body where textual inscription extends the flesh rather than presents a fascist regime that empties the body. Inevitably the modified body is that which mobilizes thought. The modified body, while tactically being positioned in an encounter with another body, does not differentiate two bodies, the body in relation with itself and ultimately the nonmodified and the modified. While concepts involving 'looking at' or 'in relation to' modified bodies are given, modified bodies described as skin create relation as an inflection, a between and a band so entities may be considered as less than

¹ There is a tension between the modern primitive who engages in practices considered primitive (such as piercing, scarification and tattooing) and self-proclaimed modern primitives who claim to be re-presenting a former, 'less civilized' mode of corporeal transformation toward a spiritual goal, such as Fakir Mustafa. Both attempt to subvert the negative connotations implicit in the word 'primitive'. Yet those who use the body to create and subvert traditional experience and those who are recreating a form of tribal experience are radically different and discursively phylic in practices and motivation (or a lack of a claim to motivation).

one and more than two. The encounter itself, more than the bodies encountering is privileged. The encounter with the modified body also does not presume the one who encounters is modified or not, and all modifications are unique.

The Western modified body has been sociologically categorized as modern primitive, fashionable, extreme (an unstable matter of degree more than essence), representative of self-expression, a mark of subcultural belonging, but problematically outside where the relation between body and observer is fiercely maintained: 'you will be organized, you will be an organism, you will articulate your body – otherwise you're just depraved' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 159). The invocation of the modified body which begins with the article 'the', or especially 'you' and 'they' shows the condition of possibility of the modified body as something to be spoken about or which speaks as. This also creates an irrefutable relation without speaker and spoken about and also polyvocal expression as experimentation. The worst thing the modified person can say is nothing. Silence insinuates guilt or ignorance. The demand for the other to speak is a demand for an appropriate answer to pre-formed categorization. 'When they come across an object, they change it, by sleight of hand, into a relationship, language or representation... a little bit of naivety is better than suspicion' (Serres 2008, 41).

The modified body is often taken as a spectacle but as an unravelling affect is felt, it invokes tactility of sight, skin as textured veil not revelation, sensorial, aural, the senses become consistency. The marking(s) encountered in silence as epistemologically not enough and sensorially too much are what Lyotard calls dispositif—the zero that refuses the act of explanation, knowledge and law which imposes on desire 'forever deferring, representing and simulating everything in an endless postponement, we libidinal economists affirm that this zero is itself a figure... where of course several libidinal positions are affirmed together' (1993a, 5). The great zero folds inside within outside and alters the dissipations and organizations of desire. Collapsing senses and internal/external dialectics can be created when we allow the modified body to be an activating modification. Of the scar as an active sign Deleuze says:

a scar is a sign not of the past wound but of 'the present fact of have been wounded'; we can say that it is the contemplation of the wound ... There is a self wherever a furtive contemplation has been established, whenever a contracting machine capable of drawing difference from repetition functions somewhere. The self does not undergo modifications, it is itself a modification (1994, 77, 78–9).

The modified self is inflected and separate from the mark as a zero simultaneous with elements of reflection as imagination, memory as creation and a zero time of experiencing the mark which does not seek the history as vindication nor future as intent. The mark is external to the self in that it provides a *dispositif* catalyzing active contemplation and also modification-self. Furtive contemplation comes as stealth and silence but never repression or ignorance. Saying nothing of the tattoo is a mode of silence as voluminous as signifying explanation but so too is

the equally active constitutive drained contemplation of 'I don't care about the modification, it is just there'. The modification is never its own thing from moment to moment and the modified-self emergent is a differing between-time.

The permanence of tattooing comes into question when the meanings ascribed to an image are not fixed. Meaning must be mobile in order for the body to be thought as transformative. Images should not be colonized by meaning; that is, seen as representing a thing, but should be taken as durational phenomena, like the rest of the body, renewed innumerable times. How can we think the body temporally through an act that is most frequently described as a permanent marking of the skin? Even if we see a tattooed body as an affective body it is taken traditionally as a spatial phenomenon – i.e. the same body affecting other bodies, not a body able to affect and recreate itself. But Bergson states:

If it is a question of movement, all the intelligence retains is a series of positions: first one point reached, then another, then still another. But should something happen between these points, immediately the understanding intercalates new positions, and so on indefinitely. It refuses to consider transition... . But it is always with immobilities, real or imagined, that it seeks to deal. Suppose we skip this intellectual representation of movement, which shows it as a series of positions. Let us go directly to movement and examine it without any interposed concept. (Bergson 1992, 15)

The Signifying Skin

Skin is the site of encounter between enfleshed self and society. The skin is where the self involutes into the world and the world into the self. Skin is a marked surface inscribed with texts of race, gender, sexuality, class and age before it is marked by ink. These corporeal expressions exist beyond the choice of the individual to define them. They are inscriptions created by historical and social consensus, while tattoos are usually formed through individual or small peer group consensus. Race, gender and other skin significations place the body within a hierarchical system before the subject can reflect on her or his capacity to represent the relationship of race and gender to self. The tattoo is an addition to the surface rather than a plane of signification into which we are born. Theoretically, tattooing is available to most genders, races and cultures. The tattoo has signified liberation (through choice), commodification (as fashion) and terrorization (in the Holocaust). It suggests individuality and belonging (subcultural, tribal, but also through the forced homogenization of tattooed people by non-tattooed culture). The surface the tattoo creates complicates the already complex sense of immediacy between the internalization of social discourse (from institutionalized discourse, such as the prison, to gendering) and the externalization of self as an enacting entity in the world. What philosophical questions can a tattooed body raise to deterritorialize the very notion of 'reading' a subject through the signifiers of the skin? The division

between the 'natural' materialization of skin and the cultural, volitional marking of skin by a tattooist's needle is perhaps best described as elucidating nuanced versus gross material expression rather than natural versus cultural skin. Either way, skin is encountered as legible. Power could be seen as the interface between the discourses of society and self-expressed subjective inscription – from gender to race to body modification. The skin is where the self enters the world and the world enters the self, similar to Merleau-Ponty's model of two hands clasping each other. Even though the hands clasp, their relation is of two not of one, each with their own specificity yet indivisible. Elizabeth Grosz emphasizes the relation of power within this model. 'For [Merleau-Ponty] there is always a slippage in the double sensation: they remain irreducible to each other. The left hand feeling the right hand is not the same as the right hand feeling the left' (1999, 157). An individual's enactment of their body is different to society exerting power upon the body, but the inextricable nature of the encounter resonates with this phenomenological example. Each single body exerts forces upon its own sense of self, made from a selection of binary choices – male/ female, black/white, etc. - coalesced into a unified subject. Deleuze and Guattari call this biunivocalization, as 'translatability of any kind requires a single substance of expression' (1987, 179).

Tattooed Bodies without Organs

The expression Deleuze and Guattari use to refer to the illegible body is the 'Body without Organs' (BwO). The BwO is not a thorax emptied of its viscera but emptied of immobilized significations of the function, meaning and capacity for us to 'read' each aspect of corporeality reliably and permanently. According to Deleuze and Guattari and resonant with Lyotard's despositif, a BwO is the degree zero of corporeal matter, although zero is not absence. As there is no two (male/ female, tattooed/not-tattooed) matter is not understood as situated comparatively in relation to a set of pre-formed options. Zero is matter as intensity. A BwO has no vertical metaphoric striation of the body. Vertical axes section the body, and each section is given value and meaning, both physiological (for example heart as pumping blood) and conceptual (heart as love). Metonymic horizontal relations signify the body in relation to another body in terms of comparative value (male, not female). A tattooed body cannot necessarily be defined as belonging to the collective body of other tattooed bodies, or as only not the non-tattooed body. It is not a body whose skin is marked as a function of anything – self-expression, symbolic representation, rebellion or mutilation – because the tattoos are not read as part of the traditional organization of the body. Marking the skin is an addition or transgression. The modified is not a body without significations but any significations are localized, tactical and temporary, exerting its forces not through its meaning but through its capacity to affect other forces and alter force relations. Affect is the openness and possibility of experiencing that irrevocably alters the self. Zero intensity is a 'principle of production' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 164).

A tattooed body is an experiment without a hypothesis. A tattooed body creates segments of affective movement more than segmenting the body into tattoos placed upon the signified skin. Rather than explain his own tattoos, multiply tattooed tattoo artist Greg Kulz states: 'A painting isn't just a two-dimensional surface with a funnel attached to your eyes; it's the whole room, the air you're breathing, and the creepy people next to you making pretentious comments. Equally a tattoo isn't just a decal on my back, it does certain things' (in Juno and Vale, 1989, 154). Deleuze, Guattari and Kulz use words such as 'experiment', 'flow', 'conjunction', 'try out' and 'does certain things'. As verbs rather than nouns these expressions emphasize a tattooed BwO as non-organized producer of affects.

Authority and Affect

Gender, race, 'deformity' and, particularly in relation to a tattoo being associated with a lower social level, class are authorized via the skin. A tattooed body is not inherently a BwO. It is the mode of production that occurs in proximity to it. Those in proximity to a tattooed body (including that very body) must open themselves to experiments in affect and force. What happens when, instead of reading a body's gender through the phantasmatically stable signifiers of skin, voice, genitals and face, we open to the gendered tattooed body's potential(s) to affect(s). Instead of 'Who is this (female, black, old) body?' one asks 'What is this body doing, to what is it connecting, what new formations is it creating?' Macropolitical bodies, from phallocratic dominant culture or feminism, individual bodies in familial or localized situations, and a body's own potential to affect itself are three bodily assemblages of possible relations to other bodies. Bodily assemblages are inexhaustible and dynamic. Each body's capacity to affect is what forms everyday 'real-life' encounters and their aptitude to repeat or transform power relations. The body is broken down or connected up into larger assemblages into segments or molecules of force that each express a capacity to affect. The organ-ized body, that is, the body whose meanings and functions are fixed, is read before it exists. Seeking to 'know' risks coming to tattooed flesh only through pre-formed possible signification. An example of a tattooed person becoming an urban model for an anthropological study can be seen in Paul Sweetman's 'Anchoring the (Postmodern) Self' in which he claims: 'Drawing ... from interviews with a variety of contemporary body modifiers this section will suggest that for some tattooees and piercees, there is ... evidence to suggest that their tattoos and piercings are experienced as more than mere accessories' (1999, 52). Even the title of the article points to the author's desire to anchor the meaning and potential of these bodies. His insistent inclusion, when citing his interviewees, of everyday banal speech (including 'erm ...') juxtaposed against his theoretical language further positions a tattooed body as vaguely inferior. This implies that the project addresses a body to be analysed rather than being an enquiry into power relations and jubilant creative encounters when connections are forged between tattooed and other bodies.

Signifiance and Female BwOs

Before the choice to be tattooed there is evidence in ethnographic interviews with a variety of tattooists that the female body needs special consideration because women's choices are unreliable, illogical and frequently annexed to a partner's will. While not equivalent to tattooing, another form of body modification – piercing – evokes similar concerns. Piercer Jim Ward emphasizes: 'I won't pierce a woman who's obviously come in because her husband or boyfriend wants it – to me that's a violation, a subtle form of rape, and I won't be party to that' (in Juno and Vale 1989, 161). Sanders cites a male tattooist who was confronted with a girl [sic] wanting a name tattooed on her breast: 'This girl was extremely fragile ... she was not, in the American sense of the word, a beautiful girl.... I didn't want to do this tattoo because I knew this girl has problems emotionally' (1989, 79).² These statements resonate with Lévi-Strauss's positioning of the female body as a site of exchange of meaning and value between men. As a BwO a tattooed body adds to the population of elements of skin, intensifies different points, and resists interpretation but also deterritorializes those planes of skin which precede it. Just as the signifier 'woman' is not a stable term beyond its failure to signify 'man', a tattooed body is the added-onto body that fails to signify the 'natural', 'raw' or 'unmarked' body, of course always and already marked with significations. Unfeminine women or rebellious women who tattoo themselves to create their own visual or aesthetic representation may seem to resist traditional versions of femininity. Covertly female tattooist Vyvyn Lazonga describes tattoos as another plane of the traditional ornamentation of women: 'Women are masters of illusion. They always have been with clothes and make-up. A tattoo is just part of that illusion' (in Juno and Vale 1989, 126). But neither the concept of the feminine woman taking performance to an extreme, nor that of the rebellious woman, give the female body the volition of discursive self-representation, including the refusal to speak. Indeed these implement a new biunivocal operation. Deleuze and Guattari point to woman as already a BwO. They claim the unorganized bodies of children are invaded with organizing principles, the first being the principle of female lack, followed by the threat of male lack to organize the male. The

body is first stolen from the girl: Stop behaving like that. ... The boy's turn comes next, but it is by using the girl as an example ... the reconstruction of the body and a Body without Organs, the anorganism of the body, is inseparable from a becoming-woman. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 276)

Woman defined by lack, historically denied self-representation, means that what woman 'is' is, of course, a contentious term. Lazonga states tattoos can 'stand

² The tattooist also claims the girl attempted to seduce him. Both body modification practitioners use explicitly sexual expressions – rape and sexual come-ons – to explain issues of gender which are not necessarily associated with sexuality.

alone as a powerful example of who the person is or is becoming' (in Juno and Vale 1989, 126). Technically, woman cannot make a statement as to what she is, because she has been denied access to enunciation of self. Does this mean that based on Lazonga's statement a tattooed woman is always and already becoming? If the female body is thought as a BwO then where and what is tattooed upon it is, by turns, irrelevant, contingent in meaning, or a form of increasing the intensity of the BwO. Does a tattooed male enter a becoming woman because tattoos pleat the organism-signifying skin into new folds of (de)signification? Seeing a tattooed body is evocative but reading one envelops it into a comparative system of self and other, distancing its power to act as a catalyst toward thinking body relations differently. The interpretation exists before a tattooed body can. Even tattooed interviewees often claim they always knew they wanted tattoos, or the desire to be tattooed was 'in my blood' (Juno and Vale 1989, 186). But in order for these claims to be made the question must first be asked, putting a tattooed body into a dialectical situation. Whether the tattoo is seen as beautiful, political or tribal, 'reading' it stabilizes the meaning of a tattoo upon an organized body. If the body is resistant to being described as an organized body with a tattoo, then the role and force of the tattoo in relation to the body can change the very definition of 'woman' that succeeds the adjective 'tattooed'.

Mutilation and Signifiation

Tattooing has been referred to as a form of 'self-mutilation'. Women in particular have been the objects of analysis as representing the point at which body art and self-mutilation seem to lose their demarcation. Tattooing becomes an incarnation of self-loathing, conflated with other corporeal pathologies such as anorexia, bulimia and 'self-harm', where all acts of opening the skin are themselves homogenized (such as sexual cutting play, vampirism practice or performance art). Victoria Pitts cites Hesse-Biber, author of a text entitled 'Am I Thin Enough Yet?', as claiming 'Women particularly are pushing the envelope of body decoration and the question is why? — is this body enhancement or body dissatisfaction?' (in Pitts 1997, 297) Pitts points out:

The image Hesse-Biber depicts is instead presented as evidence for the suggestion that body-modifiers are victims... . In this and other accounts the image of the suffering body-modifier is added to other figures of escalated female victimization, such as the anorectic, the 'delicate self-harm' cutter and the objectified teenager. (1999, 297)

Sociological academic studies of tattooing are matched with a plethora of studies in clinical journals where tattooing is taken as a form of pathology, or as inherently associated with other pathologies such as juvenile malaise (Putnin 2002); criminality, drug abuse (Braithwaite et al. 2001); self-harm (Claes et al.

2005); addiction, including addiction to getting tattooed (Vail 1999); ascetic refusal of alcohol, drugs, sex and crime in straightedge (Atkinson 2003); rampant consumption (Patterson, Maurice; Jonathan Schroeder 2010); and general deviance (Koch et al. 2005). Irwin's (2003) sociological study negotiates its theoretical premises as much around the social compulsion to be either 'for' or 'against' a tattooed body, as around a tattooed body itself.

Signifiation of the body before the tattoo is inked is important in contextualizing the image when the tattoo arrives. The body is organized around the presence or absence of the phallus, isomorphically women come to be organized not so much on what their bodies signify but what they fail to signify. Racial alterity is not a specific and different body to the white body, it rather fails to signify whiteness. The act of organizing bodies refers to the organization of a very particular kind of body, a white male body, and the failure or success of other bodies to fulfil the indices of this body. The 'modern primitive's' primitivism is usually the appropriation of another culture whose skin is emphatically non-white - Polynesian, Maori, Native American, South East Asian and Hawaiian, for example. We find the female body defined in psychoanalytic terms as lacking. Renata Salecl, within a Lacanian frame, claims the disrespect for the body apparent in body art reflects disrespect for castration. She states: 'Respect is therefore an imaginary relationship that the subject has towards another subject, or, better, towards the symbolic status that this other subject temporarily assumes' (1998, 34). Tattooed women are frequently described as disrespecting the sanctity of their female bodies, which Salecl could claim is a disrespect for the symbolic power of the phallus. Hence tattooed women and feminists are part of a greater frame of resistant women who must either continue to be defined through their antagonistic relationship with psychoanalysis and phallomorphism. Tattooed women, in theory perversely conflated with cosmetically surgically altered bodies, can be represented as being tattooed because of body dissatisfaction, to attain a certain image as a result of social pressures to appear attractive. Simultaneously a tattooed woman is often likely to be represented as unfeminine, extreme or radically departing from the norms of feminization. Cummings quotes two female interviewees:

... for whom the stigma of non-mainstream body modification remains strong. Exacerbated one woman asked 'why does it mean we mutilate our bodies if we choose to wear ink?'... Another woman chimed in 'when I got it I didn't expect old ladies would glare at me in the grocery store and that my mother's roommate would go on days-long crying and drinking binges because I could mutilate myself. (2001, 305)

These responses are interesting not because the women do not give reasons, but because they themselves ask questions.

Licit and Illicit Organs: Faces and Genitals

Although the following sentences are generalized I will refer to some gross stereotypes of tattooing to elucidate the majoritarian investment of the body as organized, even if that body creates a new plane of interest by being tattooed. The organization of the body assists in 'interpreting' tattoos as much as tattoos themselves are able to signify. For example, in the contemporary consumptive practices of fashion tattoos certain parts of the female body are seen as 'appropriate' for tattoos, such as the hip, the upper thigh, the shoulder and the lower back. These areas are often graced with 'feminine', small images, florid designs and other pictures commensurable with female performativity.³ Tattooing resource website bellaonline.com marks femaleowned tattoo shops and shops with female tattooists 'with a flower' icon. Here decals of presumed feminine tattoos are part of icons which allow women to access tattooists, although the website does not claim that only women would want to be tattooed by women.4 Being tattooed with large, less feminine images, blackwork (blocks of shapes flooded with black ink), or being tattooed in a place such as the arms, the neck, hands, mons veneris or face are not generally described as feminine forms of tattooing. The male body seems more readily a canvas able to be written on in its entirety, with the possible exception of the penis. One rarely sees images of men with tattoos on their face or penis, although the penis is a common site for piercing, usually for functional reasons. The face is a place seemingly inappropriate for both sexes because the face is the machine of significance and subjectification par excellence. The face, more than any other surface, with the possible exception of the genitals, is perceived as the legible tableau of the subject's being 'delimit[ing] a field which neutralizes in advance any expressions or connections unnameable to the appropriate significations' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 168). Because the genitals are not seen in everyday life the face becomes a semi-sacred site of the metaphysical enunciation of human subjectivity. Tattooing the face becomes taboo and many tattooists will not tattoo faces, especially the faces of women. Andrea Juno's interview with full body tattooed Michael Wilson includes the question 'After you got your face tattooed did the world change?' (Juno and Vale 1989, 39). Writer and artist Jane Handel is the only woman in the seminal Modern Primitives book with facial tattooing – small tears and dots under her eyes. Stars and swirls are becoming increasingly popular amongst the multi-tattooed but their significations are far from the impact of Zombie Boy Rick Genest's skull and brains, the Great Enigma's puzzle pieces or Wilson's reappropriation of the swastika. Even through the fashion zenith of female tattooing in the early 1990s and the popularity of stars

³ Even in design traditions which include 'feminine appropriate' skulls such as psychobilly, the designs are decorated with high colour, flowers and jewels.

⁴ According to Fisher, in 2002, 85 percent of tattooists are men (2002, 97). The emphasized presence of women tattooists in reality shows such as the franchise which includes *L.A. Ink, Miami Ink, New York Ink, London Ink* and *Inked* testifies not necessarily to a redistribution but further fetishization of the sexy woman tattooist as object of the gaze.

on the temples in contemporary tattooing, the facial tattoo is a rare sight. Manchester tattooist Irene Fraenkel-Rietti states the following in the 'manifesto' section of her website tattooed-lady.co.uk:

Many artists, for a variety of reasons will not do tattooing 'above the collar and below the cuff'. I am willing to tattoo on faces heads and hands, providing I feel sure that it is an informed and reasoned choice by the client and on their signing an indemnity or release to the effect that I, my staff and the Studio will not be held responsible for the social (and employment related) consequences in their lives of such radical display. Similarly I am willing to do both male and female genital tattooing, which many artists will not undertake.

Fisher calls this issue a 'moral choice' (2002, 99) for the tattooist. Against ethics as connective relation, moral overarching systems which precede relations give 'choice' as the power of manipulation of signification of self with the tattooist rather than the tattooee. A tattooed body is denied volition before the fact, rather than after the fact when a tattooed person is compelled to speak their bodies. If a tattooed person's power is contingent to the tattooists' 'moral' dilemma (a deeply problematic term Fisher does not define) then can a tattooed body be asked to describe their choice to be tattooed as a choice at all? Heavily tattooed all over her own body. Fraenkel-Rietti positions herself at the extreme margins of tattooing practice. Fraenkel-Rietti's manifesto is explicitly oriented around the work of Aleister Crowley. Her eight precepts are from Crowley's Book of the Law. The traditional stereotypical associations of women with witchcraft and with an inclination toward the spiritual could be mistakenly seen to be fulfilled here. Many of her tattoos are magick symbols. But many are not. The compulsion to read her flesh as a signified incarnation of her religious beliefs is foxed at every turn of her body with images ranging from the ordinary – a frog – to ones which directly challenge and pervert magickal lore - instead of a third eye on her forehead plexus, Fraenkel-Rietti has two eyes tattooed above her left ear. Perhaps their placement could resonate with Crowley's religion of Thelema as 'left-hand path' magick but the neatness of the symbol is contorted and proliferated by not one but two eyes. While I could suggest, after Irigaray (1985), the multiple is a feminine challenge to the phallic paradigm of the 'one', this tattoo is powerful not in what it represents but because it confounds the function of fulfilling an expected and preformed symbolism. The image asks a question, it both resonates with and twists an esoteric or symbolic belief. This is in addition to the deterritorializing affect of finding an ear beneath two eyes instead of a nose. Fraenkel-Rietti's head is shaved, but her body, always shown nude in the pictures on her webpage, is voluptuously feminine. Her bald head could be purely functional, for more tattoos. Shaving the head creates a space for the tattoos to come, rather than being a retrospective part of the entire 'look'. A traditional tattoo narrative follows: wanting a tattoo, then designing, experiencing the sensation of and having a tattoo, then perhaps altering one's look to 'go' with the idea that one is now a tattooed body. Another narrative is: acquiring a tattoo as a permanent affirmation of an already structured experimental look—punks, goths and people involved in other theatrical subcultures are frequently tattooed. Shaving the head is separately symbolic, particularly for women; skins, lesbians, cancer sufferers and other female subject 'types' are bald. Fraenkel-Rietti does not mention her baldness on her page. Her tattooed aspects are intensified and the usually demarcated micropolitics of 'tattooed' subject or 'bald woman' involute. There is an uneasy oscillation with what parts of her signification are most important to her subjectification. Bald is masculine, voluptuous woman feminine, naked is sexual, but here it is functional, yet it is the oscillation rather than the exchange that keeps this body's image mobile and meanings dynamic. A similar form of mobile significance, but on a male body, can be found in Australian performance artist Pluto, who uses temporary piercings, full body paint and tattoos to create trajectories and lines on the body independent of outlines of face and genitals (see MacCormack 2004).

Sympathetic Tattoos

Conceiving female difference must think the flesh itself through a different system of corporeal (lack of) comprehension. Women have rightly refused lack as the defining point of their gender. If tattooing mutilates the female body, we should ask whose version of the female body is this body? Men do not get their penises tattooed on the whole because, within a phallocentric system, this is the symbolic signifier of their subjectification, the point where the flesh is already not marked but subsumed entirely as a symbol. Is the mutilation of a female body only a mutilation in one system of understanding the body? Can tattooing not only be non-mutilative in the BwO but a form of becoming the BwO? Certainly if a man were to tattoo the penis heavily, replace its signifiance with new illegible symbols that changed the penis from a symbol of a phallus to something out of the ordinary, strange or not acceptable, he would be on the way to becoming a BwO, seen in such artists as Bob Flanagan and Pluto. Women are often tattooed in 'delicate' places, especially places where the tattoo can be easily hidden. The bikini-line, upper thigh or breast tattoo sometimes represents a secret gift for a lover; it is revealed when clothing is removed. Less sympathetically there now exists the 'tramp stamp', derogatory not simply in the conflation between being tattooed and being a sexual currency. but also assuming a sexual position associated with objectification ('doggy' style) and masculine domination. The revelation of a tattoo in these places, near the site of castration, could present as fetishes. This would explain a tattooed woman described as 'unfeminine', disavowing lack in a permanent way. If the images in these areas are 'feminine' then this disavowal of castration is questioned. But how would this explain extreme tattooing such as large amorphous blackwork that does not represent an image but pure design? Victorian circus performer The Great Omi, who tattooed his entire body with interconnecting globulous black forms, did so as a career move, making himself a sideshow freak because he had no congenital defects to exploit. His claimed motivation does not immobilize the affects produced by these confounding patterns. The patterns are irregular, so they are not really patterns at all.

The modern tattooist relies less on individual images on walls being chosen by clients, and is now more likely to design an image in sympathy with the musculature inflections of the client. To Vale's comment, 'I like tattoos that take advantage of body topography', Kulz replies, 'Like this [whirls right arm furiously, then shows forearm where the veins stand out and articulate the design itself in 3-D]' (in Juno and Vale 1989, 154). The photo shows the non-specific design (not a series of demarcated images) on his arm articulated by his veins. Kulz also has a stylized spine tattooed on his own spine. Kulz states: 'I did a tattoo on a girl's instep with the tentacles reaching down to each of her toes, so when she wiggled her toes the squid would come to life' (in Juno and Vale 1989, 154). Here a hermeneutic image can be in sympathy with the body. The image is a kinetic one, dependent for its aesthetics as much on movement as the image itself. A further example of the animal tattoo colonizing the human to make a humAnimal BwO is seen in the relatively common tattooing of animal print work, where large parts of or the whole body and head are covered in zebra stripes or leopard spots, scales or feathers. The body is territorialized by the becoming-animal (a problematic fetishizing of nonhumans which will be explored in chapter 4), of human skin or the redistribution of the body's traditional outline by large swirls and whorls of black. The body's 'look' as human is challenged. Issues of male or female tattooing are troubled by the introduction of human and nonhuman/geometrical/abstract, and the distortion of body outline through the emergence of new random literal lines of flight and figural despositifs, an alternative physics Serres calls 'disjunction [which] is arrangement, segregation constitutes coherent parts' (2000, 27). Simultaneously, sympathetic tattooing exploits the specificity of each body as unique, and the same image will not move or create the same trajectory on different bodies. The body is organized now by the blackwork or the animal pattern, which may or may not cover the breasts and genitals, but reorganizes their role in bodily signification. The body is not white woman but zebra-person, not black man but irregular blobs folded as blocks and shapes, repeated patterns that mean nothing. Deleuze and Guattari define the primitive shamanistic body and voice, in opposition to the Christ-head or facialized body, as operating through two paradigms resistant to the signified Western, Christ body. The first collapses animality, corporeality and vegetality. The second is their organization of fragile and precarious powers (1987, 176). Becomings begin as inter-kingdom toward becoming-imperceptible through zones of relation without imitation or hierarchical filiation and equivalence. Some very obvious examples in cultural manifestations of certain modifications can be applied to the first part of this idea. The marking of the body with animal patterns is a relatively common form of tattooing - lizards, zebras and cats in particular. The zebra stripes create trajectories which, without orientation from starting point to finishing point,

envelop and allow to emerge a body in zebra intensities. These stripes exhibit a becoming-zebra even though from a human assimilation of 'zebra-ness'. The power of the zebra as being striped is the most dazzling of zebra intensities via human perception, and the movement of perception the stripes create as the eves follow lines leading to nowhere except other lines demands a body that moves or must be moved around and a body that, like a zebra, stands disinterested until, when aware of being perceived, flees in assumed self-preserving terror. The observer could then be said to be becoming-lion if expressing predatory signification or creating a shared zebra threshold, not because the observer has their own stripes but, like optical illusion which hypnotize the eyes with the confusion of striped lined, all bodies residually can be perceived through trajectories which move the eyes around the body without alighting on punctuating signifying organs. The zebra tattooed body has no genitals, face, gender. The cat, usually big cat body, performs cat-intensity functions. The tiger's stripes are similar to zebra functions, but awareness of perception is met not by fleeing but with an aural roar sensed through eyes not ears, and orange saturates in a different way to black and 'unmarked' (zebra bodies are rarely tattooed with white as white is a notoriously difficult ink both to show up on skin and to maintain its colour). Leopard intensities share their kingdom with spots that dazzle the eyes after looking at the sun. Leopard spots are not circles, but spirals which do not connect, multi-coloured and of varying sizes. Domestic cats offer many varieties of pattern expression, but lines and blocks of colours and the creation of a muzzle area constitute these re-orientations of perception not only through pattern but texture from smooth skin to fur. Often cat people receive whisker implants, sub-dermal metal receptacles into which whiskers are screwed. Similar proliferation of modifications can be seen in Eric Sprague, the lizardman's bifurcated tongue. Contact lenses and other modifications make the becoming-cat more than just a 'tattooed body', the tattooing is one dimension of selected modification. It is almost fortunate that these becoming-cat people (I think here specifically of Dennis Avner, The Stalking Cat) never look even vaguely like a cat. Resemblance gives way to hybridity and both cat and human term are lost, neither half and half (no convincing speciesist cat part and no longer majoritarian human) nor exchanged. While Avner would likely be averse to an observation he has no resemblance to a cat, as becomings are not resemblances his is a posthuman form of cat-ness belonging only to a formerly human conception of cat-ness. It is neither devolutionary nor evolutionary but avolutionary and involutionary. The modifications in these examples include with their inter-kingdom becomings, the expression of alternate powers, precarious because the becomings never become and the questions posed fail to give an answer, perception of these bodies itself is inter-kingdom. This can be taken further when considering tattoos which are abstract blocks, shapes and lines that cover the body but have no resonance with other recognizable kingdoms (seen in such tattooed bodies as The Great Omi and The Enigma). The more extreme of these modifications are tattooed on the face, most often not with the

face of the animal but of the pattern itself, because primitives 'have no face and need none' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 176). The encroachment of tattoos onto the face move the body from a coupled machine to a complex machine. The face seems the final frontier of tattooing. There are problems with these examples however. They do have a residual immobilization of the becoming-element which orients the becoming as a finality – there may be no moving on from the zebra or cat. But the most difficult problem comes from exemplifying. My mentioning certain tattooed individuals both suggests by having an example imagining the becoming is vindicated and possibly authorized by either the tattooed body or my application of this body to becoming. One reason why the invocation of these bodies is important however is because the permanence of these markings and their coverage will affect the daily real lives of people. Without wishing to bifurcate the real from the theoretical the everyday resistance or even fetishistic celebration of heavily tattooed bodies (and this is not limited to becomings-animal but all heavy modification) is an irrefutable phenomenon. Bodies tattooed with symbols, pictures, designs and other images which do not orient toward an inter-kingdom element are equally met with a demand for vindication, be it a demand for speech or insipid prejudice. So the necessary evil of speaking of exemplary bodies is outweighed by what heavily modified bodies must encounter everyday as minoritarians.

Harrowing Skin

Serres claims consciousness comes when the body is tangential to itself. Modification thought as affective power allows the modification for and in itself to unravel. Serres states:

Let us now draw or paint. Isolate if you can, the chance encounters of corners or folds, the small secret zones in which the soul, to all extent and purposes, still resides... . observe on the surface of the skin, the changing, shimmering, fleeting soul, the blazing, striated, tinted, streaked, striped, many coloured, mottled, cloudy, star-studded, bedizened, variegated, torrential swirling soul ... Tattooing, my white, constantly present soul blazes up and is diffused. (Serres 2008, 23)

Demarcation between skin and modification is one form of perception through signifying punctuation – there *it* is. But when understood as a plane of composition, the modification becomes a plane of immanence which is one point of perception of the plane of consistency of the modified body. The modification distributes the body differently and no longer demarcates itself from the skin, qualities over forms. Qualities are all adamantly unstable and unlimited. Modifications can be taken as nouns – the tattoo, the piercing, the branding, the implant – annexed to or added onto the body. Serres' words reference the adjectival qualities of drawing

and painting that dissipate and disappear. When encountering a more traditional tattoo, such as a symbol or picture, the skin cannot be denied as part of the image, just as the canvas and the paint form the painting. Their materiality includes its own adjectival states. The tattoo may represent something, for the perceiver, for the tattooed person, annexed to external referents. This is not why the tattoo is art and why it always exceeds all who encounter it as such. Neither skin nor tattoo, implant nor implanted site represent. They are all-too-visceral encounters, examples of putting one's flesh where one's mouth is, so to speak. The modification as question performs affective adjectival and sensorial functions when not in need of an answer but additionally is always beyond itself in relation to another. The soul defined by Serres is inherently a touch, which means perception and relation are essential in any event of art, including the self which when emergent as asemiotic desiring-desired consistency as its own art event.

In Kafka's In the Penal Colony the apparatus writes an ultimately fatal tattoo upon and in the criminal. But the apparatus is itself the tattoo upon the flesh of its creator. The creation of a new body which is the criminal cured and killed through the moment he knows himself as his crime is formed by his tattoo. The apparatus creates that body. The creator created the apparatus as a writing his own body through his creation, defining himself through his tattoo(ing) as apparatus of self. But, like a tattoo, the corporeal re-organizing machine is part of, an expression by but ultimately exceeds its wearer. The apparatus consumes its maker, its signifying function, like any tattoo, misbehaves, becomes at turns pointless and fatal, and the maker accepts it is a permanent marker of what he has chosen to wear as a badge of who he is. The problem is the machine -The Harrow – performs a repetitive function the aim of which is to reiterate, collapsing flesh, self and word, but as one sentence resistant to interpretation, imagination, dissipation. Serres' description of affective qualities and potentials of the tattooed body teem with vitalistic intensities, a relation of fascination, wonder and joy is created and we chase the intensities, never apprehending but irrefutably occupied by them. The harrow performs precisely that – it harrows, demanding comprehension but, like all signification, there is no moment of clarification. Signification harrows. Specificity, quality and relation are unified without deviation. The machine performs a fascist operation, the machine which signifies is all there is. Modification, depending on perception, risks colonizing and slaughtering the body through a sociological or psychological mechanization of the modified self – the discursive machine precedes and resists the art-event of the modified body but the body is no less corporeal and the event of self no less material.

Synchronizing modification, psychology, sociology and techniques of self as limited to regimes of signification dissects, the body is exsanguinated by discourse. But, like the criminal's harrowed body, the modified body bleeds. Corporeality as art is what Lyotard, in his discussion of *The Penal Colony* calls *sanguis*, which 'nourishes the flesh. Its gives its hue of blueness, its pinkness...

the infinite juxtaposition of nuances that drive the painter and philosopher crazy' (1993b, 180). This craziness is love.

The Great Ephemeral Skin

Lyotard's concept of the great ephemeral skin, while of course not simply skin, seems etymologically apt for a discussion of tattooed skin. Additionally the practical materiality of being a tattooed body, perhaps contradictory to my argument as a whole but nonetheless elemental, is part of this sensual materialist philosophy. Lyotard states:

Open the so-called body and spread out all its surfaces ... spread out the immense membrane of the libidinal 'body' which is quite different to a frame. It is made from the most heterogeneous textures, bone, epithelium, sheet to write on, charged atmospheres, swords, glass cases, peoples, grasses, canvases to paint. ... The interminable band with variable geometry ... has not got two sides, but only one, and therefore neither exterior nor interior. (1993a, 1, 2–3)

The tattoo is an event rather than simply 'thing' (remembering Kulz's claim that tattoos are not things, they do things). Tattoos are occurrences, at each revelation, when one measures up to the pain, to the acknowledgement that, in relation to pre-established forms of thought, tattooing is perceived by reaction. In spite of its extensive history, the questions tattoos evoke from the non-tattooed evince their unpredictability as simultaneously corporeal, political, philosophical and artistic events. Against Iain Hamilton Grant, I do not think Lyotard's is a metaphorical force (in Lyotard, 1993a: xvi) just as tattoos are never exhaustively metaphors for symbolic events/people. Lyotard's, Serres' and Deleuze and Guattari's visceral philosophy marks no discrepancies between 'lived' reality, philosophy, politics and art. Each has investments in, directly affects and is co-present with all others. To claim a concept is metaphoric resonates with the tattoo as a metaphor for something else. The body cannot help but be affected, by discourse, art, politics and philosophy. Being tattooed is not the result of a meaningful choice to be affected but an accidental openness at the heart of being embodied. It puts the body at the limits of a permanent quivering. This possibility is unique, materially beyond the capacity to enclose it in 'reading' or 'interpretation', which is why reading must occur after an event, covering it over while preceding its potential. Inside and outside, tattooed and non-tattooed are materially inseparable, through differential relations between bodies, images, textures, smells, any sensory phenomena.

Thinking tattooed flesh involves a flattening out and making connective the embodied mind so that the movement of being affected by this tattooed flesh creates a particular band, fold, plane of intensity. Corporeal and epistemological difference is not defined as difference from. Differences are both coexistent and specific intensities. Lyotard terms this band of differential relations the great ephemeral

skin – ephemeral because it is immanently experienced (as opposed to transcendent or truthful), skin because, although not referring to 'a' body, the plane describes a corporeally embodied affective potential. Great, for my purposes, could suggest the area of skin in which Lvotard includes the flesh. This skin also includes (but does not oppose) image, thought, the viewed, the flesh of others and the opened body flattened, twisted in a möbian band out toward infinity. Looking at tattooed skin creates a band of surfaces of the retina with inked skin (including one's own). In heat, tattoos (especially blackwork) raise, meaning tattoos can be experienced as purely tactile, offering the skin as a plane of embossed tactile band. We can think tattooing without seeing a tattoo and the affective potential of the suggestion (not concept) can modulate another involution of the band. Great is enormous in size, in shape, in possibility, in time, in matter, in dimensions, infinitely. The skin is not 'one's' skin, or 'my' skin, it does not seal, it folds, extends and opens. But my motive in this move to Lyotard is his focus on the figural inextricable from the material notion of skin. The meaning of skin itself as a plane of inclusion reconfigures the figural notion in phallocentric discourse of skin being the site of opposition. 'Meaning is never present in flesh and blood' (Lyotard 1993a, 44). Like the tattoo, meaning is inked into the flesh but the flesh resists it – like tattoos, the meaning bleeds over time, the wearer will always have a different relationship to the images inscribed upon them. But culture's fascination with tattooed bodies (I could suggest, without conflating the two, comparable to culture's fascination with the female body) evinces the affective qualities elicited by being in proximity or within one of these bodies. They are rarely met with a lack of reaction.

Lyotard claims: 'To be side by side said the beautiful princess, is not to be alongside but to be inside and nevertheless indissociably in the margins' (1993a, 47). Tactically ignoring Lyotard's fetishization of the feminine here, being alongside a tattooed body, even if it is one's own, twists one inside and politically alongside the margins of dominant culture. Far from subjugating the self, becoming-marginal questions dominant culture's investment in regulating the body. For those who wish to 'speak' a tattooed body the indissociability of that body with one's own body is always part of such speech. What is said about the body after the fact takes place perhaps despite, perhaps because of, the becoming of a great ephemeral skin of body(ies). Already, by entering into a situation with a tattooed body, be it our own or that of others, embodiment itself has been renegotiated. Fascination with tattooed bodies is a form of desire – discursive, aesthetic, whatever – that will form new connections of ephemeral skin, irreversibly moving the flesh into different and differing folds and forces. 'Little matter, but at least see what effects, not causes means', states Lyotard,

It is precisely not a matter of ana-lysing in a discourse that will be necessarily one of knowledge, but rather sufficiently refining ourselves, of becoming sufficiently anonymous conducting bodies, not in order to stop the effects, but to conduct them into new metamorphoses, in order to exhaust their metamorphic potential, the force [pouvoir] of effects that travel through us. (1993a, 258)

Skin is the proximity of self and world. It is the point of intensity where everyday, unmeaningful pleasure happens, such as thermoception, or where the world is unmade, in nociception. It is also the surface upon which most forms of prejudice and terror are performed. Skin is where tattoos appear, but also where meaning is read, gender, age, class, race and 'normalcy' enacted. Skin goes right the way through the body, it is the surface of human morphology and the most minute cell. Organs have skin because they are signified, both symbolically and physiologically. Skin is the politic of flesh. Tattooing sits within the skin, as the skin sits within the frontier of culture and self. Neither extricates nor separates self from world, they are not borders but the point of inextricable assemblage or fold. Tattoos are not inscribed upon the surface but penetrate beneath our capacity to wrench them out, physically and epistemologically. Perhaps one could say, while Deleuze and Guattari ask 'how do we make ourselves a Body without Organs?', particularly in the chapter 'Economy of this Writing', Lvotard's Libidinal Economy asks 'how do we make philosophy a BwO?' In this chapter I have attempted to show both that tattooing is a radicalizing of the skin, and the skin itself is a point where philosophy and our relationship with the world can be radicalized, in reference to difference, especially gender. Tattooing incites, provokes, hopefully in a way that further multiplies differences between and within bodies. If this is so, then the subjectification of bodies to a homogeneous system of comprehension can be resisted by bodies that find joy in inscribing difference. Despite claims that tattoos are themselves increasingly homogenizing in both a consumer fashion and tribal sense, the amount of resistance 'conservative' culture meets them with evinces their continuing potential to alter power relations. Tattoos can be called fashion or consumptive products, but on a practical level it would be naïve to claim that they are yet socially unremarkable, especially dependent on the degree to which one is tattooed. Tattooed persons are still defined as tattooed persons, we are still compelled to 'cover up', to 'answer to'. As frontier, marked skin reflects the forces and resistances which Hardt and Negri see being played out on the borders of bodies and of states in capitalism's turn toward socio-economic and thus ideological empire.

The new range of possibilities in no way guarantees what is to come. And yet, despite such reservations, there is something real that foreshadows the coming future: the telos that we can feel pulsing, the multitude that we construct within desire. (Hardt and Negri 2000, 406)

Hardt and Negri mention extreme body modification as one way to create a disjuncture, but see it as possibility, not inherently meaningful practice. What their statement emphasizes is that this modification is real. It exploits the pragmatic materialization of the body in the world: it hurts, it is constantly visible in the case of extreme body modification. It makes signifying systems unstable. Systems respond with attempts to colonize a tattooed body with signification, or address tattooed bodies as a kind of citizen, resonant with Alphonso Lingis's (1994) work on the community of those who have nothing in common. Fisher's (2002) claim

that tattoos are now equivalent to clothes because they can be removed by laser is misguided. Economically, laser removal is far more expensive than being tattooed, and the large expense of tattoos themselves is seen as disproportionate with their cultural value in spite of their being akin to art over clothes. Laser removal is intensely painful and frequently leaves severe, raised scars in the form of keloids. Tattooed skin belongs to a more surgical, more visceral and, I would argue after Hardt and Negri, more contested interface with the world than do clothes. Optimistically, I would suggest that, because traditional forces are reactive to the affect of tattooing, tattooing represents a form of active force. This activity comes from the body's reaction to cultural restrictions in reference to what a body can mean before it restricts what a body can do.

One's own relationship to one's tattoos is as complex as the relationship of the non-tattooed to tattooing. The modified body, however, should not be understood as another object which is spoken about in the context of this chapter. Without wishing to regress into standpoint politics, I am/have a heavily modified body and through analysis a modified body can become other to itself through the disanchoring which occurs in being told what one's body is and why it has been modified. Additionally the creation of modified bodies as a unified category forces a homogenized relation with those with which one has nothing in common. So the Other Person can be understood as a minoritarian becoming. The creation of relations with other modified bodies need not make those bodies the same, but 'a concept also has a becoming that involves its relationship with concepts situated on the same plane' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 18). Modification is a plane of consistency over a collective group. A connection can be made between the collectivization of modified people as 'modern primitives' and Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of primitivism and segmentarity: 'Primitive segmentarity is characterized by a polyvocal code based on lineages and their varying situations and relations, and an itinerant territoriality based on local, overlapping divisions' (1987, 209). Primitives have no centralized State mechanisms. The modern primitive cannot be centralized by sociology, capitalist consumption, tribal phantasies or fetishized transgression although all of these have been attempted through regimes of observation, analysis and signifiation. The very opening lines of the seminal tome Modern Primitives posit them as an enigma, and Vale and Juno cite Nietzsche's demand that through the illogical comes good (4). I resist the term as it has associations with co-opting non-Western tribal practices and runs the risk of turning tribality into commodity, however the term itself as contradictory creates at least two elements which nonetheless inflect within each other and offer at least a first step in the proliferation of vocalization beyond the body which is and the body which is not modified. The mark as dispositif takes modification outside of cultural temporality or even the contraction of time into a single space. It neither refers nor defers but is undeniably and voluminously present, encroaching upon everything and saying nothing except creating a re-fascination with a body – fleshtext as theory, what Deleuze calls self as question (1994a, 77). 'What does the theoretical text offer its fascinated client? An impregnable body, like a thief, a liar,

an imposter who can never be caught' (Lyotard 1993a, 246, original emphasis). The silent subject whose body speaks for itself only does so through an imperceptible language or one which involves attending to languages heard with more than the ears, just as the eyes feel the modified skin and the viscera encounter the skin as an aesthetic affect. The modified body is an imposter without an original it coopts, a thief of the desire for knowledge and the apprehension of signifiation and a liar through speaking neither truth nor lie nor indeed anything at all. Both body and encountering body know nothing of their own or the other body except that something happens when the relation inflects both into one libidinal band.

Modified bodies diverge through the other elements of their minoritarianism so they create an activism of bodies with one shared disorganizing principle that neither takes away from nor ignores other principles of alterity. Similarly but beyond the scope of this chapter, modification can be shared between those who have chosen to be modified (although the notion of volition here is problematic) and those who are considered abnormal versions of the majoritarian body – bodies which are variously 'diffabled' and 'deformed'. A politics of minoritarian flesh beyond signifiation occurs as these bodies experience irrefutable daily difficulties as a result of their bodies just as being tattooed and pierced hurts (whether for pleasure or as by-product) and are also useful, for example in the use of piercings or temporary modifications for libidinal corporeal play. This does not necessitate a binarization of the real flesh from the signified body but it does make one put one's flesh on the line in minoritarian becomings, evinced when the tattooed and pierced body is continually asked in a troubled way by the non-modified 'did it hurt', more strangely long after the act 'does it hurt' or 'is it permanent/are they real'? These questions show the material elements of the body which becomes traitor to the self. As Scarry so beautifully articulates, the body in pain registers as one's body split into the body as subject and the self acted upon, one's body hurting oneself (I am not hurt, my body hurts me). Scarry points out pain is inexpressible and unmakes the world (1985). Pain occurs simultaneous with any imagined volition in creating a body as what Roy Boyne has called the 'citational self' (209). While Scarry's exploration of pain during torture involves a very different ethics both her and modification's incarnations of pain dematerialize regimes of signification, particularly of the inside and outside and self and flesh, but also attest to the inexpressibility of pain which catalyses these dematerializations. The material elements of being modified as act, encounter and body emphasize being marked as being touched, the body unravelling as skin while multiplying itself as single plane through subcutaneously filling the entire volume of the body with pain, pleasure, inevitably intensities beyond description.

Love and Modification

Like cosmetics, modifications always involve imagining their own absence just as empty skin presence of modification. Both form and relations of these are perceived through potential modulation so Serres speaks not of with and without but each attenuating and modulating its powers. A single body contemplates their own modified folds, and those areas not modified are not the background or empty space but by virtue of not being modified become voluminous qualities of their own. 'With cosmetics, our real skin, the skin we experience, becomes visible ... we never live naked in the final analysis, nor ever really clothed' (Serres 2008, 34, 38). The whole body emerges as teeming with art, un-modified skin's proximity to modification and vice versa, the bleeding that occurs over time which makes this differentiation difficult and also the skin as potential site and thus teeming with possibility but also its own qualities of organizing the chaos into a canvas which has no bare space. The body is a series of sites, unmodified, modified or the struggles between the two as folds of each other. Receding from the demand for speech, explanation or at worst vindication through the opinions of modification in the West, all planes of the flesh shine with their own qualities of colour, texture, movement, porousness. Body 'art' makes all the body art because all folds demand attention. The need for an artist in modification should also not be forgotten. Modification emphasizes all bodies as aesthetic events which can experience and are experienced through zones or folds of proximity.

Modified bodies emerge as both art and philosophy. The very question 'why' asked of the modified or the modification, usually involving the modified have to re-ask themselves at every question, contemplating these zones and not simply contemplating or asking but attending at all, makes the modification attend to its pre-modification state (bare skin, without holes) always also a demand for absence. Certain interesting conundrums occur. What is the affective relation between a modification and the eyes of the body when it is imperceptible without a mirror - those on the back or face? What of modifications which are forgotten, because one's modifications often surprise when they are perceived anew, as a smudge or 'what's that' mark, or as a re-experience when another attends to it? The eyes, as the modification, unfold and re-fold the sensorial encounter. The modification can be very uninteresting to the modified subject and the perception can come from folding with the perception of the observer where the modification itself catalyses the fold but is not part of its new constitution. 'The' modification contemplated can be 'modification' as verb and that it is interesting and remarkable is why modifying practices are important. Stereotypes of the modified – variously crusty activist punks, radical transgressives, sexual outsiders, subcultures and especially we who just like them – inevitably create, as mentioned above, the community of those who have nothing in common. These bodies are verified through being made minoritarian collectives. Collections of tattoos and piercings, branding and implants, coalesce independent of bodies and form their own activism. Modification creates its own philosophy as its own art. The modified subject is a conceptual personae. Activism and political mobilization is created through the sharing of a singular intensity by many who may have nothing else in common. Uncommon politics is what Deleuze and Guattari would call an inter-kingdom becoming. While collectivism as a discourse which imposes power limits the body to being only modified, the modification as *dispositif* flees the subject to collect as a politic. This is necessary, the collective demands renegotiating the body art/philosophy of modification because activism is needed most crucially where 'real life' bodies are at risk of misfortune through opinion. Modification, unlike race or gender, may be conceived as coming from will and experienced as opinion through taste. But however unfashionable or paranoid the claim may seem, tattooed bodies still experience malignant treatment and oppression in most social contexts, spanning oppression coming from the act of address demanding accountability to violence. Modifications offer nothing a priori and in order to be philosophers we must create each modification as its own concept based on its importance, for mobilizing discourse, including the modified body as both philosopher and conceptual personae, in relation with the many folds of self and with each potentializing a new creative relation is formed. The permanence of the mark for which it is maligned and celebrated is an event of thought which is made permanent depending on our relation with it. It is permanent and not permanent, not as a matter of presence or absence but art event and encounter. The modified self as conceptual personae is involved in an activism in which we may not wish to participate but being conceived as a particular kind of encounter is often necessary. The self contemplates the modified self, the observer contemplates the modification and the self contemplates self as observed self while contemplating the observer. The third element, the self as other person in relation to another person and who is encountered as modified by that person dissipates the modifications in flesh, of self, into a social relation and the plane of skin and activism become the environment – of art and of concept, of friendship and love. When feminism and modification coalesce, a further microinter kingdom politics occurs. The body as a site of play means modifications are always fantasies. Even modifications which are most adamantly spoken of as symbols of self exceed the self and thus hurl the self into a kind of sacrifice to the modifications' excesses. Modification may be silent but it is most frequently adamantly present when a tattoo is visible, an implant or piercing grows and stretches and even if removed leaves a hole as its own form of modification. Tattoos may be described as beautiful, ugly, palatable, vulgar, odd, abstract, symbolic, all of these and everything else because they add and multiply affective qualities, speech, relation, desire. They engage, because they are real things on real bodies which remind us of the body as materially constituted by signification but also desire, and activism, revolution and liberty a negotiation of both as same, vet too often the flesh is forgotten or purely abstracted. Our fascination with modifications invoke them as 'loved with the most demanding impatience' (Lyotard 1993a, 52) for something we know will never arrive and this itself is an element of the love that body modifications elicit.



Chapter 3

Art: Inhuman Ecstasy

The ethical encounter with art come from silences and the tenebrous illumination that discloses the planes which art unfurls to deliver us from our humanness toward pursuits of altered perception. Bataille's poem *We Can Speak of Paths Taken* expresses elements within any encounter with art, retaining certain ideas about the purpose and function of art without appealing to the expressions of those functions as affirming goals toward which the transcendental human aspires in the creation and appreciation of art.

We can speak of paths taken/Where humanity stubbornly persists./In pursuit of vanished light/Which enlightens us insofar as it vanishes for us/Which is truth insofar as it disappears/Which the night of nonmoral solely reveals/Which we never speak of except in expecting our silence. (Bataille 2004, 66, italics original)

Encounters with art necessitate becoming ahuman insofar as art is defined as that which affects along trajectories deliberately organized to alter perception. This is so even when the art may seem to seek to reflect a reality in a more precise or reduced way. Art attends to creating from chaos but the result is the opposite of the mapping of this chaos by determined co-ordinates – Deleuze and Guattari rethink science, philosophy and art as always including 'an I do not know that is positive and creative, the condition of creation itself and that consists in determining by what one does not know' (1994, 128). This chapter will discuss ways in which the art-perceiver encounter may be rethought. Persistent questions of structuralism and post-structural theory – what are ways of seeing, ways of reading, ways of listening – in posthuman ethics show there are no ways. But post-structuralism's questions do not become defunct. Insofar as posthumanism shows the very questions themselves demand answers, the polyvocality the questions presume is inherent in posthuman's multiplicities and proliferative affects. The death of the author/artist and the ensuing death of the reader can lead to a non-nihilistic vitalism that maintains an ethical non-subject. Art's capacity for fabulation and expression impossible in and not identically transferable to the real world is why we love art and why it is and makes inhuman-ness, or what I will in this chapter call ahumanity. Ahumanity differs from the posthuman, or is a more specific form of posthuman relation, in that it takes as its catalyst the very amorphous, obviously problematic, but for theorists of both post-structuralism and transcendent attainment of human perfection, a type of matter configured in a unique way by what is residually called the human. By this I mean (and each of the following words could be placed in quote marks to illustrate their tentative use) things created by human organisms

that are intended to be something formed by and external to the human, that then attempt to return to an involution with the human to alter their being, with a hope to, depending on which theoretical trajectory one follows, variously ignite becomings and encounters with the outside, or quicken the base human organism toward a more perfected cultural phenomenon (to self-realization, to God and so forth). The inhuman is the version of the posthuman created by an encounter with a plane of matter formed of human thought converted to a non-living thing (whatever thingness may mean within disparate philosophies). Even though non-living, the art has 'life' through its expressivity unique with each affective infinitesimal moment of relation. It becomes clear that in the context of certain art theory which aspires to catalyse becoming-inhuman that the very category and premise of what it means to call something 'art' is dubious. All art is viable to the extent that it is more or less affective to each immanent moment of each art acolyte. Perhaps inevitably in a posthuman context art will develop a term to refer to its own 'life' very differently. I would very much seek and welcome a new kind of terminology to refer to what we think as art, but for now, because there is no vocabulary of and for art's thingness in a posthuman context (and to develop one reducibly would be anathema to the very problem) all that can be offered in the context of *Posthuman Ethics* is that humans can create things through recombining matter that are independent of epistemes which support the valuation of use based on production as reproduction. Art is, for capitalism, useless when it makes us inhuman, but useful in posthuman ethical thought. To define what art is is a frustratingly impossible task, but worthy for ethical theory. Yet it is something, and this chapter, by describing these silent, invisible encounters, will coalesce the 'I do not know what art is' with the 'not knowing art creates inhuman ecstasies'. The inhuman is created through art's inhumanity. Art is, however, different to the creativity of events which are constituted through the subsequent posthuman encounters in this book. The following chapters on nonhuman animals, congenital and other non-self stylized monsters, desire as inherent to (though not exclusively) the human organism and the irrefutability of death are all what could be termed natural combinations of matter with which humans have an ambiguous inevitable relation. Art's is less 'natural' in degree in that its inevitability in the world is a diminished one in comparison to others due to it being after the human creator. This makes no claims to authorship, intent or expected affect. Just that art could be described as something that was not there in a particular combination before a human manipulated it, but crucially it was a nonliving set of materials (infinitely different from non-consensual organisms such as animal intervened with, the 'cured' monster or the making dead of lives). We do not know what art is, but its role within a posthuman ethical relation gives it its thingness without being an external representing object.

Rancière emphasizes that art is no longer representative in two ways. The first is that from an ethical perspective in catalyzing our posthuman becomings art should represent what is unrepresentable, bearing witness to the unspeakable that is in excess of language and to which conversion to language refuses bearing witness by inserting unspeakable art into a register or lexicon that, by virtue of this

inclusion, imagines all art represents and all unspeakable acts are representable thereby they cannot be described as inhuman. When initially Rancière orients inhuman art around the forsaking of the Other that dehumanizes and therefore demands representation in order to verify the need to bear witness, a doubling occurs which shows that inhuman art comes from the dehumanization of subjects and this inhumanity is necessary in order for certain lives to not be excluded. The lesson we learn from inhuman art – the art of the unrepresentable and unspeakable - is that maintaining human perception coming from human subjectivity is unethical. Those who cannot be converted to description and representation are excluded. Rather than selecting equality as a raising up of the Other to representability, Rancière, after Lyotard, claims art's responsibility is to resist the human perception that creates unspeakable acts. These are the 'two heterogeneous logics [which] overlap: An intrinsic logic of the possibilities of the possibilities and impossibilities specific to a regime of art and an ethical denunciation of the very phenomenon of representation' (Rancière 2007, 131). The definition of ethical art is the obligation to present the unrepresentable, to catalyse thought impossible for the human subject to recognize, make sense of, and master. The onus is neither on the artwork nor the mythologized intent of the artist, but the subject's/ witness's coming toward, or path taken. For this reason this chapter will explicitly avoid referencing specific works of art and further what constitute an artistic genre. While most immediately art is associated with fine art, literature, music and so forth, it can also include bodies, movements and experiences considered ordinary in one's day. Deleuze and Guattari state of two forms of oil painting 'The distinction clearly does not come down to "representational or not", since no art and no sensation have ever been representational. In the first case sensation is realized in the material and does not exist outside its realization' (1994, 193). In this sense each event of art, from its genre to material object status is no more than the singular encounter that realizes it. Anything which elicits an inevitable rupture of consistencies of perception can in this formulation be referred to as 'art'. The rupture is limited only to the extent that it catches us up in a moment which is, I will argue, not a dialectic but an ecstatic event. Desire for art is an ethical tactic of apprehension. Ethics demands an address to relations of difference which will necessarily dismantle and reform the subject and thus desire for art is ethical to the extent that the perceiver mobilises subjective transformation.

In thinking the inhuman encounter with art key topics are challenged: the negotiation of descriptive and reflective speech which constitutes possibilities of ways of experiencing that come from discursive regimes that precede the subject, repudiating both specificity of the work, perceiver and event and the metamorphosis that ensues; the discourse which constitutes the possibility of this speech anchored in the necessary and crucial rationalization of knowledge through artistic signification as truth and logic as a perceived rational apprehension of a metaphysically transcendent world reflected in art (often also collapsing the perceived a priori as expressive of finite possibilities); the relationship of dominance of speech and submission of the work of art which gives the perceiver and the artist

the phantasy to describe and thus constitute the work and its affects, and where the expressivity of the work is given the capacity to affect only when taking up the place and qualities of dominant modes of apprehension; incommensurability of thinking artistic affect outside of these systems, yet having to admit all art exceeds these modes of enunciation and categorization. Colin Gardner states art demands we are worthy of 'a true silence, not simply a tiredness with talking... a multiplicitous interpenetration of usually binary oppositions, such as "I" and "not I", eye and percept, concept and affect, inside and outside'(28). Certain binaries become prevalent in the modes of perception inherent in these mechanisms – speech over silence, finite knowledge over infinite thought, reflection over creation, recognition over singularity, observation (or visualization) over encounters through different modes of visibility, apprehension fulfilling pre-determined categories over sensation through resonation and dissipation, dialectics over the interstitial and interiority/ exteriority over an inflective in-between-ness. Revolution comes from the ethics of perceiving ourselves as already in artistic language – an ethics of desire. Perceiving the possibility of transcendental signifiers perceives transcendental subjectivity through observation of transcendental elements - words, images, bodies. As can be seen toward the last two polarizations, the conflation of these binaries is not one of exchange, putting faith in transgression trumping normalization or deconstruction reversing regulation. Binaries associated with art become indiscrete, leaky, excessive, the before and beyond, the in-between and the relational-connective. Claiming art, in its refusal of the symbolic which, in the context of this book can be understood as signifying systems, is psychosis, Julia Kristeva sees revolutionary art neither through what is represented as reflection, nor as creation of a 'new' world of representation. 'The artist's role is not to make a faithful copy of reality, but to shape our attitude toward reality...this genuine act of revolt is not about domination or concealment but about the interstice' (2002, 120). The perceiver's role from an ethical perspective, overrides the artists'. Yet reality is not forsaken in the synthetic creation, it is because of reality's/realities' place in ethics that we need art.

The Inner Inhuman

This chapter utilizes terms such as catalyst and work to describe the art object which creates the event as the encounter with the outside. The outside after Maurice Blanchot and Foucault, no longer sees counting as human as crucial or ethical in perceiving art. The outside involves the disintegration of the 'I' who speaks in speaking about. The 'I' speak belongs to a sovereign language. The speaker that dissolves in art (in Foucault's description literature) proliferates language, 'language getting as far away from itself as possible ... [leading us] by way of other paths, to the outside in which the speaking subject disappears' (1987, 12, 13). Art need not resonate with the human world to succeed. The ahuman planes into which art launches us are outside, we bear witness to art,

it does not account for us as humans. The outside1 suggests without defining encounters which are unimaginable, proximity without observation or demarcated alterity, ambiguity, voluminous void. These paradigmatic elements should not be understood as antagonistic or extricable. The outside includes everything, as emergence, recession and ultimately death as the self is outside self, within world inapprehensible through knowledge. Relation is inflection. There is nothing necessarily dismissive in the thinking of outside. Vertiginously pleasurable because intensely experienced, in the encounter with the outside nothing is lost or exchanged. Serres suggests contracts between artists and art, (non-dialectic) observer in proximity with the impressionistic, pointillist pleasures of aesthetic affects. Serres' use of art emphasizes that its pleasures, whatever form the work takes, are only and always impressionistic (Serres, 2000, 37). This augments his suggestion that all sense is the sense of touch (but not haptic or phenomenological). collapsing the space between as a space of protection. The space between which is a no-space is one of sensation. What is this work? Or more correctly how is it with us? How can we think the theatre of the art-event without the signifying structure? Serres offers veils as a mode of perceiving relations against empty and emptying structures. A veil has qualities which both conceal and reveal. It pleats, manifests and obscures many folds and folds the participants who themselves pleat with the 'structure' and each other and themselves as othered, while in inextricable and univocal emergence with each other. Here are at least four preliminary pleats², which of course are n pleats. Even if the veil is one blanket which covers the secret relation between self and work/element/other, it lacks the hard corners and geometrical rationalization of the structure. It is defined by contours and textures, adjectives, not the noun which is populated by other nouns of which the self and other are just two more. Crucially the veil is not removable. It is also not fused. The veil is the condition of possibility of the beneath which is in turn what creates the veil's tantalizing offer. It must be understood as both separate and incapable of being removed. It holds no promise of revelation of the relation. While traditional encounters with art offer the theatre of revelation of meaning as a promise for repetition, the veiled relation does not offer those beneath perception of sensations and affects. The theatre of the art encounter's players are binarised. The perceiver and its other risk becoming equivalent to any other biunivocal subject dialectic, beginning with active interpreter and passive work. The compulsion to remove the veil, to reveal the relation, slaughters desire, sense and event. 'All dualism does is reveal a ghost facing a skeleton' (Serres 2008, 25). The skeleton is the perceiver

¹ The use of the article is for grammatical clarity. Calling outside 'the' outside is incorrect. The outside is rather configuration of encounter. But as a concept I will use the expression 'the outside' simply to refer to this concept-encounter with a more clarified syntax.

² This expression resonates with Deleuze's work on Leibniz, but in *The Five Senses* Serres maintains an address to constructed event-entities that tends toward more material and even ordinary examples of a variety of encounters. This is not to create a false opposition, but Serres' use of folds is of a different order to Deleuze and Leibniz's.

facing its lover as a ghost. The skeleton is a dead body stripped of all sense and possibility of touch because stripped of all flesh. The ghost a desperate projected phantasy of the perceiver to remember an other that was always empty and could only be real if imagined but as material transcendent signifier actuality never emerges. Just as it is difficult to select a tactical name for the other participant which is the 'work' of 'art' so the perceiver itself needs a new name, the ahuman who is nameless. Serres suggests 'the soul, not quite itself a point, reveals itself through volume... in the space traced by unusual displacement' (Serres 2008, 21). The veil shows volume, our eyes within and without and the eyes which seek the relation can 'see' a liquid shifting, ephemeral immensity, the image of whose surface are qualities of thickness and transparency, roughness and smoothness, hardness and softness. 'All real bodies shimmer like watered silk. They are hazy surfaces... the love of the composite and the many hued are consummated wordlessly' (2008, 25).

How does this marvelous sounding soul resonate with art encounters? Serres explains 'the soul is knotted like the world, and like the world it is unstable ...' (2000, 120) He explores the burden of being a sub-ject, or sub-ject to a burden. Using a very real and very ordinary example Serres explains:

If you ever have to carry someone on your shoulders from the top of a mountain down to the valley, you will think at first that you are dying, the torture endured by muscles that do not know how to work ... gradually and for the first time previously unknown muscle fibres, unaccustomed angles, slumbering joints, zones of silence in the middle of your flesh make strange yet familiar music ... a whole world comes to life within it, arranges and adapts itself ... (Serres 2000, 120)

Pre- and ahuman catalysts, such as painting, music, sculpture, literature, cinema, dreams and other forms of art (all of course liberated from their genre) are examples through which we can explore the outside element because they are at once unresponsive and affective without intent. Where Kristeva states 'The act of questioning is present in artistic experience, in rejection and renewal of old codes of representation staged in painting, music or poetry' (2002, 121) we acknowledge that, as unresponsive, questions do not, cannot, demand answers. However against privileging new codes of representation new codes of apprehension formulate an ahuman ethics of experiencing art. The material external nature of art can be encountered willfully while the molecular and despotic elements of art resonate with the turbulent vibrating of the desire potentialized within us. I invoke art as an example of abstraction of signifying form in relation to observer but becoming inhuman is a coming to all possible events of desire as if they were art and we the supplicant to them. If the work(ing) is an outside intensification which does not constitute an other, thus a potential self, then the most basic definition of the self which is lost is that it was conceived as 'human'.

We do not need outrageously perverse acts of art or modes of expression never before experienced to identifiably slaughter the signifiable. Only the structure of signification itself, a permanent theatre of lawless (because it is arbitrary) law (because it claims, through 'logic' and 'rationality' to be the only option, independent of its participants). Against this war of signification Serres uses the Orders of Venus/Love and Mars/The War of Signifying to explore the violence and violation inherent within analysis, description and the compulsion to know. The relation between the art 'lover' and the work/catalyst element is

continuous, compressible, dilatable, viscous, conductible, diffusible ... that it enjoys and suffers from a greater sensitivity to pressures; that it changes – in volume or in force ... that it is, in its physical reality, determined by friction between two infinitely neighboring entities – dynamics of the near and not of the proper, movements coming from the quasi-contact between two unities hardly definable as such ... that it allows itself to be easily traversed by flow by virtue of its conductivity to currents coming from other fluids or exerting pressure through the walls of a solid ... and furthermore that it is already diffuse 'in itself' which disconcerts any attempt at static identification... (Irigaray 1985, 111)

In the above citation and in her work on the mechanics of fluids in general, Luce Irigaray offers a physics of desire that resonates with the gifting nature of Serres' Order of Venus. Signification perpetuates Serres' Marsian Order of Death, a war against the unrepresentable, while opening to thought as potentiality comes from the order of love, 'the ecstasy of existence is a summation made possible by the contingency of the other ... in fact it is an art of love' (2000, 29). Can we conceive love of art as an art of love?

I describe the relation of perceiver and art to one which elicits ecstasy. I do so for two reasons. The first reason is, as unresponsive, art is not conceivable as oppositionally related human (but it is not without 'life' per se) and so the art encounter is essentially a solitary event or at least what Bataille calls an inner event. When knowledge is diminished lived experience begins and the possible emerges: 'the "possible" in a realm which appeared foreign to intelligence: that of inner experience ... '(1988, 8) In inner experience, when the self 'attains, in the end the fusion of object and subject, being as subject non-knowledge, as object the unknown' (Bataille 1988, 9) which no longer recognizes differences between the intellectual, aesthetic and moral, the inner of the self belongs also to outside. Being inner within outside fuses not only subject and object but time and space, deliverance toward ecstasy. The second reason is ecstasy does not privilege any particular kind of affect. It is not pleasurable aesthetic as evaluation of worth. 'We thus come back to a conclusion to which art led us: The struggle with chaos is only the instrument of a more profound struggle against opinion, for the misfortune of people comes from opinion' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, 206). Nor is it the aesthetic of violence which theory has sought in art both in representation and perception, in order to

constitute revolutionary art.3 Ecstasy has no describable quality just as we cannot describe the finite content of art. Ecstasy found in experiencing art is a common documented symptom of the pleasurable pain encountered with works that take us outside (seen in the Stendhal Syndrome⁴ for example). In ecstatic art encounters the work is available, incidentally, accidentally, volitionally, for all selves as offering affective potentialization to all subjects – there are no limits or specific requirements for subjects to open, as each opens uniquely as a singularity based on the specificity of their qualities and capacities. For the ecstatic, experience is outside of time – arrival and expurgated satisfaction. It does not end in sacrifice or exhausted death (including la petite mort). Bataille claims 'darkness is not absence of light, (or of sound) but absorption into the outside' (1988, 17). For Bataille, ecstasy is found in the leaving behind of objects, the lament which is lost when the subject and object are simultaneously dissolved and the self is alienated from self. This comes through a giving away of knowledge as anchoring the dialectic of self and non-self, presence and revelation, so that the other(s) shifts from another to the outside itself, 'I can provide it with neither a justification nor an end. I remain in intolerable non-knowledge, which has no other way out than ecstasy itself' (1988, 12). Bataille seems adamant ecstasy comes as agony, mourning and painful failure of self. It comes as slip, seeking experience as an event to be sought and contemplated. But in voluminous ecstasy reflection is impossible. This is the Stendhal moment, or Augustine's lament that 'late have I loved thee Lord' evincing presence independent from time as the now that cannot be accessed even while it is constitutive of the ecstatic self. In address to time this could be called a-temporality, where the resonances of present, past and future which, while retaining their own qualities, can be tactically perceived as simultaneous. This also hurts. For the art lover want, for a future experience or the work, already sees the want come from a singular experience that has inflamed the possibility of new desire. So the desire toward a future relation comes from something already been but that was not expected. The self disappears at this point. But of course neither the self nor the works cease to be sensed and sensible.

Ecstatic Affliction

The other of the art encounter is an intensity-plane, not a person, or a singularly apprehensible piece of art or pre-desired scripted act of reading, listening, touching

³ In his interview with Kristeva, Rainer Ganahl critiques the emphasis in art as an act of revolt on destruction as death. He points out this tactic employs either a literal or metaphoric strategy, both of which relocate themselves in established codes of representation, even though content disrupts (In Kristeva 2002).

⁴ This syndrome, the proper name of which is hyperkulturemia, comes from Stendhal's experience of fainting at the Ufizzi gallery in Florence, documented in his *Naples and Florence: A Journey from Milan to Reggio*.

or seeing. It is sudden and too much. For each art encounter an event is created that produces a vague choice for the self, to open to an indeterminate revolutionary alterity of self-other element whereby art encounter-ing is an opening up to the outside, or to nomenclature and dampen down the inherent subversive experience to reform the self, much as discursive regulation and institutions, including those which prescribe correct and incorrect readings and interpretations, re-form the self-constellation into 'the' human. Pain is there, the pain is the decisive intensity. Forsaking humanity hurts because it both slaughters any sense of hermeneutic subjectivity and the rights counting as human affords. The more majoritarian one is, the more it hurts. The ethics of the art-encounter shows becoming ahuman is viable and necessary for new ways of thinking alterity in the realities of life for oppressed (sub) human subjects. Clearly this has always been the case for those unable to control patterns of human signifying systems, from sexual, racial and diffabled others to other forms of life and the ecological interactions which sustain them beyond human manipulation.

Effacement and extenuation take the self-work inflection outside of dialectics and discourse. The future of the self needs rethinking because the past has been experienced as surprising. This involves an infinite imagination and elucidates permanent potentiality of the subject. And where is the work? Sensed before it was recognized, lost when it was, the work is achingly non-present to the self for capture and consumption, yet it remains within the self and the self within the work. The unique entity created between and as the two is the new being, inherently and more than (at least) two but less than 'a' one. It is organic and inorganic, life and non-life, beyond human.

The thought of affliction is precisely the thought of that which cannot let itself be thought ... physical suffering, when it is such that one can neither suffer it nor cease suffering it, thereby stopping time, makes time a present without future and yet impossible at present ... affliction makes us lose time and lose the world ... it is the horror of being where the being is without end. (Blanchot 1994b, 120)

The art encounter elucidates the new horror and wonder of being in the asignified world as a new state of constant ecstasy, a functioning expressive entity nonetheless still outside of time. Art shows the seeming incommensurable, contradictory but ultimately infinite relation with the outside that is always available, and that ecstasy is always active but transforms its nature within itself. The ecstatic does not – horrifically cannot – die. As it is a vitalistic state it shatters the necessity of time without shattering the ecstatic as atrophied, reified as ecstatic, or overwhelmed to the point of the breaking of the Body without Organs we may risk if we take our experiment too far and stretch our tensor too tight. The ecstatic's joy, when the state alters its distribution, is one that welcomes the new pain. In her memoirs perhaps the most famous ecstatic, Teresa of Avila, tells us 'when this pain of which I am now speaking begins, the Lord seems to transport the soul and throw it into an ecstasy' (211). Ecstatic 'being' refuses the folding which

constitute subjectivisation. Instead it experiences self as wonder, inextricable from experience which experiences nothing recognisable or perceptible beyond indescribable state of encounter with the outside. The event resonates with our encounter with the event of the folds of baroque art. Bernini's sculpture of Teresa sees her robes fold and inflect and summon our incapacity to see the planes of the curves which are concealed beneath those we can see, (emphasised even more in Bernini's Blessed Ludovica Albertoni). Shimmering stone, presenting no form but ebbs and flows of seductive, hypnotic pleasure, the carved robes require belief in an interiority without capture and an exteriority which expresses pleasure without apprehension. To the world it may appear pure atrophy, to the cosmos immanent infinity. One cannot 'see' ecstasy yet every sense has intensified to its own quality, vet its relation of force has altered. Teresa says 'I often have visions of angels, I do not see them' (210). Just as her ecstasy cannot be signified, neither can her gaze or to what she bears witness – vision without sight. This gaze is the gaze which shows Orpheus his own death. Teresa, like a mystic Eurydice, sees in the dark. But Teresa is not *in* the silence and darkness, she is it.

While truth finds its opposite in error, there is an error of apprehending the ecstatic event. In this instance 'to err is probably this: to go outside the space of encounter' (Blanchot 1993b, 27). Speech, observation and signification find their first fault in the very possibility of being outside the outside, of evaluating through a perceived gap or horizon between which incarnates both temporally and spatially. Reflection is the after, expectation the before and observation the spatial distance between. The ecstatic has access to neither.

Teresa tells us the encounter with the invisible outside transports. Transportation refers to the transport of the soul⁵, which is the state or condition of the being which is Blanchot's being without end and being without thought, yet it does not mean transportation in space or through time. The soul's transport is one of various relations with the outside, which is always the same relation. Just as thought is unthought, pain and joy are neither and both. The temporalization of pain as experience involves the pain being either on or off, waiting for the pain and watching it recede, so living in a state of 'what next' or 'when'? Where Bataille sees the encounter with nonknowledge as death, or rather, death as the cure for non-knowledge (Bataille 1988, 111), the ecstatic's non-knowledge does not presume that that which will be known or that which is lost as knowable before it arrives – including the self's knowledge of the self as anything from presence to subjectivity – is inherent as an element of mournful lament. Lament involves reflection, intentional wanting of a preclusive self, just as the art work is wanted as expected apprehension and the self vindicated through interpretation of the work. Ecstasy cannot help itself, taking the event away from preclusion or reflection so there is no longer a self of which to speak, and to know. No memory, neither future nor past, nor even a present which constitutes

⁵ Leibniz addresses the importance of the soul in baroque perception, and Deleuze's work on the fold evinces this precise nuanced figure of the soul in a non-theistic interpretation of encounters with and as monads.

presence, ecstasy cannot ask the question of a self involved in any art encounter beyond the evanescent blind, silent everything. As Marsden points out, the fact that:

the "blinding" and abasement of self should yield both insight and beatitude is one of the enduring enigmas of mystical experience. It is precisely through the abdication of knowledge, through the liquidation of its conditions of possibility, that "divinity" is touched (Marsden 2002, 129).

Differentiating ecstasy from a more obvious form of self suffering such as masochism, to describe abasement as masochistic emphasizes the value of what is lost. Blindness of self through art encounters is not the incapacity to see, only to see through established structured of the possibilities of how to see/read/hear.⁶ Neither memory as history nor future as finite possibility, all is preserved virtually, as illegible inscription and silent record that unfurls potentiality. As the self is redistributed in relation with an imperceptible relation with an imperceptible other element, we see this is a very real visceral, fibrous, seeping self. Desire for the unknowable other art 'object' which is never revealed hurts both in the face of its disinterest (like Eurydice's the face which cannot be seen, or is visible only when invisible (Blanchot, 1982, 99–101) and in the burden we bear by bearing it without knowing it, without reason, gifting its self to itself without demand for it to act an particular way, respond or fulfill a void. Anyone who has ever experienced an event of desire from art or any encounter where the other element recedes as it emerges knows this is an emphatically corporeal (including cerebral) event.

Dying without Death

In Blanchot's novel *The One who was Standing Apart from me*, early in the unnamed protagonist's relation with the 'one', his tantalization into different perception of relation is shattered when he speaks. He does not speak as the ecstatic, but because the self becomes elliptically reaffirmed as a phantom of empty signification, he is drained of the pleasures of the relation where there is interaction and expression without words. It is a painful reminder to the protagonist of the atrophy of recognition. In this moment loss is experienced when speech reminds the speaker of himself as speaker and thus lost to the speech. This is mourning which can only be felt by the ecstatic, just as only the reified dominant subject mourns their own loss through silence and the exuberant suffering of the effaced self. A matter of choice occurs between different economies of sense, as both options are already in place in all subjects. When time collapses, ecstasy is found. Outside of time ecstasy also offers a different incarnation of space, a ceaseless space that is a here which is not here. The voluminous infinity of this space is outside of causal or narrative temporality. Blanchot offers a suggestion to how this space is occupied

⁶ Deleuze affirms this in 'He Stuttered' (1994b).

by the self and the alter-element, the art catalyst work, or the one apart. In a space of quiet joy. Blanchot's protagonist finds himself wondering and is compelled to speak, but the breaking of silence slaughters his joy. It is also the moment where he realizes the pain of wonder without reflection or speech: '[The one apart] didn't answer, but the silence closed on me again as though he said there is no 'here' for such a pain. I felt it immediately. I was tied to that pain ... It seems to me that remaining was also what the pain wanted' (1993a, 20). In a passage where he begins to encounter the incarnate, present un-encounterable the protagonist finds bodies of a number he cannot discern, who may or may not be dead. They offer a salient example of the other as the art-object of the perceiver's experience because 'the circle they form around me encloses me on the outside and yet always within me still' (Blanchot, 1993a, 76–7). While they are a catalyst, they are neither extricated nor invasive but irrefutably dissipated within he and the protagonist is dissipated within them. The catalyst is the event of encounter – the art event, not the witness forming the contractual demand. These entities are liberated from this limited option of emergence as dead or alive, apart or as coming from within when the protagonist comprehends the option itself demands speech within a frame that gives the dead a before, presence and (no) future, hence absented loss of them only for he who speaks them. For Blanchot speech is also affirmed as seeing through recognition. The protagonist finds relation, and he a dream of them, as he realizes his relation to them carries them along as they carry him. They form the 'empty infinite circle' (Blanchot, 1993a, 78) that is he but where he is not.

I look at them in that trustfulness that addresses neither one nor the other, that doesn't attribute a gaze to them, that leaves them where they are, images without eyes, a closed immobility that silently conceals itself and in which concealment is revealed. We're so close it seems to me I form a circle with them ... a new familiarity, the different air I breathe, the expectation that is not theirs but mine, an expectation of which I am not the prisoner, but the guardian. (1993a, 78)

Blanchot resonates with our capacity to think the artwork of the art event. Primarily it perhaps perversely gives the other(s) as artworks their own mode of perception, where traditional encounters with art denies the art catalyst facilitator all existence beyond a phantasized identity of clear meaning, usually via the artist. But the other as unresponsive inorganic work's perception is not there to affirm the self, so it is not a perceived perception. It is imagined as imaginable only as a presence which is absent to both. The passage beautifully offers Blanchot's contributions to an entirely ethical alternate mode of perception which can, of course, never be described as being 'an' but is the very air itself that infinitely connects elements. The space is a not-space because it does not need another space and is not demarcated as a space. The relation is outside of past and future but not present, as it is not present to itself. The event is immobile in that it is complete and thus does not await transformation. It is already *enough* but within the devastatingly voluminous familiar-circle. And it is ethical because the self that

is lost must trust the other as perceiving in this same a-perceptive way; I am here but not here because there is no here which is named and no I which is occupant in relation to another that is recognized and by which I know myself as recognizable. Trust is also a trust together with the others' I don't know. At its most difficult to comprehend this may be understood as the ethical which cannot evaluate the relation and accountability for affect which is not present to itself or others but to which we must bear witness.

Blanchot's protagonist realizes, as Orpheus cannot, that if there is no self to be dead, then death is not the end but the Hades occupied by Eurydice which may be found in the quietest and most banal moments of unlike union. The protagonist's encounter also allows an intimacy with a material-reality because there is no theatre which disanchors signifier from signified. Neither is present in the silent speech or blind-vision. He is not the prisoner but the guardian whose task is 'to maintain the circle, but why? We don't know' (1993a, 79). Reproduction of apprehension creates a phantasy of eternal life through surrogates, in opposition to Blanchot's protagonist's encounter. The life to come is the life which cannot be unique because it is a repetition of the life gone. Temporal extension is inherent, but the occupants of each time are the same and demand of their progeny they also be the same. Existence is solitary and singular between entities of past and future. The protagonist's encounter is teeming and all-present without phantasy or perception. Orpheus desires sexual union with the Eurydice he reveals. What makes art encounters interesting is that to an extent they premise themselves on solitary experience. The reproducer and the act of sexual union need another that is isomorphically made appropriately correspondent to the self (Bataille amusingly reminds us however that the solitary little theatre is always in operation 'like a daydream lived out in intercourse' (2001, 107). The artist may produce but not progeny reproducing the artist. The art witness recognizes nothing in the encounter with and as the everything that art opens, being both the opening and the open.

Unlike the voracious lover who seeks an object upon which to alight, the art object's love demands a kind of inattention which also acknowledges the desperate and hurtful truth that the one that is the other in proximity, within and extricated from the subject, the work, the intensifier, is inattentive. Blanchot demarcates two kinds of attention.

Attention is impersonal. It is not the self that is attentive in attention: rather with an extreme delicacy and through insensible constant contacts, attention has always already detached itself me from myself, freeing me for the attention that I, for an instant, become ... average, personal attention organizes around the object of attention everything one knows and sees ... The other attention is as though idle and unoccupied. It is always empty and is the light of emptiness (1993b, 121).

The power of his idea is that it does not see these two forms as specific only to appropriate attended objects. Yet the impersonal is where we find our persons (but

not personhood). Where personal attention is a means to another state of attention in which I may be demarcated, recognize and recognized, impersonal attention is that which I become and which becomes in me and everything present but none having their own presence. Impersonal attention has no attendant nor attended, just guardians who must be worthy of it. It is a circle of seduction,

placeless places, beckoning thresholds, closed forbidden spaces that are nevertheless open to the wind, hallways fanned by doors that open rooms for unbearable encounters and create gulfs between them across which voices cannot carry and that even muffle cries; corridors leading to more corridors where the night resounds, beyond sleep, with the smothered voices of those who speak ... with the suspended breath of those who ceaselessly cease living ... approach and distance – ... the distance of the wait – draw near to one another and constantly move apart. (Foucault 1987, 24)

Relinquishing the powers of comprehension for ecstatic potentialities of thought interiorizes the outside while the outside interiorizes the self. Inner and outer inflect and are neither observable nor divisible. This risky project which relinquishes the subject emphasizes the pain of such forsaking of self, the ecstatic delight in what Bataille calls the terror of inner experience. In the shift from perception as signification to art-event as ecstasy is found a jubilant communion of collapse and reemergence of the organic and inorganic a-temporal and non-oriented spatial without the capacity for signification, knowledge, reflection or structuration but nonetheless material expressive affectivity, lived experience and liberated ahumanity.

Chapter 4

Animalities: Ethics and Absolute Abolition

This chapter attempts a project which creates an impasse, even though it remains antagonistic to sovereign operations of representation or the very thought of the other. It is one which posits a somewhat utopian scheme that may verge, in its aspirations, on unworkable within the frames of knowledge within which we operate. It addresses animals, or correctly, nonhuman animals, which will hitherto be referred to as nonhumans. This is why it is a posthuman project. Human apprehension and comprehension cannot limit nonhumans within an ethical relation. What this chapter seeks is an absolute abolitionist stance on all interaction with - conceptually and actually - any nonhuman. Radical animal rights is increasingly becoming fed up with 'thinking' the animal, even through antispeciesist philosophy, as it elucidates the luxuriant arguments in which humans indulge in the name of the rights of 'them' and 'us' based on qualities of each or critiquing the qualities ascribed to each, yet remaining within a realm that speaks of, thus speaks for, and ultimately speaks with human language. Maintaining speech within the limits human language compels is the crux of all argument. It implies a shared language. Further from the repudiation of animal rights based on equivalence which antispeciesism has foregrounded, in order to create an ethics of the inevitable shared living with nonhumans, only the human can and needs to be deconstructed and the human's trajectories toward posthumanism have nothing to do with other life. If this were the technique of posthumanism it would simply constitute a reverse of dragging nonhumans up to human level to be viable. Any thinking of nonhuman entities in posthuman theory (a clear trend in current posthuman publications) fails the very premise of its ambition, no matter how amorphous or experimental. Thinking the nonhuman in posthuman ethics should, indeed can, only concern itself with the human and its decentred and delimited futures, in order to create hope in reference to inevitable, perhaps unfortunate (not for humans, often for nonhumans) encounters with nonhumans. This may sound nihilistic and certain responses are presumed – 'of course animals enjoy interactions with humans' or 'we can help as much as hurt', 'animal systems can teach us how to be posthuman' or the most basic question 'we need to think differently about animals'. No, we need to think about the undoing of us, whatever that means. From the irrefutably important work done by animal rights philosophers and activists, unfortunate in its necessity, seeking equality, thinking needs to go further enough to accept thought itself as inherently unethical in reference to the nonhuman. The simplest premise of my perhaps contentious argument on the human's posthuman future vis-à-vis the nonhuman comes from Serres' devastatingly hopeful and demanding concept of grace:

whoever is nothing, whoever has nothing, passes and steps aside. From a bit of force, from any force, from anything, from any decision, from any determination ... Grace is nothing, it is nothing but stepping aside. Not to touch the ground with one's force, not to leave any trace of one's weight, to leave no mark, to leave nothing, to yield, to step aside ... to dance is only to make room, to think is only to step aside and make room, give up one's place. (1995, 47)

Serres discussing dance as philosophy and philosophy as a dance elaborates that dance negotiates nakedness, the unwritten tablet, the absent man. We can then speak of philosophy's liberation from situatedness (no matter how multiple or mobile) to dance, where seeking nothingness is antithetical to nihilistic nothingness, rather a means by which we can become capable of anything, and that very capacity results in the freedom of real responsibility, far from the freedom to do what we can as dominant humans, to allow the nonhuman to be.

Language is a power shared dissymmetrically with more or less weight between humans. There is no shared language between humans and nonhumans. Any sympathetic argument about what interactions we may have or share with nonhumans is always limited by our thinking the encounter, even via abstracted language, thoughts from outside which delimit language. Many sympathetic to the wonder of encounters with nonhumans elevate these encounters to some kind of mystical experience because they demand another kind of thinking of the encounter itself. But still the experience is human. Claiming nonhuman encounters emphasize the animality of the human, or the enchantments of incommensurable nonetheless available in relation with something that allows us to access the elements of us that escape the human which society, culture, language, thought deny us, are all human claims. There is no deliverance from the human found in the nonhuman. The division must remain for the very premise to be valid. We are in a seeming impossible bind. In Death of the Animal Paola Cavalieri incepts the basic premise of posthuman antispeciesism: 'The notion of animality seems to have been created just to serve the metaphysics of the primacy of human beings' (Cavalieri, 3). What Peter Singer calls second wave animal rights continues the same questions which place onus on nonhumans – do they think/suffer/have intelligence and therefore should we test (an insipid prettied vernacular for torture), eat (essentially exocannibalism), slaughter (correctly, murder) and use for products such as milk and eggs (enslave). In Defense of Animals: The Second Wave includes chapters on vivisection and speciesism in the laboratory, farming reform, the science of suffering, criticism of zoos and advice for effective activism. Noble and necessary though these arguments are, they never rise from discursive games between humans about animals. Abolitionist Gary Francoine points out:

the 'smarts' game is one that nonhuman animals *can* never win ... The 'smarts' game is just that – a game. It is yet another reason not to accord animals moral significance today in favor of more silly (and harmful) research to determine whether animals can solve human math puzzles and perform other tasks that have no moral relevance. We already know everything we need to know to come to the conclusion that we cannot justify eating, wearing, or using animals – that, like us, animals are sentient. They are subjectively aware. They have interests in not suffering and continuing to live. Nothing more is needed. (2011)

Lyotard states:

It is in the nature of a victim not to be able to prove one has done a wrong. A plaintiff is someone who has incurred damages and who disposes of the means to prove it. One becomes a victim if one loses these means. One loses them, for example, if the author of the damages turns out directly or indirectly to be one's judge ... the "perfect crime" does not consist in killing the victim or the witnesses ... but rather in obtaining the silences of the witnesses. (1988, 8)

Both the welfarist and the persecutor are judge. Nonhumans are not simply silenced but in the most refined of unethical situations incapable of anything but silence, when it is only the action of the human that should be silenced/ceased.

Various misguided liberation and welfarist movements perpetuate decreasing animal suffering. Very few welfarist arguments see abolition as a clear, direct and, most enigmatically, obvious simple resolution. Questions which are persistent from both pro- and anti- animal rights include 'of what are they capable?', 'what do we owe to them?' Rather, what happens when we ask 'of what are we capable?' or 'what is possible?' in the absolute cessation of interaction with animals at a conceptual, as actual, level. The issue of rights is a human intervention. The issue of moral obligation, of 'should', is a human folly. Any ascription of any quality to any nonhuman is a human compulsion, toward vindication or liberation. The animal remains the point of exchange, the site of contestation, but always 'the'. There is nothing to think of the animal. Thus Derrida states:

It would therefore be a reinscribing this difference between reaction [ascribed by Lacan to the human] and response [ascribed to the animal], and hence this historicity of ethical, juridical or political responsibility, within another thinking of life, of the living, within a different relation of the living to their selfness, to their *autos*, to their own autokinesis and reactional automaticity, to death, to techniques or to the machine. (Derrida 2003, 129)

Of his reading of Derrida Wolfe states 'buried under the definite article here ['the animal'] is all the heterogeneity that makes the starfish so different from the ring-tailed lemur, the eel from the zebra, (and that makes *homo sapiens* by the way, closer to their kin the bonobo and the chimpanzee than those great apes are to many of their

fellow "animals")' (2003, 46). Antispeciesism needs to divulge the very epistemology of its premise, in that the concept of species reiterates that there are species. Perhaps the concept could be described as useful in its historical role in affirming the need to deconstruct animality through antispeciesism, but this would be a human analysis of a human slaughter via discourse. It cannot be considered useful in any invocation of nonhumans, primarily because it repudiates the specificity of each and every emergence of a life – which lemur? Which zebra? Which starfish? We do not need to observe differences within species – or within small groups of one kind of species – or even within one example of a species. These are still nomenclature of life. In a seeming paradox, a certain kind of recycling of the word 'animal' may simply refer to each, every, this, one incarnation of life.

Unethical Equivalence

Much has been written on the rights of non-dominant others and their equivalencies. While clearly antagonistic to my criticism of any equivalencies, much of Posthuman Ethics deals with the inhuman other, that is, the other who is biologically but not culturally or socially viable as a certain kind of human. As Adams points out 'the current ontological condition of animals has less to do with their being than with our consciousness' (194). The animal conception of women, racial others, the diffabled, the generally maligned, interrogates the heart of the power of language in constituting the broad 'species' of noncounting-as-humans. In what could be seen as a brave claim, Derrida, to an extent Lyotard and Nobel Prize Laureates Isaac Bashevis Singer and J.M. Coetzee see the operation of factory farming, testing and other uses of animals as equivalent to the operations of Auschwitz, a comparison which is beautifully and painfully explored in Charles Patterson's Eternal Treblinka. Marjorie Spiegel's The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery has a similar historical project. Where current traditional ideology often posits the human/nonhuman 'animal' as the great divide, intra-human divides from the very beginnings of philosophy have seen minoritarians as organisms related more intimately with animals than dominant humans. The continuation of the suggestion that what we used to do to humans was unthinkably horrific and thus can be mapped on our current treatment of nonhumans is a seductive form of rhetorical pathos. It is certainly needed in its capacity for diminishing the effect of the perpetuation of torture and murder, fetishization and forced assimilation. But this does not eradicate the issue. In fact, in refining the project of animal liberation through human-animal connections, it may even exacerbate speciesism. Certain species seem more clearly appropriate in their resonance with human victims. Certain situations as well create similar territories. But when slaughtered and enslaved cows and pigs are compared with slaughtered and enslaved Jews and African slaves, when the rumps, legs and thighs of chickens are reflected in the rumps and thighs of woman, what happens to other animals? Does the great ape project verify the value of the human because of closely shared DNA? Will we understand that the Oedipalization of the pet is not a better way of treating animals? It is certainly consumption of a different kind but discourse continues to envelop and slaughter all animals in unique, subtle and devastating ways. Flawed or human arguments which seek to liberate animals are irrefutably necessary in the incremental saving of life from the oppressions of the human, and these arguments all, in their own way, seek to cease certain human behaviours, albeit pleading via human logic. The persistence of the human turn will never attain a philosophy of grace, nor will any philosophy 'of' the nonhuman.

Where one stream of theory has sought to create historical rather than contemporary equivalencies to elucidate the extremity of the current treatment of nonhumans, others think that by using animality we can be liberated toward posthuman becomings. Animals, like women, cannot become majoritarian. Adams' association of animal rights with women's rights is persuasive in pointing out what both want is freedom, not to but from and not from situations or acts of cruelty or oppression or death but from majoritarian (or any) 'attendant regime of general equivalence between systems of value ... necessarily accompanied by an utterly hopeless fetishization of profit¹ (Guattari 1996a, 122). The rights of an animal to be free from torture and being eaten reflect the rights of women to be free from sexual assault. Both emerge through a discourse which places the onus upon them as differend to prove they are not meant for 'food' or 'sex'. Importantly for threshold and hybrid becomings, while many advocates and rights philosophers address issues directly related to their own identity, animal rights activists inherently speak as the irreducibly other because the other cannot speak the language which destroys it. This is increasingly evident in recent US legal arguments which repudiate the rights of animals evaluated simply on the extent of their experiencing cruelty as wrong when it is for fun rather than 'cause', to elevating animals to the status of entities with rights. Property law and death as either one of autonomy or domination, the question of 'whose' property would give animals that very who-ness that they are denied - whoness without equivalency based on similarity. However the US supreme court's problem is that 'animals do not have standing to seek redress or assistance' (Slocum-Schaffer 78). Slocum-Schaffer points out that in various US legal cases violation of the rights of genetically engineered animals was ruled violation of patent, that the refusal of students to dissect was acceptable based on the rights of students, not animals. The law's problem with animals is not that they may own their bodies but that they cannot 'recognize rules', the very human paradigms which allow them to exist and which make them inferior as they apparently cannot make their own rules. Serres states:

¹ Deleuze expresses a similar sentiment in *Spinoza* but strangely maintains certain taxonomies to emphasize his point, that 'the *rational man* and the *foolish man* differ in their affections and their affects but both strive to persevere in existing according to these affections and affects. From this standpoint their only difference is one of power' (1988b, 102).

The declaration of the rights of man had the merit of saying 'every man' and the weakness of thinking 'only men' or 'men alone' ... objects themselves are legal subjects and no longer mere material for appropriation ... law tries to limit abusive parasitism among men but does not speak of this same action among things. (2002, 37)

Refusing man as deserving of rights comes from refusing rights defined by man, a self perpetuating mode of perception.

Descriptions of 'animalistic' or 'wild' behavior, the bestial, brute and inhumane now describe the exquisite refinement through technology and consumption of unethical treatment, discursively, materially, actually, and always when humans act most like humans without confessing the deplorable behaviours unique to humans. The inhuman(e) is the post-human. Destruction for fun, the dead for forgetting, the elimination of bodies for purely discursive or epistemic reasons, existence as flesh as conceptual (and always someone else's) are all 'wild' human behaviours of war-machines, science, philosophy, and victims are those of progress not evil or aggression. Adams' revolutionary studies of the animalized racial and sexual other is a seductive stepping stone, not to how we should perceive nonhumans differently, nor why maligned humans should be treated better than animals, but explicitly why human discourse itself creates, perpetuates and irretrievably binds the possibility of thinking ethically in reference to all which fall outside the human ideal. The problem is not that animals suffer like us or even that they suffer for profit, where people don't 'care'. Unethical treatment of animals and women and, unsympathetically, Deleuze and Guattari's becoming animal terms and the posthuman fashion for demarcating fallacious patterns between technologies and insect and other nonhuman mapping theories, involve legal 'contracts' for which the other party has no agency or is acknowledged for its independent alterity, really contracts between majoritarians for the use value of the object. Animals are in the way or used for the way. Joy Dunayer emphasizes 'human chauvinism is one type of speciesism' (4). This is mirrored by Braidotti's (2006, 105–9), however her claim that animal rights activism shifts the moral and legal balance 'in favour of animals' (107) creates an unnecessary bifurcation. Lyotard (1988, 28) points out that such arguments involve placing the defender before the victim, because the shift is created by someone (the defender). The animal cannot bear witness according to Lyotard and for this reason the animal is particularly in need as they neither create nor affect the paradigm directly. Lyotard criticizes the belief in a universe prior to phrases, but animals are prior to phrases and yet we implement them and only allow the possibility of their being (or non-being as the speciesist would claim) in this discursive world. Thus the animal, it could be argued, is not one in a series of valued victims, but its oppressed being-ness makes its rights equivalent to other victimized beingnesses for no other reason than it is, regardless of what it is.

Whose 'Companionship'?

Sympathetic explorations of animality coming from poststructural and posthuman theory seek to evocatively offer alternate potentializations of sense and perception based on figurations of the altered territories of corporeal experience which belong to other species. The most persistent question which prevails in much academic animal rights writing is perhaps ironically the same question that has allowed the oppression and slaughter of nonhuman bodies, the question of 'who'? The tradition of observing the animal and denying it any rights because it is seen as a machine, or a brute, or an idea over which God gives the human dominion asks the same question, but the response which vindicates speciesism is usually 'who it is not'. Utilitarianism, comparative questions of personhood based on suffering and sense of a nonhuman's own awareness of its existence and issues of welfare laid the groud for animal rights, and from these posthuman trajectories have emerged. Theorists who focus on the human-animal collapse and the question of 'I'-dentity as a human investment when considering the liberation of the troubling conceptnon-concept of animals, such as Haraway, Wolfe and Derrida, to lesser or greater degrees ask the question in order to show three particular tendencies not simply in the human's formulation of relations between human-nonhuman entities but the human's very capacity to ask itself, the qualities which allow the question to emerge, the paradigms which close off other questions and ultimately 'who' has the right to speak where they will be heard?' The first is the question of who which critiques the 'who-ness' of the human. Derrida's persistent question is 'who am I?' even at the very point of its unanswerability. The second is interrogating the human-animal species divide as fuzzy, as imagined and as ultimately redundant borne of the human compulsion to bifurcate nature and culture. Reconfiguring this question is, for these theorists, the third tenet in evincing the human as a phantasmatic compulsion to power. The first question of the first line of Haraway's When Species Meet locates the entire premise of the book: 'Whom and what do I touch when I touch my dog?' (2007, 3) From a posthuman origin Haraway describes the variety of other-than-humans which have formed her oeuvre – the cyborgs, apes, monkeys, oncomice and dogs as both imagined figural entities (in the same way the human is neither natural given nor exclusively sign) and ordinary lived organisms. These she says she has 'written from the belly of' (2007, 4). In spite of her ambition to overthrow human tyranny Haraway maintains deeply troubling predispositions. 'My' and 'dog' are both antagonistic to a posthuman ethics of nonhumanity. Her dog is, by being her dog, the Oedipal dog. In spite of her second question, which is 'how is becoming with a practice of becoming worldly' (2007, 3) Haraway has missed the territory which diverges human Oedipal families to which the dog 'belongs' from the abstract animal machines of becomings.

There is a becoming animal which is not content to proceed by resemblance and for which, resemblance, on the contrary, would represent an obstacle or stoppage ... an irresistible deterritorializations that forestalls attempts at professional,

conjugal, or Oedipal reterritorializations. (Are there "Oedipal" animals with which one can play Oedipus, play family, my little dog...?) (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 233)

In this sense it is impossible to become with an Oedipalized dog (but according to Deleuze and Guattari the non-Oedipal dog, by virtue of not being the dog defined by the Oedipal human, can offer becomings). Covertly Haraway criticizes what that non-Opedipal canine would be, the non-mundane packing wolf, with which she has 'no truck... here I find little but two writer's scorn for all that is mundane and ordinary and the profound absence of curiosity about and respect for and with actual animals' (2007, 27). Haraway performs a particular antagonistic and not entirely attentive reading of Deleuze and Guattari in two ways, one of which is a reading I also contend. The misreading Haraway and I would share is that for which Deleuze and Guattari have been critiqued by feminists such as Braidotti, Irigaray, Jardine and Massumi in reference to becoming woman. Deleuze and Guattari 'use' the minoritarian in order to facilitate a somewhat fetishistic adventure in what they are not, insinuating co-option, majoritarian wet dreams of occupation toward the Xanadu of asignified becomings. The finale is where we are forced to turn back and reflect on to what precisely those 'women', those 'girls', those 'wolves', 'rats' 'oxen' and 'crabs' refer. I agree Deleuze and Guattari are refusing the mundane and everyday, those actual bodies with histories of suffering. But that is the point. Woman and animal are human conceits, defined through denigration, the precise nodes which majoritarian humans wish to and need to reject to maintain human dominance. They are not and never were 'women' and 'animals', they were the phantasies of those with the right to signify.

Sympathetically they are stepping stones in the devolutionary liberation of asignification. In a posthuman ethic there are no more women or animals, just as ultimately in becomings there are no more things into which to enter alliances or unnatural participations as Deleuze and Guattari call them, only imperceptibility. Haraway seeks to naturalize the unnatural participation of dog and human, conveniently looking for sympathetic reconfigurations of domestication (and that she calls the use of laboratory animals and animals murdered for food domestication is offensive, while companionship is how she elegantly ablates the fact of dogs being enslaved through domestication). No matter how de-culturalized she sees the human companion, while seeing the relation as natural it will always seem 'right'. Deleuze and Guattari show a belief in unnatural participations being here and now, the not-right as in not logical or based on commensurability within taxonomies, that is all around us and that, by seeing the unnatural as the only ethical direction, shows both our responsibility and urgency in refusing the politics of comfort and resolution of human-nonhuman relations which can be seen to be no better than the division of human-nonhuman through disgust and subjugation. Inevitably however, Haraway's main misreading comes from the fault of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of woman and animal in that they are not talking about women or animals. They are talking about the abstract fabulations which deliver

signification itself, which is why their wolves and bats end up being vampires and lycanthropes to emphasize the immanent and available unreal which catalyses art in all its guises to free (both jubilantly and frighteningly) the human from being so but without co-opting the imagined forms, forces and systems of other organisms. These we must find in the mundane and everyday because the mundane and everyday are the feeling flesh of infinite corporeal and political territories which cry for liberty. As they say, becomings are not metaphors and are without end. A politics of the posthuman is necessary because it is difficult, irresolvable but absolutely needed, so we must think the unthinkable in the everyday, both in art and in activisms. Perhaps my sympathetic reading of Deleuze and Guattari here is contradictory in its opposition to my first reading which agrees with Haraway. But what Deleuze and Guattari's animal becomings ask us, is what will we think when we can no longer think of the things that perpetuate the category of human, that make thought itself available only through species, subjects, reiterations and resonant systems? Haraway's 'my' dog is less dubious for being the owned dog, and most dubious for being 'dog'. As well as Oedipal, dog ownership (Haraway maligns the naming of dogs as evidence of the oppressive nature of this), even prettied up with words like companionship or mutual symbiosis are also always professional and conjugal, and speciesist. Capital use of animal bodies, as well as furry fetishists who claim postmodern perverse sexuality at the expense of the signified other, pet ownership, and most importantly theorizing 'the' animal through examples of species which will always be through human paradigms, show the degree of animal use that may seem less or more sinister, but that is underpinned with an inevitable system of signification which asks the who, the what, the how and the why. And for which the animal bears the burden.² Beyond a critique of dog-human relationship as being speciesist through being privileged among other common relations of enslaving domestication/murder/torture for not being pig-human, chicken-human or bee-human, the very category 'species' must be repudiated for a truly non-speciesist ethics. Posthuman theory is focused on the deconstruction but not replacement of the subject, precisely the human subject. This extends to subjectivization, to all taxonomical projects. The singular is multiple (no one human, no foregrounded kind of subject) and the multiple a singular force (political activism and so forth). Epistemic discretion is recognized in posthuman theory by its discretion from other systems through their relation to truth (Church, state, science, industry, family) while excavating the shared power systems and interests by which each operate (majoritarian control, capital, production). So the potentially lunatic claim that we can no longer adhere to

² Though this chapter is not an address to traditional animal rights and activism, I in no way mean to denigrate acts such as pet rescuing or other seemingly Oedipal, professional or conjugal practices. But this chapter is an attempt to offer get out opportunities which can happen simultaneously with the maintenance of those animal lives for which we are still responsible through depriving pets of their independence from humans over millennia of domestic enslavement.

seemingly compulsory, whether pragmatically or empirically, concepts such as species is entirely resolvable within a posthuman ethic.³ Further, categorization is antagonistic to a posthuman ethic in that one must give way from category to singularity. The question 'which dog?', in reality 'which life?' may sound absurdly simple, but the persistence of the mentioning of species in antispeciesism is treacherous to the shift from humans bestowing rights to posthuman gracious ethics in relation to the divide between whatever human may mean and nonhuman may invoke.

AntiSpeciesism/ASpeciesism

For posthuman ethics the first moments toward gracious nonspeciesism are the end of the 'who'/I and the end of species. The I and the who dissipate into collective singularities defined ethically by the specificity of their relations, which renders them perpetually mobile and metamorphic. The end of species performs a paradoxical and thus posthuman operation of unifying all lives only so much as it distinguishes hierarchy, dissymmetry, taxonomy and classifications where type constitutes worth, while also attending to the infinite heterogeneity of life without the hubris of claiming knowledge of its vastness. The posthuman, as we continually see, is neither what comes after, nor what is only a direct interrogation of the human. The posthuman shows there never was a human. Will does not compel to cogito but to the premise of seeking to understand will itself - knowledge affirms and validates the operation of desiring to know and the monolithic authorial regime it concretizes.⁴ Before Darwin will to exhausted knowledge was inextricable from the natural creations made by God, after Darwin to complex adaptive ecology. Both set an immutable structure of what is possible to know and how we do so, and while I am not interested in the questions which posit religion against science, what both share is that theirs is the only mode of knowledge of the natural world based on the logic of what is

³ This claim makes me highly sympathetic to Wolfe's experience that 'my assertion [to question species distinction] might seem rather rash or even quaintly lunatic fringe to most scholars and critics' (2003: 1). Sadly he names veganism a radical posturing and suggests that vegans would assume eggs were potential life which insinuates veganism is akin to anti-abortionism. Dunayer (2004) points out that these are all moot claims reacting against the conundrum non-speciesists often feel if they continue to be non-vegan and the point is, akin to my use of Serres and grace, that leaving animals (and their eggs) alone is the nonspeciesist option – not what the humans do but what they choose not to do.

⁴ Wolfe connects Serres' claim we have never been human to Latour's definition of the human in *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993). This example shows for every punctuative moment in theory there is also the vital attestation to the mythology of time itself as a desire to demarcate incrementally superior (and critiqued for being so) cultural chronology, where chronocentrism collides with logocentrism.

possible based on how to observe and classify.⁵ Dialectic observation is part of the collapsed structure of metaphysics and humanism in philosophy, science and the consideration of life.

The observer is perhaps the inobservable. He must, at least, be last on the chain of observables. If he is supplanted he becomes observed. Thus he is in a position of a parasite. Not only because he takes the observation that he doesn't return, but also because he plays the last position. (Serres 2007, 237)

No matter how hard Derrida admonishes that observation by his cat makes him naked coupled with his criticism of Levinas by pointing out that in Levinasian ethics 'there is, to my knowledge, no attention ever given to the animal gaze' (2008, 107) the gaze is a human conceit and affording the animal a gaze continues to hold equality (albeit sensitive to alterity) as the mark of ethical attention toward animals. Putting the human second to last is an act catalysed by the human in order to show responsibility toward the animal, the human observing himself being observed by the animal creating an eternal return to the human in which the animal remains a point of confirmation of the human's capacity to shift the playing field of who observes and who is observed. The animal does nothing. The animal does not have a concept of the gaze because the gaze is a human concept. Whatever the animal, this animal, has is so beyond any resonance with human modes of perception the animal shows that there is both infinite refined specificity in nonhuman paradigms of perception - not within species but within each animal life – and that this can never be subsumed or incorporated into any mode of thought the human can formulate, even if the human seeks to open the world to animal liberty. By giving the animal the gaze the human takes the position he doesn't return by returning it to a human conceit.

Many of the arguments made for animal rights are constituted by the complexity of a species' social group, or with the feelings and responses a species shows when engaged with human interactions. The deduction tells the human we should not treat an animal cruelly because they⁶ can feel, we should not denigrate their complexity because they show a diversity of behaviours within their social structure. Again we find ourselves within systems of equivalence, in quality if not in kind, and speciesism where certain species seem to exhibit more or less intricate interactions and responses. None of these claims allow the animal to be without evaluating the reasons and validity of its beingness. Lyotard

⁵ Brown sees Darwin's relation to logic as one of secular capitalism and thoroughly humanist and metaphysical, which makes it part of the human terrain posthumanism challenges (2009: 13).

⁶ I use the awkward and not entirely grammatically correct third person plural here. This is not to homogenize animals as collectives but to avoid imposing human gender dimorphism on other life forms.

states two points which resonate here. In speaking of the Holocaust Lyotard states: 'The plaintiff's conclusion should have been that since the only witnesses are the victims, and since there are no victims but dead ones, no place can be identified as a gas chamber' (1988, 5). The application of Lyotard's differend to the murdered animal is clear, but the animal as differend is also the dead victim in that the living animal is dead to the capacity to negotiate its existence using the appropriate kind of phrase, not to bear witness to its suffering but to bear witness to its ability to describe suffering within human paradigms. Because this is impossible, these descriptions come from human interpreters, yet the inevitable problem of all animal speech being speaking for and speaking about animals emphasizes that all speech is human and all phrases are between humans. The animal does not exist except as a human communication. The animal does not exist as an animal or a life. While we are human there are no animals, only human ideas of animality. The media wonders at and lauds the signing ape, the speaking parrot, the obedient dog who understands. These individual animals speak human. They are seen as clever and worthy because of their uncanny capacity to be human. The protected species which dazzles through its aesthetic beauty – the big cat for example – speaks to our aesthetic language and must be saved. But it is a species, constituted by numbers, not this cat or one cat but how many cats are left and how can more people see more cats for our pleasure? One cow cannot speak human, nor, in its plentiful occurrences can it appeal with its scarcity. Welfarists speak for the cow, but someone, somehow, asks why the cow (but rarely this or one cow or no use of species) deserves its life. The question should be not why we should question the treatment of certain animals (homogenized as species) and expect a reply, nor why any animal should want to reply (even though we think it would be in that animal's best interest) but what gives us the audacity to ask a nonhuman life any question? The animal cannot be thought. Therefore ethically the animal should not be thought. 'If animal life and human life could be superimposed perfectly, then neither man nor animal - and perhaps not even the divine - would any longer be thinkable' (Agamben, 21). Agamben is critical of this turn, seeing it as increasingly dehumanizing for human subjects. Agamben however sees thought as necessary for human rights. In the context of this chapter human thought (more correctly operational tactical knowledge) is the impasse that precludes any capacity for nonspeciesist ethics. Knowledge itself – defined as a constellation of nomenclature, totalizing machine, isomorphic dominance, the repetitive and reifving patterns which continue the human, logos – is what props discourse and discourse allows for thought. Thought in a posthuman sense is thought from outside, thinking the unthinkable but nonetheless necessary, the incompossible, incommensurable but possible, the unanswerable question which answers in silent activism, encounter without condition and most importantly, if we are to encounter the nonhuman without being parasites, the grace which can only come from leaving alone. Traditional arguments would see more and more detail about the wonders of the animal as the most logical directive toward liberation.

The Grace of Leaving Be

Posthuman ethics of grace requires nothing more than leaving all animals alone; in interacting with them, in thinking them, in involving them at all with a human world. Our becomings-inhuman do not devolve us toward more interaction with the natural world humanism and metaphysics cleave from us. It delivers us from the inevitable destruction we wreak on that world. The more we think that world, the further it is irretrievably part of it. Animals do not offer posthuman deliverance, neither does rethinking the animal deliver nonhuman life. As Serres says, grace is a stepping aside, and when the posthuman steps aside from discourse, it steps aside from other life. The logic of rights is a contract between species which was a result of humans acknowledging the damage we do. No animals were involved in this contract, just as no animals were involved in the contracts which tortured and murdered them. 'The social contract was thereby completed, but closed upon itself, leaving the world on the sidelines, an enormous collection of things reduced to passive objects to be appropriated' (Serres 2002, 36). Rights are human laws. Animal rights are human laws concerning contracts of liberty without the oppressed or liberated. Immediate activism based on these rights is needed and do lead to certain individual lives being 'better'. But any intervention from human discourse will never break this perpetual contract against nature. Animals do not need us, except as a direct result of what we have done to them through domestication or destruction of habitat. We use them, the parasitic relation is never reciprocal, we are never host. Our discourse and communication about animals is a result of the ways we have exploited and (ab) used them, parasite off them, needed them and wanted them. Arguments that animals need us are flawed in their constitution through human concepts. They are often pragmatically and rightly based on the need for care borne of reliance on what our enslavement has made them depend. Long term through preventing reproduction animals with close human dependent interaction this will be less relevant. The natural contract, outside of the capacity for human thought, is the contract we make without knowing the tenets of the agreement because we do not know how to know them. The contract is one of leaving alone and will, as I will contentiously argue in the Epilogue, ultimately demand of us the question of whether the only valid extinction is that of the human.

Abolitionists seek to abolish human intervention so abolish humans. This makes the abolitionist approach to anti-speciesism ethically posthuman. Serres states:

War is characterized not by the brute explosion of violence but by its organization and its legal status ... violence plus some contract ... we must make a new pact, a new preliminary agreement with the objective enemy of the human world: the world as such ... we must envisage, along the other diagonal, a new pact to sign with the world: the natural contract. (2002, 13–15)

To see the natural world, the extra-human world which we colonize with human signification and occupy with devastating effects, as antagonistic to the human world performs a beautiful dance, just as Serres sees the philosophy of grace a dance. Posthumanism directs a challenge to tenets of deconstructive elements of poststructuralism, the zenith of which is Derrida's maxim 'There is nothing outside the text'. As either the reading from the translation which suggests there is nothing outside of discourse, or the French reading of textuality as a series of eternal ellipses, sliding signifiers, signifiers in debt to difference, this phrase has come to stand as both the cause and fate of human access (or prevention of that access) to the world. The world can be understood as phenomena exterior to language, representation, signification, but it is nonetheless evident within human experience, what Derrida calls the pre-linguistic mark, and what elsewhere, in Kristeva for example, is known as the semiotic or Guattari the asemiotic. Whatever vocabulary we use to attempt to encounter this experience we are struck with the realization there is no vocabulary for it. Very simply, if there is 'nothing outside the text' is taken as an attentive description of human experience, then a posthuman philosophy attests to the world being everything. When nothing is overcome, everything arrives as part of posthuman experience, a connective, traversive, ecosophical ethics. Nonhumans are both posthuman as extra-discursive, but they are also part of their own textual worlds to which we are irreducibly alienated. Tempting though it may be to, from a welfarist and ethological desire, explore, map or only acknowledge social communicative methods in other species or, relinquishing species, in individual lives who experience, think, express and are affected, we can never ask because we can never know. Thinking we can whether to empathize or denigrate, is a humanist, metaphysical ambition. This terminal extrication between individual living entities both reflects the multiple subject in its teeming internal schizoaffects, intra-human relations insofar as two human lives are always in an impasse within communication, and constitutes a relation that is ethically connective because it requires creativity and grace. Gracious communications are natural contracts and binding ties, which Serres describes as that liasing element between two entities that can stretch taut and atrophy or become loose and supple. The elements themselves are created by the cord, much as Spinozan ethics sees the expressive and affective appetite and will of the organism as constituted through its capacity to express and be affected, that is, through its relation with another element. The bond between two elements is the natural contract. It only becomes law when it is overstretched or is used to voke dyssymetrically.

Law marks limits. The bond makes it possible to feel these borders, but only when it becomes taut, straight; that is, when it becomes law. Prior to that it defines a space, plane or volume, free and unbound. Or a zone of non-law within law. Thus the variation before the frontier is reached is just as important as the border itself. If the cord gets hard and stiff, then it imitates solids; at rest, soft, coiled, folded,

sleeping, lying looped on the deck, it becomes invaginated, absent. A strange metamorphosis, a natural and scientific change! (Serres 2002, 106)

The interaction of posthumans with nonhumans is unfortunate but undeniable. Even in an ideal abolitionist world where the only ethical encounter with the nonhuman is no encounter, there are chance meetings, incidental and accidental comings together, and the assistance currently enslaved animals require. Gracious posthuman-nonhuman contracts attempt to make the bind its most flexible, seeking a material with which the cord is made come from no human source, unheard of matter in a singular emergence and connecting in ways for which human vocabulary has no verbs or nouns. The nonhuman only remains such tactically, the posthuman experimentally. While interactions with nonhumans must be creative, pleasurably or confoundingly so, the contract precedes and constitutes the elements, making the categories of nonhuman and posthuman tactical. 'The object here is a quasiobject insofar as it remains a quasi-us. It is more a contract than a thing... not a quasi-subject but a bond' (Serres 1995, 88). The nonhuman animal subject is still a different kind of quasi-object. It is independent from the posthuman quasi-object the human is becoming. Humans do not find ethical animal encounters in the faux simpering claim that 'humans are just/also animals'. To say so would erode the histories of violence for which we must be accountable, in whatever ways we negotiate the positive affects of the challenges of bearing witness and responsibility. In a perverse turn, where discussing animal rights is unethical because it uses the animal as currency within human rhetoric, accountability and bearing witness is, after all, for and between humans. Nonhuman animals are not benefitted by such human discourse, even though it is apologetic and seeks to make amends. Amending the history of the excesses of indescribable violence perpetrated on nonhumans comes as a step toward posthuman becomings, elucidating the detrimental effects of human discourse and thus the urgent need to forsake it and the powers which it affords. It is perhaps the why that catalyses posthumanism without concretizing genealogy or origin that predicts future or finitude. Both the nonhuman animal and the posthuman, through the ethical bond, become nothing, but nothings of different orders. The nonhuman animal is nothing as it is unthinkable, and nothing because it should be avoided in order to prevent human intervention in nonhuman worlds, even if they overlap. It is however everything and sufficient to itself and must be treated thus. The posthuman is nothing as it is also unthinkable, but involves thinking multiply and otherwise. Against all claims we need to rethink animals, the only gracious ethics of nonhuman relation is to absolutely cease all thought which includes animals. 'The teaching corps, like the dancing corps and the thinking subject, is forever evoking, forever invoking, calling, another focus than itself. So naked, so blank, so empty, so absent that it brings forth a presence' (Serres 1995, 45). Where Levinas claims we need an Other, not necessarily perceived but encountered, toward which we turn in order to form an ethical relation, using Serres I argue that leaving the other alone is ethical invocation, responsibility (for our actions, not their lives or existences) and calling forth independent of result, perceived emergent entity. The thinking posthuman subject, perceiving without knowledge, thinking without perceiving, brings forth the other as its own coming. Serres' grace as stepping aside allows without condition, prediction, or affirmation. The emergent other owes nothing to the posthuman. The posthuman is created when the focus is away from the human and away from the nonhuman animal it discusses to vindicate its unethical use and abuse of each nonhuman animal entity. ⁷

Activist Absence

We do not 'owe' an obligation to those lives we have enslaved awaiting their natural extinguishment. We do not need to bear witness for them as differends who can no longer bear witness to their own tragedy. We can, and must, bear witness to what we have done and attempt to make lives of enslaved nonhumans as without intervention as possible. In reference to so called domesticated animals this may involve intervention but not mastery, intervention as passive nonhumans allowing the enslaved nonhuman to be without conditions of their being. This will be an ethics based entirely on singular interactions and without prescription or species conditioned strategy. The obligation perversely is one without care to another but bearing witness to the ravages of what we have done. In order to bear witness the only image we see is the other without representation or objectification so bearing witness to our refused traversal resists indulging in some mirror of selves plagued with accountability that, through expiation, can resolve us back to our humanity and the fallacious prefix of 'humane' ones. The open of the human animal fails in the animal insofar as the animal is not open to. I resist Agamben and Heidegger's argument here as it maintains the humanist conceit that the nonhuman

Clearly there are obvious problems with the implementation of grace. My goal is to offer a desirable state of relations which both are and are not immediately possible. If all humans right now were to forsake the parasitic benefits use and abuse of animals gives them the natural contract could flourish. Tragically this is unlikely. Certain issues arise which reintroduce the welfarist argument, but remembering the welfarist argument is only relevant in an unethical, non-posthuman world. Examples would be the need to look after enslayed animals who have become dependent on humans. To this I would agree but add all these lives should be prevented from reproducing and continuing the enslaved dependence. A more radical criticism and one about which I am still uncertain is that if a truly ethical posthuman cared for the abolition of animal suffering then predators would be neutered, fed on synthetic food which would stop all unnatural animal death, and further, as much animal illness would be treated as was possible. This would mean human intervention not for benefit of humans but nonhuman life. Cessation of predation may mean exhaustion of food resources for non-predators. This could lead to the suggestion that the only way to prevent all suffering of nonhuman life would be to prevent any further reproduction of any life. I am not yet convinced this is a non-viable idea. The human element of this suggestion will be explored in the Epilogue.

has a nonhuman conceit, much in the same way as atheism claims there is no god while needing to engage the concept of god to give this claim veracity. Agamben and Heidegger utilize this denial of the animal's openness (which I neither deny or affirm but confirm as belonging only and wholly to the human) in order to verify the residual nonhuman in the human but on its own terms as beingness of a uniquely human kind that grapples with the human being that opens in order to perceive, apprehend and qualify. Agamben quotes Jakob von Uexkull claiming, the animal has no object (2004, 39). This is due to the object and object relations belonging only to the human. Just as 'nothing is outside discourse' evokes everything, so falling away from being open immerses us in the everything. 'While man always has the world before him – always only stands "facing opposite" – and never enters the "pure space" of the outside – the animal instead moves into the open, in a "nowhere without the no" '(Agamben, 2004, 57).

Obligation, the bestowing of rights, welfarism and sympathy are, according to an abolitionism view, the 'civilized' versions of totemism, fetishism and metaphor. They retain the object and to what and how the human will be open. They retain the address. The radical inversion of abolition is that the address will always be detrimental because humanism cannot address without the object to which it feels obliged but which in actuality it makes oblige themselves to the human. Thinking the animal thinks the object, and opens to the object in the turn that constitutes the human. Veganism can be used here as an example. Veganism is frequently constituted in three ways⁸ – as denial or avoidance of certain foods, as giving up of these foods, and as exemplifying life without these foods primarily through life without intervention into animal life. The third is the most gracious way. Denying and avoiding foods retains openness to them as foods. Giving them up reorients a focus on a somewhat pious subjectivity. Veganism as evinced by we who live without, while defining without as no possibility of inclusion, so the 'with' does not insinuate their could be a with, and the out is not a departure or prevented intervening, shows the very basic bare reality of humans not needing and never having need for the products of slavery, torture and murder. This phrasing is used with the focus away from the potentially more emotive and humanist description of acts of violence and toward the 'not'. We do not. Not the welfarist, rights or moral philosopher's 'we should not', although that is the case, except the we are those who decided what should and should not be. We do not need to address, encounter or maintain the parasitic relation with the nonhuman. Any and all 'studies' claiming what humans need are human studies and are belied by the simple reality of living vegan 'life'. Similarly if the example of vivisection is used, the lives now living have lived hitherto until now. Anything to come may extend the compulsive infinity phantasies of human life but beyond the arguments for this form of science being either repugnantly capitalist (for example

⁸ I am not speaking here of veganism as standpoint politics. Any focus on the vegan rather than the operation is independent of ethics.

in cosmetics⁹) or reprehensibly unethical or scientifically specious to the detriment of the human organism, we are in a position to step aside and leave be. Veganism here is only one example and as it also belongs to the human taxonomy of subjects it is used tactically as a contemporary example of grace as the stepping aside. The relationship between the vegan and the animal is ended. From the practical to the paradigmatic, veganism can be changed to thought itself, as the unthought encounter with the outside. Within infinite relations and thinkings of their own which are absolutely inaccessible to human apprehension, the nonhuman animal belongs to the outside, they cannot enter into human discourse and discourses of nonhumans are inaccessible to humans. Our entrance with, within and as the outside creates an inflection, a new incomprehensible but activist series of relations, and yet does not necessitate any material relation with the, this, or one animal. There is no relationship to contemplate, the object is gone, the subject derealized. What we are and have is already phenomenally too much as I will discuss in chapters 7 and 8, but from an abolitionist gracious paradigm the posthuman refuses parasitic needs. Gracious posthuman attestation to the nonhuman animal delivers the animal and the human, from law to freedom. Law as prescriptive, according to Lyotard's reading of Kant, deduces its conclusion. Incrementally through changes in laws which allow animals more freedom – to be animals in relations with those, we humans, who prescribe the law in the first place – reverses the capacity for freedom. Lyotard challenges the law which compels *you ought to* as borne of a modelling of desire for result, for the manipulation of the object denied freedom. You ought to is antagonistic to the world and nature. Citing Kant he states: 'The realm circumscribed by the quasiexperience of the You ought to and in which the latter is inscribed is not the world nor even nature, but a "supersensuous nature" whose "idea really stands as a model for the determination of our will" (1988, 120). You ought to has two effects upon the animal within legal rights legislation. The first is directed toward the human 'you ought to allow animals liberty, deliverance from (humanly defined) pain' and so forth. But this law primarily obliges the animal – destined to fail – to be what constitutes a life with rights - 'you ought to be viable within human knowledge of what is ascribable to your place'. For 'great apes' their fulfilling of being more like humans was their human defined and human constituted liberty from vivisection

⁹ An example of sufficient knowledge can be found in the impasse between cut-off dates and rolling rules for cosmetic, household product and other testing. Companies with cut off dates do not use ingredients tested beyond a certain date in any of their products, those available and those in production. There is a sense that what we already have is too much. The rolling rule companies seductively offer a usually 2–5 year cutoff date for ingredients which rolls over to the next 2–5 years, so they are essentially simply agreeing to lag behind new ingredient availability in order to appear to be against torture but market that very standpoint as a selling point while continuing to support and maintain testing. Even the term 'testing' constitutes the animal as the rough template for the final version of the products' use.

through successfully being deduced as good enough. For 'dogs' who ought to be like surrogate children, being deduced as such afforded a certain protection.¹⁰

The addressee may indeed link on with a *I won't do it* but he or she was still first a you grabbed hold of by the obligation. Obligation is analogous to a constraint insofar as it is the displacement of an I onto the addressee instance, its being taken hostage. (Lyotard 1988, 121)

To Be Able To Not

Insipid claims to these resolutions offering some nonhuman species their freedom defines freedom – both human and nonhuman – in a flawed way. Lyotard's exploration of freedom inflects with Spinoza's definition of will and appetite as that which allows the other to flourish in their capacity to express and be affected in a way which benefits their living and their own appetites and will. Spinoza's concept of the activity to express is through a tactical, always impossible but still sought expectation of expanding the other's capacity to express through the self's affects. Lyotard offers *You are able to*, 'a partial silence, as a feeling, as respect' (1988, 121). This silence comes both through opening to the expressive potential of the other and as the silence inherent in seeking to create liberating affects in the other but acknowledging there is no guarantee or dividend. *You are able to* should always be an *I am able to so you are able to*. This ensures obligation remains with the 'I'. 'You' is diminished as a comprehensible addressee to a life with will and appetite unknown but to which we are obliged without demanding obligation or reciprocity.

The entity harbouring this spontaneous causality [which is neither principle nor demand] cannot be the addressee. The latter receives the announcement of spontaneity in the form of [quoting Kant] "dependence", "constraint" or "coercion". The addressee is not the one who is able to. The addressor is the one who is able to, who is the power. (Lyotard 1988, 121)

If the addressor makes ability a compulsory obligation, he or she returns to the *you ought to*. At this time the reification of the empowered 'I' – the human – also returns. The 'I' that asks what it is able to do without legitimating edict is the posthuman ethical 'I'. When we are able to give the nonhuman animal their *you are able to*, which we must do without condition or expectation, we give freedom to both ourselves and the other. The word gift is the ethical spontaneity, for which a better word is conceptually preferable but within a posthuman abolitionist vocabulary, perhaps not yet available. Grace comes from the ethical turn to the 'I am able to' which acknowledges the most beneficial, most liberating ability

¹⁰ This is the premise of 'training' itself, to which most animals are made to oblige, actually and discursively.

is to leave be, to turn away from the addressee where turning away opens to the addressee being something unto itself other than an addressee. This turning away is the opposite of the Levinasian turn away.

The tree and cow told us that man never returned or recognised the gifts of flora and fauna. He uses and abuses them but does not exchange with them. He gives food to the animals you say. Yes sir he gives the flora to the fauna, fauna to the fauna ... what does he give of himself? Does he give himself to be eaten? The one who does so will utter a timeless word. One word, *host*. (Serres 2007, 82)

Recognition is the turning away with grace, making no demands of the addressee's face, exchange comes from disanchoring the parasitic human and reciprocity is human absence. The gift of being eaten, that is, of becoming edible through forsaking the dissymmetry of parasitic humanity upon other life, is ethical grace as making available beyond the other's availability. The horror of using animals is matched by using other animals to sustain the animals we use.¹¹

Grace turns away from the addressee to open to the world without addressor or addressee, obligation without object or subject, freedom without the free. 'What is invoked in the phrase of freedom is not a power in the sense of an eventuality. but one in the sense of an ability to act, that is, an ability to be a first cause from the cosmological point of view' (Lyotard, 1988, 121). Our obligation to leave the nonhuman life alone from an activism perspective still obliges us to turn toward the other human, to make demands not of you ought but you are able to because speciesist humans think they are either unable to live without animal slavery, torture and murder, which is fallacious, or in the overwhelming face of animal (ab)use in all facets of human life they think they are unable to do anything because they really seek to tell the other human vou ought to. Command and response evince a lack of freedom, of will, of appetite. But the submission most humans give to the you ought to shows that ability takes efforts of corporeality and imagination, while succumbing to command fosters the luxuries of apathy, many of which masquerade as a demand of the 'I' for the 'right' to (ab)use. The right to dominance claimed by humans is the individual's exploitation of the perception of the vou ought to as being vou must but is actually vou are able to but choose not to. The dominating structures of capital which perpetuate torture, slavery and

¹¹ The effects of raising animals on world poverty and the environment are devastating, however privileging world hunger and green issues over animal life is speciesist and somewhat politically fashionable. Nonetheless issues such as natural environment damage causing suffering to life are crucial to attending to the effects of speciesism. The issue of feeding pets other animals is a volatile one, but that human technology can make almost all minerals and chemicals needed to maintain domestic animal health synthetically offers no excuse for the minimal, difficult to access and not entirely health giving status of vegan pet food. Vegans want nutritious vegan pet food for their rescues, industry wants pet food resulting from animal slaughter and testing.

murder of nonhumans also perpetuate human belief in the incapacity to be able to not to do so. But humans are able to, and most ethically, are able to through not – not enslaving, not cannibalizing, not torturing. In a postmodern turn, much animal activism associated with abolitionism is the ability to choose to be unable to do what we are able to do, such as boycott, refuse to financially support companies and industries and so forth. Not exploiting is a voluminously active ability of retraction which is a cause through refusal to partake – activism which deactivates the trajectories that compel the *you ought to* act as a human toward the nonhuman. Ethics never mistakes the *I can* for the *I must* or become involved in the question tennis which oscillates endlessly between the *why* and the *why not*. Posthuman ethics begins toward the nonhuman with the 'I will not' which creates the 'I am not all' thus 'I am not so the other may be'.



Chapter 5

The Wonder of *Teras*

Teratology has referred to the study of monsters and monstrosity in all epistemic incarnations though most often in medicine. Two inclinations resonate with two effects encountered in relations with monsters. Irrefutable and irresistible wonder and terror have led, in the life sciences, to a compulsion to cure or redeem through. making sacred or sympathy. The effect monstrosity has upon the 'non-monstrous' is an inherently ambiguous one, just as monsters themselves are defined most basically as ambiguities. The hybrid and the ambiguous hold fascination for the 'non-monster' because they show the excesses, potentialities and infinite protean configurations of form and flesh available in nature even while human sciences see them as unnatural. Human sciences' study of and curing monstrosity is less about monstrosity and more about preserving the myth and integrity of the base level zero, normal human. Monsters are only ever defined contingent with their time and place, they are never unto themselves. It could be argued that monstrosity is only a failure of or catalyst to affirm the human. Can we even ask what a monster is? Configured as everything but a normal human, monstrosity points out the human as the icon of what is normal, and thus the monster as what is not human. For this reason the monster has an ideal and intimate relationship with the concept of the posthuman. Posthuman teratology interrogates the conditions of possibility of being and knowing the human while offering examples from all discourses of how there is always something more in the human that delimits its parameters and possibilities. It is the interface between nature's unique emergences of flesh and metaphysical attempts to make sense of that flesh. In this sense the posthuman emphasizes that we are all, and *must* be monsters because none are template humans. The human is an ideal that exists only as a referent to define what deviates from it. Derrida states 'a monster is a species for which we do not have a name ... [However], as soon as one perceives a monster in a monster, one begins to domesticate it' (1995a, 386). Through teratology we discover in the posthuman what can be thought as ethical, material, experimental, creative and yet which escapes definition – the organically human but inhuman, the a-human, the nonhuman, the infinite wonders of diverse human forms.

As combinations of flesh emerge from nature infinitely variously, so too monster consistencies vary in the ways in which we become attentive. This exceeds and resists attention as perception, and this chapter will not privilege any particular kind of perturbation by which monstrosity is expressed. Arguably monstrosity is most often understood as a spectacle of flesh (in 'deformity') or of capability (in diffability for example). But it also includes patterns of non-specular expressivity, such as behavioural or communicative diversions from what is

considered within the spectrum of unremarkable behaviour. Each mode has its own unique considerations, and each monster emergence is also uniquely considerable. These particulars are beyond the scope of any refined analysis of this chapter, but their specificity deserves refined exploration. While immediately associated with human sciences, teratological studies frequently glean their names from both animality and myth – the Elephant Man/Protean syndrome being one example which include both animal and ancient monstrous-man figure. Myth, symbolic use of animals, fiction and fable coalesce in hypertrichotic 'werewolf' syndrome. Cherubism names the apparent otherworldy construction of the face of 'sufferers' after putti (not, as often misconceived, after the Renaissance angelic order). These are three of many examples which show the monster unifies disparate fields of study and the residue of myth, fantasy, fear and hybrid aberration that is maintained in science. Already this book has offered the body-modified as a kind of monster and the animal as the first falling from and failing of the human. This chapter will explore ways in which monstrosity works alongside and inflects with the posthuman, inflects science with myth and the actual with the fictive to emphasize the established relationship between these different orders of knowledge that seem to already form a hybrid – even monstrous – foundation of studies in monstrosity. The catalogue of monstrosity, both historical and current, is contingent on ways of containing the uncontainable. I will raise examples as citations, rather than sites of analyses, but I will not perform an excavation of any specific 'actual' monsters as this defeats the liberatory compulsion for all selves and discourse itself to become monster. Monsters have been studied from the mystical to morally objectionable, and currently include a constellation of disparate corporealities from diffability studies to perpetrators of school massacres, online roleplay gamers to queers, but persistently enacting analyses of examples. To exemplify the monster performs functions I would consider in the context of this book incommensurable with posthuman ethics. Analyses are crucial in interrogating the ways in which oppression has expressed through nomenclature and taxonomy, but the lessons it teaches are always about the non-monster, our/their compulsions, our/their regimes. I deliberately use the awkward our/their, as monster studies continue to, even when enamoured with fabulations of fiction, film, music, medicine and technology, posit 'them'.

I consistently used the term 'the monster' as tactical, qualified in two ways. First it is clear that there is no single taxonomical category of monster; second I use this term not to describe a thing but more to name a catalyst toward an encounter, resonant with the modified body of Chapter 2. The monster is nature's artistry of the human, not always benevolent for the life of the monstrous body, but neither intentionally formed. 'The monster' refers to the organic human element outside the observer that

¹ A particularly eclectic example is the collection *The Monstrous Identity of Humanity*, proceedings from the 5th Global Conference, Mansfield College Oxford, September 2007. http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/publishing-files/idp/eBooks/mioh%20v1.3d.pdf Accessed 23/11/2011

sparks and creates an event of perception that necessitates the participation of two unlike entities. The monster can simultaneously refer to anything that refuses being 'the human' and that which makes the person who encounters it posthuman. There are a number of ways by which we can conceive this kind of monster. Importantly it emphasizes that referring to a monster only ever refers to an encounter with alterity. This is so even if both entities could be described (or describe themselves) as monsters because monsters are as unlike each other as they are the non-monstrous, but a site of 'cure', a particular cultural artefact, different from the body modified as it incarnates from sources external to human intervention (except in the case of disorders resulting from human science and medicine – usually non-predicted resulting teratology and a result of animal vivisection).

Teras means both monster and marvel. Immediately one is struck with an inherent contradiction. The aberrant as marvellous points to the crucial role desire plays in thinking both the posthuman and monsters. Where the posthuman is scary because it eviscerates absolute knowledge as an impossible goal, monsters are scary because they do not fit into the classifications we create in order for something to exist at all.² The monster is not a being unto itself, it is a failure to be a proper being. In 1831, Cambridge University Professor of Medicine W. Clark wrote a treatise based on transactions of the Cambridge Philosophical Society. Clark commented on the fascination monsters elicit: 'Of late years no subject has more incessantly occupied the labours of learned continental anatomists than the investigation of the steps by which the rudimentary organs of embryos advance to their perfect form' (1). Here temporality is configured in an early heralding of evolution where the form at which one arrives, as well as the comparative place that form will occupy in relation to others, are 'results' of stages toward perfection. Being a being is a finite goal in this configuration, creating resonances of the organic with the increments of knowledge one must take to arrive at a concept of one's self philosophically and the ultimate arrival where man attains God, through access to truth, absolutism and most importantly, likeness to God. The human template, the micro-God, is both that which nature seeks in order to create proper healthy, normal human life, and that which science seeks to know in order to match it elegantly with more esoteric or philosophical notions of what it means to be a living human. This template is seemingly basic and straightforward but actually an impossible concept of singularity, showing that any organism only ever exists as a version of an ideal which, by its very nature, is immaterial and phantasmatic. The focus on elements of disambiguation and temporal transformation is key in theories of the posthuman, where plethora replaces persona and being becomes becoming. The monster reminds us of the ethical importance inherent in thinking about posthuman aberration. A key factor in posthumanism in relation with teratology is that teratology brings us back to history as a remembered present while it seeks the

² For an elaboration of modes and purposes of teratological ontologies and their paradigmatic shift in contemporary culture see Cohen, Jeffrey, (1996) *Monster Culture (Seven Theses)*.

future-now upon which much posthuman theory focuses. Exchanging history for individual memories means that the past does not affirm the present and guarantee a future, as posthumanism opens up potentialities rather than repeating forms. However it acknowledges the suffering, objectification and effects of being named monster which cannot be denied. Remembered present asks 'how does experience of the past effect present modes of being'? For the monster it validates experience as other, for the objectifier it demands accountability.

The primary element which defines monsters is that they are not not-monsters, not us, not normal. They have no category of their own by which they may be recognized and thus removed. To have an object (monsters are objectified, never subjects unto themselves) which cannot be described and placed into a category along other like objects is the primary concept which structures all other elements of monstrosity - that is the ambiguous, the neither-neither - neither this, nor that, but not 'not' these things. Monsters formed from human matter are never entirely independent from the human form, their uncanny redistribution of human elements considered aberrant configurations. It is the part we recognize as made strange, or in proximity with a part with which it should not sit side by side, that makes monsters monstrous. Like the posthuman, the monster is neither before nor beyond the human, but an interrogation of the myths of human integrity, biologically and metaphysically. A monster is not a classified object nor a self-authorized subject but more the result of an act of being named such. So the next circle of ambiguity and relation after that which recognized the monster as familiar and unfamiliar is the relation between the monster and the non-monster who names it. Again this involves the element of the familiar, here normal, with the unfamiliar and indefinable, the monster. Both in itself and in its relation with the not-monster, the monster operates through this system of hybridity. We cannot speak of monsters. We speak only of examples of the plasticity and creativity that is inherent in all concepts, including those formed to describe and know human biological phenomena. Ambiguous hybridity of form and encounter spatially locate the monster. Temporally, the monster is constituted through metamorphosis and distortion. While the form of a monster may not necessarily undergo perceptible alteration any more than all bodies are in constant state of change, the way the monster is perceived does – historically, monsters have been encountered first as abominations, then with sympathy, then as projects to fix. Again we see it is the structure of relation with the monster that creates its meaning. rather than the quality or nature of the monster itself.

Technoteratology

My positing posthuman teratology will not focus on the more obvious examples of the chimeric hybrid posthuman, the primary one of which is the technoposthumanism. Haraway creates a connection between woman as the first step away from the 'human' – correctly the man masquerading gender specificity with all its associated powers of signification as neutrality – and technology. What

she emphasizes is that technology persists in the compulsion of majoritarian paradigms, which operate primarily through the production of meaning as 'binary dichotomization' (1991: 209). If the pre-human was nature to culture, the posthuman in the context of techno-biopolitics is culture to future while simultaneously a collapse between the most basic biology and the most refined technology. The persistence of the binary system shows that the quality of an event of the human cannot be posthuman if it stands in opposition to a less attractive, oppressed or suppressed other who both threatens to re-emerge in order to subsume it, but also reminds it of the irrefutable necessity for dominance in the quest for liberation from the flesh. It is the very flesh of the other that is usually subjugated (this is especially so for xeno-biology in animal organ harvest experiments for transplantation). A system of equivalence sits side by side with that of accumulation. As animal is to human, and woman is to man, so man is to cyborg. The first term in each dyad is one from which the majoritarian flees but also which it needs in order to operate a structure of proportion – definition based on difference as only success or failure at resemblance. In a seeming contradiction, the cyborg as a posthuman future reminds us that the 'natural' flesh, particularly the animal and woman, is the most monstrous. Biotechnology translates the human into a machinic operative at the most refined level: 'Hardware processes information: software embodies information. These two components have their exact analogues in the living cell; protein is hardware and nucleic acid is software' (Rifkin, 188). A troubling appendix to this series of proportion is the current tendency to equivocate brains with computers, yet it is most often the computer system which is seen to offer an insight into the brain, while the brain's complexity finds its greatest power in its capacity to be synthetically constructed in cyborg consciousness. But neurophysiologist Cotterill emphasizes that it is:

rather unlikely that computers as such could be given consciousness merely through the use of a specific type of software. There would have to be something that is likened to a body, equipped with counterparts of our muscle-moving apparatus... Given that thought is essentially stimulation of the body's interactions with the environment, as I have said, this would mean that the computer would be simulating simulation ... we humans appear to be mesmerised by the prospect of artificially producing copies of ourselves. (434–6)

Cyborg and simulated consciousness technology has come a long way since Cotterill's text; however, what remains the same is the desire to re-activate qualities associated with human-yet-transcendental subjectivity.

Is simulation empty copying, an elliptical compulsive return to the human, or is it a virtualization of potentiality which goes beyond the paradigms that allow traditional coveted qualities of idealized humanity to operate?³ Two intriguing

³ In relation with the copy as a natural phenomenon and culture's fascination with both studying and creating copies, see Schwarz (1988) *The Culture of the Copy*.

issues arise in Cotterill's lament – the first is the inextricability of identity from environment, the second the necessity of flesh or something akin to it. Consciousness is flesh and vice versa. A Cartesian extrication of consciousness from flesh compels many cyborg theories, while a Spinozan understanding of expressions, relations and affects between entities, environment, subject, thought and (inter)act(ion) haunts its as yet impossible. Spinoza states 'matter is everywhere the same, parts are distinguished in it only insofar as we conceive matter to be affected in different ways, so that its parts are distinguished only modally' (1994, 12). Robert Pepperell's seminal posthuman manifesto states: 'The idealists think that the only things that exist are ideas, the materialists think that the only thing that exists is matter. It must be remembered that ideas are not independent of matter and that matter is just an idea' (26). Pepperell emphasizes that posthumanity is liberated from binary dichotomization, anchoring ideas into virtualities which must be actualized in order to be (that is, they are neither transcendental, nor independent from other ideas from all fields, particularly the inextricability of science and philosophy). Yet there still resonates a fear of matter because, as will be explored below, through posthuman ethical philosophy, matter may be emergent as a negotiated concept through being an idea, but there is nonetheless matter beyond and independent of (because always within) simply being 'just' an idea. Pain, actual suffering, experiments on non-consenting flesh, or the results of technologies of combat show us not an 'idea' of matter but matter's ubiquitous all. I am not suggesting here that matter creates ideas, per se, or lurks beneath them, waiting to pounce out to destroy us by reminding us we cannot be without a body, but in order to think an ethics of biopolitics, the future-now needs to acknowledge what we cannot get rid of, either through technology or through signification. Knowledge of matter is just matter as an idea, but matter for itself is not.

While the cyborg body is constituted by defining qualities of monstrosity - hybridity, negotiating binaries such as flesh/technology, nature/future and experimentation, on which an enormous amount has been written this has been to the detriment of certain ways we can, or should, think posthumanism as now and as a field which should not place itself in a future without a past or residue. Critically, cyborgism can tend to a hyper-evolutionary obsession where the only way to be posthuman is to collapse the technology created by man to manipulate life with the organism, lamentably for cyborgs, as which we still persist to exist, with all its frailties and failures. Cyborgism has promises of enhancement toward immortality and a God-scientist who can create and extend life and become the ultimate selfauthorizing identity, no longer in need of the physiology alienated from his will that threatens to destroy him through age and disease. Cyborgism can be experimental, playful and hold much promise, but teratology reminds us that the negotiation of volition and self-expression which underpins cyborgism has too frequently been denied monsters, be they anatomical congenital aberrations, transgressives or bodies at the most basic level of alterity from the majoritarian understanding of the human. Additionally, perhaps contentiously, should not monsters in their posthuman incarnations, by their very aberrant definition, ethically and politically

challenge the structures which underpin dominant powers? Mitchell, Pellegrino, Elshtain and Bethke write:

Some individuals even call themselves "transhumanist", explicitly promoting the re-engineering of humankind into some form or forms of "posthuman" being. Even the U.S. government has invested in a controversial project to reengineer human beings. Yet even if not adopting such an extreme view or goal it would seem a large number of individuals in the United States and around the world are enticed by all the potential technologies of 'enhancement'. The desires for modification may be rooted in wishes for fashioning oneself into a more socially acceptable image, attempting to improve self-esteem through reengineering, or making oneself more competitive in business, the professions, academia, or athletics. Unfortunately the motivations behind these desires are usually socially driven fears, experiences of rejection or failure, or just plain greed, and they may reflect a social rather than biological pathology. (11)

While vaguely theological, this criticism elucidates the point that we cannot find the posthuman as a liberating concept in what it is, but in what it does to majoritarian systems of control, social hierarchies and the obsessions with an extension or enhancement of the same old power enforcements taken to their longed-for eternity. The question with cyborgism is 'enhancing what?' Artistic and conceptual-performance cyborgism, such as the work of Stelarc, which makes up a considerable component of cyborg incarnations and biotechnological experiments, may find itself aligned more with traditional teratology than with cyborg theory or body modification, per se.

The Horrors of Wonder

In contemporary culture consistencies remain from the monster perceived as mystical or aberrant grotesque, primarily the spectacle of the monster as defined through 'mal' formation of the flesh. In reference to connections between modern perceptions of diffability as a kind of teratology Longmore states:

The most obvious feature of 'monster' characterization is their extremism. The physical disabilities typically involve disfigurement of the face and head and gross deformity of the body ... these visible traits express disfigurement of personality and deformity of soul ... the individual is perceived as more or less subhuman. (135)

⁴ The authors do not give examples of to what they refer here. They word their comment ominously however and so it is difficult to glean whether they are invoking eugenic projects, ultimate Frankensteinian man-making goals or an extension of the human genome project.

The most important word is *perceived*. Arguably physical deformity – as in the capacity of the plastic flesh to develop in excess of what is understood as a base normalcy of the human (where deformity begins at unattractive or ugly toward monstrous at its extreme degree) – is the most immediately apprehensible of human monstrosity. Longmore emphasizes that the non-diffabled's re-evaluation of responding with horror for that of sympathy is an equivalent response in effect. Braidotti defines monsters as: 'human beings who are born with congenital malformations of their bodily organism. They also represent the *in between*, the mixed, the ambivalent as implied in the ancient Greek root of the word monsters, teras, which means both horrible and wonderful, object of aberration and adoration' (Braidotti 1994, 77 my italics). Modern scientists, those who assist in the social naming of monsters, can themselves be seen as monsters in their determined drive to see further, pathologize more rigidly and adhere normality to the integrity of an organism, they are themselves enough of an object of wonder for Braidotti to include them in her argument. Judith Halberstam points out the location of monsters is important to being monster, 'The monster always represents the disruption of categories, the destruction of boundaries, and the presence of impurities and so we need monsters and we need to recognise and celebrate our own monstrosities' (Halberstam, 27). The only cure for disruption is to subsume monsters into the very categorization they resist. At their most powerful monsters resist all definition, categorization, boundaries and thus potentially speech 'about'. In reference to enforced 'acceptance' of one's monstrosity Longmore points out 'If they [the diffabled] are socially isolated, it is not because the diffability inevitably has cut them off from the community or because society has rejected them. Refusing to accept themselves with their handicaps, they have chosen isolation' (138). The monstrous is subsumed into the category of diffabled and forced to accept the non-diffabled definition of this category. Refusing to accept this category refuses accepting any one community, a political monstrous activism showing the traversive and mobile ambiguities of all social categories and communities which enhances hybrid activism between uncommon entities to create new corporeal and communicative ethics. Subsumation or definition demand liberty through accepting what one has been told one is. Primary is the very problematic term 'disabled' (correctly diffabled) – for Canguilhem in his studies of the normal and the pathological always a matter of contingent degree, for ethics a homogenization of those who share nothing except their non-normal status. Specificity as refined unique deviation for each 'monster' is also why I choose to speak of monstrosity. In being nothing more than a deviation from the phantasy of human consistency, the monstrous is everything else, limitless and excessive of the concept of the human. However this tactic is highly contested in theoretical debates. Discourse reifies through analysis and affirmation of (hierarchical) place, of function, form and nature. Monsters challenge all of these categories by being both resistant to and ambiguous within them. The Frankenstein story is reversed. Axes of wonder/ horror are integral to monstrosity as a, if not the, primary site of ambiguity. A body of difference, while being an object of fascination, is simultaneously that of disgust. Inherent in fascination for something is distance from it, so that if the monster is object of fascination or even desire, the fascinated must oppose rather than align themselves with the monster.

It is well to claim that we are all configurable as monsters, and that to desire becoming monster is a positive way to radicalize the place to which the term monster commits such monsters. Gail Weiss (1999) takes Braidotti up on this by firmly planting her contrary arguments within the context of Braidotti's anxieties about reproductive technology and the teratology – the formation of cultural, sexual, amorphously failed-human 'monsters' as objects of ontological analysis – of genetically defined homosexuality, perversion, criminality, but in a basic sense simply that to be studied, that which is attended to. Desire is here not configured as dissipating the subject through which it ranges toward becoming-minoritarian, but 'desire, which takes knowledge as its object' (Braidotti 1994, 90). To study monsters is to neither love them nor acknowledge teratological elements in every human. It is love for discourse. This risks being a desire that dissipates the subject into a reformulation, or reiteration, of majoritarian subjectivity. The formulation of a monstrous self-body is not without negative implications, especially from a feminist/diffability studies/queer/animal abolitionism perspective where a re-negotiation of subjectivity is occurring in post-structuralism before the subjectivity to be negotiated has been sanctioned for subjects of difference. This flaw only emphasizes the importance of interventions of alterity in posthuman ideas about embodied, real life being and becoming in order that post-subjects, monstrous subjects and other a-human subjects will be ethical as well as culturally transformative. What are transformed here are issues around a singular ability to define subjects (including one's own ability as the only valid one) and subjects as defined only through what they are, which is both nostalgic of their history and establishes their future (spatializing subjects contracts the temporal aspect of subjectivity into a single moment).

Weiss asks 'is this mixture of horror and fascination advantageous for those who are its objects, that is, is this a mixture of passions we want to privilege?' (Weiss, 108) In order for old monsters to be replaced by new monsters there will always be a form of monstrosity devalued beyond all others. This makes the demand for 'advantage' impossible; for those advantaged others must be disadvantaged through their alterity. Weiss' emphasis on 'those' rather than 'we' is telling. The call to becoming through monstrosity first challenges primary differentiations between 'we' (non-monster) and 'those' (monsters). Becoming-monster is a challenge to the bifurcation between monster and not-monster, and the discursive act of defining these separately not to the definition of monster. What exactly constitutes a 'real' monster that appropriating the term monster will harm and make light its pain? Are not the a-humans of posthumanism already monster enough that to call themselves the new monsters will constitute an ownership of the derogatory term given them? What would Weiss define as a real monster? Is the act of defining an incitement to the reification of another 'other' or type of minoritarian subject? Braidotti juxtaposes the self-proclaimed monsters, be they culturally evident as monsters, against the

monsters technology creates and names precisely because monstrosity is devalued in terms of that who names the monster 'monsters'. The political nature of monsters comes directly from the acts of naming and defining (and the reasons for the acts), not the nature of the object named. There is no essential non-contingent thing named monster. Weiss discusses the use of the word monster as metaphor and the way in which metaphor devalues the meaning of terms. Monster then loses its necessary subversive potential. I do not think Braidotti is advocating using 'monster' as metaphor. I think she means it as a literal enfleshed becoming.

All acts of naming, metaphoric or not, have the capacity to compel the corporeal performance of the name given, so even metaphor is not incapable of material effect. Sexuality, corporeal de- and mal-formations, skin colour, female and hermaphroditic genitals and body modifications are all material conditions of the human body that are far more than metaphor both in their inability to be cast off and also their definition within culture. They also somewhat resist any singular definition of subjectivity, reflecting the 'holes' of discourse enclosed simply as 'other'. If they were metaphor experienced suffering and real triumph would be irrelevant when thinking monstrosity. Weiss asks 'does this fascination and horror in Braidotti's corresponding reification of these passions, serve to intensify, in oppressive ways, the monstrosity of the monstrous?' (Weiss, 108) She emphasizes the intensification of the term monster through the passions of fascination and horror. Intensification may be understood as some form of othering, the thing we call monster and the desire for it while being it - nonoppositional, same yet entirely different both in body and relational-event. This intensification is not of visibility or equality but precisely of discourse. Monsters 'appear' only when discourse about them appears, which is why discourse and speech are as urgent issues as the bodies and acts of those addressed. If Braidotti is advocating a becoming-monster, or a proclamation of monster then the first desire we must have for monsters is for our own 'monster-ization', claiming (or stealing) the immanent discourse that threatens to define and other us. Weiss' point is an important and valid one which comes from the anxiety Braidotti exhibits herself in her theorization of monsters, that becoming monster is fraught with the threat of being *named* monster by someone else in the wrong terms, as the wrong kind of monster within the wrong discursive episteme. But what becoming monster does successfully achieve is the emphatic refusal of categories and boundaries that have been set up for monsters, semi-monsters and the rare normal subject. Braidotti emphasizes 'We need to learn to think of the anomalous, the monstrously different not as a sign of pejoration but as the unfolding of virtual possibilities that point to positive alternatives for us all' (2000, 172). The virtual here refers to the instability in thinking teratological force and affect without establishing a limited and limiting series of pre-set possibilities. Braidotti's explicit refusal of 'the sign' is a refusal of signification within systems of knowledge and discourse, particularly crucial in a biopolitics that sees cure as deliverance/ the next stage of evolution. Even monsters as

signs of celebration use signification as a stabilizing act, rather than the infinite potential of thinking the monster as continual unfolding expressivity.

Fabulations

There is, it seems, no 'safe' concept of monster that does not threaten to slide back into more traditional exercises of naming as power. Discourse reifies through analysis and affirmation of (hierarchical) place, of function, form and nature. Monsters challenge all of these categories by being both resistant to and ambiguous within them. Whatever the joys of love for and as monster, the risks are great, both towards our expectations of what posthuman teratology will mean in a 'real' socio-activist context and also the risks we take by appropriating a concept that is dangerously linked with degrading and power-embedded practices. Monsters in themselves are created through a bordering and create bordering encounters. Within monstrous 'identity,' therefore, there is already more-than-one and relating with the monster mirrors this multiplicity within the singular. There is no evidence of discrete identity, not even bad identity. Resonating with the turn to animality in posthuman theory, the monster is a hybrid of 'animal' and 'human'. But another way to utilize animality in posthuman teratology without assimilation or fetishization comes from fabulations of impossible combinations created not through sutured forms but intermingling intensities. For example, in fiction, myth and popular culture we find the werewolf and the vampire. Werewolves are part human part wolf without being examples of either. They operate with the word werewolf because there is no name for it, so the need to defer back to established terms emphasizes its unique emergence. The werewolf is rather, after Deleuze and Guattari, the 'wolfing' of man. It is defined by its temporal transformations and instability. Additionally werewolves are frequently characterized by their tragic benevolence and horror at wolfing (usually incarnated in compulsions to destroy their own families), so they cannot be reduced to a single expression of intent or nature. The vampire mingles dead with living undead, it becomes bat, wolf, molecules of fog. The vampire does not metamorphosize, it is itself metamorphosis. Covert to the tragically benevolent werewolf, the vampire is unapologetically horrifying and seductive precisely for being such. We cannot ask what a werewolf or vampire are as they are always changing. In another example a Lovecraftian Ancient One shows 'a darkness with a positive quality ... it moved anomalously in a diagonal way, so that all the rules of matter and perspective seemed upset' (1989, 95). In a contradictive conundrum they are defined by instability, mingling of different forms and invoking violent aggression in sympathy, irresistible desire in repulsion, cosmic eternity in fear and perception through non Euclidean sensation:

The abnormal can be defined only in terms of characteristics, specific or generic; but the anomalous is a position or set of positions in relation to a multiplicity ...

It is always with the anomalous ... that one enters into alliance with becoming. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 244)

In a posthuman project towards becoming-animal (where the venture, the becoming, is the focus, and the final form never arrives), the fictive animal becomes more real than any becoming based on ethology. Becoming-monster asks for fabulated monsters. Just as the animal is not an animal as we know it. neither is the monster. Teratology risks fetishizing the monster, as sacred, as victim, as repulsive, through claims that absolute knowledge will mean absolute capacity to name and describe the limits and meanings of the monster. The fictive fabulation animals Deleuze and Guattari mention are those that demand creation and imagination – encounters which ignite thought rather than promise knowledge and its associated powers. As imaginary concepts, most frequently found in art, literature and film, fabulation animal-monsters such as werewolves and vampires cannot be co-opted as they exist only as demands for relations of othering. We can never 'know' that which does not exist, but, like all art and fiction, it does not mean our ideologies, paradigmatic tendencies and responses are not affected by experiences of these entities. Posthuman tribal totems are not those of 'primitive' culture, nor even of the use of animals as symbols in modernity, but strange, taxonomically impossible creatures that are us and not us, which move us to different positions. The werewolf is man and nonhuman (but not animal) life, the vampire inherently metamorphosis to the limit of being gaseous, a future of post-death rather than eternal, technologically facilitated life. Both are fleshy, furred, corroded, showing different conditions of the smooth, hard flesh of normal humanity and its ambition toward being impervious cyborg metal. Yet both are recognisably human. Most importantly, both infect and exist in packs. By very virtue of being infective vampires must form packs even if they are disparate. Indeed the idea that one belongs to a pack although one may never see one's fellow packmates exemplifies the oxymoronic status of these monstrous evocations. This means the only way to access these monsters is to be part of them – the encounter is the concept itself. The enigmatic nature of these monsters, eternal but notably popular in contemporary culture, shows they are not the abject abnormal creatures to be put away, made sacred or profane but always without, but seductive promises of extending thoughts of human potentiality. where we come within. Emphasizing the marvellous, fascinating etymology of the word, fabulated monsters can only be encountered by becoming with and as them. Neither vicarious metaphor, nor mirroring mimicry, our becomings are transformative politics which put their faith in experiments which will open the new fabulations to come. While each emergence of werewolf and vampire is unique, the packs they create are communities abstracted from each other. These phenomena reach a pure abstract point in Lovecraftian cosmic gods. Serres claims sense is the only constant when chaos is redeemed from repetitive disorder to chaos as limit (2000, 146). In his union with Ancient eternal monsters Lovecraft's Randolph Carter passes:

amidst backgrounds [both through and around] of other planets and systems and galaxies and cosmic continua; spores of eternal life drifting from world to world, universe to universe, yet all equally himself... His self had been annihilated and yet he – if indeed there could, in view of that utter nullity of individual existence, be such a thing as he – was equally aware of being inconceivable way, a legion of selves. (1999, 526–7)

The risk of the possibility of ignoring 'real life' monsters, entities both human and animal that have been forced to suffer through oppression catalysed by their alterity. once again is exacerbated. The function of fiction does not oppose that of reality, but it breaks down the binary itself. Fiction requires a belief in the unbelievable. While readers, viewers and listeners are aware of the fictive form, the affects and intensities incited in the imagination are real and have direct effects on the subjectivity of the reader, just as all fictive art affects the self beyond the fiction, and all science of the real operates via beliefs in what kinds of knowledge are possible and acceptable, the belief in which is its own fiction. Modes of perception are neither fictive nor true. They are constructs of potentialities of ideas. This means all encounters with alterity will create a choice – to turn away by knowing the other as abnormal and therefore affirming the self as normal, or to enter into a bordering or pack with the monstrous, creating a revolutionary hybridity of two who were already hybrids, and so forth. This bordering is as relevant for political activism as it is for dreams of wolfing and vampirism. Foucault states of power: 'That's just like you, always with the same incapacity to cross the line, to pass over to the other side ... it is always the same choice, for the side of power, for what power says or what it causes to be said' (1982, 220). It is just as easy for the fictive to incite reiterations of oppressive power – the hybrid must be punished, the abnormal is evil – as it is for the limitless potentials of fiction to exploit those elements that are unthinkable outside of literature and all art. As it is more difficult to imagine the becoming-vampire of everyday subjectivity, so it is more important in reference to the need to think the fact of everyday monstrosity as that which proves the infinite differentiations of the myth of the static human as a single possibility of expression whose only others are considered deviations rather than variations. Encounter and proximity refuse the distance required for one to objectify and name another. And both encountering entities alter within their own nature and as a single new hybrid manifestation. By this can be cured the most monstrous but repressed of animal functions which man operates in his oppressive regimes:

History hides the fact that man is the universal parasite, that everything and everyone around him is hospitable space. Plants and animals are always his hosts; man is necessarily their guest. Always taking, never giving. He bends the logic of exchange and of giving in his favour when he is dealing with nature as a whole. When he is dealing with his kind he continues to do so: He wants to be the parasite of man as well. (Serres 2007, 24)

Serres shows that it is not the monster who needs normal man to liberate it, but man who needs the monster to affirm himself and his status. The monster is always liberated enough, too much, limitless. The monster's becoming with other monsters, already us as we are already them, is quelled by man's being as parasite not only of the nonhuman but also the human. This relation, to know and name the monster, is an act of violence:

Consequently the basic combat situation reappears in knowledge. There. Just as we noted previously, a collectivity united by an agreement finds itself facing the world in a relation, neither dominated nor managed, of unconscious violence: Mastery and possession ... Science brings together fact and law: whence it is now decisive place. Scientific groups, in a position to control or do violence to the worldwide world, are preparing to take the helm of the worldly world. (Serres 2001, 22)

That science is law shows the fictitious nature of both, and monstrosity requires a certain lawlessness that, as a concept, is itself seen to be monstrous. It is not, it is simply not top-down. 'Cure' is not deliverance but violence. To alter the body to diminish pain or suffering is different from seeking to 'rectify' abnormalities or deformities for the benefit of those who must confront them. Traversal is active and activating. From abnormal thing to anomalous movement operates, the politics of traversal. Monsters show all subjectivity must be considered pure singularity. Traversing domains of singularities, creating monstrous territories promotes:

innovatory practices, the expansion of alternative experiences centred around a respect for singularity and through the continuous production of an autonomising subjectivity that can articulate itself appropriately in relation to the rest of society ... Individuals must become both more united and increasingly different. (Guattari 2000, 59, 69)

Aberrant Openings

Teratology from taxonomy to traversal celebrates the singularity of each monster while showing we are all monsters in our singularity. Collectivity comes from the unlike, to transform groups based on expressions of creativity through difference, not of power through knowledge. It also addresses the lived reality of monsters and their/our unique experiences of suffering and jubilance. The most basic and quiet of corporeal acts, if not enclosed in regimentation and signification, can cause horror, while grand experiments in posthumanism can reiterate the oppression and repression of bodies depending on what symbolic values and by what means these bodies emerge and are encountered. 'Pathology is not a general state of being, a disease which afflicts the whole system, but a local and readable lesion, a mappable topography...' (Walby, 24). Monsters are lesion bodies that majoritarian regimes

say must be excised from the body politic, the corpus, for the benefit of all. They must be read before they can be encountered and removed, yet we could say the encounter, which causes horror through aberration as ambiguity is the catalyst for signification, where marvelling converts to meaning. Marvelling opens up the witness; meaning closes off the monster. It is a question of a revolutionary or reifving decision, the way the other is mapped. A lesion to be ablated, or a suppurating opening, what Guattari shows is that the way beyond the categorization of the human is what we have already repressed that is inherently part of and all that we are. And one could argue cyborgs do not sweat, shit nor spit, while animals, including the human animal do, but we perceive it in either a ritualized or naturally innocent fashion. Kristeva writes that 'experimental multiplicity is entirely different from the emptiness and destruction experienced in the loss of identity' (Kristeva 2002, 131). Monsters, multiple, hybridic and metamorphic, find their place – a no-place, an every-place – in posthumanism as proliferation and connection. They offer a vitalistic foil to the sometimes cynical, even nihilistic, risks the post-modern loss of identity may entail. The very nature of monsters as sicknesses of a failure to be human makes their dividuated corporeal aberrancies mirror their place in society as flaws or deformities of the social corpus. But when post-modernity facilitates posthumanity, monsters show the body already remapped. We are faced with our bodies as monstrous because the sites of what would be considered failures or flaws upon a human map, and signified as such close off thinking the body differently, become openings toward life without and beyond humanity, actual lived experience, being without having to be a specified subject. Monstrous 'deformities' and symptoms traditionally punctuate a normal body as text to be read. These punctuative points can be encountered as despositifs which escape signification rather than functioning as an affirmation of the claimed necessity of normality. Lyotard states of the aberrant body that 'the body is undone and its pieces are projected across libidinal space, mingling with other pieces in an inextricable patchwork' (Lyotard 1993a, 60). Patching together despotic aberrations of the flesh, the genetic code connects points which are incommensurable with the normal human but which are also commensurable with each other. Where they are single points – conceptually and physically – which sully the smooth, sealed terrain of the human, they become multiple relations between other monster fabulations and each seam of the patchwork (and each despotic aberration has many sides thus many seams and many relations with others) is a unique connective tissue of creative singularity. It demands thought because it has never been encountered before. All bodies, perceived as formerly normal or not, have to think what relations they can make with multiple despositifs. Each body must therefore have more than one plane, side or aspect and each specific connection exacerbates these multiplications. This operation involves:

opening the body to connections that presuppose an entire assemblage, circuits, conjunctions, levels and thresholds, passages and distributions of intensities and territories and deterritorialisations measured with the craft of a surveyor ... how

can we unhook ourselves from the points of subjectification that secure us, nail us down to a dominant reality? (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 160)

Teratological connectivity fulfils certain qualities of the posthuman – multiplicity in the one, singularity in the many, the death of reproduction for production of the unlike. This mode of teratological experimentation in thought and practice does not need an actual element of alterity that is not human – animal, machine – but reminds us all humanity is made up of its own elements of otherness that are repressed, denied or catalogued. Teratological connectivity affirms that the category of human has never existed proper, but instead of co-opting elements opposed to the human, it celebrates and exploits that we already have everything we need to become posthuman monsters without the need for fetishization or assimilation of those who cannot choose to become part of non-human assemblages, such as animals, or for access to overarching systems of modernity beyond the reach of most people, such as cyborg research. Teratological re-signification of all bodies should not involve a forgetting of the realities of the lived experiences of those named monsters by dominant epistemes. While connections involve opening futures as becomings to come, no body comes from nowhere and the memories of suffering and oppression are part of the specificity of each despositif to which each connector will have its own relation, such as shared oppression and accountability. What matters most is that by refusing regimes of signification we all become accountable, while all acknowledging the urgency with which and the reasons why experiments in teratological connectivity are as political as they are interesting, artistic, liberating and, hopefully, fun.

Nature Against Itself

If myth informs science, as much as the converse, then the power of social imaginings of 'impossible' fictional fabulations exerts as much power on our constitution of irreducible 'nature' as does the idea of distant objective scientific discourse. Monsters emerge in science, medicine, criminology and psychology as predetermined by genes, chromosomes, congenital destiny and other 'reasons', authenticated by a phantasy of phenomena that precedes the discourses which describe them. This has seen real bodies deemed monsters and addressed as those who must be either cured or ostracized, those who deserve sympathy or extraction from the 'healthy' social corpus. For historical studies, as with all minoritarians, this actual system of teratology must be remembered, however a teratological posthuman ethics shifts science's claim to truth in monsters as that which needs to be studied and described to abstract monsters who demand imagination and renegotiation of self precisely because they cannot be studied or known. Braidotti points out a tendency in modern relations with teratology 'the contemporary trend for borderline or liminal figures of sexuality, especially replicants, zombies and vampires, including lesbian vampires and other queer mutants' (Braidotti 2006, 179). There are two reasons we can see this turn occurring, but neither is discrete. The first is the fear of a residually superstitious fantasy which comes directly from a concept of the fictional in order to act as a catharsis to rectify anxieties about the elements of fantasy which operate in reality. For example, lesbians create anxiety because they show that non-phallic desire is possible without being exhausted by description or in need of gender opposition. The vampire is the seducer which takes the victim away from the grounding performed by the phallus in sexuality, offering a scenario of fear and ambiguity as its own sexuality without epistemology. The lesbian vampire coalesce these two figures of mystery. Zombies unite food and sex, death and the idea that the death of the human gives birth to a living nongendered, non-integrated, oozing, suppurating, mucosal, 'something else'. This is especially true for representations of metamorphic zombies rather than those belonging to voodoo, mindless consumerist lore or the troubling emergence of misogynist zombie incarnations. Deleuze and Guattari see fictional monsters as neither metaphor nor phantasy but as invoked for a politics of virtuality which can actualize material political, ethical, creative becomings, always founded on desire. Where science that nomenclatures monstrosity sees nature as having produced mistakes. Deleuze and Guattari see ethics as coming from relations which are 'combinations neither genetic nor structural; they are interkingdoms, unnatural participations. That is the only way Nature operates – against itself' (1987, 242). This theory performs an elliptical, infinite function. Entering into relations with the monstrous other including our othered selves creates an unnatural participation, an inter-breeding, a truth created from incommensurability. Hybridity and mobility, inherent elements in monstrosity, describe these relations. Nature is always already against itself, folded into a multi-faceted chaotic elegant creativity, nothing is normal or aberrant, nothing a mistake as by virtue of nature creating it, it cannot be unnatural. Only participations which majoritarian discursive systems see as unnatural, via the cultural interpretation of nature, are observed as incorrect phenomena and mistakes. Unnatural structures exploit and develop their becomings through inconceivable but nonetheless possible infections of unlike intensities, and for this reason real life material becomings are not bifurcated from fictional becomings, such as participations with werewolves, demons and vampires. The intensities, not the biological givens, constitute these monsters, non-fictional and fictional alike so that this categorization itself is moot. 'Becomings produce nothing by filiation: all filiation is imaginary' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 238).

That the monster is not the 'brother of man', outside of the family tree of the evolutionary zenith of the human, means there is no family for the monster so the only relations possible are unnatural. The monster cannot reproduce itself and nor its subjective discourse because every relation is a singularity. In this sense Deleuze and Guattari emphasize that ontology is fiction, becomings actualizations of nature. Werewolves, demons, vampires and other post-teratological monsters multiply the multiple of the assemblage as they are already more than one

– packs of wolves, contagions of vampires and zombies, demons as legion or pandemonium. Within their own emergence they are hybrid – the werewolf half animal half man thus neither and both, the vampire transforming undead to wolf, bat and always sexually ambiguous, the demon seducing as it damns, reflecting the self of the one who makes the pact while showing infinite potentialities of self as otherwise. Deleuze and Guattari state:

we are not interested in characteristics, what interests us are modes of propagation, occupation, contagion, peopling. I am legion. The Wolf-Man fascinated by several wolves watching him ... Beezlebub is the Devil but the Devil as Lord of the Flies ... sorcerers know that werewolves are bands, and vampires too, and that bands transform themselves into one another. (1987, 239, 241)

Monstrous Ethics

Monsters no longer contain characteristics, they cannot be described, signified, inserted into a hierarchy or nosological system. In the most reduced sense then, through concepts of adaptability and evolution itself, all organisms are unlike – we are all, and must be monsters because nothing is ever like another thing, nor like itself from one moment to the next. An ethics of monstering becomes a *practice*, an activity to evoke affects and open up to affects unthought of:

Fear, hideousness, vampires, dragons, the multiple at first, inspire fear. What terrifies is not the meaning of the noise – the thing spoken, forspoken – but the increasing multiplicity that says it ... But these demons are nothing but the calls of the world or the moans of the others who are crying for help. Would you be frightened by this wailing? (Serres 1995, 67)

Love for monsters acknowledges their suffering within a certain regime of signification. Just as fear and wonder emerge when relating with monstrosity, opening to this fear bears witness to a suffering based on the incapacity to speak within a certain discourse, described but not heard. When we succumb to the wondrous desire of unnatural participation this wail is also a seductive call to hear without interpretation or epistemology, to encounter with the self become otherwise. A monstrous language, sonority frightens only the human, the refusing, the dividuated and the integrated. The multiple shifts, the band twists as a moebian strip and the self is lost to the many within one, the one within many, the community of the unlike.

'Everything flows' writes Serres:

Objects are springs ... thus perception is an encounter, a collision or an obstacle, one of many intersections along the way. The perceptive subject is an object of the world, plunged into the objective fluencies. Receiver, in its place, transmitter

from every point of view. Beaten, struck, wounded, sometimes ravaged, burned, painful. (2000, 49)

Proximity with monsters constitutes the monster only as its own object or object in the world which itself as space does not perceive as the world is not constituted as its own object per se. The monster, as all perceivers, is object as receiver. It cannot be objectified for or by the other. It is one among many proliferative objects within a teeming world where the only demarcation of objects comes through proximity and vibration or turbulence. Why in this argument I maintain the monster as monstrous object is twofold. First the monster is frequently that which is most likely to be demarcated as object for the other due to its particularly emphatic modes of collision affected by its extreme difference. Constituted as aberration this collision makes likely the monster as receiver more likely to receive in Serres' warning way – beaten, struck and so forth. The ethical turn of the perceiving other will be a part of this sensation of diminishing affect toward the other. But from a posthuman teratological creative perspective, the emphasis on turbulence of familiar and stabilizing vibrations, waved and flows which the monster catalyses means perception is most likely to form new, unthought of relations which encounter the monster as molecular synthesis rather than obstructive traumatic collision.

Love for Monsters

Constituted by the order of signification, the subject in proximity with the monster cannot sense because sense is blocked by knowledge, just as harmony is destroyed by collision. Errors are of sensation as perception, so an object cannot be an erroneous subject, the monster not an erroneous human. Monstrosity is experienced as a viscous seduction of perturbation. We can only name monstrosity under these conditions as mucosal, inextricable molecular alteration of both objects as they are perceived by their conditions of singularly expressed collusion. Serres call to sense is both a sensuousness and sensation as asemiotic relation. Sensuous relations are ones of corporeal desire, where the flesh comes before the constitution of its form as subject by science, religion, capitalism and so forth. Sensation similarly refuses the hardness, surface or outline of bodies as being objects independent of the world in which they arise. Those who name monsters imagine they stand outside of the world, where the world is defined as the conditions which produce our capacity to know through naming and name through knowing. In this context knowledge belongs to the finality and to absolutes of qualities exhausted by definitions of forms. Two singulars stand in opposition in the order of taxonomical expressions of power, the aggressor and the invaded. But the aggressor does not define itself, masquerading as the distant voice of reason, logic or any other mode of elocution independent of subjective investment in power. The aggressor defers speech and operations of naming the monster to external, higher order unities – Law, 'nature' as preceding culture, God. The monster represents two vulnerabilities in the system of

the singular – first the abject as the collapse between subject and object, I and other, demarcated and integrated. It also shows to the I that it is always and already part of this collapse. Discourse is both a description and an activity of separation. Two elements in space standing against each other are also a continuing practice in time of maintenance and assurance through repetition. The beings, those who are the 'to be' – to be the monster and to be the not-monstrous are always a consistency of being as durational separative practice. Monstrous ethical desire is movement without cessation or destination. 'The place and law of the One does not exist without a series of separations' (Kristeva 1982, 94). Elaborating the work of Douglas on the clean and the unclean, the holy and the unholy and the sacred and the taboo, Kristeva relates the structure of abjection as a strategy of taxonomical demarcation. The tendency to make the monster sacred, to fetishize it, to elevate it to an equal or superior position as mystical saviour or esoteric portal to world where knowledge means enlightenment more than observable truth, continues series of separation, inverting the arboreal taxonomy without relinquishing the patterns of objects in space to be studied and placed within a hierarchy. This fails to address that 'every body is a well and every body is a fountain' (Serres 2000, 89). Fluidity not of one body but between bodies, each body a volume which is empty and full, creative and created. Attraction as interdependence is an act of both love and grace – love in seeking sensation and grace in forsaking the human inclination to exert and maintain power through taxonomical ordering.

At this stage of thinking monstrosity comes a perplexing question. What, in this new desire does it mean to be a monster? The troubling but somewhat necessary persistence of syntaxes of 'we' and 'they' have become confounded. 'We' speak of 'those' who name, while speaking of 'those' who are named. I have deliberately used this oscillating and sometimes frustrating pronoun use for two reasons. The first acknowledges 'we', as in all subjects, are complicit in naming and exerting power through practices of knowledge. This is most evident in historical genealogies of monstrosity, taxonomy and teratology. But it continues in any space where extrication from another is activated for purposes of preserving dominance or simply demarcation. The second conversely welcomes and addresses the monstrosity that all subjects contain and the risks certain subjects take through political activities which enhance monstrosity through occupying spaces and performing actions that resist, disrupt and make the concept of the normal transparent. We are all monsters and all not monsters depending on our relation with signifying systems. Power is its own act of desire. Imagination through encounters with alterity that catalyse loss of self is a form of desire that is, like the spectacle or encounter with the monster itself, both frightening and compelling, seductive and dangerous. Thus monstrosity, in its final definition as the simple turbulence that collides or harmonizes with the fluidity of our own selves, is nothing more than a wondrousness possible in all things which requires not the monster as entity, but monstrous encounter. The monster in this (de)structure is independent of all objects as it is a state of relation. It is the in between, the threshold, and we are left with our selves as constituted as part of and through this

relation. Without a relation of desire we can no longer speak of monstrosity, just as without human configurations based on polarity we cannot speak of 'the' monster. Taking the monster lover in the way Deleuze and Guattari configure the friend:

the friend who appears in philosophy no longer stands for an extrinsic persona, an example or empirical circumstance, but rather for a presence that is intrinsic to thought, a condition of possibility of thought itself, a living category, a transcendental lived reality. (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 3)

Without desire there can be no ethics, as ethics is a power of affective and porous force. Monsters have stood as symbols of a need for ethical address in the face of an entity which refuses the modes through which we have come to be used to addressing otherness and self in human forms. The shift from the symbolic to asemiosis, from form to relation and from atrophy to metamorphosis – all monstrous intensities – transforms the monster from that position of symbolism, denied specificity, to an imperative for action. Monstrous posthuman ethics is a form of activism borne of lived oppressions as well as an experiment and expression of desire from nature's infinity.



Chapter 6 Mystic Queer

In a claim which both dispels all sexuality and by doing so opens up desire as an infinite everything. Foucault states 'it is not sufficient to liberate sexuality; it is also necessary to liberate ourselves from the notion of sexuality itself' (2000, 245). Desire in non-opposition is gueer. While gueer has been understood as coming after heterosexual and homosexual differentiation, as a kind of post-post modern sexuality, posthuman queer desire occurs before the separation of forms, 'desire is constituted before the crystallization of the body and the organs, before the division of the sexes, before the separation between the familiarized self and the social field' (Guattari 1996a, 153). Queer has its own genealogy, beginnings seeking to orient homosexuality independent of heterosexuality, through anti-object as same, anti-act, anti-theory toward liberation from the theatrical paradigms whereby the materiality of desire emerges via structuring scaffolds. Time varies in its relational affects with queer along a variety of trajectories; the bedrock of the (now almost defunct) Oedipaliziation; becomings and metamorphic sexualities based on novel connectivities and participations; oscillations of genders and inclinations through performativity, trans and neo-fetishism; a kind of stuttering or tourette speech of sexual enunciation leading to a refusal to speak, among others. Spatially queer has operated a theatre of transgression, sadism, masochism, scatology of both theory and act and other disorienting structures whose participants are indeterminate subjugated to acts over object (as a recognisable subject)-choice and the intensities they afford. Traversive lines between gueer and feminism, feminism and gay studies, gay studies and diffability sexuality to new experiments in non-human sexuality as not animal per se but a kind of theoretical bestiary of fabulated creatures which we both become and with which we consort. The fiction of the sexualized subject is mirrored and unfolded by the fictive of the sexual 'partner' or 'object' as primarily an imagined and creative catalyst for unravelling despotic locales of desire. The pandemonium of posthuman monsters are all attendant, vampires, werewolves, sonorous entities, aliens, cyborgs, the germinal feminine, the disabled and a cornucopia of others. Histories of knowledges of the body in science, representation and the capacity to be recognised have given way to sympathetic revisions which show that desiring bodies, sex and gender have always been and continue to be contested, not in what they are or were but in the theory itself which constituted them. Historical re-readings show that the is/was not bodies themselves which were the problem but the continuing difficulty in speaking about them that meant a doubling of oppressive reification simultaneous with liberation through the ambiguities in epistemology afforded precisely because of the body being unspeakable and inexhaustible. Far from being the

object which through continual analysis promises the possibility of absolute knowledge, from the gross of genital anatomy and physiognomy to the refined in genetics, the body's misbehaviour as a mobile and enigmatic desiring emergence has proliferated discourse and created disagreement within it. Sadly this has often resulted in the multiplication of oppressive regimes rather than a repudiating discourse as the alternative to majoritarian knowledges. But this shows we cannot be anti-or pro- queer just as queer initially sought to renegotiate the challenge of bifurcated sexuality, whether it be historically as normative and 'everything else' or heterosexual and homosexual. A thousand claims to know sexuality seeking to eradicate aberrations are matched by the equivalent of those seeking to vindicate or celebrate them, and this is so of all epistemic systems, not simply science versus philosophy, truth versus activism and such. The ethical question has traditionally been how do we resolve the rights of sexual alterity with the concept of doing away with sexuality altogether? While the latter is more aligned with the premise of *Posthuman Ethics*, it would be utopic to claim the former is no longer relevant. This may be a question which mirrors the very foundation of philosophy, being how does philosophy become useful in the world? Searle states:

How and to what extent can we reconcile a certain conception we have of ourselves as conscious, mindful, free, social and political agents with a world that consists entirely of the mindless, meaningless particles in fields of force? How, and to what extent, can we reconcile what we believe about ourselves with what we know for a fact from physics, chemistry, biology ... how can there be a social and institutional world in a world consisting of physical particles? ... How can there be *political reality* in a world consisting of physical particles? (Searle, 81)

Post-structuralism's refusal to binarize theory and practice, thought and materiality liberates from the perception there is a need to choose, resulting in what has come to be considered as the U.S. versus Continental schools of gueer enquiry as well as the persistence of the nature/nurture impasse. The use of queer has only recently come to be viable for the Continental school, which always favoured the term desire, while the U.S. school associated gueer with performativity and the uneasy relation between sex and gender. Both sought to address the activism/abstract relation and each committed to these terms being simultaneously possible even while seeming incommensurable. Of course there is no answer when the question itself maintains integral features of majoritarian thought – choose a side, one is true if the other is false, etcetera. New questions arise: when we are all queer, what does queer mean? If we recognise transgressive sexualities how do we avoid a new taxonomy of perversion which, no matter how liberal, privileges description as a function of power? Where is feminism in a post-gender world? What happens to the history of suffering of minoritarian sexualities and genders (mirroring the same integral question found in Chapter 5 and current teratology studies) when we future-queer? Questions themselves maintain the demand for response even while opening up for many responses. As ethics itself, these new problems instead require thinking

the singularity of desiring as an event which we cannot expect nor upon which reflect. Sexuality is a negotiative moment for which no vocabulary yet exists. The above questions are human questions, from humanist to trailing the persistent residue of human concerns. But *all* things desire as all is desire. This chapter faces a problem and for this reason it is a problem itself. I will explore understandings of bodies, acts as events and finally seek abstraction as an ethical way to think new queer. Oxymoronically however, I will offer an alternative queer in the form of a relation between two entities, thus relegating queer back past its non-diachronous structure, to that of a between-(at least but also within) two sexuality. Perversely this both mirrors hetero/homo as operating within a binary structure but as relation is the third and the within the self the quickening of the relation, simultaneous with the outside, this between-two is tactically rather than reducibly offered. The relation seeks both an alternative in the nature of the between and the abstraction of the other object choice in order to invigorate an imaginative, creative and ethical self of desiring events. In this sense this chapter in no way sets itself apart from or above the rigorous innumerable work now appearing which utilises abstract others such as those monstrous fabulations, minoritarians, transgressives and activists. To do so performs the replacement expression of power that consigns thought back to verified or disqualified knowledges, and associated operatives of validity found in logic and truth. Theory is what it does, not what it is, so I will seek to do something different or at least to do 'it' differently. This chapter will offer an other in the form of the angel which directs its alterity to an ethical mysticism that brings together the ecstasies of Chapter 3 with the monstrosities of Chapter 5.

Transgression has been criticised as a queer tactic. Two perceptions persist in the devaluation of transgression. The first is that transgression, as a reactive force, fails to be independent of those regimes which limit desire. The second claims transgression is not political 'enough': 'Since the mid-1990s there has certainly been a turn away from this focus on transgression and a turn towards a focus on topics that are seen as perhaps being more worthy' (Binnie, 31). Though not citing precisely what constitutes a worthy topic, Binnie refers to the turn away from representation in favour of theories which understand the body emergent as a mapping of power, critiquing that 'the body has become more abstract than ever' (Binnie, 31). The critique of abstraction which defaults here to transgression continues to haunt new modes of thinking queer. But the separation of abstraction and activism, of theory and practice, is arbitrary at best and a phantasy incommensurable with that of being a body in a world where thought produces knowledge which in turn produces the body, social, political and biological, as theorists inspired by Continental theory have long contested.\(^1\) Will as coming

¹ In a not dissimilar oscillation between practice and theory, bodies and activism, there is the sociology and philosophy disjunctive. Much of the work being produced on the question of ethics in queer theory directly involves an interrogation of the relation between the sociologist researcher and their subject, whether the subject and object are configured as occupying the same marginalized subject position or are different from one another.

from consciousness and appetite from the body occur differentiated equally while simultaneously they inevitably and inextricably coalesce: Spinoza configures the organism as complete in itself but in a state of constant vacillation as a result of external forces. These forces can produce love, associated with pleasure, and hate, associated with pain. An external force is not loved as a result of its own self-enclosed nature but through its capacity to affect the self. The external force is not a thing but a cause and the self not an entity demarcated and isolated in a population of other things, but a result of the affects of external forces who are, in turn, results of other external forces including the self's. The external cause is only ever an idea of a cause based on what is produced in the self through affect. This does not mean that the self is an intractable or hedonistic persona. Far from it, the self is supple and mobile and its very nature is a nature of relationality.

Affects of Love and Hate

Just as queerness and normalcy have been theorised as states of degree over identity places of occupation (notably from Canguilhem and his influence on Foucault) so affection creates conditions which are states of lesser or greater perfection. Perfection is itself a state of relation, not a project of finitude. Greater perfection comes from pleasure from an affective force, while lesser perfection comes from an affective force producing pain. These in turn will be converted into the expressive force of love or hate based on the idea of the external force – love or hate not for a thing but the self's idea of the external force. The external force is not consistent so when we say 'I love you' we are saying 'I love the idea of you based on this force at this moment'. The external force is gifted its configuration as multiple, temporal, metamorphic, proliferative and complex over being reified as a complete person with an inherent and atrophied essence. 'If we conceive of a thing, which is wont to affect us painfully, has any point of resemblance with another thing that is wont to affect us with an equally strong emotion of pleasure, we shall hate the first named thing and at the same time we shall love it' (Spinoza, 1957: 38). Just as the thing we love or hate is a multiplicity capable of unthought and infinite expressions which affect the self, so the ways we experience those affects are ambiguous, what Spinoza calls vacillation, which reflects the ambiguous relation between emotion and imagination. Spinoza defines desire as appetite (body) with consciousness (mind) indivisible. Desire is present in and as all human organisms. External forces change the nature of the organism toward, not perfection as completion, but new states of possibilities of expression and capacities to be affected. If we take this as a queer ethics, desire for Spinoza is a system of the inbetween, the supple and the active-passive that

See for example Browne and Nash's anthology *Queer Methods and Methodologies: Queer Theories and Social Science Research* (2010) and Jennie Germann Moiz and Sarah Gibson's *Mobilizing Hospitality: The Ethics of Social Relations in a Mobile World* (2008).

emerge simultaneously. Any concept of political standpoint identity associated with queer gives way to a beyond, an outside. While definitions of identity are always contingent upon the regimes which constitute them, speaking 'as' or 'for' is perilous because it insinuates there is a non-porous entity whose enunciative function expresses from a non-absorbent state. This is monodirectional speech from volitional self-knowing will of one's sexuality. The institute being attacked is therefore constituted similarly as established in its nature.

Ironically it is the very malleability of oppressive regimes which makes them so difficult to alter. They slip and collide with criticisms not to open new opportunities for alterity so much as to seduce new false consciousnesses through adaptation of phylum. Power formation 'no longer draws its [capitalism's but also its inextricable politics of identity] consistency from a basic human factor, but from a machinic phylum which traverses, bypasses, disperses, miniaturizes and co-opts all human activities' (Guattari 1996a, 207). In this sense the suspicion that transgression affirms the system it critiques by being a reactive rather than active force is misguided in that transgression must always adapt and perceive subtle perturbations from the macrocosmic to the microcosmic. 'a procedure of working through or working across to something which is forgotten "before" representation or memory. The point of such rewriting is not to achieve a new synthesis or arrive at a new destination, but to work through, "to pass beyond synthesis in general" (Lyotard 1993b, 54). Transgression is abstract because non-representational, as a result of attempting to tease out the non-representable, not through the making visible of hitherto unrecognised queer subject positions. Those positions which exist but are not represented must have no language in order to claim they are not visible. Making them visible as demarcated identities performs the reactive transgressive function, while, from an abstract perspective, affirms the invisible in the visible as, not that which awaits being revealed which was constituted before the revelation, but that which is always within in order to move to new modes of affectuation and expression – refusing queer coming out, the passing beyond. In order to think queer any recognition must be a catalyst for passing beyond rather than an affirmation and thus validation of difference added to the taxonomy of sexualities. 'The sodomical sublime is a symbol of diffuse desires, mysterious delight and inchoate feelings, with a potential for uncanniness, and a counternormative capacity to transgress and subvert' (Munt, 8).

How Queer is Queer?

By gaining recognition homosexuals (and inevitably all 'deviants') lose as much, if not more, than they gain. Terry states:

What would it mean if 'homosexuality as we know it today' [Sedgwick] became reduced in the popular imagination to a strip of DNA, or to a region of the brain, or to a hormonal condition? What would we lose in the defensive move

to believe science to be our rational saviour and to base our politics in biology? What does science do *for* us? What does it do *to* us?² (157)

Pathologizing non-normal bodies has reduced in size in material terms, within science, to the cellular genetic code. The miniaturization of biological corporeality seems less offensive to culture than claims of large, visible and what could be described in the context of Chapter 5 as 'monstrous' differences. The arrival in the 1990s of Dean Hamer's study of the 'gay gene' and Simon LaVay's of the 'gay brain' did not necessarily argue in the realm of nature versus nurture. The gay gene, Xq28, was only ever identified in homosexual men, so perhaps only gay men are gay, and all others, even straight women as under-represented on their own terms, gav women and other established identified sites currently negotiated as sexually a-typical, are queer. 'Post-queer queer' includes 'straights' now, because while homosexuals at the most basic level are defined by object choice, heterosexual queers are liberated from object choice vet risk being queer only through performativity in relation to the enactment of sexuality and gender, in a post-structural turn collapsed. The compulsion to ask remains. The straight enunciation 'how are you queer' is the demand for sexual identity, not necessarily a sympathetic opening out of dissipative (deviant) variants on epistemologies of desire. Leo Bersani defines homo-ness as liberated from object choice or act, a state of 'anti-identity identity' (101). This is the foil Calvin Thomas uses in theorising hetero-queer, what he calls post-normal, against criticisms that hetero queer (gender not specified) intellectuals have co-opted queer thus eroding radical queer projects.³ While post-normal normal, straight-queer or whichever term is used to describe non-homosexual queers is both politically liberating for those who do not choose majoritarian status but repudiate the effects of power it affords, and problematic in co-option and fetishization, it exacerbates the issue identity politics has with abstraction. To claim queer is co-opted if straights are queer relegates queer to an authentic position. This then risks authenticating biological essentialism – something which both performativity queer theory and abstraction

² Terry continues: 'And where can we turn for a new question of the self and new ways of *performing* – as opposed to biologically manifesting – deviance?' (157). I deliberately omit this statement as it raises the issue of performativity beyond the scope of this book but also beyond arguments which seek to collapse the bifurcation of performativity 'versus' biology incepted by Butler. The self as a question rather than a being is a posthuman statement, however ways of performing insinuates a distance between desire and representation as well as the capacity to act as one desires, expressing a transparency of one's desires to oneself. This risks the posthuman either being all biology with no capacity to represent (that is, nature may exist but it is inaccessible via language) or all performative, with the attractive association of no need for verification or authentification. This impasse remains a fascinating point in current queer inquiries.

³ These criticisms come mainly from Teresa DeLauretis, who coined queer before denouncing it, in her 1997 chapter 'Fem/Les Scramble', (2007) and Annette Schlicter's 2004 article 'Queer at Last: Straight Intellectuals and the Desire for Transgression'.

refuse. To claim one is a queer straight based on performance of gender relegates both identity and desire to the realm of representation. To claim one negotiates one's traditional gender role through act makes sexuality seem a result of will. To act queer while being straight without necessarily willing it will result in one being named queer whether one is or not, which was the problem in the first place – being or not being queer, but the exertion of power enacted when one is pronounced queer. Is the queerest straight the one called queer who doesn't set out to be, or who is disturbed by the label? Is theorising queer queer? Is it anti-queer? The criticisms of DeLauretis and Schlicter levelled specifically against postmodernity and intellectuals continue the identity representation/abstraction argument with gay-thus-authentically transgressive/intellectual theorization of queer. Thomas' rethinking of heterosexuality as post-normal involves refusing reproduction of the child which functions to narrativize sex as having a goal, an outcome (2000) which could then presumably mean sex is either successful or unsuccessful. This can be directly translated to homosexuality in reference to the production of authentic sexual subjectivity.

Theorising sexual subjectivity is straight if it relegates desire to language and act to representation. LaVay, who 'discovered' the gay brain, claims 'Biology and psychology are merely different ways of looking at the same thing... even if something is totally culturally determined, like what music you like, it has a representation in the brain.' (in Burr, 315) LaVay's refusal to disjoin biology from culture retains the belief that somewhere, somehow, there will be a recognisable reason, a representation of function, purpose and constitutive element. It does nothing radical in its address to ambiguity while it insists on evidence which can be apprehended and translated into truth. Straight queer is not found in pegging or dressing ambiguously, just as the defaulting of homosexuality to being queer long ago lost its currency. The queering of biology cannot be found in the co-option and mimicry of 'animal' behaviour that homogenises members of species while attempting to make nonhuman anatomy and acts comparable to the human. Underrepresentation may make the narrativization of homosexuality, especially female homosexuality, queer but queer refuses representation altogether. There is no goal, neither of identity nor desire, as desire flows through limitless and luminal planes which exceed act, object choice and self.

What kind of queer is struggle? What queer is excess without reference to what is exceeded? Most crucially, what queer is the limitless ambiguity and plurality of affectuation and expression that creates love as a result of interactive ethics? Even polyvocal representation vanquishes a queer project.

We are thus in the presence of two polar modalities of consciousness: that of pseudo-territorialities of resonance and that of an irrevocable deterritorialization; that of tranquilising (and reassuring) faces and significations and that of anxiety without object, or rather, an anxiety which aims at the *reality* of nothingness ... It is a question of neutralising, by reducing them, the 'n' animal, vegetal and cosmic eye of the rhizomatic possible which could subsist within residual

territorialized assemblages ... the media install a vanishing point behind every glance. (Guattari 2011, 82–3)

Does gueer seek to repudiate resonances with anything? By which it opens to singular resonatings with unlike entities within and without the self to create through exposing us to the marvellous and terrifying reality that nothing means the voluminous material world without referent. Guattari's use of animal, vegetal and cosmic need not be interpreted as co-opting the sexually different from the human animal in nature, but the a-humanity of various orders of the human when liberated from the exhausted moment of the myth of absolute truth found in manufactured perception. The animal, vegetal cosmic eve is an a-human eve that does not see in genus and species but nor does it homogenize singularities in their rhizomatic interactions. Guattari may offer a possibility of activism found in what he calls residual territorial assemblages – how can we utilise queer to activate an ethical configuration of desire that is only defined by its deterritorializing usefulness at any given moment? Our likeness to other queers is a matter of residue of seeking to rethink regimes rather than who we are doing or what we are doing with them. But as it is a project of desire it is gueer nonetheless. Oueer is a territory that demands accountability and this can only come through abstract thinking in order to open each tactical temporary territory to what is needed, to change the assemblages rather than seek the finite point of perception which will tell us what is queer, how to be queer, what metaphors are associated with and applicable to queer. We are all queer and not queer in ways which exceed representation. Cosmic and chaosmotic particles coalesce into queer configurations creating desire and the question is how do these occur? How can we exploit them so the glance which encounters queer shows a perhaps terrifying but nonetheless wondrous infinity of new configurations?

In a perverse turn, while science was used to explain queerness, now queerness is used to explain science. Elements in physics which are too abstract for gross physical scientific method to perceive turn to queer for its capacity to 'describe' material abstraction

The point is that theoretical entities such as strings or gravitrons or extra dimensions are quite unlike anything in the familiar universe. But this is not something about which we need to worry; such queerness does not mean they do not exist—it simply means that the universe is more queer than we might at first have thought. On reflection, we might even admit that it is not something that should surprise us ... And in roughly the same way, understanding the nature and structure of the universe might require that we adopt some fairly queer ways of thinking. (Brassington, 36)

Queer is thinking the unthinkable. Without wishing to enter into a discussion of physics, Brassington does show that when encountering the inconceivable but nonetheless dynamic materially incarnated queer is a way in which we can grasp

what is but what we have hitherto been unable to approach based on established modes of thought. The queer approach is nothing more than an approach. At each approach we do not come closer to final excavation or revelation. We create new queering trajectories ad infinitum. Queer is a way of approaching the unfamiliar. Desire, the capacity to express and be affected, and love are all the most familiar of irreducibly unfamiliar. We are not subjects who desire or love, we coalesce into certain configurations of expression based on those affects which constitute us when they mingle with our unknown selves. Desire assembles the temporary self, desire is consistent and consistency, not the sexual subject.

Mucosal Angelic Love

Spinoza's ethics, while configuring the self and external force as proliferating multiplicity and will as non-transparent, can be applied to desire's development from dialectic, object related sexuality which welcomes a kind of abstracted queer. The following deliberate reading/misreading of Spinoza's organism/force relation positioned as resonant with desire as two nodes – self and outside/other – resonates with queer, in a perhaps perverse (re)turn to queer based on act catalysed in object choice rather than vice versa. Relation is the liminal point of theorising this configuration. This section will describe relation, after Irigaray, as mucosal, in order to emphasize the in-between so crucial to Spinoza's expressive self/external force and which affirms relation is neither opposition nor extrication. The space between constitutes each element and is the site of each element's appetite and will, the event of love which is still known only, according to Spinoza, as the self and the idea of the external force, is the mucosal space, not empty, but a voluminous, sticky space. The second part of the misreading offers an object choice which is abstract, and for reasons elaborated below – the angel. This negotiates some of the problems involved in a turn toward object choice while avoiding slipping back into dialectics of sexual diachrony, from hetero- and homo- to perverse object choices which facilitate transgressive practices only to afford their representation in the taxonomical catalogue of queer positions. The angel is an abstract other in that it is fictive but affective. As fictive it avoids being co-opted through the perilously assimilative result of the external force only ever an idea of an other. But I will argue below, as an abstract other it offers a queer passage, eventually becoming that passage, through which queer openings and beyond create a non- or anti-theistic mystical desire. Mystical angel queer addresses Foucault's concern which began this chapter. As an impossible sexuality we can ask is this a sexuality at all?

'You are mucous and always double, before any speculation' (Irigaray 1992a, 66). Mucosal relations configure the encounter event between self and other as one where ethics is found in the viscous connectivity between the two and where each escapes identity, the theatre of the act, and desire premised on the human while opening to flesh. That the materiality of the relation is mucosal reminds us that opening to the asignifiable other can be conceived as unpalatable, that even when

we flee residue remains, that there are escaping leaky elements which exceed the two within the relation and most importantly, that thought is material and materiality is a thought event. Mucous then can lead toward all posthuman bodies in their coalescence as a-human desiring encounterers. Mucosal expression is a-human through its resistance to language. 'Already constructed theoretical language does not speak of the mucous. The mucous remains a remainder, producer of delirium, of dereliction, of wounds, sometimes of exhaustion' (Irigaray 2002, 244). In the sticky fold of desire, alterity is encountered within the self, through the other, and the other encounters the self in ways the self cannot autonomously express. Each element has aspects which are present to self and not present to self but to the other, and, simultaneously apprehends aspects of the other not present to itself.

Nor will I ever see the mucous, that most intimate interior of my flesh, neither the touch of the outside of the skin of my fingers, nor the perception of the inside of these same fingers, but another threshold of the passage from outside to inside, from inside to outside, between inside and outside, between outside and inside. (Irigaray 1993, 142)

Serres states: 'Love is a chimera, the leftovers of the split up parts' (2002, 232). When the sacrifice to Serres' Venusian Order occurs, the valuable parts are extinguished. The residue is that we did not perceive as valuable, perhaps because we did not perceive it at all or it was connective tissue without function, too metamorphic and of a particular velocity the rhythm of which did not align with perceptible forms. Sacrificing human subjectivity loses or adds nothing except potentials of alterity, and encounters with other rhythms can catalyse these, relations of love with that which seduces the leftovers and in splitting forms with us a mesh of mucosal interstitial passage. The chimera is a hybrid liberated from 'animal' belonging only to inhuman perception. It does not require the lionian, the goat or the snake, just the relations which aberrant unlikes manifest. The beloved chimera is both what facilitates love and is love, it brings the passage and the passage is the love, complete in itself just as we in our chimeric configuration with the beloved are complete even in our shared passing.

Irigaray constructs a chimera, one which is constituted by many elements of alterity and of love. This chimera shifts from a hybrid inhuman form to an open and is the opening into which we fall but not fall through as we are captured up in an opening world. This chimera is phylic dividuation, an entirely singular event entity that is a mode of passage In Irigaray's work this chimera is configured through the tactical name 'angel'.

The contrast between the saying and the said as the disjunction between *jouissance* and being, drive and signifier ... another figuration of the sensible transcendental, bringing together the antithetical figures of the angel and the mucous ... as a marker of *jouissance* ethical saying would be a passage between

the anarchic diachrony of the past that has never been present and the infinite future of becoming. (Ziarek, 171)

As its own kind of posthuman, the angel is the interstitial species, the half fallen, the pseudo-celestial, androgynous. In the inhuman-ness it catalyses with and as us it is the human made mystical not because it transcends the everyday embodied human or proposes the 'after' - after death as either technology or theistic revelation – but refuses the human, an inhuman thus posthuman spirit, an ecstasy inducing non human without fetishization or personification, myth or religion. Mucosal queer as angelic both encounters us as a fabulated non-human and is an inhuman relation. In this non-theistic invocation, the angel is the messenger of the outside and the message, becoming conduit with us toward nothing evolutionary (the technoman, the cyborg chimera) nor devolutionary (the animal, the bacterial) but repudiating unidirectional trajectories themselves, allowing nature to surface as a fabric mesh, immanently with no hierarchy or incremental seriality. Just as in Chapter 3 art induces ecstasy as movement without before or after, without time and in a space that has neither inside nor outside, so this angel passage is neither celestial nor fictional. The angel is the encounter with outside, the becoming with that which, through disorientation, causes ecstasy. All inconceivable concepts can act as angels. Becoming inhuman through angelic passage is the indeterminability of other becomings. Becomings with angels are libidinal indeterminacies which attack the primary phallic majoritarian but do not seek the minoritarian for cooption. In the way queer is a sexual tactic, encounters are acts of desire, the angel is the other/love object insofar as it is the way we perceive the other and the message of the work as inhuman apprehension.

The consequences of such non-fulfilment of the sexual act remain ... to take only the most beautiful example ... let us consider the *angels*. These messengers are never immobile nor do they ever dwell in one single place. As mediators of what has not yet taken place ... these angels therefore open up the closed nature of the world, identity, action, history, (1992a, 173)

Angelic⁴ love is formed of a mucosal consistency. It finds itself alighting upon fabulated creatures. While baroque in its enveloping, another form of baroque movement of desire is ecstasy, an encounter of the outside. Irigaray tells us angels are mucosal. Inhumans are angels and angels inhuman, the angel is catalyst for passage and passage itself.

The angel is what passes through the envelope or envelopes from one end to the other, postponing every deadline, revising every decision, undoing the very idea

⁴ As a semi-post-script however I would suggest the angelic still carries unfortunate residue of the theistic. Perhaps the greek daemon would be better as a more Nietzschian non-qualitative passage.

of repetition ... They are not unconnected with sex ... it is as if the angel were the figural version of a sexual being not yet incarnate. (Irigaray 1992b, 173)

As a cosmic and pantheonic, zerotheistic mystical queer, angelic union could be described as experiencing a borderland demonic union. The demon requires a pact, creates a borderline and opens the assemblage to other potentialities of inflective alliance with the unlike. A demon, like desire, in all senses of the word, is a 'transporter; he transports humours, affects or even bodies... "The devil take you" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 253). To take ... within, away, even biblically. Demons are interstitial inflamers of imagination and interkingdom pack/pactings in Deleuze and Guattari. Queer angelic demonology forges a pack between unlike entities which are already unlike themselves as both fabulations and fictive subjects. making packs with the unlike within, a spreading out and mucosal connecting. Deleuze and Guattari's demonology is hybridity relation, but there is still novelty of the signification of the multiple and the between, which is exceeded and resolved in the mucosal desire-silent speech of Irigaray's angelic morphologies. 'From beyond' writes Irigaray 'the angel returns with inaudible or unheard of words in the here and now. Like an inscription written in invisible ink on a fragment of the body, skin, membrane, veil, colourless and unreadable until it interacts with the right substance, the matching body' (1993: 36). The angel is the becoming which has no knowable, by which we see in the dark and hear the inaudible through the not-vet language, unheard and unheard of. Yet we match its flesh. There is nothing upon which we can alight as humans. Deleuze and Guattari state:

Goodbye, I am leaving, I won't look back at infinity, these refrains must rejoin the songs of the molecules, the newborn wailings of the fundamental elements ... they cease to be terrestrial, becoming cosmic ... [a] molecular pantheistic cosmos. (1987, 327)

Angelic mucosal queer, never realised by arriving or apprehending, turns time into molecular cosmos, and emphatically demands the development and becomings of self which proliferate selves and attention to the selves which are not known or perceived but present and therefore which must be accounted for as they dissipate through the cosmos in the creation of their own pacts, volitional and otherwise.

While we may live under 'the promise of man', Blanchot points out our relation with the outside expresses us as 'lesser daimons' (Blanchot 1993, 26). No less demonic in the Deleuzio-Guattarian sense, the angel is not another body as force and catalyst for affectuations of self-for-self. Outside of the visible, the knowable and the signified, even if only signified as a differentiated force, the angel leaves us with openness to thought that is an encounter with the interiority of the outside, which is the infinity fold that turns back upon itself, in transforming pleats that remain constant because there is neither a 'time' which unravels and reravels transformation, nor divisible qualities. 'What appears to be stammering for expression in the beguiling simplicity of mystic utterance is the thought that the

contact with the divine is *inhuman* ... the *unconditional unknown*' (Marsden, 129). This relation is one of love because there are no conditions which are necessary to constitute the event as present, no signification of self to self, existence without evidence, encounter without apprehension and, most importantly, there is no way to describe or satisfy the event. Protevi emphasises that the paradigm of Deleuze's work is annexed to this one profound concept: 'Couldn't one just as well say that Derrida and Deleuze think about nothing but love? What have they written that isn't linked rather directly to desire, to alterity, to getting outside oneself?' (Protevi 2003, 183). Protevi states that for Deleuze love is experience as experiment. Queer angelic mucosal sexuality is an accidental, unsought, unexpected experiment. Emphatically it is also the 'unconditional' in the unconditional unknown, and this is the point where desire or pleasure become love, as the ecstatic faces giving way to the joyous grace of demanding no conditions, significations or interpretations. It is libidinal yet poignent, beautiful yet invisible, and unqualified in the same way as thought is independent of knowledge, and a failure of truth, no less affective for being so, and no less wondrous. Collapse of body and spirit, sweetness and suffering, and death and life of the self are not oppositions which are all present, but more the poverty with which language is stricken – expressed in 'a language spoken by no-one; any subject it may have is no more than a grammatical fold' (Foucault 1994, 166). Simultaneity of opposition does involve the suspension of time, and against Deleuze's concepts of transformation (or even becoming) queer mucosal angelic desire also needs no time in its experience as yearning, ecstasy, joy, pleasure and even death. These are voluminous aspects of the outside that cannot confess their qualities through revelation or signification. The angel both awaits as the not yet and is already the quickened with us. We are with, within and encounter the angel as the outside while in an ecstatic form of movement that is sufficient within space without development, a thousand infinite spaces that have neither toward nor from and thus cannot reflect or aim, alighting on no signifying capacities. No longer apprehensive of alterity because no division is perceptible, the angel is a nothing upon which we cannot be parasitic without grace. We can choose to step aside from configuring the pervert transgressive queer, this act, an object, any configuration, but we need not forsake, through entering into relations with abstract configurations, entities with which we create becomings, chaosmotic events of love.

'Here the body effaces itself in order to call forth another body, here the body is annihilated and becomes a tiny pile of ashes in order that the existence of other bodies may rise up, the immense legion of angels of absence' (Serres 1995, 45). The self becomes ashes from the burning of ecstasy, and phoenixes pluralized. To juxtapose this against compulsion toward reproduction (of the same, of humans, of acts, of identities, of perception) and the manic need for extension of life, the *my* of my life affirmed in the *my* of my consistent perception of exhaustible meaning, Bataille says 'Death is waiting in the long run' (2001, 101). Death toward a beyond within and (not/now) here is demanded in Blanchot's ethics. The reproducer and the act of sexual union need another that is isomorphically made appropriately

correspondent to the self (Bataille amusingly reminds us however that the solitary little theatre is always in operation 'like a daydream lived out in intercourse' (2001, 107)). Bataille beautifully evaluates the difference between sex and sensuality as mysticism, because while the first perpetuates self in another, mysticism involves only dying to oneself. The dying which effaces self is neither lacking in a deity (be it God, psychiatrist or capital) and it does not see ecstasy as equivalent to orgasm. Serres' presentation of the coming of the gods may be a better way to understand the relation between the mystic and a dying a-temporal a-spatial want/wait of a coming other through a silent contract and a contract of silence.

Silence returns like a modest veil. Slowly. The immortals are hesitant to descend to such an easily sullied place. The gods pass us by, weightless, insubstantial, flanking non-existence, evanescent spirits; the least wrinkle in the air will chase them away/... stillness has the quality of eloquence, and the social contract answers silence with the silence of what is said. The gathering hears and recognizes itself through a word that emanates from its own silence... Should the spoken word be silenced, then the gods will come. (Serres 2008, 86–7)

Angelic queer is sufficient for itself but cannot present externally. As a queer ecstasy angelic relation is the non-entity queering time and in space, 'enough' but not a particular space, theatre or sexual configuration. This kind of queer is indeed death – of time, space, perception, enunciation and the anchors which we find in love, or desire, or pleasure, but which we erode with causal narrative, object to fill lack, knowledge and so forth. And, as we all feel, the most simple, ordinary, undramatic love hurts because we are filled with it without knowing it, ourselves, our situation. Love could already be understood as an ecstatic state. Love is a mystery, which is where it collides with mysticism. Love is angelic and the angel. Far from the revelation of Christian mysticism, angelic ecstatic mysticism is thought where we become a unique, abstracted, mystical queer event. So even though Deleuze and Guattari state perception 'is a state of the body induced by another body' (1994, 154) we ask what are the produced queer relations and ethics of a pleated body which encounters a belief in an angelic body which is neither exterior nor interior, real or false?

Chapter 7

Vitalistic Ethics: An End to Necrophilosophy

Post-philosophies, post-structuralism, post-modernism, posthumanism and their tributaries, have celebrated and lamented the loss of the human and its associated residual humanism and transcendentalism, particularly the absence of selfreflexivity and the repression of corporeality in both philosophies. The posthuman is similarly associated with post-structural philosophy. While these ideas have underpinned much of Posthuman Ethics, there are less vitalistic effects of this turn that demand address. In this chapter I will explore ways in which both are necrophilosophies. Necrophilosophy describes the aspects of post-structuralism and the posthuman that resonate around (and mourn) the death 'of...'. Perceived as benevolent or malevolent necrophilosophy focuses on what is lost. It is conceptual – deferred to an abstraction that is compelled to return continuously to the condition of the subject who mourns their own potential absence as one of the casualties of post-philosophy. Necrophilosophy laments the loss of subjectivity in post-structuralism, and also decides how we lose that self. Death of the subject invokes creations of multiple subject positions and future subjects, but persistent in the lament is the focus remaining on self-realization, representation and truth as absence or spectacle, simultaneous with a certain emptiness in this multiple. Absence is necrophilosophical because it mourns loss, concretizing that which has been lost even in celebrating its absence, and discursively indulging in loss nihilistically sacrificially.

Necrophilosophy as a postmodern drive lauds and mourns through the concept of death — explicitly conceptual, tentatively material. Death is abstracted as a bureaucratic technique at the interface of legal and medical epistemes, an enunciated concept from the legal enunciative function. It absents the material process of dying in the same way as transcendental existence does to living, making a noun of the two most ubiquitous of verbs. Death is now a pronouncement, an agreement between law, medicine and at the troubling interface, ethics. As Patrick Hanafin and Fintan O'Toole state 'death has been taken out of the hands of the dying' (7). The right to live has extended to the right to die and so necrophilosophy has collapsed both life as a subject and death into events which must be announced and to which we have access only via institutions. Death itself has died as an ordinary reality — it is an announced finding, a phenomenon to be proved, sometimes a crime. Scientific advance allows the perpetuation of the death state but discourse about death cannot keep up with these advances so this discourse comes from the interpretation of life as a legal state. The problem comes as simultaneously how

the law defines life so as to prevent the shift of the subject to the definition of death and death as ascertainment of the cessation of fulfilling the criteria for life. Like the binary systems of logocentrism, there seem to be two states, but the system is isomorphic.

In-between posthuman minoritarian subjects are in-between dominant transcendental 'life' (the majoritarian) and minoritarian devolved ambiguity (less than the majoritarian). But the very definition of life is now an epistemic state, before someone can ethically count, their life signs must be counted up. Similarly, after Lockean arguments in legal studies, life and death become the property of those who are given property over their own bodies. The Millian principle of harm as only counting if it is harm to others means that ownership of one's life depends on whether one is one's own body or if that body is the property of others, including abstract institutions. For the subject not entirely considered human, the subjects of Posthuman Ethics, this question arises based on counting as equivalently viable life – life given the status of subject. Derek Morgan points out the exertion of legal power incarnates in two ways in reference to property – property defined as owned by another and thus justifying domination, and property which, as owning oneself, emphasises autonomy (85-6). Morgan invokes Aristotle's and Leibniz's vindication of domination because the two first non-dominant humans, women (for Aristotle) and animals (for Leibniz), are machines. Covertly the mechanization of the pronouncement of death and thus life means we are facing the dematerialization of autonomous flesh. The dominator is not flesh and blood, and thus mediative negotiation – the most basic element of ethics – is with a dead entity, the ghost of the definition of life and death based on real bodies. The optimistic idea of autonomous flesh seems somewhat anathema for the transcendental subject who uses signification to repudiate the very possibility of, and thus the being a body which gives autonomy over, the termination of existence.

Forensic Force

Like forensics, necrophilosophy extends over territories of physiology, pathology and law, constructing the very territories of possibility of definitions of life and death as it goes. The grand death machines of war are miniaturized in the machine of individual death. Ethics comes at the moment when law permits medicine the 'decision'. Ben Rich negotiates the difficult shift from dying as something that happens to organic entities to death coming from the coalescence of four discursive legal imperatives: death as *concept*, the *definition* of death, a set of *criteria* and *tests* performed to determine if those criteria are fulfilled (119) But these are necrophilosophical imperatives as the body which may be already dead – whether due to wanting to die or being apparently dead – is disinterred through discourse and only reburied at the permission of the law. Just as certain subjects in society are permitted to live based on their fulfilling majoritarian criteria, so too they can only become absent through systems and the human body as an organism is excavated of

its failing organs to become a purely organized body – organized as either alive or dead but as necrophilosophical states as concepts. A Body without Organs allows the organs not to work – vitalistic autonomous death is a body without organs.

Our concept of something is our general idea of it. As a matter of logic and consistency our definition of death, our criteria for establishing that some formerly living entity is now dead, and our tests for confirming that criteria has been met ... should be consistent with our concept of death. (Rich, 119)

Necrophilosophy thus collapses life and death, making everything dead only to be alive in pre-formed concepts.

Post-structural philosophy and the emergence of the posthuman at a time seemed a utopia for subjects in excess of or failing as the human. At its inception certain trajectories mourned or celebrated the death of truth, transcendence and metaphysics. Others invoked a materiality in thought as a creative project replacing metanarratives of knowledge. The archaeology of knowledge emphasized humanism and transcendentalism as forms of forensic philosophy, where to reveal that ready to be known, atrophied in a place of permanent waiting, was also revealed as a creative form of thought designed to immobilize ideologies, powers and the majoritarian episteme. Thought as knowledge was the resurrection of the already dead, that known before it was revealed, that which fulfilled – experiments relied on hypotheses, to prove more than to enflame, dissipate or incite alternate and multiple trajectories of ideas. Forensic philosophy, like all forms of forensics, is habitual active reiteration, not simply working within but a working toward maintaining the within. It is excavation which admits the body and life are inextricable from the law, a matter of status not a state of being. The practice of excavation toward truth – what happened? Was it legal? – is a tireless digging. At the most basic level forensic text books tell us forensic law is based on inference which is 'any passing from knowledge to new knowledge... for the passage to be valid it must be made according to the laws of logic that permit a reasonable movement from one proposition to another ... because of past experiences in human affairs' (Aldisert, 13–14). Aldisert also tells us in addition to being logical a premise must also be true, (15) emphasizing the self-perpetuating eternal ellipsis of logocentrism. New knowledge is found here only in digging up and loving the dead, not moving too far from the grave, and the corpse is always a human who counts – he who creates the category of human itself and thus controls and memorializes the affairs. For vitalistic philosophy the apocalypse of human affairs ruptures the eternal return creating unreasonable movement, a movement of new reasonings, ethical because it is inherently critical of the category of human as singular and thus subjects can speak only as different from one another. Permission is a matter of ethical openness not pedagogic necro-indoctrination. As Deleuze and Guattari emphasize: 'Habit is creative' (1994, 105).

Theoretically then post-structuralist posthumanism is not a seemingly impossible explosion of entire discursive systems *en masse* but a simultaneous

active experiment in unthought – creative thinking without hypothesis or a projected outcome (point of death) and reactive in its resistance to those systems which have maintained, oppressed, ablated, ignored or isomorphically annexed to, the dominant. Forensics is excavation, necrophilosophy the lamentation of nothing to find. Simultaneously vitalistic post-structuralism takes on the seemingly impossible urgency of addressing the unthinkable, responding to the other as an encounter without seeking, needing or being able to know or nomenclature its singularity, but thinking it nonetheless. This could be referred to as Derrida's necessary impossible. Foucault's unthought and resonant with Lyotard's differend. Thinking rather than knowing is both difficult and easy. It is radical and risks reiterating the margins it attempts to cross and explode. More binaries are invoked, new binaries to replace the old. Forensics philosophy used isomorphic systems to value certain terms within binaries at the expense of the others who were not opposed to but failed to be the dominant term. Some new terms have replaced the old and excavation has been replaced by speed and simulacrum – are we new enough, are we going fast enough, are we changing at breakneck celerity, are we replacing things we don't know we need with new things we don't know we need? Forensic philosophy excavates the metaphysics of what it meant to be human, transcendentally, intellectually, spiritually, legally and corporeally only to the extent that science maintained the body as vessel of, not inextricable from, the mind/soul/self. Physiology is about maintenance of the same, but extended to a greater length – biological (live longer), chemical (overcome the world), social, both feudally (economics as lineage) and 'democratically' (empire), legally (the imperative to maintain individuals as alive at any cost, including at the cost of life as lived), sexually (from repressed to healthy, both reproductive), familial (name), logical (always a truer truth beneath), religious (maintenance of a healthy spirit ensured that spirit would function in this life and the next). The painfully slow and ambiguous issues of dving and death have been replaced by the 'verdict'. Post- is maintenance, replacement and augmentation. The transcendental human is now a node within speed epistemes of synthetic reproduction, essence as point more than thing, not the 'what now' but the 'what next'. Life is synthetic and measured by time, flesh extended by cyborgism, technologies which do everything instead of, rather than for, the flesh. Philosophy and science make futures which exist in the present. Law announces their arrival through vindicating their presence within structures of knowledge from the past.

Posthuman spectacle creates fabulations and hybrids of the human through art, technology and bio-science which appear radical but problematically inherit the same values of humanism packaged in increasingly anthropocentric ways. As I have discussed we are not becoming-machine in cyborgism, becoming-primitive through body modification, becoming-queer through transgression for its own sake, becoming-monster by tolerant sympathy for the monstrous, becoming-woman through the fetishization of feminine minoritarianism or becoming-animal through xenotransplantation. Rather the animal, woman, diffabled, queer, artistic, nonhuman and machine as phyla are finally and completely consumed by the

pathological drive to make the human without genesis and live forever. Their legal status has shifted in description over ethical address to difference. Such a human invokes the death of grand and meta- narrative which Lyotard points out is a key symptom (for optimistic and pessimistic reasons) of post-modernity. Assimilation of all alterity makes the human finally evident to itself as finite, as everything to itself. The human as its own self becomes necrotic but both causes and denies the actual and discursive death of others in its wake. Pathology ends in death. An ethical philosophy does not require a return to humanist transcendentalism. It is a valuation of 'life' not as a concept but as it actually incarnates in everyday fleshin-the-world as an emergent point of philosophy and bio-physiological existence. While post-structuralism laments or celebrates the death of subjectivity and the truth of existence, the biotech posthuman is a form of embodied subjectivity similarly necrotic, not through death but the urgent desire to overcome the body. In humanism the body is not yet born because human essence is not yet known, in post-structuralism it is already extinct. Death of the subject – post-structural male hysteria – and death of discourse as affective – relativism – have created necrophilosophy. Reified forms and nomenclatured epistemes have perished. In law this has resulted in the almost hysterical fear of announcing and therefore shifting a subject with the vaguest of residues of 'life' from life to death resulting in the continued illegality of euthanasia. Michel Rosenfeld sees postmodernity and its associated lauding of interpretation and multiplicity making law a kind of hybrid discourse between politics and ethics. For him law is now a symptom of a crisis. Any return to original intent use of the law, where certain authors are elevated over others, is equally dissatisfying as it is just as interpretive albeit more consistent, leading to a 'paralyzing idolatry' (14) – necrotic law as a result of the resurrection of a dead master. After Habermas Rosenfeld invokes the proceduralist paradigm, and suggests the tendency to accord be based on the rationality of the interpretations of justice. Feminism has repudiated Habermas' dialogical proceduralism, as it is based on the myth of neutrality and rationality and the discursive field of potentiality is already masculine – a kind of necrophilosophical legal cemetery. Rosenfeld points out feminist legal interpretation would be 'neither metaphysical nor hierarchical in nature' (138). An a-human legal system would be neither necrophilosophical (based on transcendence) nor murderous (hierarchical - necrophilosophy's tendency to make dead all subjects who do not count and thus do not face the impending death of the subject).

Historically a-human posthumans have neither been granted form nor controlled ideologies but have been the threshold of bios, between animal and man, monster and baby-incubating machine, physiology and pathology. Rather than dead identity, does an a-human posthuman ethics offer the possibility of threshold subjectivity? Deleuze and Guattari's repeated use of the question 'What happens in-between?' privileges the affects of interrelative action rather than the reflective meaning of being, thus always considering a between-ness, or existence as only valid within an assemblage rather than dividuated. Deleuze and Guattari emphasize that 'the plane of consistency is the intersection of all concrete forms'

(1987, 251). Concrete forms need not refer to, nor exclude, whole bodies or selves. But they do include materiality and undifferentiated flesh, because the quality of any whole or thing is available at many intersections or points along the plane of consistency. What is discursive flesh when law negotiates the ethics of its conditions of social possibility with singular instances of material lived existence? Does repudiating necrophilosophy resurrect the real death of concrete beings and thus the materiality of ethical philosophy? Can the posthuman as ethical shift from a critique of the human subject to threshold subjectivity both celebrate vitalistic ethics and simultaneously address our relationships with the conceptual and real dead? Many 'post-' theorists and artists explicitly demand we get rid of philosophy (as we know it) to mobilize ethical politics, material transformation (though not through the matter of form). Are they really calling for an end to necrophilosophy. at turns hysterical, nihilistic and (whether accidentally or deliberately) murderous, hurtling us toward death but never acknowledging the dead it has caused or the never been? Legal language is about announcing the state and thus rights and viability of subjects. Majoritarian culture is a notorious murderer of difference. A post-necrophilosophical forensic legal announcement of murder could herald new formations of subjectivity, a vitalistic sacrifice. How could law become postforensic, one which announces the state of the body not as organized into life/death but as a Body without Organs, which here is essentially a legal organization without organs – ethically adaptive, mediative and diverse in reference to significations of body, property, domination, autonomy and the demarcation between bodies? The social corpus would thus also be a traversive Body without Organs.

Whose Death?

Necrophilosophy is a spatial atrophy. Temporally this autopsy attempts to make sense of male death within evolutionary celerity. It is a response to two potentials. The first is positioned behind the myth of the white male, as devolutionary – virality, feminism, animal rights, diffabled, queer. The potential in front of the myth is the posthuman, with which the necrophilosopher has an ambivalent relationship - both augmenting and speeding the male toward an evolutionary immortality and anxious at the hybrid created – it is relatively safe if assimilated, threatening as a threshold union. A-human posthuman ethics is spatially the interstitial and pack, temporally as contracted memory and becomings. It is an adamantly material discourse. The a-human bodies of *Posthuman Ethics* mobilize from devolutionary to points of threshold which affectuate shifts in inter-relations between organisms as ecologies, not emptied of their force but teeming with lives at every threshold of forces: a critical but adamantly vitalistic discussion of becomings. Postnecrophilosophical ethics acknowledges flesh and life as reality through issues of activism and minoritarian bodies. The conception of death ignores the dead, and must address necrology and actualize ecology rather than subjectivity as posthuman, equivalent or conceptual. Within the interstitial is the issue of real life bodies, activating real material change. Threshold(s) are the becoming that refuse the fathomless empty space between meaning and communication, living as legal status, subject communicating transcendentally to like subject, the space often filled by the bodies of women, animals, the queer, diffabled, the monstrous, for symbolic and actual exchange between subjects and their relationship with knowledge and consumption. Law ceases to excavate difference toward the transcendental subject to which all law can be applied, asking which 'people' are we invoking when we say the greatest good for the greatest number?

While racial otherness, sexuality, diffability, geo-economic and other forms of alterity equally deserve address, the following will focus in particular on animals and women. While these categories have been critiqued in *Posthuman* Ethics and address to nonhumans analysed as unethical, I aim here to situate these categories as necessary impossible – they are impossible to address but the effects of the human upon them is irrefutable and so it would be more correct to say this chapter will focus on what the human perceives as women and animals, from a majoritarian perspective. The importance of flesh in ethics is the unnatural of nature – not nature as signifying or as part of an episteme but nature as excess material thought, thereby becomings are not metaphoric or performative but actually risky, even though both becomings raise issues of co-option of the minoritarian, and raise criticisms as well as tactics. Animal rights activists are currently being named urban terrorists for non-violent protesting, while antiwomen's rights groups such as religious extremists and anti-abortionists are increasingly powerful. Both privilege and ignore the subjectivity of the oppressed - coverage of animal rights focuses on the activists (as good, bad or mad) and anti-abortionists on the fetus in relation to the woman, where the 1967 Act, while using the term 'the woman' only does so in relation to 'the child' and 'the woman's health' not her will or rights. Animals and women are still denied agency and subjectivity, their existence is non-existent, dead before it was born, while those who would have control over their bodies (explicitly their flesh) reaffirm the philosophy/corporeality binary, except now the Cartesian split occurs through conflicts within those who demand the power of epistemic control and those who exist at the intersection between them. Women and animals are territories of new empire while also remaining the most banal of life – far from the spectacles and outrages of radical monstrosities, artistic ecstasies, modifications and queer radicalism. Like all these bodies the colonization of women and animals is more than conceptual, it manifests in actual physical torture and death, but unlike the other posthumans, women and animals are most at risk for being most prevalent vet seen as least remarkable. From one direction they are the abused differend, from the other, the posthuman plaything.

The death of God, followed by the death of truth (science and philosophy) has elicited necrophilosophy. The intervention of flesh into thought offers a vitalistic philosophy through thought as creative (not creative of), and philosophy as both emergent enfleshed thought and risk of self-flesh as non-sacrificial but ethical, and at the first dehu'Man' level, feminine.

This creation would be our opportunity from the humblest detail of everyday life to the 'grandest' by means of the opening ... that comes into being through us, of which we would be the mediators and bridges. Not only in mourning for the dead god of Nietzsche, [necrophilosophy] not waiting passively for the god to come, [arguably seen in Derrida and Blanchot's later work] but by conjuring him [sic] up among us, within us, as resurrection, transfiguration of blood, of flesh, through a language and an ethics that is ours [women's]. (Irigaray 1993, 129)

Those who are forced into interaction based on the specific minoritarianism of their flesh are those who also disprove the potential of any concept of enlightenment (and thus law) being for all humans. This repression of the corporeal corresponds to those subjects within enlightenment thinking most repressed or robbed of potential for thought by way of the being of their bodies; those racially, sexually or non-humanly different to the level zero body of the cognitive thinker. The popularity and importance of body theory is making complex enlightenment theories of representation in which the studied other has frequently been ultra-visible.

Alphonso Lingis suggests 'it is the certainty of my imminent death, which is the way the certainty of non-being comes to me, that makes doubt about the present beings, and consequently the quest for empirical certainty, first possible' (118). The dead are empirical. Post-modern theory attacks the concept of truth in general, and rightly so, but from Lingis' words are distilled a more insipid inquiry; behind the quest to disprove truth really stands a male hysteric quest to disprove the absoluteness of death. Lingis speaks of the mind, the existence of the self, the force of the subject but not of the dead. The relationship between the flesh and the hysteric philosopher is forced. He represses the flesh because it is not the death of the flesh he is worried about but the death of the force of the self. These are inextricable. One cannot repress the flesh in order to overcome it, or one risks repressing the actual death of the actual flesh and thus self of others. The flesh is denied or it is changed into ecstatic (ex-stasis) plethora, as in Bataille's plethora, Freud's death drive, Lacan's sexuality as repetition. Law is justified or unjustified, rational or irrational. Death is brainstem death, which relies on the brain as a symbolic organ capable of apprehending these two concepts of justification and rationality. Robert Lee and Derek Morgan point out this legal definition is counterintuitive (4). Brainstem death refuses the possibility of a Body-without-Organs. The already dead but still brainstem active patient who wishes to die has no control over their becomings because their legal status is not as dead. 'Death' remains conceptual reflective. It is the very corporeal dead which we must conceive; A turn from the hysteric ownership of the not yet born, bits of nothing cells, by which anti-abortionists erode women of their flesh; a refusal to shift animals as sentient dividuated singular entities to undifferentiated flesh for consumption or use. Shifting women and animals from singularities to flesh misses the in-between which is the event that also shifts them from a life not to death but to dead. Women do not exist as life when their bodies are not their own, animals are not considered lives but simply useful when alive (enslavement, to murder for food production,

torture) or dead (meat). 'Dead' may (and must) be represented as theoretical logic rationality of the madness of total war(s) – capitalism, misogyny, animal slaughter, prejudice against a-human bodies, censorship. Death cannot. Dead refers to the dead and to making something dead, as these lives do not 'naturally' experience their own deaths but are made dead. The rise of capitalism, technology and other tropes of modernity to post-modernity have created an entirely modern post-nation, the nation of the dead.

The Nation of the Dead

While modernity has created a necromancy of reality, necrology, after Elliot, names the dead in order to survive their status as dead. It should, rather, seek a 'structuring of death consciousness' (187). Necrophilosophy attempts to make sense of death, perhaps in order to deny it, but ethics should be preventing the nonvolitional asymmetrical dead-ing of things rather than transcendentally enlightening their being. Necrophilosophy is a conversation with death, necrology is conversing with the too often needless irrationality of making lives dead in modern culture. William Schabas recalls Churchill's claim that genocide is the crime without a name. In the formulation of anti-genocide law the United Nations General Assembly resolution states genocide refers to crimes which have already occurred (Schabas, 14). Genocide creates a global law, a rare instance of an (presumed) agreement on mens rea and actus reus, global moral and physical crime. But that the crime usually has no name as it happens, and can only be reflected upon, evinces the impossible nature of fathoming total death in the necrophilosophical playing field because it is immanent and so total it cannot be apprehended in its immediacy as deferrable to pre-formed signification, particularly those oriented around 'the' subject or the iconography of individual death as symbolic of shared death. Taken as an event rather than a group specific crime (victims of genocide, while usually minoritarian, are unified in the cause of death) there are no recognizable 'players', the field itself becomes death - an ecological terrain of the dead, not demarcated, devoid of subjective specificity, nameless and all the more horrific for being so as there is no purpose for memorialization, no memory. It is precisely the point where ethics is needed most and an example of technology's capacity to create death en masse. Politically and historically genocide can refer to the slaughter of certain subjects - and Guattari's call to end the massacre of the body through signification with which Posthuman Ethics began. Bodies must be understood as flesh in order for us to ethically prevent their actual massacre. While we abstract and signify along petrified and repeated trajectories the occupied flesh of ourselves and others is being philosophically and physically slaughtered simply by virtue of its gender, human/ non-human status, geography or race. So we come to the question of the possibility of a political logic of inclusion of formerly dead (or not counted as living) subjects; of legally acknowledging interactive ethics in the value of all subjects – non-human, a-human, posthuman and even human; and of shifting the geology of intensification

for some subjects and areas of the human against the other. What Elliot calls the nation of the dead as a result of total death – man made in war, industrially induced disasters, genocide and disease - must formulate a nation of the living, a global nation, not globalization as intensification of some citizens and nations at the expense of others or valued through equivalence. This is more than just valuing each individual; it is the intervention of vitalistic reason – ecosophy – into irrational mass slaughter through axes of signification, science, law and philosophy as well as war, which have created the nation of the dead. Post-modernity, the new age, the new millennium and other myths of newness have resulted in this nation of the dead. Elliot states 'Indeed, some people deny the usual bright vision that the next [21st] century will be the "century of Brazil" - or China - or Russia, and instead assert it will belong to the nation of the dead' (187). This nation which outnumbers any other is a created nation defined not by synthetic geographical limits of sovereignty but the detritus of metaphysics. It thus makes a global law beyond Schabas' reflective legal imperative. Elliot is speaking of the made-dead by the living through technologies of war, capitalism and their side-effects. Just as posthumanism is the self authored by itself, and legal status the self autonomous through possession of the self, so too the largest modern nation of the dead is authored by the other global nation (And Elliot does not count animals whose numbers as citizens of the nation of the dead would almost be inapprehensible). Elliot emphasizes the irrationality of making-dead has been vindicated in modernity and post-modernity through two myths. The first the myth that 'in a society with certain freedoms and drives it is inevitable' and the second that this 'free' society has 'monstrous proclivities. It grows untrammelled, it has uncontrolled appetites, it consumes that which feeds it' (193, original emphases). As a form of false consciousness the living nation perceives with freedoms, of government, of capitalism and of knowledge and results in casualties. Subsequently the creation of these freedoms gives their apparatuses a certain freedom to exceed our control of them – viruses that save but might kill, weapons that leak toxins and kill in a 'friendly' way, machines that go havwire, brain diseases that infect while we enjoy our fast food. These myths are necrophilosophies. 'And the nation of the dead is the death-myth of the people' (Elliot: 194). Through quickening certain materializations and pack assemblages we can effect change and inflect traditional linear evolution through becoming-fabulation-animal, becoming a material subjectivity as well as ecology of transformation. The materiality and materialization of philosophy through minoritarian flesh, Guattari's ecosophy, links and postulates that connect all matter, human, non-human, abstract, social. Philosophy and matter are inextricable but inspired by those trajectories usually designated by flesh and derogatorily so. In animal protection law it is a crime for an individual to inflict cruelty on an animal but total extermination is both ignored and abstracted from being torture and murder to a 'necessary' making-dead. On a practical level ecosophy's address to ecology could shift the law to define mass death as a result of climate related disaster as a form of genocide under the legal definition of the rights of persons to safety. However, just like the homogenization of the dead, the abstraction of corporations emphasizes the law's tendency to comprehend (and apprehend) the homicidal individual. Analysing

England, Ireland and Wales Lee and Morgan point out that while disasters under the law clearly show a homicidal act has been committed the law is less likely to attach criminal liability to a corporation than an individual, resulting in scapegoating (197).

Future Histories

Sevla Benhabib takes three elements of post-modern thought as problematic when formulating an ethics for selfhood. These are the death of the subject, what she calls The Death of Man, the excavation of the truth of history or The Death of History and the death of the desire to master the self and the world by knowing everything, The Death of Metaphysics (211). Our bodies are now fashionable theoretically, and assimilation by the logic that marginalized us in the first place is a trend of postmodern theory. The desire to master reality through its inception as epistemological being in post-structuralism comes as simulacrum seeming, the extravasated signifier. Benhabib states 'The subject is replaced by a system of structures, oppositions and differences which, to be intelligible, need not be viewed as products of a living subjectivity at all' (209). Where does the specificity of a lived woman's body and history go when the desire to become process, non-fixity and becoming replaces the idea of an historical embodied self? Whether they are Baudrillard's nodes of information rather than communication or seemings rather than beings, bodies beneath, beyond and bound by the law still exist. Where is accountability, ethical responsibility and responsibility for history in a constantly altering transforming self? My response to these questions is thus: The activity of locating and transforming through 'others within the self' simultaneously with 'pack other' (becoming fabulation or abstraction, an assemblage existence, be it politically such as feminism or total such as a refusal of total death) produces an active engagement with:

- 1. Concepts of other not limited by and not entirely deposing of the borders of the flesh and not forced isomorphic contracts with abstract legal machines, be they fetishistic (becoming woman) or actual slaughter; an embodied self which actively negotiates others as molecular not molar, either the other in the self or other bodies which themselves have their own boundless others, such that all specificities of all concrete others are actively engaged with at every moment; a self which identifies the borders of the flesh and its memories but does not see them as indicative of wholes or organisms for the future due to such borders.
- 2. Concepts which deconstruct, sometimes violently, any notion of the sanctity and integrity of a subject created to resemble a valuable capital commodity, be it over-valued male subjectivity, objectified female biology or Oedipal or devolutionary models of the creation of man-who-will-live-forever through inhumane actually quintessentially human animal experimentation in order to create the posthuman. This includes the over-

- valuation of life defined as brain-stem activity where the right to die and thus being dead would be a more vitalistic state.
- 3. The nature of *what* is being deconstructed so that history and accountability are always in process with transformation we can transform toward something else but we transform *from* whenever we transform *to*.

Deleuze and Guattari claim the only way to get out of the dualism is to be-between. (1987, 276–7). In being-between the relation of philosophy and flesh encounter in actual risk, in conceptual experimentation that puts the body both on and as the line. Instead of male death resulting in becomings through fetishization the in-between fights an ecosophic war as a dual citizen of resistance fighter in the nation of the privileged living and potential member of the nation of the dead. What Deleuze and Guattari fail to express is that this constant un-being of woman, who promises so much for becoming, exists at a place or a be-between that woman neither made for herself nor resides in willingly. Feminism has attempted to re-appropriate the in-between and abstractedness of woman's representation in culture in order to affirm female being and take away the power of namingher-there, which phallologocentrism exercises. What Deleuze and Guattari do is make desirable the position without acknowledging the importance of speaking and valuing the position in the process of its becoming desirable. Woman needs to speak her own subversion, as much for the speech as for the subversion. As Rosi Braidotti points out:

To put it in more feminist terms, the problem is also how to free 'woman' from the subjugated position of annexed 'other' so as to make her expressive of a different difference, of pure difference, of an entirely new plane of becoming, out of which differences can multiply and differ from each other. (1994, 115)

Post-philosophies have been resistant to the idea of 'real life women' just as the posthuman at worst denies real life subjects. Postmodernism is suspicious of too much meaning being read into experience and hence affixing meaning to action (against 'performativity' where there is no real agency behind the 'mask'). What this elucidates is postmodernism's adherence to an element of enlightenment philosophy – that of real life experience being irrelevant and even detrimental to the formulation of a self that is beyond material immanent experience. Real life is hyper-unreal – the cyborg (including the life-supported cyborg maintained by law at the cost of living), the xenotransplanted – a new enlightenment of privileging post-flesh. It affirms transcendent truth for all 'man' against a micro-experiential formation of interrelated existence – life as displaced concept of death, of other made equivalent to self. Interstices existence is the use of animals without their will or sentience, the use of women for becomings without their memory and the use of machines to create uber-terminators or terminal patients as zombies, giving hu-man-ism the post-existence it has so sought, a balm for hysterical possible non-existence in the face of feminism, post-colonialism, queer theory,

diffability theory, radical purposes of art, and animal abolitionism. The desire for posthumanity places the chain of being in time, hurtling towards the zenith of eternity, not space, which would configure the links as co-present and mobile, distortable, inflective.

The importance of history in this new ethics is a response to the hyper-speed or present-future of the posthuman (already arrived before the human departed). The Krokers, (1991) by suggesting masculinity is so threatened its anxieties are now comparable to those of feminists, are suggesting that popular masculine theorists and their own theories are able to be taken on board with feminist discourses. This claim is utopian, and I maintain that whatever a 'feminine' or 'feminist' version of death is, including its threats, drives and such, it is always going to be different to those of the dominant (hence only) subject position. Death has always been and always is the apocalypse – the apocalypse of every subject is death, and for every subject the idea of their own singular death apocalyptic. Theoretical apocalypse, the death of the integrated male subject, is simultaneously a necrophilosophy and a luxury apocalypse compared to the anxiety expressed at the annihilation of the subject altogether, of consciousness altogether or of whatever any one particular theorist believes is that which is annihilated at the point of death. The fear of death for the idealized masculine subject is also an affirmation of a unified identity – where does this put the actual dead?

D.N. Rodowick challenges the idea that power may simply be taken by the less powerful and exchanged for already-available (already-thought) power through Deleuze and Guattari's idea of resistance and memory. He claims 'the relation of history and memory is equivalent to that of power and resistance. The memory of resistance is not a "human memory" [male/majoritarian]... this absolute memory of resistance, that founds all acts of resistance, is minoritarian' (205-6). Resistance is attractive because it makes becoming-minoritarian available for all subjects without conflating the desire and most importantly memory of all subjects in their processes of becoming. Becoming-woman, the memory of 'woman' is different to the history of women. A male becoming-woman would utilize the history of 'woman' (the *idea* of woman) resistant to the memory of being (powerful) majoritarian. Women per se would utilize their memory of being women (in all their specificities) resistant to majoritarian powers in history. How can the majoritarian, he who desires becoming, know woman further from the basic fact of her not-being-man/majoritarian? Is becoming-woman a becoming-flesh of the transcendental subject? The enfleshment of philosophy? Actuality abstraction? Man knowing woman's memory is not her memory but his history of her. Deleuze and Guattari's focus on the little girl over the woman makes me ask, has she suffered enough yet to need to become-woman? The majoritarianism's enigmatic relationship to women figures 'Woman' in 'History' over women's memory(ies). Aldisert's claim law must come from maintaining former legal premises needs to become law developed from memory (or memories) as much as history, ethically interacting with singularities and multiple interstitial communities. Memory also demands our interaction with the nation of the dead to which we can never be

members borne of the total death to which we can never bear witness. This crucial point (although Deleuze and Guattari's conflation of man-and-woman and their choice of order are questionable) emphasises that woman's suffering can never be known because her marginality, her minoritarianism is never constant and never clear, (this is the majoritarian power that forces her to resist constantly – she is pack but not of equivalent molarities).

Deleuze and Guattari are potentially guilty of either making minoritarians trivial by affirming their difference, based only on their difference in respect to humans or they are using the lived experience of real minoritarians constantly being differed as a philosophical strategy. Deleuze and Guattari's suggestion that women first enter into a becoming-woman is problematic because it insinuates that beneath phallologocentric repression of the potential within female bodies is some kind of residual memory of how to be 'woman unbound'. So while the male subject may lose his subjectivity while being made explicitly aware of that which he has oppressed through becoming-woman, woman is leading the way by setting out the true unbound mode of being. Women are re-differed through the suggestion that we might know better how to unbind ourselves, albeit after being told as much by two male philosophers. Unbinding ourselves makes us forget our memories while setting up some kind of mystical theistic innate path, firmly cemented in the lamentation of God's death, for others to follow. Woman as interstices is developed along a chain of being, an adamantly hierarchical chain. Even though the horizontal evolution chain claims to have replaced the vertical arboreal taxonomy, the links are relatively finite to the left, certainly devalued, and posthuman to the right. And any belief that woman is equivalent with man is almost misguided optimism, just as the belief that animals are good enough equivalent models for science but, in an unethical oxymoron, not good enough to not be tortured and murdered. Similarly we have the Oedipal animal (which Deleuze and Guattari critique as not animal at all, but little baby). The little doggie unloved by its mummy and daddy acts as an opiate to deflect attention from, for example, the prevalent breeding and experiments on beagles, tortured as matter for information, themselves a strange hybrid of physiologically human enough to work on but not enough to enter into an ethical threshold relationship with. While animals in science are legally used as tools of equivalence and information or in diet as enslaved and consumable, animal abolitionist activists have, as discussed in Chapter 4, to contend with their ethics being similarly valued only through their equivalence use – the arguments must vindicate the animal based on its equivalence of sentience and thus rights. Cruelty law defines unnecessary harm or cruelty toward animals as criminal but here the crucial term is 'necessary', as clearly the definition of necessity is 'necessary for (and thus structured by) the human' – an arbitrary and vague word forming a deeply unethical because non-mediative structure. There is no necessary dead, only the living making excuses. The episteme must remain the same for the ontological place to shift upward. 'Can they – hurt/suffer' is discursively the same as 'what do women -want/need'? Legal definitions of 'crimes against humanity' and the problem of the ambiguities of what constitutes harm, safety and rights

in relation to the difficulty of resolving domestic with international law, need to change the term human, not the definition of what constitutes a crime or how it is disseminated and agreed internationally. Francis Butler calls the European Convention on Human Rights a 'living instrument' (5) but the nature of life in (all) living non-majoritarians and non-humans is ignored while the abstract enunciative legal machine is the most valued and focal entity. Failure to be majoritarian is more detrimental than opposition because the subjugated or minoritarian term simply does not exist, nor are possible paradigms of existence available to 'it'. There is not two, there is one. For Deleuze and Guattari unity however comes, not at one, but zero. One is isomorphic, it exists where addition robs its unique status and subtraction insinuates absence. One is the coalescent supremacy of signifiance and subjectification.

Activist Expressions

Poststructuralism can dissipate the one into many. It can also make the one better, more encroaching. Zero creates unity, absolute assemblage, neither hegemony nor homogenization. Derrida abstracts and mourns the fact of (his own) death - 'death is very much that which nobody else can undergo or confront in my place...It is from the site of death as the place of my irreplaceability, that is, of my singularity that I feel called to responsibility' (1995b, 41). This would 'save' women, animals, others only because of their equivalences. Death is not what Derrida calls 'the experience of anticipation' (1995b, 40) at worst some kind of elegant version of Kroker hysteria. The nation of the dead is not acknowledged through hyper-reflexive empathy. The dead find no comparison with life. Elliot suggests replacing death as myth (death is evil, death is violent, death is necessary for nationalism), religion (death as pre-fix to post-death) and philosophy with, for example, ecology (202). Ecology is connective and material – after all the dead are nothing but matter whose physiology has failed. This could be seen to resonate with the continued disjuncture between legal definitions of life, death and rights to either with the materiality of palliative care, lived animal reality and other everyday ethical interactions with the fleshy actuality of life and death. Discursive physiology must adapt, mobilize and shift to maintain the health of the planet, not only interrelation between persons but a challenge to the privileging of certain concepts (or even certain becomings-) over others. While we become we should resist anthropomorphizing other life forms or even pure abstractions of nature, acknowledging the unknown and unknowable. Optimistically Guattari urges 'how do we change mentalities, how do we reinvent social practices to give back to humanity – if it ever had it a sense of responsibility, not only for its survival, but for the future of the whole planet' (1992, 119–20) - a virtual ecology. Survival involves living one's existence rather than ablating one's death through philosophizing it or subjecting it to a legal status. Total death borne of faux nationalism (including gender and political 'nationalism') and capitalism (total death by proxy) is replaced with a precise alternative; flux over

libido, phylum machines (rather than dialectics or drives), virtual universes of value rather than sublimation and unconscious complexes, finite existential territories, not instances of self - 'the being before being' (Guattari 1992, 126) which allows the becomings-to-come. Irigaray similarly refers to the 'sensible transcendental' (1993, 129). Transcendentalism and existentialism, replaced by necrophilosophy, reemerge in both Guattari and Irigaray as material, corporeal, hopeful, thought and flesh indivisible. Theirs is an immanent transcendence, utilizing truths that here and now can effectuate change (and thus truths themselves change). Truth is not the enemy of post-structuralism, neither absolute nor limiting. Vague relativism which disputes truths can evoke apathy or a fear of committing to a 'thing' – be it activism or thought. Acts need not be inherent, nor thought ideology. Fear of truth can make philosophy necrotic. Irigaray emphasizes that the 'truth' of life-science must ask 'what science or what life is at issue here?' (1993, 125) In right to die arguments the horror with which arguments which question our obsession with extending life at any cost are met (including the cost of life as lived for life in death-state) shows that trite perceptions of binaries of activism for life or against death fail to mediate with real life bodies as individuals and the context of maintaining the life of individuals with access to certain facilities while a land of the dead in other parts of the world is created. Legally in many instances animals are denied life while the living dead terminally ill are denied death. We can still ask 'what truth' or 'whose truth' but for existentialism to shift from self instance to pack activism we must encounter and commit to a tactical truth which may mean tactical acceptance of death in certain laws related to life and death conceived sympathetically. Our becoming-woman and animal are temporary existential flux-truths to effectuate shifts, activism against the human because of the dead.

How do we create a corporeal philosophy of activism to combat necrophilosophies, an ethical becoming? Put simply what can we do? Philosophy is material, and action philosophical, but this is not enough. Ethics demands we put our bodies on the very line occupied by the interstitial animal and woman, our becomings must be more than just affectuation through the power of material thought. We have to get up, get out, and do. But then what is activism? What constitutes an activism? I have no answers and to create one would be to undermine the premise of activist assemblages and becomings as mobile. I will suggest activism needs to challenge dividuated and over-valued self through both becomings and assemblages (which are indivisible but differ in intensities). It also needs to commit. Both the activism and the activist needs to attempt to sustain themselves, they are neither sacrificial or martyred. The activist and activism need to put their flesh at stake, take risks which may have consequences detrimental to sustainability as sustenance of self as same. Activism is a becoming that always goes a bit further than it thinks it should or could to maintain its current existence. It must alter trajectories of dominance. I emphasise the flesh as a privileged point of activism not simply because the flesh of women and animals is a key node of the encounter between becomings, philosophy, dominance and resistance, but also, much to the disgust of posthumanism, the flesh is still the materiality of alive and dead. It is *not* purely consumable by concept – life and death. We hurt and we die through the flesh, nothing else. Arguably it is the limit of most people's activism, whether through fear of hurt or death but also comfort, pleasure and demand. Before we are hurt or denied we are relating the hurt and denial to perceived loss or suffering. If activism is embodied philosophy of becoming, so too is maintenance of bodily satisfied self. An emphasis on flesh is no less discursive, nor discourse any less fleshy. Flesh is the point where becomings go from metaphors to actualized, fetishism to minoritarianism. Matter or meaning of specific ethics is not the most important point of consideration in order to formulate an ethical theory; it is the movement of the ethics within the world that must be considered. Deleuze and Guattari state: 'The important thing is that they not be used after the fact [necrophilosophy], that they be applied in the course of events, that they be sufficient to guide us through the dangers (1987, 251).

Benhabib's formulation of a context-specific ethics – interactive not legislative (6) – encourages an application of Deleuze and Guattari's theory of becoming and its focus on specificity, intensity and unique intersections, within an ethical and 'real-life', social context or ecology. Mediation is a constant consideration of concrete specificities as they intersect, not economically but in terms of quality and movement. Deleuze recognizes meditative ecology: 'Not becoming unearthly. But becoming all the more earthly by inventing laws of liquids and gases on which the earth depends' (1995, 133). Deleuze points to the application of theories of becoming and mediation as directly affective of real bodies and real situations in movement – finite existential territories and machinic phyla – not philosophical or reflective conceptual versions of becoming. This actuality ecology encompasses what Braidotti emphasizes: 'Here the focus is more on the experience and the potential becoming of real women in all of their diverse ways of understanding and inhabiting the position "woman" (1994: 115).

Actuality ecology involves the slowing of time, of tactics which are modest and thus possible to concretize, and of the mobilization of pack assemblages, devolved humans rather than the so individual it is no longer completely there as human posthuman. As Serres points out – 'everything is founded in the possible' (24). Feminism, queer, animal abolitionist activists and other mobilizations of reified maps are pack deterritorializations of finite existential territories – inextricably actual and theoretical, politically, aesthetically, activist, creatively (and *actually* risky for being so). Rodowick's urge for an ethics of thought points out:

Thinking or thought is defined not by what we know but by the virtual or what is unthought. To think ... is not to interpret or to reflect but to experiment and to create. Thought is always in contact with the new, the emergent, what is in the midst of making itself... (198)

If posthuman ethics are about embodied thought, where can we make emergent the body in thinking unthought, which is essentially activism without the implementation of new systems? How do we put our bodies, or embodied thinking selves on the edge? Necrophilosophy is buried and vitalism activated though embodied philosophy, otherwise it is simply simulacrum as a seeming to be, celebration of overcoming necrophilisophy or optimism as limbo. While one may argue the philosopher, reformist or lecturer activates change because thought is material and thinking is affective of and inextricable from action, the body able to be hurt, deprived or die is the point at which the real of hermeneutic subjectivity both haunts and is irrefutably maintained in all philosophies.

Intellectuals and artists have got nothing to teach anyone ... they produce toolkits composed of concepts, percepts and affects, which diverse publics will use at their convenience. The Universes of the beautiful, the true and the good are inseperable from territorialized practices of expression. Values only have universal significance to the extent that they are supported by the territories of practice, experience, of intensive power that transversalise them. (Guattari 1992, 129–30)

When the body is literally opened up, is cut, beaten, bleeds or hurts, we realise material thought must take actual risks without needing to make these visceral marks badges or proofs. To activate material vitalistic philosophy the vitalism of the assemblage must colonise that irresistible point of self-maintenance located primarily in the flesh – all we are and all we need to live. Corporeal philosophy introduces the hitherto ignored, repressed and overcome. We must introduce the flesh in the risks and experiments of thought we take, allow our bodies to hurt, to not be the occupant but make our flesh available to be occupied as part of a greater assemblage. Autonomy defined through legally owning our own bodies (isomorphically not those of or in relation with others) is precisely what we must refuse in order to ethically negotiate being a self as not others. We must become molecular as one molecule in a political assemblage, a molecule in a pack such as the pack of feminism, of anti-racism, of animal abolitionist activists, of queer-rights. Real flesh has been the site of prejudice, isomorphic annexation and suffering. It is purely because of the flesh – its use and its minoritarian status visually and conceptually - that suffering and death has been experienced. The animal murdered or tortured, the woman impregnated, raped or beaten, the racial other starved or killed, the gueer abused and denied rights heterosexuals are given have all been made to corporeally suffer and cease to exist through the maintenance of majoritarian ideology. This ideology is a material philosophy, seen in its devastating effects and ends. So how do vitalist, activist philosophers do the same? We shouldn't focus on the victim, becomings are not victimhoods but tactical entry points, although the prevention of the making dead of the victims is nonetheless an inherent quality of becomings. Majoritarian systems need to be the focus of change, not just the immediate rights for preserving potential victims within those systems. But becomings may make us feel like victims temporarily – allow our bodies to be hurt, risk losing our jobs, or giving a little more time or more money than we (perceive we) can. We must take care not to martyr ourselves. Claiming we shall sacrifice our 'oneness' simply makes the value of that oneness consistent. If it is not sustained it cannot be part of the assemblage and while not wanting to overvalue the one(ish) that is us, we should not underestimate the more-than-one-less-than-one which is our ability to effectuate as part of assemblages. We are sustained in our becomings not in our beings. Activism changes paradigms but also attempts to preserve the life of other individuals at local and micro levels. It does not break the law to exchange it for another but evinces the ethical imperative required on a micro-level that molar legal structures cannot. Ethics demands we seek to simultaneously decentre molar systems of majoritarianism who oppress 'women', 'animals' and so forth as groups but also actively affect single instances of suffering and life – we must act immediately as well as on a larger paradigmatically scale. This prevents the ineffectual mourning for the dead who are numbered, 'the orders of magnitude' (Elliot, 15). Lists of how many must not confound through their shocking extent the dividuated lives gone, the individuals precisely made dead which at a local level could have had their trajectories altered. Larger assemblages have local intensifications which do not save *numbers* of dividuated live or suffering but enter the activist into a specific becoming with the real life oppressed so both transform their potentiality. Sustaining self encourages these new assemblages which in turn sustain themselves and that with which they subsequently make connexions. Sustainability forms both local and overarching assemblages. Both directly interact and affect each other. Grass roots and global are indivisible and thus must be simultaneous in activism although will incarnate in different tactics, techniques and assemblages. Sustainability raises:

the challenge here of how to think in terms of processes, not of entities or single substances, at both the social and symbolic levels. Interdisciplinarity is an issue but the very boundaries between the various disciplines also get questioned and need to be examined. New forms of cross-disciplinary co-operation seem absolutely necessary, as well as forms of "self-reflexive transdisciplinarity". (Braidotti 2006, 206, cites Becker and Jahn).

Processes of the immediate social and the larger symbolic will differ but the activist themselves must therefore be cross-disciplinary, traversive both in issues addressed and becomings encountered toward the same issue.

Guattari and Braidotti address two issues in activism. The need for interdisciplinarity is urgent if we are to support universal change. We cannot be one activist at the expense of another – 'I' am a feminist, 'I' am animal rights activist, 'I' am queer activist, 'I' am diffability activist ad infinitum. Similarly the law cannot protect categories. We must however acknowledge the difficulty of multiple becomings, and refuse the fashionable pick 'n' mix issue of the week activism belonging to convenience which dilutes western or majoritarian guilt. Vitalism addresses practices and the difficulty, perhaps impossibility, of clear or satisfactory results. Deleuze says, 'A creator who is not grabbed around the throat by a set of impossibilities is no creator' (1995, 133). This leads to activism as impossible and incommensurable with itself. All assemblages exist in disagreement. Difference feminists resist equality feminists, anti-speciesists refuse welfarists. In-fighting is

not creative, it constructs dialectic territories which attempt to colonise each other. Majoritarian culture fuels these issues (particularly academically) to deflect the becomings of these activists. These disagreements annex themselves to majoritarian practices, where thought is founded on consistency and homogenous conformity which is called 'logic'. In majoritarian logic if an argument or issue is logical it would not include disagreeing elements. The molar is infected with radical molecules. The issue must be sick and cannot be acknowledged until it is fit to enter into healthy discourse and society. In this logic in order to live, feminism and animal welfarists versus rights activists etcetera (though abolitionism tends to resolve in-fighting) are not vitalist philosophies but must atrophy, and essentially die. Becomings toward a-humanism are molecular movements and must have inherent disagreements, to adapt, to transform rather than to insert themselves into an issue taxonomy. We must be multiple (many issues) and agreeably disagreeable (within each issue). Inevitably however the interdisciplinarity of issues is their shared becoming. Differing issues share territories, within one issue differing territories and intensities exist. Activism is not empire. This is Braidotti's 'co-disciplinarity' which inflects an ethical turn into post-structural interdisciplinarity that at worst is a series of epistemologies doing their own thing and competing for sexier or more convincing truths, but sadly inherently maintaining the same majoritarian cultural capital values.

Currently in many Western countries, particularly Britain, the United States and Australia, many trajectories of activists are being called 'terrorists'. Activism, ecowarriorism, anti-war action, occupation of economic institutes and many forms of resistance are being pushed toward the criminal, occluding the spaces between the criminal, the mad and the ethical. Moira Gatens states: 'This is one way in which the social body can absolve itself of responsibility for the acts committed, since between "the criminal" and "us" a distance and a difference has been created' (121). Gatens is speaking of the cultural fascination with serial killers. However commitment to ethical and material issues elicits discomfort in consumer society in love with empty signifiers. The activist is as criminal as they are crazy and irreconcilability of issues is represented by the media as evidence of an irrationality equivalent to crime and madness more than to the complexity, multiplicity and inter-relatedness, perhaps the new global serial killer of dominance.

Irigaray sees interdisciplinarity as a mobility of female sexual difference.

If a scientific model is needed, female sexuality would perhaps fit better with what Prigogine calls "dissipatory" structures which function through exchanges with the exterior world, which proceed in steps from one energy level to another and which are not organised to search for equilibrium but rather to cross thresholds. (1993, 124)

Her scientific model is science's becoming-woman. How can we think law is becoming-woman, particularly when law, not science, defines what counts as 'life' and death? Irigaray emphasises scientific epistemes as both murderous and dead, a devastatingly effective necrophilosophy. By 'installing himself within a

system, within something that can be assimilated to what is already dead' (Irigaray 1993, 125) the scientist purges his horror with the posthuman scientific revelation that there is and never was the human. Because our scientific abilities are going faster than necrophilosophy can maintain, the law intervenes to orient what we can do with what it means, or more correctly, is allowed to mean. Becomings are different but part of the same, like each activist more-than- and less-thanone. Deleuze and Guattari's call to becoming resonates here with Irigaray's sexual politics, themselves two philosophical streams made falsely antagonistic. Physical risks and pains are part of becomings more enfleshed through risk. The wound creates a consistency of traversal and re-orientation of becomings, not a point of wounded 'I'. Bodily risks effectuate turns and multiply trajectories. They do not affirm commitment but may shift or alter a becoming. Wounding is an opening to the twists and deterritorializations we go through in activist territories. Wounds as new ruptures make them particularly plastic and unpredictable. The wound is not evidence but might change our tactics depending on our relationship to sustainability. The flesh has always found a privileged site in women and animals and this then may be an inherent part of becomings, a plane of resonance. We may not have the memory of suffering but the risk of our flesh being literally on the line is the very line of resonance in becomings, the point of alliance, one of the affects by which we enter into composition with woman, animal, racial other, queer, diffabled. Again, we should not overvalue this site, but for two reasons it is important. First transcendent truth is present in vitalist philosophy, at least for the everyday person who does not have access to food, medicine, cutting edge technology and other products of post-modernity. If our bodies are hurt enough we become the dead, we cease to exist in the world. While the margin of life and death is increasingly collapsing nonetheless people and animals die. Second becoming-enfleshed is one of the many points of entry into becomings toward a-human posthumanism. It is there – it is ready – it is as practical and humble as it is radical. Becoming assemblages put our bodies at liminal, sometimes dangerous points, ethically challenging majoritarian techniques putting minoritarian bodies in their place as inferior and useful.

Positive Chaos

In all aspects of Guattari's ecology is the dissipation of the molecular woman and animal, everywhere actually but nowhere discursively – thus forsaking the vague libidinality of becoming woman for the flux which makes him love and become us whether he likes it or not – a viral vital philosophy? He doesn't want us, he wants to become, 'nameless words. Verbs without nouns... rhythm is a fluctuation of the rhesis, the surge... to speak of these transports as positive, negative, is mere naïve anthropomorphism. The multiple moves, that is all' (Serres 1995, 101, 69, 101). The body is 'what it can do' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 257) Becomingwoman *is* negative, but only to the anthropomorphism Serres and ethics deride.

Giving up a majoritarian position *should hurt*. The question is where to find the rhythms of woman and animal. Activism involves seeking a mobilizing rhythm. Its effects will be unpredictable, even frightening. The body in becomings is defined 'by given relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness (longitude); the sum total of the intensive affects it is capable of at a given power or degree of potential (latitude)' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 260). In posthumanism the slowness is as important as the speed, the degree as effective minutely as massively. The intersection of latitude and longitude is interstitial or inbetween existence. It is verb not noun, most simply not to be but be-coming, to come but never arrive, the 'to' and 'is' are lost but not mourned.

Serres states:

The chain of reasons is reliable because it is reduced to the law of the weakest link, and thus in any other links there is always more than enough strength – the local pull induces a global movement very seldom, but it can happen. This is not a solid chain, it is simply a liquid movement, a viscosity, (1995, 71)

not evolutionary moments of atrophy, but molecular, twisted, constellation continuities. Aristotle's placing of women halfway down the taxonomy of life to animality resonates with Deleuze and Guattari, but inverted, (in a capitalist sense could this resonate also with Negri and Hardt's becoming-poverty/homeless?) The nation of the non-human animal dead both emphasizes the continuity of the chain and the intensification of the posthuman. Is the xenotransplanted the devolved interstitial or, through the intervention of science, the dead slaughtered toward the posthuman? Posthumanities experiment with infinite life has led to some very irrational reasonings indeed. Virtual universes are corroded for the unconscious sublimation of alterity as annexed, incorporated and consumed as part of the hysteric drive for posthumanity, to go faster and further from the terms from which the human has departed. With Guattari, Serres acknowledges that flux must replace libido, which Serres calls 'the slavery of desire', (1995, 96) desire for, desire to, desire to be. The phantasy in law based on autonomous ownership of our own bodies keeps us enslaved to an internalized desire to 'count' as human. Self-authored hybrids emerge – posthuman monsters which replace the former monstrosities of women, racial others, animals, queers, thus draining their reclamation of terminology. These are still dividuated monsters though, not the more attractive pack monsters as teeming collectives of mobile relations. When everything is celebrated nothing is left as a tool for resistance. Hybrids could be shared interstitials – meeting at points of specific celerity and its resonant qualities - ecology as both dependent on transformation by and accountable in force with the other term, the three-or-more-way pack hybrid force, rather than the augmented man.

What tools can we think of? Are they minoritarian, or are they tools for the acknowledgement of general a-human alterity? Creating a flux which slows the temporal chain can remap its intensities, turn the band, created by woman as

interstices between man and animal, hyrid, pack and fractured – the indeterminate. Creating flux is 'positive chaos. Spinoza does not say otherwise: determination is negation. Indetermination is thus positive' (Serres 1995, 98), the great unreason of rational enlightenment which is that one can determine the place and (lack of) meaning of a thing precisely in order to refuse, negate and deny that thing. The really sad thing is that post-modernity is the exact opposite of 'anything goes' – many infinite instances of self rather than finite territories in which interrelational or in Leibniz's terms effectuation ethics must figure (Is playing on our clitoral iPads instead of our joysticks really a becoming-woman rhythm?) Posthuman Ethics find simultaneously in culture the impossibility of marginalized bodies being valued, and the impossibility of the necessity for only one kind of body to exist. Impossibilities are the cause, the action and the aim of vitalistic feminist becomings. Tactically activated mapped but mobile ecologies shift through nonlinear evolution of becomings-animal, woman and eventually imperceptible – we are all active flesh but not striated and subjectified concept, we can invest vitalism and creativity with a simultaneous address to the pragmatics of an ecological or material philosophies, keeping flesh and interrelated systems alive without destroying the world in a pathological quest for eternal physiology of the increasingly pure conceptual individual. We must find enfleshed rhythms of alterity, prepare to be scared, open to our potential to effectuate change through becomings and pack assemblages to create ethical ecologies and mobilise ethics for possible ecologies of the becomings-to-come. Perhaps most difficult and most scary, we must commit to becomings in the face of those changes seeming impossible.



Epilogue After Life

Posthuman ethics occupy an ecosophical terrain of thought coalescent as material, affective and activist. It operates via an ecological consistency. This book has offered some singular despositifs which show the blind spots, wounds, fountains and redirectives which populate territories that attempt to homogenize and regulate all life through limiting the system of operation as well as life itself. Posthuman ethics create other ways for that which cannot be assimilated instead of the majoritarian options of being forced to be or slaughtered. Yet while critiquing any attempt to exemplify I have nonetheless selected examples. The difficult conundrum of ethical address to alterities, while resisting holding any one organism as inherently posthuman, other or even reducible in reference to itself, is a difficulty which both shows the need for and catalyses creativity in reference to rethinking lives. Guattari states: 'The ecosophical perspective does not totally exclude a definition of unifying objects...but it will no longer be a question of depending on reductionist, stereotypical order-words' (2000, 34). Encounters with posthuman conceptuae (concepts, personae and their co-emergence) are events of joy and necessity. Encounters with posthumans as failed humans take those same terms in order to reduce manufacturing of continuous power machines. What a posthuman is or could be is, finally, what essentials urge its conceptuae, what wrongs are redirected through encounters, what paths created, what thought opened and what outside glimpsed. For oppressive machines the posthuman aberrant is required to isomorphically raise the status of the majoritarian, and the posthuman's future is only as a cog in that operation of ascension. Ecosophical and eco-minoritarian theories seek to alter this monodirectional system. However if they do so, would we still be the 'humans (however 'post') connected with ...', and would it, as it has been argued, ultimately benefit us too, be good for us? This kind of utilitarian imperative, noble and radical though it is, changes the relations but perhaps never entirely allows escape from the persistent terms, or terminologies, even while we grapple with learning to speak silently and think otherwise. Without being pessimistic, is it viable or even possible to ask if we can ever enter into entirely ahuman, inhuman, posthuman becomings? When the human becoming-imperceptible politic dissipates the human into collective molecular assemblages with environment and cosmos, when I becomes we, is it not still our task, and our multiplicities, and our assemblages because primarily our ecological and philosophical disasters we seek to rectify and our being (whatever that may be) we seek to undo and reform?¹ Are projects fatally human projects of cosmic connectivity? As categories melt, entities hybridize, what will be recognizable as human? Is this aspiration for the answer being 'nothing' in its actualization something toward which posthuman life is authentically capable? I do not mean to raise demands for pay offs or results, antagonistic to becomings and the opening for new potentialities, but thinking the unthinkable has varyingly easier and more perplexing ways to move toward next steps in new ethical relations. This epilogue will attempt to show that, like the optional 'examples' of the posthuman *Posthuman Ethics* has offered, there is one example of a response belonging to the easier way. That is, an openness to the very viability of the continuation of what was formerly called the human – the cessation of the reproduction of human life.

Extinction is activism in three ways. The first is imaginatively expressing and accounting for the life we live even though it was not chosen. It validates the inevitability of life and may lead to decisions that give that life its freedom through its perpetuation or extinguishment.² The second, more extreme form of activism, comes from the decision which acknowledges life is inevitable and beyond the control of that emergent life, but this life may control its finitude, through suicide.³ Nonetheless 'this death always comes from without, even at the moment when it constitutes the most personal possibility' (Deleuze 1994a, 113). Suicide is a recombining of chaos potentials that results in waves of particle affects which precede and exceed the tentative myth of absence/presence but that comes from a certain will to a new occupation of cosmic consistency. Vitalistic suicide is not a cop out, nor is living necessarily a choice to be a certain kind of subject. Life continues after suicide through affect. The first two elements are entwined in that to die is to die actively, to live to affect others for the express purpose of affecting others so they may live vitalistically, Blanchot's passivity that is active love without condition or mastery. Coming from these elements, the third is accepting that choosing not to reproduce entails vigilance for immanent lives. It opposes hedonism which would privilege our lives, as the last generation, as free to do

¹ Baofu sees the future of the human when identified as post-modern post-human extinction with a new transcendental humanism: The spread of floating consciousness across the cosmos without biochemical constitution, and the emergence of hyper-spatial consciousness in multiple dimensions of space-time in this world. But he retains the idea of the 'mastering of complexity in the cosmos' and 'understanding and manipulating complexity' (245, my emphasis).

² This is the system underpinning the political agenda of the Voluntary Human Extinction Movement. www.vhemt.org.

³ The positive elements of suicide as vitalism are becoming increasingly present in writings which both explore the suicide of many philosophers and also the fallacy of suicide as a result of and inextricable with, despair. See, for example, Braidotti (2006, 233–4), Weinstone (102) Colombat (1996) on Deleuze's suicide. Suicide is also one of the four stations of The Church of Euthanasia's manifesto, the others being sodomy (or any non-reproductive sex), abortion and euthanasia (although each has deep complexities). See thechurchofeuthenasia.org.

what we wish and decimate what is left, just as postmodernity does not replace the single subject with multiplicity as being and doing anything without purposeful acknowledgement of affectivity. All three projects enrich life. They emerge based on necessity; neither the move after the next nor the entire narrative can be predicted in advance. Problems for the far future are complaints (not unviable but also not productive) which reduce the life of the open future and so limit the expressivity of imaginings of openings. Are the pragmatics of concerns over what will happen a few activist moves down toward extinction so different from contemporary concerns over impending deaths by dissymmetry of resources and war in the world and its presumed futures? Guattari states 'In the final account. the ecosophical problematic is that of the production of human existence itself in new historical contexts' (2000, 34). Guattari advocates the philosopher as futurist, and futurity as the jubilant purpose of rethinking subjectivity and relationality. It would be a mistake to understand the cessation of the human as a denial of futurity. The future is not discontinued as a result of human disappearance, it is the very definition of what an imperceptible, cosmic, immanent future can be because it is future without thinking in advance as a thinking human. In order to be accountable posthumans, near futures, tactical little goals and strategic unification of issues in order to increase the expressivity of other lives are nodular moments toward the ultimate creative future of joy, which the human cannot think and to which, if the future is the real goal of posthumanism, even while it attests to the present being the location of that goal and its activisms, the human cannot belong. Jeffrey McKee claims the ultimate casualty of human expansive population growth is biodiversity itself, 'both extinction and population growth are natural phenomena. What is unnatural is the magnitude of both trends in today's world. And what is unusual is that one species has a choice to alter the course of things to come' (171). This emphasizes diversity is the greatest sacrifice, structures of multiplicity, connectivity and immanence are the main casualties of human population and while the structure itself is destroyed, ethical interaction is impossible between individual lives. Extinction means nothing in ethical consideration when single, real lives in their unique emergence and duration are the crux of relational considerations between lives. Doug Cocks states 'Extinction of the individual, the species or the ecosystem occurs when it has no pre-programmed response rule for an eventuating environment or cannot devise such a rule... a problem to be solved [assimilation] ... to be dealt with [accommodation]' (230). Programming and resolution are notoriously human compulsions. From a humanist perspective they are viable as much for the power they produce as for the benefits they afford. Humans may be most adept ethical at accommodation of this world through our absence. Because humans invented the concept of species itself (leading to speciesism and denying lives or the dead) they must be the species to change the becomings to come. These must not include our own becomings beyond the becoming-imperceptible. Perhaps a perversely literal interpretation of Deleuze and Guattari's call to becoming-imperceptible is to define imperceptibility as absolute absence. Perceptible by whom is the question that leads to those who

perceive often being victims of perception as an encounter with affects produced by the entity perceived. The affects of human existence are immeasurable. Measure adheres to value both as quantity and quality: 'The question is not how many people the Earth or the universe can support, but rather, which people it can support, which existences. Number here, immediately converts its magnitude into moral magnitude: the size of humanity becomes indissociable from its dignity' (Jean-Luc Nancy, 180).

Reproduction, or rather the repudiation of reproduction, underpins posthuman theory. Serres states:

The perpetrators of bloody domination may well have been thrilled to find this world and seize the laws of determination, theirs, the same as theirs, those of extermination ... Then Mars rules the world, he cuts the bodies into atomized pieces and lets them fall ... law in the sense of dominant legislation ... the law is the plague ... Reason is the fall. The reiterated cause is death. Repetition is redundancy. And identity is death. (2000, 109)

Posthuman theory deals explicitly with the death of identity, because the demand for identity, to be identified by the identity which one has been proscribed and which one must accept to register as an identity, is where lives emerge as the cells of signifying systems. Of extinction and ethicists at the end of the world John Leslie critiques Emotivists, Prescriptivists, Relativists, (but somehow not himself as a Utilitarian) rather seeking a complete and accurate version of reality, querying 'how one could ever say humbly that one's own present ethical standards, even if fully self-consistent, may be mistaken' (160) While he argues against privileging Cartesian life as subjectivity over lived-life, this emphasis on a subjective ethical map as consistent requires a consistent subjectivity first. Both Leslie and prescriptivism then mistake morality for ethics.

Dominant systems need repetition both to maintain their power, and to make alterations which would disprove their claimed logic quietly without being perceived as rupturing their own operations. The bodies which populate Posthuman Ethics antagonize reproduction, and in their audacious celebratory existences they deny the phantasy of reproduction constituting life. The modified body of Chapter 2 is the non-reproduction of the organised body machine. Chapter 3 lauds perception without recognition. Chapter 4 facilitates the argument that absence of the human is the most powerful activism. Chapter 5 resists the curing of the abnormal to facilitate the perpetuation of normal humans, and just as many hybrids and monsters are incapable of actual reproduction, so hybrid thought cannot reproduce. Chapter 6 queers via a refusal of reproductive practices and sex without recognisable referents. Chapter 7 sees modern human life as driven and obsessed with conceptual death while reproducing death machines and nations of the dead. How can we consider absence and cessation without sacrifice? Can the end of the human without replacement be a creative, jubilant, affirmation of 'life', where life is defined as affect and thus the ambition toward the cessation of the

human in existence a celebration of the capacity for other lives to express opened through the removal of human affectivity? Of life, Spinoza and death, Gatens and Lloyd state:

To understand our eternity – which in our less enlightened state we conceptualise through the illusion of a continued existence after death – we are to engage, Spinoza tells us, in an exercise of 'feigning'. We are to consider the mind, that is, as if it were beginning to exist, and now beginning to understand itself as eternal. Despite the contradiction which reason can discern in the exercise, it is harmless, he assures us, provided we know what we are doing. The fictions of the wise allow glimpses of the deep truths which elude reason operating without imagination. (Gatens and Lloyd, 38)

While explicators of Spinoza would operate under the consensus that will and appetite strive toward joy which is averse to death and which makes suicide unthinkable as irrational, I wish to adapt this idea another way. Spinoza states of death 'A free man thinks of nothing less than of death, and his wisdom is a meditation on life' (1994, 151 original emphasis). Wisdom comes from reason as imagination. Spinoza urges us to think the eternity of our lives while aware this is both fallacious and makes us irrational. However as rationality in Spinoza is borne of self-preservation – the will to continue through which essence is found - knowing the impossible, the event which repudiates our existence, our rationality and our preservation while simultaneously refusing it by exchanging it for the concept of eternity without us, creates an intra-affective ethics, a molecular terrain of disagreement and conscious incommensurability which itself sustains us. Spinoza's request for self understanding as meditation on the mind's eternity posits the self and mind as continuously germinal, a perpetual beginning which unravels via the multiple trajectories within the mind's multiple intra-affects and their collisions and mutations with the affects of others. The will has no absolute beginning, nor established stasis, nor perceptible end. We know all three things while knowing our claim to know them is feigned. Life is this way understood as the infinite beginnings which teeter upon potentialization at each constellation of interaction and relation. If what we claim to know as 'human' life were sought to cease this does not necessarily conform to what Spinoza defines as suicide or even death. The gradual cessation of human life on Earth and in the Universe is the beginning of the contemplation of the eternity of life affects, of the life of all ecosophical cosmic interaction. This can be understood in the renegotiation of what is meant by a will, an appetite, a self, or rather, where we draw the lines between different incarnations of these. Already the self is made up of multiple interactive affective selves (what, in many philosophies after Leibniz, Deleuze and Serres could be called the soul) while the cosmos is a singular consistency. If each entity aspires to greater perfection, thus greater joy, if human life was an element of the cosmos which facilitated lesser or greater perfection, we must ask to what extent the cessation of human life would increase joy. Of course this is an unanswerable question. But my point here is that contemplating the cessation of human occupation of Earth and space is the opposite of being against a meditation on life. Just as we can never know what the lives to come will be, yet we think them, or we can never know our own life after death, while knowing there is none, forsaking the repetition and reproduction of the human cannot know its effect but can encounter life as the ultimate unthinkable outside, and the freedom of man which Spinoza celebrates becomes freedom of life itself without man. The lesser man, the bound man, is the man led only by affect (as reactive) or opinion, the greater man by reason (Spinoza 1994, 151) which is consciousness as imagination.

The perpetuation of human life as human subjectivity is arguably an *a priori* presumption, a reaction to predetermined culture, against a vitalistic, entirely unique event, and borne of the opinion that one should perpetuate the species which requires the species precede the qualities which would presumably be used to vindicate its perpetuation. Put simply, joy at the celebration of life must ethically define life as a connective consistency, not my, one or human life. Nancy states: 'The speaker speaks for the world, which means the speaker speaks to it, on behalf of it, in order to make it "a world" (3). *Posthuman Ethics* has consistently sought the silencing of what is understood as human speech emergent through logic, power and signification. Human speech makes the world according to the human, tells the world what it is and speaks for the world, that is, to other humans and to the gods of human speech – religion, science, capital. Silencing human speech opens a harmonious cacophony of polyvocalities imperceptible to human understanding, just as human speech has the detrimental effect of silencing unheard, unthought expression.

Human life has demarcated itself as an object, demarcated the world into objects and by this operation, facilitates, vindicates and perpetuates its own object-ness. Its object-ness is its subjectivity, its subjectivity the impossibility for other life to be. Our access to the life of other life as it lives and perceives rather than as our object is irreducibly absent. Human knowledge of life sacrifices that life, conceptually and actually. 'The sacrificer needs the sacrifice in order to separate himself from the world of things and the victim could not be separated from it in turn if the sacrifice was not already separated in advance' (Bataille 1992, 44). Most importantly 'this is a monologue and the victim can neither understand nor reply' (Bataille 1992, 44). The sacrificer gives other life its value through withdrawing it from a world in which the sacrificer is sovereign ruler as a result of the lament that the sacrificer has lost intimacy as life. The world of gods and the divine in this instance occupies the place which excesses of signification, capital and power have evacuated. The further estranged from life the human becomes, the more nonhuman elements we humans drags with us in order to rectify this estrangement. The sacred and the divine are worlds which the human has created because this world is both too much and not enough. Nature is the jubilant infinite beyond what we can perceive or encounter, and excised though we attempt to be from it, we are a result of it, subjects to a sovereign with no intent, design or flexing of might. We have separated ourselves from nature and claimed to have redeemed it by making it 'better' through manipulating those particles of chaos which antagonize will or control over destiny. In this sense modern (and postmodern) science, law and state are no different in our investment in them to the need for oracles and fate. 'Nature is reduced to human nature, which is reduced to either history or reason. The world has disappeared... Curiously, reason acquires in the legal sphere a status quite similar to the one it had acquired in the sciences: the laws are always on its side because it founds law' (Serres 2002, 35). In contemporary desires to rectify some of what we have perpetrated, to turn our address to ecological and environmental issues, welfare and the redistribution of freedom we still fail to allow natural law (which we still define as external to the human, yet only we demarcate, separate and define externality) to govern, because natural law must be resonant with human logic. For the human a law of nature is unthinkable. Nature itself in its current conception is a phantasy precisely because it is inconceivable, as Serres states, the world does not exist. What could be simpler in order to allow the world to exist, then, than leaving it be? 'Issues', 'welfare' and 'nature' continue to dismember the world into pieces which are consumable but which fail to sufficiently (and efficiently) understand the connectivity that is all the world and in which human connections are few but their encroachments and effects are innumerable both immanently and continuously.

Posthuman Ethics seek new silences through which to speak and hear. If, simultaneous with the most desperate attempts to host the world more than we parasite from it while we remain, we can celebrate the death of the human – as subjectivity and ultimately as extinct – we are operating in the most creative of new spaces, the spaces in the world but which we never accessed. 'Go look for death' writes Serres, 'down in this world you allow yourself a thousand peaceful acts: to sleep, dream, talk, on and on, relax your attention' (2002, 111). Serres shows that death offers the world's spaces we choose to refuse, and which language conceals. Far from the violent destruction perpetuated through human regimes – Serres' Order of Mars – this death – the sacrifice to Venus in and from nature – makes the world strange, subtle, incandescently beautiful. It is harmonious with our new senses and posthuman ethical modes of perception. Civilization chases off death, but death opens up and occupies remote and strange worlds, 'everyone considers these worlds dangerous, but what they actually call for is simple presence' (Serres 2002, 113) Serres' worlds to which death leads us teach us other worlds are the opposite of the sacred worlds through which the sacrifice assures the stubborn and fearful human subject. Human extinction differs from sacrifice, we are not being sacrificed by nature in order to save it in the same way we as humans unethically sacrifice other lives to save ourselves from imminent death as annihilation. Nature does not want to sacrifice us. Investing nature with a destructive will overvalues our absence and once again returns us to the legislator and signifier of things. Conceiving human absence as sacrifice is an insipid response that claims we give a gift of the most valuable element in nature – humans – in order to save the nature we have manipulated. Human sacrifice is another manipulation. Sacrifice of others or ourselves is life lived in death. Death in nature which opens other worlds is the simple presence of life living. The absence of the human is the most vital living yet to be accomplished, it is life lived as life. Our accursed share is a life lived in horror at and refusal of our absence, whereas

life that is good is interested only in death, which, in exchange, shapes it. Once past the other worlds that stimulate our own, we will cast off anew towards death, our origin, to be rebornwe have all become astronauts, completely deterritorialized: not as in the past a foreigner could be when abroad, but with respect to all humankind. (Serres 2002, 114, 120)

In this sense through the worlds death opens we apprehend the gravity of the actions perpetrated upon lives to create the nation of the dead while gifting ourselves actual life. Ethically this new life lived in the worlds to which our finitude introduces us make us live differently, life configured in wondrous unthought of ways which benefit nature through our becoming more hospitable, less parasitic, more creative and productive in our connections and the opportunities of expressivity we encounter from a world territorialized constantly anew. The cosmic both extricates us from the world we know and the knowledge that destroys the world while also placing us inextricably within that world, the world become the encounter with outside as we dream, sleep and imagine. Through managing what we have done to the earth while we live, in an attempt to further its freedom for expressivity, not with guilt but joy, allows us accountability with immanence and futurity rather than a constant address to the past. 'Never forget the place from which you depart, but leave it behind and join the universal. Love the bond that unites your sic plot of earth with the earth, the bond that makes kin and stranger resemble each other' (Serres 2002, 50). Resemblance without homogenization, land without sovereign and love without structuring relation or condition are subtle, gracious interactions with the earth, earths and ordinary emergences of and from the earth. Earth is matter itself, its constellations lives and relations unthinkable but everywhere and everyday in the sense that they are constantly surprising without reason, and unique without name. It is clear these new worlds are without much, even without anything, certainly without humans, and so teeming with everything beyond human comprehension. Everything the earth is left without in the cessation of life as human and human lives converts to the within, a wholeness that liberates becomings while the human is left behind, in time and purpose, in signifying slaughter and actual destruction in its maintenance. Consistently we see an earth emerge via the 'not' and the 'without', the very antithesis of lack and irresolvable with lament. When all is lost to the human an overwhelming everything arrives and the things we can do for the earth will further this everything. Life as present to itself resolves any hint of absence in becoming-imperceptible, it is secret life.

The secret is elevated from a finite content to the infinite form of secrecy. This is the point at which the secret attains absolute imperceptibility, instead of being linked to a whole interplay of relative perceptions and reactions ... a nonlocalizable *something* that has happened. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 288)

What can we do now in and for the world? It must be a secret form of activism because it operates tactics of unknowability, unpredictability and actions that take aim without a project, though its connectivities and hoped for affects are contemplative, thoughtful and openings created beneficial. Secret humans are vitalistic in our repudiation of imperceptibility as absence. Ethical imperceptibility limits diminishment of the expressivity of the earth – we live a quiet undetectable life – and produces joyous openings for the earth's expressivity – a secret making things happen.

Ecosophy requires humans:

to bring into being other worlds beyond those of purely abstract information, to engender Universes of reference and existential Territories where singularity and finitude are taken into account by the multivalent logic of mental ecologies and by the group Eros principle of social ecology; to dare to confront the vertiginous Cosmos so as to make it inhabitable; these are the tangled paths of the tri-ecological vision. (Guattari 2000, 67)

Love is the catalyst for the posthuman ethical force. The ultimate love may be the acknowledgement that, while the tenets of the secret society's tactics are incremental, adaptive and thoughtful relations with outside which are known only in small advance and thus not mapped in a project toward finitude, making the Cosmos inhabitable takes first the refusal of the privilege of 'the' human and in unpredictable developments, inhabitability of the Earth contingent on human extinction. In attempts to be hosts we are actually being incidentally gifted the role of parasite toward joyous affects - our expressivity is challenged and extended while we launch upon the creation and habitation of other worlds within, and thus our pleasures are taken from these worlds and their affects independent of our detrimental diminishing force. For Deleuze and Guattari, the basest level of human subjectivity that is ripe for becomings is the germinal, larval child, yet to be guickened into any position and who has their body stolen from them first. If, then, we were to explain to a child, with their strange machines of connection and comprehension, posthuman ethics inspired by Spinoza and developed by 20th and 21st century theory, we could simply state these ethics are indescribable relations and connectivities seeking, in secret and silence and invisibility, and never arriving at the sought. They are instigated by the life we must immanently live in order to respect the death that we perpetrate. We thank as making our living joyous, the opening of all other organisms and their relations. These ethics are the between, the third in a relation between one, two and many. They activate as passage. They are the desire that we are. They come from and teach us how to love.

Who is love? Look at him well. He is a relation; he is the intermediary, he is the passage again, the pass; he is what passes, quasi object, the quasi-subject ... Who is love? He is the third man [sic], the son of lack and of passage, pass and

lack ... love is the third; it is third, between two. It is exactly the included third. (Serres, 2000: 241–2)

The cessation of reproduction may seem unthinkable, even mad. But life itself cannot exist in the perpetuation of human subjectivity – for formerly human life nor for any other. Many arguments may be made for the idiocy of suggesting extinction, both practical and moral, and many suggestions made for how we can continue sustainably. These questions return indeterminably all worlds to us, to our thought, our practices, our legislations and ultimately suggesting the world belongs to us, whether as desecrators or custodians. Is this love for an imperceptible unknowable other? Love the passage moves the world through relations which are defined by love itself, nothing exists except in its relationality. All life lacks in solitude. Without relation, within self and with external forces, life lacks. Humans continue to show their want for interaction with nonhumans. Want is monodirectional, love is gracious acknowledgement of the relations we have made and those we must inevitably continue to make. Love will not cease at human absence, just as life has not ceased in post-subjectivity theory. The millions of considerations of what will happen are for our secret projects which are based on need as they arrive. If the question of human extinction seems ridiculous, the very least we can offer as an act of love is an ethical address to the purpose of why we see its need to continue. Ouestions are secret, because the answers exist only in the creation of new questions. Posthuman ethical questions shift from 'what am I', 'why am I' and open up the infinite thought found in the gracious, quiet, secret and effulgent query 'what is love'?

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