

Katarzyna Szafranowska*

***Metaphormosis:*
The Machinic Metaphor
in Kafkian Animal Stories**

Abstract

In my paper, I discuss the Deleuzian reading of Franz Kafka. I argue that Deleuze perceives Kafka's works through the prism of his own criticism of metaphor and that in this case one cannot dismiss the use of metaphorical language as Deleuze and Guattari attempt to do in *Kafka. Toward A Minor Literature*. Analyzing the narration of Kafkian animal stories, I claim that metaphors do appear in Kafka's works but they are broken, dysfunctional metaphors: more a metaphormosis than a metaphor itself.

Keywords

Gilles Deleuze, Franz Kafka, Metaphor, Short Stories, Metamorphosis

It is not an exaggeration to suggest that we are dealing with some kind of Kafkian conundrum, for his writings have not ceased to trouble scholars and readers since the publication of the first edition of *Der Prozess* in 1925. The notion of “a permanent *déjà vu*” (Adorno 1997, 245) still seems apt as the nature of the peculiarity of Franz Kafka's prose and strangeness of his narrative world constantly escape unambiguous interpretation. Kafka's narrative world has been already described as “uncanny” (Masschelein 2011, 63), a world of a premythical character (Benjamin 2007, 117), or a “de-ranged cosmos” (Adorno 1997, 249); while his narrative strategy has been

* University of Warsaw
Faculty of Artes Liberales
Email: k.szafranowska@al.uw.edu.pl

defined, amongst others, as “the intimacy of distress” (Blanchot 1989, 83), an ambush staged with each written word (Bataille 1987, 5), a paradoxical act of constant self-accusation (Agamben 2011, 20–36) and a “diabolical pact” (Deleuze, Guattari 2008, 29). Still, what seems the most problematic is the use and function of metaphor in his prose. Is it the case that Kafka completely destroys metaphor (Benjamin 2007, 111–140) or detaches it from any reference to achieve utter incomprehensibility (Sokel 2002, 82–101)? Or is it perhaps that Kafkian prose plainly escapes categories such as metaphor and proper meaning (Sussmann 2002, 123–148)?

The problem of metaphor (and its disruption) seems even more intriguing in Kafkian animal stories. Animals are certainly one of the main themes of the short stories Kafka wrote, although it is possible to distinguish different animal figures in Kafka’s works—figures which are either voiceless or anthropomorphized—and I claim that Kafka tries to go beyond the metaphor of animality in the sense that the animal is no longer a mere point of reference but a constantly present undertone, an underlying possibility of transformation. The aim of Kafkian linguistic strategy is to create a continuum of beings and disturb the distinction between the animal and the human, i.e. an animalized human and a humanized animal. I argue that Kafka achieves this effect by the means of metaphor, which is often used as a broken trope: a metaphor that is deterritorialized—to recall Gilles Deleuze’s notion—and inevitably leads to metamorphosis. Kafkian literature proposes a flight or a mirage of a flight from the human-animal categorization. It offers a smooth transition between what is distant and close, what is strange and familiar. The hypothesis is that Kafkian metaphor exceeds metaphor itself; it is a possibility of becoming, derived from the potentiality of language.

Franz Kafka and Gilles Deleuze both seem to have a problem with pure metaphor, metaphor based on resemblance and treated like an analogy. I bring up Deleuze’s view on metaphor and metamorphosis in order to prove that one cannot radically dismiss the use of metaphorical language in Kafka’s case as Deleuze and Guattari attempt to do in *Kafka. Toward A Minor Literature*. I will begin my deliberation on the animal metaphor in Kafkian prose with a presentation of the Deleuzian critique of metaphor. Subsequently, I will propose the notion of the machinic metaphor and analyze its role in Kafka’s animal stories in order to prove that metaphors do appear in Kafka’s works but that they are broken, dysfunctional metaphors: more like *metaphormosis* rather than a metaphor itself.

Metaphor and Metamorphosis: the Deleuzian Stance

As I have already suggested, Deleuze regards metaphor as primarily disadvantageous and oppressive. This hostility toward metaphor has at least three possible explanations: the first one derives from a critique of the very idea of representation; the second one is a consequence of Deleuze's emphasis on the performative character of language; and the third one is the result of his theory of "metaphysics in motion" (Deleuze 1994, 8).

The first argument of Deleuze's criticism of metaphor, namely his objection against representation, is linked to his ontological stance. The author of *Difference and Repetition* claims that representation favors the actual and compromises the virtual aspect of reality. Thus, Deleuze severely castigates representation and contrasts it with the creation of concepts. For Deleuze and his collaborator in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Félix Guattari, "the plane of consistency is the abolition of all metaphor" (Deleuze, Guattari 1987, 69). According to Deleuze and Guattari, everything is enfolded by the plane of immanence, everything is already given within a flat plane of immanent life which continually reconfigures its elements. In this very process the authors of *A Thousand Plateaus* see the source of unlimited creation and the possibility of a real change. Conversely, the notions that transcend the sphere of life and bodies hamper the creative process by introducing a hierarchy—"micro-Oedipuses, microformations of power, microfascisms" (Deleuze, Guattari 1987, 205)—and thus petrifying the existing configuration. What results from the introduction of the concept of the plane of immanence is a rebuttal of all transcendent notions, including representation and metaphor in its indirect form.

Deleuze rejects the concept of literary representation criticizing it for being the repetition of the same, a reproduction of the tyranny of the given. What interests him is literature that refutes mimetic representation for the sake of its own autonomous power of creation. Only when words cease to represent objects and instead become objects themselves, only then are they prone to transformations and modifications. However, the binary opposition of the Saussurean linguistic system with a particular emphasis on the oppressiveness of the signifier makes language immune to variations. Deleuze and Guattari describe the signifier as holding tyrannical power *via* the transcendental distance of the signifier that imposes its own law on every process of meaning. Contrarily to the unrestricted and unpredictable work of the broken literary machine, the despotic signifier—a sign that is

deterritorialized in a letter and must be read and read again—imposes a necessity of univocal meaning, a terror of renewed interpretation. Thus, the authors of *A Thousand Plateaus* return to the pre-Saussurean conception of territorial sign. They resist the Saussurean claim that the domain of objects is alienated from the domain of language—and that our language does not reach the sphere of bodies, and what follows, the sphere of life. With the critique of metaphor in which it is treated as a trope that requires interpretation and thus imposes upon language the tyranny of the signifier, Deleuze repudiates the dominance of the Saussurean signifying regime (Deleuze 1987, 14).

The second reason for Deleuze's objection against metaphor is his conception of language, which is inspired by Austin's theory of the performative function of utterances. On its basis, a direct link between language and reality is created, and since the illocutionary force of words enables them to freely reconfigure reality, each enunciation starts bearing a revolutionary potential. Drawing from Austin's theory, Deleuze proposes intervention instead of accurate representation. He opts for experimentation and construction, which is particularly noticeable in the creative aspect of Deleuzian philosophy. Conversely, metaphor as a form of analogy based on representation fiercely resists creation. According to Deleuze, metaphor derives from the imaginary entity of resemblance that statically links two concepts together in a presupposed and imposed relationship. In this sense, metaphor defies metamorphosis.¹ Metaphor stabilizes the linguistic system by retaining the distance between two elements, while metamorphosis completely disrupts this relationship, indicating the hidden potentiality of change. Each thing could become anything else, for metamorphosis operates within the rhizomatic structure. Metamorphosis disrupts structural hierarchy, while metaphor delineates ideally parallel planes, implying similarities but also the inadequacy of comparisons² (Deleuze, Guattari 2008, 41).

¹ Yet, in his early work, *Proust and Signs*, Deleuze does not sharply contrast metaphor with metamorphosis, when he states that "metaphor is essentially metamorphosis" (Deleuze 2000, 48).

² The example that quite clearly shows the difference between a metaphor and metamorphosis can be found in the 1919 Kafkaian story. Kafka's machinery from "In the Penal Colony" functions at the same time as a judge and an executioner when it inscribes verdicts on the bodies of convicts. Thus, the said machinery abolishes the distance between the content of the sentence and its expression. It is not the sentence's meaning that seems to matter in this case but the very act of execution, the undeniable change that the machine introduces to the current state of affairs. "In the Penal Colony" is perhaps the most vivid example of Kafkaian fascination with the domain of law which treats words not as a means of description of the reality (metaphorically) but as an instrument of its trans-

The third reason is directly related to the Deleuzian inclination toward “intellectually mobile concepts” (Deleuze 1995, 122).³ It derives from the philosophical attempt (shared by Nietzsche and Kierkegaard) “to put metaphysics in motion” (Deleuze 1994, 8). Mobile concepts are more suitable for expressing a Deleuzian world of events, as Deleuze conceptualizes reality in terms of the modulation of material fluxes. The domain of liberated and chaotic creation is a domain of pure life, which is “a complex relation between differential velocities” (Deleuze 1988, 123), an unstrained play of creative and destructive forces. The Deleuzian vitalistic conception of reality is naturally linked to the notion of becoming, which is understood as a dynamic motion, a flux of life, a passage from one sensation to another, from one quality to another, increasing or decreasing in power (Deleuze 2001, 27). Hence, the fundamental aim of philosophy is to investigate the dynamics of changing forms: metamorphosis, transmutation, transformation and change. The reason why Deleuze fiercely criticizes representation acknowledging its failure, is that thought is unable to capture such phenomena when oppressed by the tyranny of representation. For the authors of *A Thousand Plateaus*, representation and imitation always bear a mark of territoriality, while deterritorialization draws a line of becoming (Deleuze, Guattari 2008, 14). Deterritorialization results in being constantly elsewhere, following an abstractive line of flight. The movement of deterritorialization leads beyond the rigors of actual form. It introduces limitless motion into a structure, putting it into a permanent state of disequilibrium, making it pulsate, vibrate and whirl.

Machinic Metaphor and Machine-people

Still, it seems possible to think and construct a different concept of metaphor: related to metamorphosis rather than analogy, not based on representation but mobile, machinic and deterritorialized. Before I examine the potentialities of deterritorialized metaphor that could apply to Kafka’s writing, let me begin with a concept intimately linked to deterritorialization, namely the concept of the machine (with a particular emphasis on the literary machine).

formation (metamorphically). In *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* Deleuze and Guattari use this story to further emphasize the immanent character of the creative process in which the author is not a typist or even the machine’s mechanic but rather “the living material with which it deals” (Deleuze, Guattari 2008, 56).

³ The notion of “mobility of philosophical concepts” is interestingly developed further by Paul Patton (2010).

While introducing the concept of the literary machine, Deleuze focuses on the very act of the production of signs. When literature is examined from the viewpoint of its machinery, the question changes and the problem reformulates. Instead of wondering “what does it mean?” one asks, “how does it function?”. The machines of writing are treated as an experiment on actuality, an apparatus capable of producing deterritorialization, a disruption in the order of reality. The machine launches a deterritorializing movement of a territorial assemblage. The “line of flight”, namely the process of a machine entering into movement, leads to a new territory (Deleuze, Guattari 1987, 510–514). A machine is being defined exactly by what it escapes, by a line of flight followed by material fluxes in a perpetual variation.

An intrinsic trait for a Deleuzian machine is its being broken, deteriorated. It produces an imbalance, a distortion, or, more precisely, a deterritorialization. Not only is a machine an element of destabilization in a structure, but it also proposes a radically different form of organization. An open system constructed by machines has permanent imbalance for a governing principle. “The line of escape is part of the machine,” claim the authors of *Kafka* (Deleuze, Guattari 2008, 7). And dysfunction is its critical element. Machines break and interrupt, they work through malfunctioning. The fundamental characteristic of a working machine is constant variation; the opening of the space of pure functioning, the productive character of machines. It is no longer a reproduction based on an imitation, the mark of territoriality, but a process of creative production based on the movement of deterritorialization resulting in being constantly elsewhere, escaping on a line of flight.

The aforementioned concept of metaphor that I want to propose is that of machinic metaphor understood as a broken trope that undergoes a process of deterritorialization. What would define this kind of corrupted metaphor is its line of escape. The deterritorialized metaphor no longer refers to the stable structures of meaning, but escapes territoriality and hence the domain of the signifier. It is not purely representational but creative: it enters the path of the becoming-metamorphosis and thus bears a revolutionary potential, experimenting with words and matter.

What I would suggest then is to try and read Kafka’s writing through the work of machinic, deterritorialized⁴ metaphors, which blur the distinction between literal and metaphorical meaning, between metaphor and

⁴ For Henry Sussman (2010, 238–239), the author of *Metamorphosis* is “the poet and prophet of deterritorialization”. Sussman engages in the analysis of the concept of deterritorialization in relation to Kafka’s works, although he understands the term broadly. What seems to mainly interest Sussman is the socio-political aspect of Kafkian works.

metamorphosis. In *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Deleuze and Guattari forcefully assert that metaphors are absent in Kafka's works, since Kafka replaces metaphors with metamorphoses:

There is no longer any proper sense or figurative sense, but only a distribution of states that is part of the range of the word. The thing and other things are no longer anything but intensities overrun by deterritorialized sound or words that are following their line of escape (Deleuze, Guattari 2008, 22).

Deleuze seems to perceive Kafka through the prism of his own criticism of metaphor. According to the author of *The Logic of Sense*, Kafka adopts the strategy of dismantling metaphor in order to dispose of designation and thus escape the oppressive force of the signifier. New "distribution of states", a transformation of reality and metamorphosis, become possible without figurative meaning and signification. With metamorphosis, understood by Deleuze as a line of flight, Kafka introduces into his narrative both dynamics and deterritorialization, which converts meaning into intensities.

At the heart of this paper is a particular mode of metamorphosis, namely human-animal metamorphoses, "the becoming-human of the animal and the becoming-animal of the human", as Deleuze and Guattari describe it in *Kafka* (Deleuze, Guattari 2008, 35). It is a variation on the deterritorialization of the human and the reterritorialization of the animal. Metamorphosis comprises and conceptually deforms the human-animal relationship, introducing it into a sphere of vibration and modulation: the animal becomes human and the human becomes an animal. What plays a key role here is that the animal is not a metaphor, it is a metamorphosis, a line of escape, and:

[a] writer isn't a writer-man; he is a machine-man, and an experimental man (who thereby ceases to be a man in order to become an ape or a beetle, or a dog, or a mouse, a becoming-animal, a becoming-inhuman, since it is actually through voice and through sound and through a style that one becomes an animal, and certainly through the force of sobriety) (Deleuze, Guattari 2008, 7).

For Deleuze, writing has a fundamentally machinic character. As a result of becoming a writing-machine, a writer puts their literary works in motion. In this framework it is not surprising that the works of Kafka, who is a "bachelor machine," are highly privileged by Deleuze and Guattari. The writing-machine is a force behind metamorphosis, a force of transformation and becoming, a line of escape. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, its authors state that "writing is a becoming, writing is traversed by strange becomings that are not becomings-writer, but becomings-rat, becomings-insect, becomings-wolf" (Deleuze, Guattari 1987, 265). And writing as the becoming-animal leads to the figure of the Kafka-a-vampire.

Deleuze and Guattari call the author of *The Castle* “Dracula the vegetarian, the hunger artist” (Deleuze, Guattari 2008, 29). They observe that there is “a vampirism in the letters, a vampirism that is specifically epistolary” (Deleuze, Guattari 2008, 29), as Kafkian letters are sent almost compulsively to friends, lovers and acquaintances. It provokes the authors of *Kafka* to compare the flux of letters with the flux of blood and the necessity to write with the necessity to live. The vampiric element in Kafka’s letters forms an intriguing example of the tight connection between life and literary creation. It becomes even more intriguing when one notices that the figure of the vampire, that they so eagerly recall, is not a figure that represents life but death; the infinity of death. Thus, they argue, Kafka the writer becomes Kafka the vampire—the missing link between life and death, between animals and humans. The vampiric author operates with a language of non-discernibility, of constant and necessary transformation from animality into humanity.

Becoming-kafka

The unanswered question concerning Kafka and all his animal stories is as follows: why the metamorphosis of a human becoming an animal and an animal becoming a human is so easy that almost unnoticeable? I claim that the transition between the human and animal is only possible by the power of the machinic metaphor—neither metaphor nor metamorphosis—which blurs the difference between metaphoric and literal meaning. Since the machinic metaphor rejects the power of the signifier, following the animal line of flight, metaphor as analogy ceases to exist. Machinic metaphor, then, is an experimental and mobile concept; an element of potentiality and change, which introduces dynamics into the text through the movement of becoming: becoming-animal and becoming-human.

Let me now concentrate on the mode in which the machinic metaphor functions in Kafkian animal stories. The animal theme returns in Kafka’s short stories so frequently that Deleuze describes this figure of becoming-animal as one of Kafka’s several lines of flight. An animal in Kafka’s stories may only be seen as a metaphor but all Kafkian metaphors eventually become literality and all what is literal still appears to escape unambiguity.⁵

⁵ In my understanding of literality, I follow Deleuze and Guattari in their remark from *A Thousand Plateaus* in which they equate speaking literally with “living literally,” referring to life in its various aspects: molar and molecular, political and biological (Deleuze, Guattari 1987, 201).

Kafka's characters, both human and animal, avoid classification. More than a human being or an animal, they resemble all those non-existent beings that Kafkian stories are full of: Odradek, Kittenlamb or a man cut out from yellow tissue paper, all in-betweens. There seems to be an inner relation between all elements of Kafka's world. A human being can become an animal, and an animal can become a lawyer—everything is connected by the possibility of an unlimited process of the metaphor's creation. The mere fact of having a name results in a special form of existence: being always open to *metaphormosis*, becoming animal, becoming other.

Yet, the enunciation that enables the occurrence of metaphor is disturbed. Kafka notes in his *Diaries* that “[e]very word, twisted in the hands of spirits [...] becomes a spear turned against a speaker” (Kafka 1976, 423). The author, like the animal characters, is almost voiceless. For both, Deleuze and Kafka, writing is a struggle for a new mode of enunciation. Kafka seems to constantly transform into an animal, a *kavka*—Czech for “jackdaw”—as if his name was a form of vocation to animality. “A screeching of jackdaws is always in our ears”, writes Kafka in ‘An Old Manuscript’ (2005, 416). Jackdaw and bird metaphors frequently appear in his writings (e.g. Kafka 2006, 32) suggesting the considerable importance of this particular animal figure. This homonymous resemblance between his family name and the name of a little grey-black bird launches the process of becoming-*kavka*.

Kafka emphasizes a certain similarity between himself and an animal, an uncanny resemblance to a bird, a cockroach or a crossbreed. There are at least a few intriguing animal figures of Kafka: Kafka the city sparrow (Kafka 1954, 54); Kafka the whimpering cat (Kafka 1976, 237), wordless but not voiceless; and Kafka the fox, conscious of his flesh cut open:

I lay on the ground by a wall, writing in pain, trying to burrow into the damp earth. The huntsman stood beside me and lightly pressed one foot into the small of my back. “A splendid beast,” he said to the beater, who was cutting open my collar and coat in order to feel my flesh. Already tired of me and eager for fresh action, the hounds were running senselessly against the wall, the coach came and bound hand and foot, I was flung in beside the gentleman, over the back seat, so that my head and arms hung down outside the carriage. The journey passed swiftly and smoothly; perishing of thirst, with open mouth, I breathed in the high-whirling dust, and now and then felt the gentleman's delighted touch on my calves (Kafka 1954, 109).

What seems highly intriguing in this passage from *The Blue Octavo Notebooks* is that it links animality with writing, and writing with pain. Kafka becomes a slain fox here; there is no “as a fox,” when in order to write—

to unfold the narration—the writer is cut open by the cold blaze of a knife.⁶ “Writing in pain” culminates in being cleaved: the knife is a necessary element of this process and so is the flesh. The becoming-animal, becoming-fox, has creative potential and launches the literary machine. A writer remains an assemblage of tool and material: the machine and the body from *In the Penal Colony* or the knife and the animal flesh from *The Blue Octavo Notebook*. The animal is castigated inside of Kafka to the same extent as Kafka himself is an animal within.

The possibility of metamorphosis—for a human to turn into an animal and for an animal to become a human—seems to be crucial for understanding almost all of Kafka’s animal stories. Each of the Kafkian metamorphoses occur as the result of the use of metaphor, which eventually go beyond figurative language and blur the distinction between what is metaphorical and what is proper. The choice of certain metaphors seems to be necessarily significant as, in Kafka’s case, each metaphor enters the domain of literalness and introduces a new configuration of relations. Anything can easily become anything else. Metaphor veils and unveils the distance between humans and animals, the animal understood as the other but the other within me, close and distant at the same time. As in ‘An Old Manuscript,’ a short story by Kafka, where “nomads from the North” are described as the absolute foreigners deprived of language and thus they rather resemble animals than human beings (Kafka 2005, 416).

Yet the Kafkian animal is not mute. It is a being that exists within language but in the sphere of indiscernibility. The muteness of animals only appears as a form of resistance to communication, as for example, in the case of Odradek, which although being able to conduct a conversation often “stays mute for a long time, as wooden as his appearance” (Kafka 2005, 428). Animal language is a language of “mute traces,” that is a language without any words; a sound that escapes interpretation, highly ambiguous as the incomprehensible, even meaningless screeching of jackdaws, or the uncanny laughter of Odradek. The absence of language—or rather the deprivation of language—is a condition of both, the animal and Kafka. And this similarity places him closer to a chimera, a heterogenous being, which belongs neither to humans nor animals.

⁶ Kafka is fascinated with knife and spears, cutting and stabbing, frequently mentioning it in the context of literary creation (Kafka 1976, 70, 101, 221, 342).

Ambiguity

The universe of Kafka's zoology contains both existing and imaginary creatures. And perhaps, the most interesting of them all are those which do not exist: a cat-lamb from Kafka's 'Crossbreed' or Odradek from 'The Cares of Family Man.' Voiceless or almost voiceless, yet completely understandable in their longing for non-existence. Kafka's menagerie consists of animal-human or human-animal figures and other in-betweens. In 'Crossbreed' the narrator and Kittenlamb forms one mechanism, that is neither entirely animal nor human. What is important in the case of Kittenlamb is confusion, an intermixture of two elements, which results in it being neither (Kafka 2005, 426). Another interesting example is Hunter Gracchus, a character stuck between life and death, and what is even more intriguing someone, who eventually transforms into a butterfly. Others include a horse which becomes a lawyer, an investigating dog, an "old dung beetle," a singing mice. Kafka seems to be concerned mostly with chimeras, the heterogeneous multiplicity of the living, as is for instance with said Kittenlamb: more than one animal in one body; or Gregor Samsa: more than one being in one body. Ambiguity remains a crucial trait of Kafkaian prose.

The problem of the ambiguity of both meanings and beings appears particularly in Kafka's early work 'Description of a Struggle,' where he explores the conundrums of the name-thing relationship. The dissonance between a thing and a name is the main thread of this story. One of its characters, Supplicant, cries: "Thank God, moon, you are no longer moon, but perhaps it's negligent of me to go on calling you so-called moon, moon. Why do your spirits fall when I call you 'forgotten paper lantern of a strange color?'" (Kafka 2005, 41). Names seem to scamper and fail to reach their aim. The characters strive to impose random names on things they encounter, struggling with resistant lingual matter. And not only the characters but also the narrator notices the perversion of the name-thing relationship, the deteriorated mechanism of language. When narration stutters: "But no, it isn't like that", and eventually fails, the whole story is put in question (Kafka 2005, 46).

Another passage from 'Description of a Struggle,' which concerns a distortion of language and the resistance of non-lingual reality, calls it "a sea-sickness on land, a kind of leprosy": an incurable disease of writers (Kafka 2005, 33). Paradoxically, it is the sickness of language that stimulates writing. The very same linguistic dysfunction, which distorts the name-thing relation, launches the writing-machine and begins the process of deterritorialization. A word deterritorializes itself in another word.

The acquaintance from 'Description of a Struggle' is a character cut out from yellow tissue paper, rusting in the wind. The narrator of the story points out to him: "The entire length of you is cut out of tissue paper, yellow tissue paper, like a silhouette, and when you walk one ought to hear you rustle" (Kafka 2005, 37). Without a name, he seems more like a *homunculus* or a kind of semi-existing being, than a human being. He transforms into a horse later in the story, though he still remains an ambiguous creature, neither human nor animal, neither substantial nor unreal. There is no literalness in this metamorphosis, there is no "like" or "as", either. The narration, dealing with a crisis of its own matter, defers the final decision: the acquaintance becomes a companion-horse in the very moment, in which the other character decides to mount him, and he stops being a horse when is no longer needed. The metaphor retracts itself; the metamorphosis reverses its result. Deterritorialized metaphor introduces an oscillating movement into the narration, the movement to and fro, back and forth.

The Kafkian Machinic Metaphor

In Kafka's world, there is a continuity between an animal and a human being. The transition between humans and animals occurs by the power of language, and particularly, by the machinic metaphor. Kafka's metaphor is a flight from metaphor; it is a deterritorialized metaphor, a metaphor rich in potential; a metaphor that directly transforms itself into metamorphosis. Becoming-animal, a form of *metaphormosis*, marks the Kafkian line of flight. The machinic metaphor works by comprising three kinds of elements: becoming, dislocation, and motion.

The first one is becoming. I have already mentioned the process of Kafka's own "becoming-kafka". It seems that in his works there is frequently no clear distinction between the human and the animal. In such a way the process of becoming is intimately connected to ambiguity. The animal exists within the human, so that one morning one could effortlessly wake up as "a gigantic insect" or observe the becoming-dogs of children (Kafka 1976, 280–287). It is a constantly present undertone, similarly to Gregor Samsa's voice which has a "horrible twittering squeak behind it like a undertone" (Kafka 2005, 91). Whether an animal is an undertone of a human or a disguise, in either case this ambiguity is not resolved but in fact enhanced. I return to the Kafkian 'Description of a Struggle' once more for an interesting passage on Parisian dandies:

it might happen that two carriages stop on a crowded boulevard of a distinguished neighborhood. Serious-looking menservants open the doors. Eight elegant Siberian wolfhounds come prancing out and jump barking across the boulevard. And it's said that they are young Parisian dandies in disguise (Kafka 2005, 43).

Is it possible to decide who is alighting the carriage? Could one be certain whether it is a pack of dogs or group of Parisians? Their disguise helps to blur the distinction between one and another, provoking certain perplexity and eventually indecisiveness on the phenomenon of humans becoming dogs or dogs becoming humans.

I will proceed to the second element. Kafka frequently engages in telling a story of dislocation, of men and animals disconnected from any territory. He himself is deprived of a community, or of a pack, like the dog from 'Investigation of a Dog,' or the heroine of 'Josephine the Singer'. The phenomenon of dislocation seems to be intimately linked to animal characters, as in 'The Old Manuscript,' in which the disturbance of space is the effect of the arrival of nomads. Nomads begin the process of deterritorialization of the old structures of the capitol. And thus, an animal metaphor leads to a metamorphosis, into a complete transformation of space that is no longer neither organized nor controlled, when "a horseman and his horse are lying side by side, both of them gnawing at the same joint, one at either end" (Kafka 2005, 417). Space is of utmost importance to Kafka's writing and it seems that the author of 'The Burrow' perceives literature as a particular form of architecture. This could be seen in his prose and spotted in his remarks concerning the process of writing; when, for example, he operates with the notion of "cellar of the structure" while speaking of certain literary themes (Kafka 1976, 150). Writing then is an endeavor similar to constructing an architectural edifice. The building material is faulty, however, and the whole construction sways in the wind (Kafka 2005, 333). The Kafkian predilection for defective architecture and dislocation remains one of the peculiarities of his writing. He engages in the stories of corridors, mazes and burrows. What seems to interest him the most is this moment of maladjustment of movement and space, a certain dissonance between those two aspects and its various combinations: for instance, when movement and space diverge from each other and it is impossible for A. to meet B. in H. (Kafka 2005, 429-430).

Motion consists the third element of the machinic metaphor. Kafkian stories are full of motion expressed by their narration, whether it is the swing in 'Children on a Country Road,' the trapeze and the shaky architecture in 'First Sorrow', or the chaotic movements of mouse folk from

'Josephine the Singer.' In 'The Giant Mole,' the eponymous animal, though absent, becomes a hidden mechanism that stirs the narration, putting the story into motion. An animal, a *kavka* for example, remains a creative force behind the writing, and as Deleuze and Guattari note in *What Is Philosophy?:* "art is continually haunted by the animal. Kafka's art is the most profound meditation on the territory and the house, the burrow" (Deleuze, Guattari 1994, 184). The authors of *Kafka* assert that "to become animal is to participate in movement, to stake out the path of escape in all its positivity" (Deleuze, Guattari 2008,13). The animal is linked to territoriality and immediately launches the process of deterritorialization. The animal is a movement, even if still; it is a multiplicity, even if alone. The metaphor results exactly from this motion, this transposition (*meta-pherein*).⁷

The fourth element is multiplicity and particularly an animal as multiplicity, whether it is a dog pack in 'Investigation of a Dog' and 'Jackals and Arabs,' or the faceless crowd of prematurely old children and childish grown-ups in 'Josephine' (Kafka 2005, 368–369). In his writings, Kafka favors multiplicities, doublings, variations and possibilities. What remains the key category of Kafkian prose is "a mishap," which causes the terrible state of Hunter Gracchus, the transformation of Gregor Samsa and numerous other unfortunate events. This constant variation and multiplication remains a mode of continuous metamorphosis in Kafka's narrative world.⁸ Kafka follows the path of animal escape with his fondness of potential and possibilities, his obsession with variants and doublings: the two acquaintances from 'Description of Struggle,' the dual nature of Kittenlamb, Gregor Samsa the "giant insect" as a variation on Gregor Samsa the salesman, and Franz Kafka himself, who is at once Amsel, the Jewish son of Hermann Kafka and *kavka*, the bird, always in flight.

Kafka is a chronicler of dislocation and transposition. He is a writer of error, mistake and mishap, erroneous placement, mis-diagnosis and misconception. Kafka is a writer of misguided, deterritorialized movement; a writer of cages, corridors and burrows, and, most of all, of escapes. To some extent, his writing resembles Odradek, who is made thoroughly from "old broken-off bits of thread, knotted and tangled together, of the most varied sorts and colors" (Kafka 2005, 428). And though "the whole thing

⁷ That is why metaphor itself precedes the very concept of metaphor (See: Derrida 1974, 18).

⁸ Hence, it is rather the opposite to what Sussman observes, when he writes that "Kafkian metamorphosis, then, in its widest sense, pursues the transmogrification of circumstance, life, existence, futurity, and necessity in and out of writing" (Sussmann 2002, 138).

looks senseless enough, but in its own way [it's] perfectly finished. In any case, closer scrutiny is impossible, since Odradek is extraordinarily nimble and can never be laid hold of' (Kafka 2005, 428). Kafkian writing is similarly rhizomatic, multiplex and mobile — the work of machinic metaphoric creation.

The proposition to look at Kafkian animal stories through the prism of machinic metaphors rather than mere metamorphoses seems to have a few advantages. Firstly, this proposition saves the concept of metaphor with the claim that Kafka indeed uses metaphors but as broken tropes. By deploying such a strategy, he challenges literary language and introduces subtleties into the relationship between language and reality. When closely analyzed, the Kafkian world reveals itself as neither a world of parallel planes between words and bodies nor an entirely flat world in which words simply amount to bodily configurations. The introduction of the machinic metaphor, the third option after metaphor and metamorphosis, underlines the plasticity of the word-thing relation. It excludes transcendence but preserves the difference between words and bodies, stretching or shrinking the distance between them. Secondly, contrarily to metamorphosis which seems to imply that it has a beginning and an end, machinic metaphor, when once launched, acts ceaselessly. Thirdly, the concept of the machinic metaphor enables thinking about literature in an immanent manner which does not reduce it to the interpretative process and thus frees creation from the hegemony of meaning. The emphasis on broken tropes opens literature up to unexpectedness and stresses its potential to launch a process of change within the realm of language as well as within reality itself. Moreover, the immanent approach to Kafkian animal stories underlines the multiplicity and density of connections between the animal and the human. In this rhizomatic structure each change has its effect on the whole. The symbiotic existence of the human-animal community heavily influences the possibility of artistic creation. The author of "The Metamorphosis" constantly disturbs the distinction between the animal and the human, aiming at the sphere of unambiguity; it is in his becoming-*kavka* that Kafka fully exercises the creative power of language.

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