Deleuze and the Non/Human

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

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

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

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

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

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

Two humans

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Three films not about Madagascar

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

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

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

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

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

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

The first: celluloid pets

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

First, individuated animals, family pets, sentimental, Oedipal animals each with its own petty history, 'my' cat, 'my' dog. These animals

invite us to regress, draw us into a narcissistic contemplation, and they are the only kind of animal psychoanalysis understands, the better to discover a daddy, a mommy, a little brother behind them (when psychoanalysis talks about animals, animals learn to laugh): *anyone who likes cats or dogs is a fool.* (Deleuze and Guattari 2004 [1980]: 265, emphasis in original)

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

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

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

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

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

The second: myth-animals

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pan-African mammals with distinctive American accents are used to naturalize this contradiction. *Madagascar* tropes racial types already familiar to viewers of American film and television: Marty as a hysterical black American man; Gloria as a voluptuous and sassy black American woman; Melman as a Jewish hypochondriac ('I can't be transferred, I have an appointment with doctor Goldberg at five'); and Alex as relatively unmarked protagonist (see Rose 2014). With some distress, these characters all discover their species kin in *Escape 2 Africa.* Personality traits previously presented as uniquely *American* are now coded as part of being 'a lion' or 'a zebra' or 'a hippopotamus'. This opens up two opposing readings of the *Madagascar* mythology. On the one hand, the rediscovery of American stereotypes on a continental African wildlife reserve transforms these 'racialized' traits into timeless social archetypes. Just as nature produces the hippo and the giraffe, so too does culture produce the Black American Woman and the Jewish Hypochondriac. On the other hand, the Central Park mammals learn that their cultural identities actually belong to a global diaspora that crosses geographical and political boundaries. *Madagascar* is simultaneously an American film about discovering the rest of the world is like America, and a transnational film about American travelers discovering that they have always-already been cosmopolitan.

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

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

The third: becomings-animal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Who is the anomalous?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa

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

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

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

Has anyone ever told you that you look like a supermodel? Albeit a fat, hairy one who smells. Whoo-hoo! Oh, you have a very hairy back. I like that in a woman.

Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Playing the Deleuzoguattarian

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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9
The Companion Cyborg: Technics and Domestication

Ronald Bogue

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