

# Bodies and Becomings

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*Human and Animal Encounters in Early Modern English  
Literature*

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## *Declaration*

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## *Abstract*

In this thesis I undertake a poststructuralist study of human and animal relations in early modern English literature. I argue that the “type” of human we understand ourselves to be is directly related to the “type” of animal we encounter. Specifically, “bounded” and “essentialist” conceptions of the human depend on notions of animals as “territorialised,” “passive” “objects.” Instead of reinforcing the idea of “human being,” I attend to the “affective” materiality and mobility of human and animal bodies to suggest kinds of “human becomings.” I pursue this aim by using the “affective” philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. I use three different “affective” approaches to bodies—“cartographic,” “meaty,” and “machinic”—to explore representations of human and animal bodies within the early modern contexts of bear-baiting, hunting, and music-making. In Chapter 1, I consider representations of bear-baiting by John Stow and Edmond Howes, William Shakespeare, Robert Laneham, and Thomas Nashe. In these representations bears move from “objects” of the spectators’ gaze, to “actants,” which like the Heideggerian “thing,” exert their efficacy and autonomy through non-cooperation. As “actants,” the animals in these examples emit affects which, potentially, draw spectators into an experience of “becoming-dog.” In Chapter 2, representations of the stag hunt by George Gascoigne, William Shakespeare, and Margaret Cavendish suggest somatic continuity between humans and animals. I argue that the shared carnality between humans and stags in these texts creates an affective “zone of proximity,” which Deleuze labels “meat.” “Meat” allows us to read moments of “deterritorialisation” in which “affects,” produced both voluntarily and involuntarily, disrupt categorical distinctions between humans and stags. The categories of “human” and “animal” emerge, in this chapter, as contingent rather than essential. In Chapter 3, I challenge ideas of animal, and indeed material, passivity through a “vital materialist” reading of acts of music-making in poems by Christopher Marlowe and Shakespeare. In this chapter, “affects” are machinic—that is,

connective—flows or vibrations of matter, which Deleuze and Guattari label “non-organic” or “non-localised” desire. Desire creates connections between not only humans and animals, but also organic and inorganic matter, suggesting an ontology of “human becomings.”

## *List of Abbreviations and Notes on Editions*

### 1. Abbreviations

These works will be cited in full on their first appearance. After this, I will use the following abbreviations.

<b>ABC</b>	“ <i>L’abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze</i> ” or, “The ABC of Gilles Deleuze,” interview with Claire Parnet.
<b>ATP</b>	<i>A Thousand Plateaus</i> , Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari
<b>AO</b>	<i>Anti-Oedipus</i> , Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari
<b>CC</b>	<i>Essays Critical and Clinical</i> , Gilles Deleuze
<b>FB</b>	<i>Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation</i> , Gilles Deleuze
<b>K</b>	<i>Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature</i> , Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari
<b>WP</b>	<i>What is Philosophy?</i> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari

In quoting from Spinoza’s *Ethics*, I will be following the conventional method, which uses Roman numerals to refer to the parts of the *Ethics*, and Arabic numerals for axioms, definitions, propositions, etc. Following the example of Edwin Curley’s edition of the text, I use abbreviations like: A = axiom, P = proposition, S = scholium, Post = Postulate, Pref = preface. So, for example, IIP2Schol refers to the scholium of the second postulate in part two of the *Ethics*.

### 2. Notes on Editions

Details on the editions of early modern works are listed in the bibliography.

I have modernised early modern uses of “v” and “u.” For example, Thomas Nashe’s *Vnfortunate Traueller* becomes *Unfortunate Traveller*.

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