



VCU

Virginia Commonwealth University
VCU Scholars Compass

Theses and Dissertations

Graduate School

2013

Art and Becoming-Animal: Reconceptualizing the Animal Imagery in Dorothea Tanning's Post-1955 Paintings

Samantha Karam
Virginia Commonwealth University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

© The Author

Downloaded from

<https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/etd/470>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at VCU Scholars Compass. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of VCU Scholars Compass. For more information, please contact libcompass@vcu.edu.

© Samantha Karam 2013
All Rights Reserved

Art and Becoming-Animal:
Reconceptualizing the Animal Imagery in Dorothea Tanning's Post-1955 Paintings

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at
Virginia Commonwealth University.

By
Samantha Karam

Director: Kathleen Chapman, Ph.D., Art History

Richmond, Virginia

April 24, 2013

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my gratitude to a number of people for their aid in the production of this thesis. To my adviser and mentor, Dr. Chapman, thank you for your guidance, support, and involvement in every step of the process. To Dr. Hobbs, thank you for providing your savvy theoretical insight and expertise. And to Dr. Lawal, thank you for contributing your time and a valuable nonwestern perspective to my research. I would also like to thank Pamela Johnson, director of the Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive in New York, for welcoming me into the archive, sharing her knowledge, and providing me with materials which proved indispensable to this thesis. I am also grateful to Wendi Norris of the Gallery Wendi Norris in San Francisco for contributing her time and insight regarding the Gallery's recent exhibition, "Dorothea Tanning: Unknown but Knowable States." My sincere gratitude also goes to Virginia Commonwealth University's art history department for generously funding my research in San Francisco through a graduate research travel grant. Lastly, I would like to thank Ron and my family for their constant encouragement and advocacy in all of my endeavors.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	iv
Abstract	v
Introduction	1
Chapter I. From Tiny Surrealist to Changing the World	23
Chapter II. Supremacy: Humanity's Problem Drug	37
The Rise of Animal Studies	42
Dorothea Tanning's Perspective on Animals	46
Chapter III. From Seeing to Becoming	62
An Introduction to Deleuze and Guattari	64
Art as an Event?	89
Chapter IV. Engaging with Tanning's Post-1955 Paintings	96
Larger Ideas	122
Conclusion	132
Figures	139
Bibliography	147

List of Figures

Figures

1. Dorothea Tanning. *Le Mal oublié (The Ill Forgotten)*. 1955. 52 x 61 ¼ in.
The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive, New York, NY.
© The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive.....32
2. Dorothea Tanning. *Insomnies (Insomnias)*. 1957. 81 ½ x 57 ⅛ in.
Moderna Museet, Stockholm.
© The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive.....104
3. Dorothea Tanning. *To the Rescue*. 1965. 80 ¾ x 58 ⅜ in.
Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH.
© The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive.....104
4. Dorothea Tanning. *Chiens de Cythère (Dogs of Cythera)*. 1963. 77 ½ x 117 in. The
Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive, New York, NY.
© The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive.....109
5. Dorothea Tanning. *A Parisian Afternoon (Hôtel du Pavot)*. 1942. 40 ½ x 17 ¾ in.
The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive, New York, NY.
© The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive.....112
6. Dorothea Tanning. *Self-Portrait*. 1944. 24 x 30 in.
The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive, New York, NY.
© The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive.....112
7. Dorothea Tanning. *Kenningar*. 1961. 31 ⅞ x 39 ⅜ in.
Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, New York, NY.
© The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive.....113
8. Dorothea Tanning. *Memoires d'un touriste (Memories)*. 1964. 28 ½ x 36 ¼ in.
The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive, New York, NY.
© The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive.....113

Abstract

ART AND BECOMING-ANIMAL: RECONCEPTUALIZING THE ANIMAL IMAGERY IN DOROTHEA TANNING'S POST-1955 PAINTINGS

By Samantha Karam, MA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2013

Director: Kathleen Chapman, Ph.D., Art History

In 1955, American artist Dorothea Tanning abandoned her figurative Surrealist renderings of dream-like scenarios in favor of a complexly abstract and fragmented style of painting. With few exceptions, the ways in which Tanning's later works function independently of her earlier paintings tends to be downplayed in the scholarship on her oeuvre. Equally sparse is the scholarship on Tanning's dog imagery, which pervades her oeuvre but becomes most apparent in her later phase. This thesis seeks to shift attention toward Tanning's later abstract paintings; it also seeks to fill the gap in scholarship on Tanning's dogs. Specifically, through the study of five Tanning paintings from the late 1950s and 1960s, with the theoretical aid of Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the becoming-animal, this thesis will investigate how Tanning's post-1955 paintings create and promote new ways for viewers to think about the relations between humans and animals in the human-dominated modern world.

Introduction

Fragmented, dynamic, and vibrantly colored, *Le Mal oublié (The Ill Forgotten)*, painted in 1955, marks a significant turning point in the career of American-born artist Dorothea Tanning (1910-2012). With her debut of *The Ill Forgotten*, Tanning abandoned her more clearly delineated, figurative renderings of dream-like scenarios, as seen in her well-known 1943 painting *Eine kleine Nachtmusik (A Little Nightmusic)*, in favor of a more abstract and elusive style of imagery.¹ While her earlier paintings, dating from the 1940s through the mid-1950s, earned Tanning the Surrealist label and in many ways paralleled the works of René Magritte, Salvador Dalí, and Leonor Fini, Tanning's later paintings broke away from the Surrealist idiom. However, today Tanning remains most known as a Surrealist artist. With the exception of *Insomnies (Insomnias)*, completed in 1957, Tanning's later works tend to be overlooked in the scholarship on her oeuvre.² At most, they are interpreted largely within the context of Tanning's

¹ This thesis provides illustrations for a selection of Tanning's paintings examined most closely in the present study. These paintings are indicated in the text by a corresponding figure number. For an illustration of *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* and other paintings which are less important to this thesis's argument, readers may consult the online catalogue of Tanning's works, provided by the Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive, at <http://www.dorotheatanning.org/>.

² A small handful of published studies about Tanning's later works include Catriona McAra, "Kaleidoscope Eyes: Cytherean Voyages in the Post-Surrealist Practice of Dorothea Tanning," in *Dorothea Tanning: Unknown but Knowable States* (San Francisco: Gallery Wendi Norris, 2013); Martin Sundberg, "The Metamorphosis of Dorothea Tanning: On the Painting *Insomnias*: Between Facets and Details," trans. Frank Perry, *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift/Journal of Art History* 79 (March 2010): 18-32; and Charles Stuckey and Richard Howard, *Dorothea Tanning: Insomnias: Paintings from 1954-1965* (New York: Kent Gallery, 2005). Additionally,

earlier Surrealist paintings—all the easier for scholars to prolong and adhere to labeling Tanning a Surrealist artist. This thesis, however, will shift the attention away from Tanning’s initial involvement with Surrealism, focusing instead on her later abstract paintings and the ways they can function uniquely as politicizing and radicalizing works of art. This research will also examine the largely neglected animal motifs in Tanning’s paintings. Specifically, through a close study of five of Tanning’s paintings from the 1950s and 1960s, this thesis investigates how works from the post-1955 phase of Tanning’s career create and promote new ways for viewers to think about the relations between humans and animals as the world becomes more controlled by humans than ever before.

Tanning first became interested in the Surrealist movement, headed by André Breton, after viewing the “Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism” exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1936. She became actively involved with the movement three years later, when the European Surrealists fled to the United States at the onset of World War Two and settled in New York City where Tanning resided. After 1942, she began regularly showing her paintings in the Surrealists’ exhibitions and participating in their group meetings. Her connection to the Surrealists, which will be discussed in chapter one, was fostered by the most basic goal shared by Tanning and the rest of the movement—that of overcoming the conventions, engrained values, and such binaries as right/wrong, true/false, human/animal, and male/female, at the core of bourgeois society. The fundamental goal of Surrealism—which, according to Breton, was “to shake up...settled ways of

readers may want to consult Mary Ann Caws and Jean Christophe Bailly, who both provide illuminating discussions of Tanning’s later works, though only in larger studies of her entire oeuvre. See Mary Ann Caws, “Person: Tanning’s Self-Portraiture,” in *The Surrealist Look: An Erotics of Encounter* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999); and Jean Christophe Bailly, “Image Redux: The Art of Dorothea Tanning,” trans. Richard Howard, in *Dorothea Tanning*, by Dorothea Tanning, Jean Christophe Bailly, and Robert C. Morgan (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1995).

thinking”³—was well suited to Tanning’s own desire to subvert middle-class norms and question conventional notions of truth and reality.⁴

However, Surrealism fell short of providing Tanning with an artistic means for actually promoting change and presenting her viewers with an actively politicizing type of art. By the time Tanning became a mature practicing artist, Surrealism had already developed into a primarily artistic movement with a recognizable style of painting. This style was largely characterized by precise, illusionistic renderings of unfamiliar and illogical scenarios, often incorporating the irrational juxtaposition of dissimilar objects. Tanning once described this iconic style of Surrealist painting as the “reliance on precisely painted elements of the natural world in order to present an incongruity.”⁵ In other words, it was a figurative style of painting intended to subvert norms by emphasizing irrational relationships between humans and their surroundings in the external world.

Surrealism inspired Tanning’s meticulously rendered, figurative paintings at the beginning of her career; but after about a decade, Tanning began to experiment with new ways of reaching her audiences through art. Hence, in 1955, she broke away from her iconic “Surrealist” imagery to explore an altogether new and more radical way of painting and envisioning the world. As this thesis will argue, the abstract, kaleidoscopic paintings that characterize Tanning’s

³ André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), 152.

⁴ Tanning made many statements throughout the course of her career about her tendency to use art to question accepted notions of truth and reality; these statements will be examined mostly in chapter two of this thesis. Interested readers may also want to consult Tanning’s poem titled “Artspeak,” in which she comments on art’s ability to sweep up comfortable certainties “as meaningless as dust under the rug.” See Dorothea Tanning, “Artspeak,” in *Coming to That: Poems*, by Dorothea Tanning (Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2011), 44.

⁵ Dorothea Tanning, *Between Lives: An Artist and Her World* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2004), 213.

oeuvre from that point onward—especially during the 1950s and 1960s—demonstrate Tanning’s investigation of a new, more politicizing way of promoting thought and challenging conventional values and attitudes in modern western society.

Despite the fact that Tanning spent more years painting abstract and nearly nonrepresentational paintings than figurative ones, she has mostly been recognized in art historical scholarship for her early Surrealist figurations of irrational and unusual scenarios. Thus, Tanning remains widely classified as a Surrealist artist—and, more specifically, a “woman Surrealist.”⁶ The label, “woman Surrealist,” indicates two prevalent and often overlapping interpretive contexts that dominate the art historical scholarship on Tanning’s art: the context of her gender and the context of Surrealism. On the one hand, numerous scholars have interpreted Tanning’s art in terms of the artist’s gender, arguing (1) that Tanning’s experience as a woman prompted her to paint images that shed light on female inequality in bourgeois society, and (2) that the paintings subvert gender norms and expectations. Alternatively, many art historians have looked toward Tanning’s initial involvement with Surrealism, and have focused on the movement’s debt to Freudian psychoanalysis as the basis for their interpretations by arguing that Tanning’s paintings reveal her innermost unconscious desires. In the following discussion, this

⁶ Discussions of “woman artists” or “woman Surrealists” abound in Surrealist scholarship, and Tanning is often included—much against her own wishes. See Whitney Chadwick, *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement* (Thames and Hudson, 1985); Mary Ann Caws, Rudolf E. Kuenzli, and Gwen Raaberg, eds., *Surrealism and Women* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991); Patricia Allmer, ed., *Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism* (Munich: Prestel, 2009); and Penelope Rosemont, ed., *Surrealist Women: An International Anthology* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998). As the titles of these sources indicate, discussions of gender and Surrealism are often intertwined, due to the strained relationship between women and the Surrealist movement. Chadwick’s *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement* remains one of the most important texts for examining that relationship. It may also interest readers that Tanning often wrote letters to these authors expressing her strong objection to being included in exhibitions and surveys of “women artists.” For Tanning’s explanation of why, see for example Tanning, *Between Lives*, 334-335.

thesis will provide an overview of some of the common gender-based and Surrealist-based readings of Tanning's art. As will become apparent, all of these interpretations of Tanning's oeuvre center on her early figurative depictions of childhood adventures and dreamlike narratives, as well as her exploration of apparently "erotic" fantasies.

Relating Tanning's art to her gender, feminist art historian Whitney Chadwick interprets many of Tanning's paintings, such as *Birthday* (1942) and *Maternity* (1946-47), as self-portraits in disguise. She argues that self-representation was a way for Tanning and many other "women Surrealists" to "confront her own reality" as a woman, as well as the social ideologies of gender roles and expectations that go along with it.⁷ In a similar manner, Renée Riese Hubert posits that Tanning employed self-representation as a means to assert herself in the shadow of her more famous husband, the artist Max Ernst.⁸ Hubert writes, "To be the spouse of Max Ernst, a genius, and to function at the same time as a painter in her own right would tax anybody's strength, so concessions had to be made."⁹ For both Chadwick and Hubert, self-portraiture was a means for Tanning to gain self-awareness, to explore her own desires, anxieties, and fears, and to assert her position within a patriarchal society—both in terms of the male-dominated Surrealist movement and the phallogentric western world in general.¹⁰

⁷ Chadwick, *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement*, 95.

⁸ Renée Riese Hubert, *Magnifying Mirrors: Women, Surrealism, & Partnership* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 23.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁰ The same is generally said for all "woman Surrealists" in most feminist Surrealist scholarship. See for example Ilene Susan Fort and Tere Arcq, introduction to *In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States*, ed. Ilene Susan Fort and Tere Arcq (Munich: DelMonico Books; Prestel, 2012).

Other scholars who have used Tanning's gender as the basis for their interpretations of her art include Ilene Susan Fort, Katharine Conley, and Soo Y. Kang. For these art historians, Tanning's paintings reveal overt attempts to subvert and undermine gender roles and conventions in bourgeois society. For example, in the catalogue for the 2012 exhibition, "In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States," Fort interprets the seemingly endless doors in Tanning's self-portrait *Birthday* as representative of the many doors through which Tanning fled in order to become a successful painter in New York, despite growing up "in a patriarchal society [where] marriage and family remained the goal for which [women] were meant to strive."¹¹ Similarly, Fort concludes that *Maternity*—depicting a young, tired mother in a desolate landscape, holding a child in her arms while a dog with a baby's face lies at her feet—also undermines traditional women's roles of marriage and child rearing. In Fort's analysis, this painting portrays motherhood as isolating and alienating—perhaps a protest against such an unwanted distraction from the artist's more urgent need to focus on her career.¹²

Like Fort, Conley also views Tanning's art as subversive of the domestic responsibilities assigned to women in bourgeois society. According to Conley, the "representations of women in houses...allowed women artists to question a woman's relation to a house as a safe haven and the inevitability of a woman's confinement to it."¹³ Conley analyzes Tanning's *Eine kleine*

¹¹ Ilene Susan Fort, "In the Land of Reinvention: The United States," in *In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States*, ed. Ilene Susan Fort and Tere Arcq (Munich: DelMonico Books; Prestel, 2012), 44.

¹² Ibid., 47. Her interpretation of Tanning's *Maternity* echoes earlier interpretations by Chadwick and Hubert. See Chadwick, *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement*, 131; and Hubert, *Magnifying Mirrors*, 23.

¹³ Katharine Conley, "Safe as Houses: Anamorphic Bodies in Ordinary Spaces: Miller, Varo, Tanning, Woodman," in *Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism*, ed. Patricia Allmer (Munich: Prestel, 2009), 46.

Nachtmusik—in which two partially nude young girls wander through a dark hallway, which is vacant aside from the inexplicable presence of a menacing oversized sunflower—to illustrate her argument. Conley asserts that in *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, Tanning questions the confinement of females to the home by representing “domestic space for young women as claustrophobic, haunted by malevolent spirits,” and by portraying the home as a place from which a young woman “desires to escape.”¹⁴ Likewise, in Fort’s reading of the same painting, she writes, “Tanning focused on adolescent girls, often naked or swathed in flying and twisted drapery... The traumatic character of this and other images by Tanning that concern women on the threshold of sexuality questions the exact nature of the stifling atmosphere of the artist’s childhood home.”¹⁵ In other words, the apparent theme of sexuality in Tanning’s art is linked, in Fort’s analysis, to the stifling oppression of female sexuality in traditional bourgeois homes, not unlike Tanning’s own childhood home. In this view, Tanning’s depiction of adolescent girls “in mysterious, often sexually charged emotional states” is thought to subvert bourgeois notions of morality and conventions of female decency and propriety.¹⁶

Kang, too, is primarily interested in the young girls in Tanning’s paintings. In her article, “Tanning’s Pictograph: Repossessing Women’s Fantasy,” Kang asserts that the girls in Tanning’s works “evidence a woman’s voice” and “seem to speak of woman’s space and

¹⁴ Conley, “Safe as Houses,” 50.

¹⁵ Fort, “In the Land of Reinvention,” 50.

¹⁶ Terri Geis, “Artists’ Biographies,” in *In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States*, ed. Ilene Susan Fort and Tere Arcq (Munich: DelMonico Books; Prestel, 2012), 238.

desire.”¹⁷ In Kang’s view, Tanning, like other “women artists...utilized female qualities and issues,” for the purpose of “[producing] aberrant images and [undermining] conventional values and standards.”¹⁸ Further, Kang’s article moves beyond a purely gender-based analysis of Tanning’s works. In her view, Tanning’s paintings not only investigate female issues in order to undermine conventionally masculine standards, but they also “express the voice of a woman” by representing the artist’s inner unconscious desires.¹⁹ Indeed, the artistic exploration of the unconscious mind lay at the heart of the Surrealist movement; thus, Kang’s interpretive approach to Tanning’s paintings pivots between the context of the artist’s gender on the one hand and the context of the Surrealist movement, from which the artist emerged, on the other.

Chapter one will discuss Surrealism’s interest in the unconscious—and the importance of Freudian psychoanalysis for the Surrealists’ artistic practice—in further detail. Here, it is mainly important to note that for the Bretonian Surrealists, the unconscious was understood as the key to irrational, imaginative discoveries—inner desires, anxieties, and unfiltered thoughts that oppose and subvert western logic and reason. There were two major paths, according to Breton, by which a Surrealist artist could tap into his or her unconscious mind.²⁰ The first was through automatism—the practice of writing or drawing the random words, images, or directions of the

¹⁷ Soo Y. Kang, “Tanning’s Pictograph: Repossessing Women’s Fantasy,” *Aurora* 3 (2009): 90.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 103.

²⁰ André Breton, “Artistic Genesis and Perspective of Surrealism” (1941), in *Surrealism and Painting*, by André Breton, trans. Simon Watson Taylor (Boston, MA: MFA Publications, 2002), 68.

pen that immediately came to mind without conscious premeditation or articulation.²¹ The second major way was through “the stabilizing of dream images in the kind of still-life deception known as *trompe-l’oeil*.”²² This second method—the irrational juxtaposition of meticulously rendered objects in dream-inspired settings—dominated Surrealist painting, particularly in the 1930s and 1940s, and it was born out of the Surrealists’ interest in Freudian dream analysis, in which dreams are interpreted as expressions of unconscious thoughts and desires.²³ Hence, for many Surrealists, dream-inspired “*trompe-l’oeil*” paintings could be interpreted like dreams, decoded and deciphered psychoanalytically, to uncover the artist’s inner unconsciousness.

Due to Tanning’s early affiliation with Surrealism, many art historians have psychoanalyzed her paintings as images derived from her own unconscious dreams, supposedly revealing her innermost fantasies and desires. Kang, for her part, asserts that Tanning “genuinely focuses on her own dream images and discloses the unconscious mind” in order to express the “fantasies of women.”²⁴ In Kang’s view, Tanning herself is the “ultimate desiring subject” in all of her paintings, employing the young girls in many of her earlier works to represent her “inner

²¹ Automatism was Breton’s preferred method. In his first *Manifesto of Surrealism*, he defines Surrealism as “Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express—verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner—the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.” See Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, 26.

²² Breton, “Artistic Genesis and Perspective of Surrealism,” 70.

²³ See Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. Joyce Crick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

²⁴ Kang, “Tanning’s Pictograph,” 103.

world” of erotic desires.²⁵ Kang’s article somewhat echoes an earlier essay by art critic John Russell, titled “The Several Selves of Dorothea Tanning.” In his essay, Russell posits that underlying each of Tanning’s paintings is the confrontation and reclamation of her oppressed childhood, her unfulfilled desires.²⁶ Russell writes, “Somewhere behind every one of [Tanning’s works] is that notion of the unlived life which has haunted Dorothea Tanning since her days as an infant...and it is for us to tell her that, on the contrary, she has lived her life to the full in her art.”²⁷ Hence, like Kang, Russell views Tanning’s paintings as representations of her own repressed feelings and desires, which are supposedly released from her unconscious mind and projected onto her canvases.

The above psychoanalytic and feminist interpretations are all centered on the figuration of human bodies in Tanning’s early works, identifying the exploration of human—and particularly female—anxieties, fears, and desires as a recurring theme throughout Tanning’s oeuvre.²⁸ There is, however, one art historian whose feminist contextualization of Tanning’s art

²⁵ Kang, “Tanning’s Pictograph,” 103.

²⁶ Russell bases his interpretation of Tanning’s paintings on her relatively uneventful childhood and her family’s strict Lutheran observances, and also on the fact that Tanning practiced elocution as a child—per her mother’s demands—rather than socializing with friends. A more detailed biography of Tanning will be provided in chapter two.

²⁷ John Russell, “The Several Selves of Dorothea Tanning,” in *Dorothea Tanning*, by Sune Nordgren, John Russell, Dorothea Tanning, Alain Jouffroy, Jean-Christophe Bailly, and Lasse Söderberg (Malmö, Sweden: Malmö Konsthall, 1993), 29.

²⁸ It should be noted that in describing certain analyses of Tanning’s art as “feminist,” I mean that they are based on Tanning’s sex. These interpretations have their roots in essentialist feminist art history, which presupposes that the meaning or significance of a work of art can be linked to the artist’s biological sex. Thus, art historians taking this particular feminist approach to Tanning’s art excavate her works for certain elements that may be traced specifically to her experiences as a woman—suggesting, for example, that her art addresses certain issues (such as socially constructed gender roles) *because* she is a woman and is therefore concerned with these issues, even if she does not immediately realize it.

aply focuses on the later abstract paintings and the ways that they function independently of the earlier figurative ones. In “The Metamorphosis of Dorothea Tanning: On the Painting *Insomnias*: Between Facets and Details,” Martin Sundberg provides a reading of Tanning’s 1957 painting *Insomnias* that is similar to Conley and Fort’s assertion that Tanning’s Surrealist art is about women’s liberation; but he also examines how the later *Insomnias* more actively confronts issues of female oppression. He writes,

Since most of the Feminist interpretations of Tanning focus on her early Surrealist phase, they tend to neglect the later evolution of her work and the abandonment of early Surrealism...Tanning is not very fond of feminist art history, but this does not mean that one can neglect the links to theories concerning the gaze or work explicitly devoted to strategies...aimed at investigating the position of women in art and society.²⁹

For Sundberg, the fragmented and elusive composition in *Insomnias* depicts “a moment when a transformation takes place,” portraying an “active gaze that also demands activity from the viewer.”³⁰ Hence, in his analysis, Sundberg proposes that Tanning’s prismatic paintings, exemplified by *Insomnias*, liberate Tanning’s female forms from the male gaze because the bodies are “mocking, elusive,” and “there is no longer any place from which to observe a woman, for making her into an object.”³¹ Sundberg’s article is important for the light that it sheds on Tanning’s post-1955 paintings and the significance of their stylistic distinction from the earlier phase of her career. As will become apparent, this thesis, too, shares Sundberg’s view that the dynamic, fragmented imagery solicits viewers to actively engage with Tanning’s later paintings rather than passively gazing at them. However, the focus on women’s liberation fails to

²⁹ Sundberg, “The Metamorphosis of Dorothea Tanning,” 26

³⁰ Ibid., 29.

³¹ Ibid.

address the complexity of Tanning's work, and this study will add a new dimension to these paintings that Sundberg overlooks.

With the exception of Sundberg's analysis, interpretations of the female bodies in Tanning's Surrealist paintings are largely echoed in the sparse scholarship on Tanning's later works. In contrast to Sundberg, other scholars have interpreted the bodies in Tanning's later paintings as being less about the liberation of women from the oppressive male gaze, and more about the celebration of human sexuality which allegedly stems from Tanning's early days as a Surrealist. For example, in his essay for the "Dorothea Tanning: Insomnias: Paintings from 1954 to 1965" exhibition catalogue, Charles Stuckey describes Tanning's painting *Insomnias* as the conjuration of "supernatural concupiscence," a "cloudscape of heavenly love," which carries the theme of human sexuality into Tanning's later paintings from her "sexually charged" works of the 1940s.³² Similarly, in a recent essay in the "Dorothea Tanning: Unknown but Knowable States" exhibition catalogue, Catriona McAra declares that, in Tanning's post-1955 "kaleidoscopic" paintings, a major theme that recurs from her earlier Surrealist works is eroticism, culminating in the "swirling eroticization of amorphous nudes in... tumbling visual orgies."³³ Hence, even in the two essays by Stuckey and McAra, each of which is solely about Tanning's post-1955 paintings, the two scholars interpret the works by alluding to Tanning's earlier "sexually charged" or "eroticized" imagery of nude children and women. However, this thesis contends—and Tanning herself asserts in numerous texts—that there is still much more to be said about her later prismatic paintings that has little to do with eroticism.

³² Charles Stuckey "Insomnias," in *Dorothea Tanning: Insomnias: Paintings from 1954-1965*, by Charles Stuckey and Richard Howard (New York: Kent Gallery, 2005), 9-11.

³³ McAra, "Kaleidoscope Eyes," 15.

Tanning often challenged the heavily eroticized readings of her work. In a published interview with Carlo McCormick, for example, she asserts,

My work is generally perceived as erotic, period... It's an obsession of the whole, not so cultural, establishment, that almost everything we do which is inexplicable must be reduced to sexuality, and that's absurd. It's certainly very strong—I would never say it wasn't—but, after all, there are other yearnings, with names like glory, incandescence and love and knowledge. I like to think that you feel some of this when you look at my pictures.³⁴

Similarly, in her autobiography, *Between Lives: An Artist and Her World*, Tanning facetiously rejects “Eros, the companion invariably assigned to me by the experts who are always ready with explanation, a kindness in a way, to tell me what I am painting, what is leaking out from under my fingers, all unconsciously.”³⁵ She continues,

The sad little procession of analyzers, trudging toward the altar of libido... For example, some paintings of mine that I had believed to be a testimony to the premise that we are waging a desperate battle with unknown forces are in reality dainty feminine fantasies bristling with sex symbols. Elsewhere, two rows of terrible teeth on one of my sculptures become, under these beady eyes, incredibly, a vulva. A statue that I thought was a moment of grace is the male member, this doubtless because it is standing up instead of lying down (O vanity). Death's face, which I fear, looks out at me from many of my pictures. But it is often mistaken by these hot-blooded writers for the face of lubricity. Though they can spot Eros every time, they see no one else.³⁶

In this statement, Tanning attempts to dissuade her interpreters from viewing her works as overtly erotic and sexual. She would like her viewers to take more from her paintings than mere libidinal insight; she wants, in fact, her works to spur contemplation about other emotions and issues of everyday life. In fact, in an undated entry in one of her unpublished journals, Tanning writes, “What of the human enigma, the magic of hallucination, powers of the eye,

³⁴ Carlo McCormick and Dorothea Tanning, “Interview with Dorothea Tanning,” *BOMB* 33 (Fall 1990): 37.

³⁵ Tanning, *Between Lives*, 335.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 336.

man's baffling consciousness, the relations between human beings, animals and all living things, including stones? ... When I paint I try to represent my feelings about some of these things."³⁷

As this journal entry indicates, one of Tanning's major concerns was the relation between humans and animals "and all living things."³⁸ This thesis will, consequently, examine how Tanning's paintings address those relations.

There is an undeniable persistence of animal motifs, particularly dogs, throughout Tanning's oeuvre that tends to be overlooked in the art historical scholarship on her work. When the dogs are acknowledged, they are primarily associated, once again, with eroticism. For example, in his article, Sundberg suggests that the dog often appears in Tanning's works as "representative...of her male partner."³⁹ In a similar vein, both McAra and Georgiana M. M. Colvile assert that the dogs in Tanning's paintings have erotic connotations, though neither of these scholars develops these assertions further.⁴⁰

To this author's knowledge, no critical examination of Tanning's animal imagery currently exists, although Annette Shandler Levitt comes close in her book *The Genres and Genders of Surrealism*. In a chapter of her book titled "Women's Work: The Transformations of Leonor Fini and Dorothea Tanning," Levitt reads the animal motifs in Tanning and Fini's Surrealist paintings as indicative of the artists' urge to subvert boundaries in the western world. She declares that both artists are fascinated with "the breaking of boundaries, with

³⁷ Dorothea Tanning, unpublished journal (#2), Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive, New York, NY, p. 81.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Sundberg, "The Metamorphosis of Dorothea Tanning," 26.

⁴⁰ See McAra, "Kaleidoscope Eyes," 15; and Georgiana M. M. Colvile, "Women Artists, Surrealism and Animal Representation," in *Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism*, ed. Patricia Allmer (Munich: Prestel, 2009), 66.

transformations and metamorphoses...In their art, these women reveal that they have accepted, have returned to the ancient wisdom that humans, animals, and the earth are all linked, indeed are at times interchangeable.”⁴¹ Levitt’s interpretation of animals in Tanning’s paintings—particularly those depicted in proximity with humans—as motifs capable of subverting boundaries and bringing the two closer together is illuminating, for it acknowledges Tanning’s concern for human/animal relationships in the western world. However, Levitt does not understand Tanning’s incorporation of animal imagery as polemical or intentional, and this is where her analysis falls short. For Levitt, Tanning’s use of animal imagery to subvert human/animal boundaries was largely “unselfconscious,” since Tanning, as a woman, has “merely done what came naturally...unselfconsciously pushing the envelope, testing limits...living, thinking, believing, and creating without reference to norms.”⁴² In Levitt’s essentializing analysis, Tanning’s use of animal imagery is one tool among many for doing what all “women artists” do: disrupting norms and being rebellious.

Though they each provide thoughtful analyses in their own ways, Levitt and the other aforementioned scholars fail to grasp the specifically radicalizing and politicizing function of Tanning’s animal imagery. In conjunction with the prevalence of animal motifs in her paintings from the very beginning of her career onward, Tanning often expresses in her writings a genuine concern for the displacement and oppression of animals in modern western society.⁴³ Taking this

⁴¹ Annett Shandler Levitt, “Women’s Work: The Transformations of Leonor Fini and Dorothea Tanning,” in *The Genres and Genders of Surrealism* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 89; 94.

⁴² Ibid., 110.

⁴³ Tanning’s personal view of human/animal relationships will be discussed in chapter two.

into consideration, this thesis will argue that an exploration of the immanent bonds between humans and animals—and a desire to overturn the sense of superiority of animals felt by humans in the West—is at the very core of Tanning’s artistic project. Moreover, Tanning’s new style of painting in the 1950s marks a strategic move toward creating art that is capable of actively engaging viewers in contemplation; it corresponds to Tanning’s increasing urge to overturn conventional values and worldviews in order to subvert the western privileging of humans over their animal counterparts.⁴⁴

It should be noted, however, that a number of scholars have indeed argued that Surrealist women utilized animal imagery in order to subvert fixed notions of identity. For example, Patricia Allmer asserts that Surrealist women used certain artistic strategies to “disrupt binaries, hierarchies, the linear, the fixed and the motionless” for the sake of subverting “generic and gender categories.”⁴⁵ For both Allmer and for Chadwick, one of the major ways in which women

⁴⁴ This thesis incorporates as evidence a great deal of Tanning’s own autobiographical texts, in which she repeatedly discloses her urge to entrap her viewers with her paintings and to encourage new perceptions and new modes of thought. These ideas will be discussed extensively in the chapters to come. Here, it is important to note that the artist’s perspective is one among a number of valuable sources in the study of any given body of works, and should not be regarded as the ultimate authority in determining meaning. However, as Michel Foucault proposes in his essay, “What is an Author?,” an author or artist is a product of, or “described” by, his or her works. Thus, Tanning, as an artist, is a product of her paintings, writings, and statements. Although her words are not the ultimate authority, they are part of the equation for understanding the body of works examined in this thesis and why the question of the animal is essential to it. Further, because Tanning was an artist and a writer, both her paintings and writings warrant close investigation; her words help contextualize the images and corroborate this thesis’s assertion of the centrality of animals in her oeuvre. Taken in conjunction with each other, both her paintings and texts help open this body of works to a Deleuze and Guattari-based analysis. See Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?” in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion, and trans. Robert Hurley and others, vol. 2 of *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984* (New York: The New York Press, 1998).

⁴⁵ Patricia Allmer, “Of Fallen Angels and Angels of Anarchy,” in *Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism*, ed. Patricia Allmer (Munich: Prestel, 2009), 15.

subverted binaries was by “projecting aspects of the self as animal surrogates”⁴⁶ in order to emphasize hybridity and transformation over the “stasis of being.”⁴⁷ In this view, women Surrealists employed images of animals and human/animal hybrids in order to disrupt traditional notions of boundaries and gender-based binaries, which enabled them—at least theoretically—to stake out their own position in the male-dominated art world.

This thesis’s aim is not to dispute the validity or possibility of disrupting gender binaries by way of subverting the equally reductive human/animal opposition. Indeed, numerous scholars have identified the oppression of women and animals alike as a common symptom of the patriarchal and anthropocentric western standard; thus, the subversion of both binaries goes hand in hand. As Josephine Donovan and Carol J. Adams write in their influential text, *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*, feminism has the potential to be more than a “narrowly construed liberal feminism that pursues rights and opportunities only for women.”⁴⁸

Donovan and Adams advocate

a radical cultural feminism...incorporating within it other life-forms besides human beings... We believe that all oppressions are interconnected: no one creature will be free until all are free—from abuse, degradation, exploitation, pollution, and commercialization. Women and animals have shared these

⁴⁶ Whitney Chadwick, “An Infinite Play of Empty Mirrors: Women, Surrealism, and Self Representation,” in *Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism, and Self-Representation*, ed. Whitney Chadwick (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998), 12.

⁴⁷ Allmer, “Of Fallen Angels and Angels of Anarchy,” 25.

⁴⁸ Josephine Donovan and Carol J. Adams, eds. *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 2-3. Other helpful sources on the topic of the connections between feminism and animal activism include Carol J. Adams, *Neither Man nor Beast: Feminism and the Defense of Animals* (New York: Continuum, 1994); Emily Gaarder, *Women and the Animal Rights Movement* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011); and Lynda Birke and Luciana Parisi, “Animals, Becoming,” in *Animal Others: On Ethics, Ontology, and Animal Life*, ed. H. Peter Steeves (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999).

oppressions historically, and until the mentality of domination is ended in all its forms, these afflictions will continue.⁴⁹

Thus, “feminist” readings of Tanning’s art can potentially say a great deal about the implications that her paintings hold for the disruption of *all* binaries and the advocacy of equality for *all* of the earth’s inhabitants. And yet, they have not done so. Scholars interpreting Tanning’s paintings in the context of her gender have focused on how she allegedly expressed her own female desires—through the representation of nude female bodies and “eroticized” dogs—for the sake of confronting the oppression of women in a masculine society; it appears that none has taken this idea further to examine how Tanning confronted the equally problematic and pervasive oppression of animal beings. However, Tanning’s work indicates a deep concern with exploring and thinking critically about the dire state of relations between humans and animals in the western world. In fact, Tanning’s paintings are decades ahead of their time in asking questions that have only recently begun to be investigated in a relatively new field known as “animal studies.”⁵⁰

Animal studies, sometimes called “human-animal studies,” is defined by posthumanist theorist Cary Wolfe as a multidisciplinary field of inquiry, developed in the 1990s, with the primary aim of “exposing how [animals] have been misunderstood and exploited” in western culture.⁵¹ To this definition, Matthew Calarco adds two major patterns of questioning in the

⁴⁹ Donovan and Adams, introduction to *Animals and Women*, 3.

⁵⁰ It should be acknowledged that various experimentations and field-studies have been conducted in the past two centuries, and especially throughout the second half of the twentieth century, to help raise awareness of animals’ intelligence and abilities that are usually denied them by humans. However, as this thesis maintains, animal studies, as a widespread humanities-based discipline, is a relatively recent accomplishment in the betterment and advocacy of animal welfare.

diverse practice of animal studies: one concerns the ontology of animals, or “animality,” and the other focuses on the supposed distinctions between humans and animals.⁵² These two overlapping areas of investigation initiate a debate about whether there is, as has traditionally been assumed in the West, some “shared essence” that characterizes nonhuman animals and justifies their demarcation from—and subordination to—humans. Thus, animal studies places under attack the “traditional human-animal distinctions, which posit a radical discontinuity between animals and human beings.”⁵³ The longstanding ontological distinction between humans and animals in the West has been predicated on the widespread assumption that all humans have the capacity for language, logic, and feeling emotions, which all animals supposedly lack; hence, animals have been perceived as unequivocally “other” and inferior to human beings. However, for various reasons, which will be addressed in chapter two, humans are beginning to realize the negative consequences of their mistreatment and belittlement of animals; this has prompted some—though certainly not yet enough—critical reevaluation of western anthropocentric attitudes and behaviors. It is becoming more apparent, at least among animal studies scholars, that these creatures are indeed capable of much more than was previously assumed, and that humans and animals are not so distinct from each other after all. Thus, the strict human/animal binary of western thought is becoming increasingly challenged in an effort to bring humans and animals closer together—at least mentally, if not physically—and to halt the destruction wrought on the natural environment by human hands and machines.

⁵¹ Cary Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 134.

⁵² Matthew Calarco, *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 2.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 3.

The cultivation of new, more bioegalitarian relationships between humans and animals begins with a fundamentally new way of thinking about animals and their place in humans' lives. Wolfe posits that the multidisciplinary nature of animal studies enables this burgeoning field of inquiry and thought to be investigated in productively diverse ways, noting, "it is only in and through our disciplinary specificity that we have something specific and irreplaceable to contribute to this 'question of the animal.'"⁵⁴ For example, countless literary studies devoted to the cause have examined the ways in which certain novels and other literary texts represent animals and human/animal relationships in order to tease out the implications of those representations for coming to a new understanding about animals in western culture.⁵⁵ Equally numerous philosophical projects have been devoted to theorizing human/animal relationships in new ways; Donna Haraway's *When Species Meet*, Jacques Derrida's *The Animal that Therefore I Am*, and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* constitute but a few of them.⁵⁶ Disciplines within the sciences have also

⁵⁴ Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?*, 150.

⁵⁵ A few examples of these literary studies include Wendy Woodward, *The Animal Gaze: Animal Subjectivities in Southern African Narratives* (Johannesburg, South Africa: Wits University Press, 2012); Kari Weil, *Thinking Animals: Why Animal Studies Now?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); and Marianne Dekoven, "Guest Column: Why Animals Now?" *PMLA* 124 (March 2009): 361-369.

⁵⁶ See Donna J. Haraway, *When Species Meet*, vol. 3 of *Posthumanities*, ed. Cary Wolfe (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet, trans. David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008); and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

contributed to questions of animal studies by investigating animal behavior and subjectivity and also by shedding light on the consequences of human actions on the environment.⁵⁷

This thesis aims to make an art historical contribution to animal studies through an analysis of dog motifs in Tanning's post-1955 paintings in order to investigate how works of art can create and promote new ways for viewers to think about animals. It will rely in large part on Deleuze and Guattari's radical concept of "becoming-animal," which they outline in their collaborative book *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.

Chapter one of this thesis will provide a brief biography of Tanning and an explanation of her relationship with the Surrealist émigrés in New York. It will, moreover, examine her shifting goals as an artist in the mid-1950s, which resulted in the prismatic, abstract paintings at the core of this study. The second chapter will discuss the emergence of animal studies in recent decades. It will also investigate some of the major problems facing animals in the modern era, as well as Tanning's own concern for the welfare of nonhuman beings. Chapter three will discuss extensively the becoming-animal, which is a process in which one entity, such as a human, "becomes" or forms a "molecular" alliance, with an animal.⁵⁸ The idea of becoming-animal is predicated on Deleuze and Guattari's belief that humans, animals, and all other entities exist in a constantly shifting "web of life" (to borrow a term from Deleuzian scholar Tamsin Lorraine).⁵⁹ All beings are molecularly connected to one another in this free-floating world in which identity

⁵⁷ For example, readers may want to consult Francoise Wemelsfelder, "The Problem of Animal Subjectivity and its Consequences for the Scientific Measurement of Animal Suffering," in *Attitudes to Animals: Views in Animal Welfare*, ed. Francine L. Dolins (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 37-53.

⁵⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 238; 275.

⁵⁹ Tamsin Lorraine, *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experiments in Visceral Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 119.

is no longer conceived as fixed and stable, but is instead viewed as fluid and malleable.⁶⁰ As chapter three will explain, becoming-animal is a type of incorporeal “event” in which humans become open to their molecular connections with animal subjects. Here, the term “event” is based on Deleuze’s use of the word in his book *The Logic of Sense*, in which it is viewed as something incorporeal and conceptual, a turning point in perception that creates radically new forms of thought and new modes of relating to the world.⁶¹ Chapter four will demonstrate how Tanning’s post-1955 paintings are capable of functioning as such incorporeal, politicizing events; in other words, how they evoke becomings-animal in which viewers are prompted to consider new ways of thinking about and relating to animals. In so doing, this thesis will illuminate the “specific and irreplaceable” contributions the study of art can make to the development of harmonious, non-hierarchical relationships between human and nonhuman animals in the increasingly human-dominated western world.

⁶⁰ This notion that all entities are in a state of perpetual transformation pervades Deleuze and Guattari’s oeuvre. It is perhaps best summed up in Deleuze’s book *Difference and Repetition*, in which he promotes a “categorical reversal according to which being is said of becoming.” In other words, for Deleuze as for Guattari, a human no longer *is* a static entity, but constantly *becomes* something new. See Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 40.

⁶¹ These ideas will be explored throughout chapter three. It should be noted that Deleuze tends to nuance his theories and redevelop many of his ideas from text to text. For example, his explanation of the “event,” varies slightly from his earlier book *The Logic of Sense* (1990) to his later *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (1993), and is also discussed in different contexts in his later collaborative books with Guattari. In this thesis, I will be using the term “event” as Deleuze considers it in *The Logic of Sense*. Interested readers should consult: Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); and Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, and ed. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press).

Chapter I

From Tiny Surrealist to Changing the World

Dorothea Tanning always doubted the notion of “destinies.” It was not that she did not believe in destinies, but she doubted whether anyone could truly know what his or her destiny is or what it means to “fulfill” it. In a published interview with French artist and writer Alain Jouffroy, Tanning confesses, “I tell myself that I am ‘fulfilling my destiny’. But how do I know...? It may be my counter-destiny, or my antidestiny. I may be crushing my destiny.”¹ Nevertheless, Tanning had always known, since the age of seven, that she would become an artist. In her quiet hometown of Galesburg, Illinois—“a place where you sat on the davenport and waited to grow up”—the young Tanning immersed herself in her drawings.² She made a secret haven of the tin box she kept hidden in the high branches of the cherry tree in her family’s backyard; concealed within it were her art supplies, her “sly collaborators,” with which she concocted her “secret messages” to the world.³

¹ Alain Jouffroy and Dorothea Tanning, “Interview with Dorothea Tanning,” in *Dorothea Tanning*, by Sune Nordgren, John Russell, Dorothea Tanning, Alain Jouffroy, Jean-Christophe Bailly, and Lasse Söderberg (Malmö, Sweden: Malmö Konsthall, 1993), 51.

² Dorothea Tanning, *Between Lives: An Artist and Her World* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2004), 16.

³ Dorothea Tanning, afterword to *Dorothea Tanning*, by Dorothea Tanning, Jean Christophe Bailly, and Robert C. Morgan, trans. Richard Howard (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1995), 341-342.

In her second autobiography, *Between Lives: An Artist and Her World*, Tanning recalls, “When I was seven I drew a figure with leaves for hair. Was I a tiny surrealist?”⁴ In another instance, much to her family’s dismay, Tanning drew a naked angel, “a lady angel with round breasts and a sweet smile.”⁵ Such were the images that isolated Tanning from the rest of her family. Of course, all children draw. For many, it is a creative pastime; however, for Tanning, it was an urgent escape. Her parents, both Swedish immigrants, pushed a lifestyle of conformity on their American-born daughters. The single picture hanging in the Tannings’ dining room, *Heiliger Hain*, spoke of Sunday morning piety.⁶ The young Dorothea loathed this picture, with its “veiled figures gliding towards an altar,” almost as much as she did going to church, and she did not share her family’s strong Lutheran faith.⁷ Tanning found her calm, bourgeois upbringing—with its predictable weekly sermons and mundane suburban communities “punctuated by neat boxy houses each locked in its rectangular islands of grass”—to be largely unbearable.⁸ Hence, her means of escape was to look inside of herself, transferring the aberrant images of her imagination onto paper.

At sixteen, Tanning graduated from high school two years early, took a job at the Galesburg Pubic Library, and enrolled in college courses at the local Knox College. Her employment at the library armed her with an invaluable access to books; she particularly favored

⁴ Tanning, *Between Lives*, 16.

⁵ Dorothea Tanning, *Dorothea Tanning: 10 Recent Paintings and a Biography*, ed. Dorothea Tanning (New York: Gimpel-Weitzenhoffer Gallery, 1979), n.p.

⁶ Ibid., n.p.

⁷ Ibid., n.p.

⁸ Ibid., n.p.

the restricted ones, labeled “immoral” by the head librarian.⁹ Tanning spent her hours musing over gothic novels and other writings by the likes of Ann Radcliffe, Edgar Allen Poe, and Samuel Coleridge; writings which would later serve as references for many of her early paintings.¹⁰ Tanning also found her literature courses at Knox College particularly engaging and enjoyed writing. (She would later recall her shared love for both literature and art: “My balancing act—writer? artist?—obviously never quite came to an end.”¹¹) Yet at the time, Tanning yearned for an applied arts program, which her liberal arts college did not offer.¹²

In hindsight, Tanning suspects that college must have been her parents’ effort to quell her bohemian ways—“to straighten the lines of the portrait, to calm the iridescent colors, to bring the delinquent clay into some acceptable shape.”¹³ Tanning, however, had other plans. She chafed at the thought of conforming to her family’s (and indeed, to society’s) plan for young women: to attend college, get married, and settle down with children. Thus, in 1930, after two full years at Knox College and three years of employment at the library, Tanning fled her provincial hometown and began anew in Chicago, her eyes set on the Chicago Academy of Art.

The following decade was a whirlwind of events for Tanning. To begin with, she quickly realized art school was not for her. Rather than finding the excitement of artistic conversation and creative freedom for which she had yearned, Tanning was confronted with imitative

⁹ Tanning, *Between Lives*, 27.

¹⁰ For a recent analysis of how Tanning’s early exploration of gothic novels influenced her paintings, see Victoria Carruthers, “Dorothea Tanning and her Gothic Imagination,” *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas* 5 (2011): 134-158.

¹¹ Tanning, *Between Lives*, 333.

¹² Tanning, afterword to *Dorothea Tanning*, 343-344.

¹³ Tanning, *Dorothea Tanning: 10 Recent Paintings and a Biography*, n.p.

commercial art and a teacher who urged his students to emulate strictly what Tanning described as the shortened, stocky figures of Picasso's Rose Period.¹⁴ Three weeks later, Tanning dropped out of the program. Thereafter, everything that she learned about painting would come from intense observation of other artists' works.¹⁵

After Chicago, Tanning found herself briefly in New Orleans, followed by a short stay in San Francisco. Finally, in 1936, she purchased a one-way train ticket to New York City and rented the first vacant room that she could find. New York's array of museums and galleries became her art academies. Most importantly, the Museum of Modern Art's exhibition "Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism" (1936) became Tanning's first official introduction to Surrealism. She describes her reaction to the exhibition in her autobiography:

Here in the museum...is the infinitely faceted world I must have been waiting for. Here is the limitless expanse of POSSIBILITY, a perspective having only incidentally to do with painting on surfaces. Here, gathered inside an innocent concrete building, are signposts so imperious, so laden, so seductive, and, yes, so perverse that, like the insidious revelations of the Galesburg Public Library, they would possess me utterly.¹⁶

For Tanning, "Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism" was "THE revelation."¹⁷ To be sure, even prior to her exposure to the French Surrealists, Tanning's drawings seem to have been of a very surrealist nature. As explained in the introduction, Tanning's early works shared many similarities with Surrealist paintings in that they depicted possibilities beyond what was immediately apparent: they challenged the laws of reason and rationality, and they dove into the

¹⁴ Tanning, afterword to *Dorothea Tanning*, 345. For an example of Picasso's Rose Period, see his *Two Nudes* (1906).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 345.

¹⁶ Tanning, *Between Lives*, 49.

¹⁷ Jouffroy and Tanning, "Interview with Dorothea Tanning," 49.

enigmatic world of Tanning's imagination. "I was drawing otherworldly things right from the beginning," she explains, identifying Surrealism, in part, as an interest in the otherworldly and unseen behaviors and thoughts that haunt daily life.¹⁸ Thus, "Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism" only confirmed an urge that Tanning had been harboring for years.

Three years after the exhibition was installed, World War Two prompted many of the European Surrealists to flee to America, and their congregation in New York brought Tanning "a kind of relief to see my aberrant pictures find not only tolerance but enthusiasm among these seminal exotics whom I had admired for so many reasons."¹⁹ Through a series of lucky events, Tanning met Julien Levy, who, at the time, owned New York's leading gallery of Surrealist art. Levy invited Tanning to join his gallery and, months later, he introduced her to André Breton, Yves Tanguy, and other Surrealist émigrés who "saw in [Tanning's] work preoccupations and affinities that matched their own."²⁰ Tanning's involvement with the Surrealists was further strengthened in 1942 when she met and later married the Surrealist luminary Max Ernst, with whom she would share a long and adventurous life in New York, Arizona, and, for nearly three decades, France.

For many years after her initial introduction to the Surrealists, Tanning showed her work with them, shared their ideas, and participated in many of their group meetings and games, such as the *cadavres exquis*.²¹ Frequent visitors to her New York apartment included the Surrealists

¹⁸ Dorothea Tanning in an interview with John Gruen: John Gruen, "Among the Sacred Monsters," *ARTnews* 87 (March 1988): 181.

¹⁹ Tanning, *Between Lives*, 75.

²⁰ Tanning, afterword to *Dorothea Tanning*, 348.

²¹ Ibid. The *cadavres exquis*, or exquisite corpse, was a game devised by the self-proclaimed Surrealist leader, André Breton. It involved the creation of a composite sentence or

Breton, Marcel Duchamp, André Masson, Roberto Matta, Kay Sage, and Tanguy.²² At this stage of her career, Tanning's Surrealist paintings, such as *Birthday* and *Children's Games*, both completed in 1942, presented clearly delineated, figurative renderings of fantastic, dream-like, and sometimes disturbing scenarios. Common motifs in her paintings of this time included doors (often symbolizing the barriers between the seen and the unseen), animals, young children, and phantom hybrids of unrecognizable species. These early paintings, which are comparable to works by other Surrealist artists like René Magritte and Leonor Fini, explored multiple realities and questioned the boundaries between what *is* and what *could be*—a goal Tanning kept throughout her career.

For better or worse, Tanning's early involvement with Surrealism left an indelible impact on her art. To be sure, she had initially been drawn to the movement for many reasons, not least of which was its principle of enriching life and confronting all of life's possibilities—both rational and irrational—by respecting and exploring the unconscious.²³ Spearheaded by Breton, Surrealism sought, at its core, to battle the inhibitions and restraints placed on individuals by various social institutions and oppressive systems of thought. Breton and other Surrealists stood strongly against conservative, restrictive values and fixed notions of morality, which were upheld

drawing via collective means, whereby members of the group individually added segments to a work in sequence without any knowledge of the word or image that preceded theirs. For examples of the exquisite corpse compositions, see Clark V. Poling, *Surrealist Vision & Technique: Drawings and Collages from the Pompidou Center and the Picasso Museum, Paris* (Atlanta, Georgia: Michael C. Carlos Museum at Emory University, 1996), 33; 67.

²² Dorothea Tanning, "Souvenirs," trans. Harry Mathews, in *Dorothea Tanning*, by Sune Nordgren, John Russell, Dorothea Tanning, Alain Jouffroy, Jean-Christophe Bailly, and Lasse Söderberg (Malmö, Sweden: Malmö Konsthall, 1993), 39.

²³ Carlo McCormick and Dorothea Tanning, "Interview with Dorothea Tanning," *Bomb* (1990): 38.

by the dominant middle class and imposed on society through what Breton referred to as the “abject trinity: family, country, and religion.”²⁴

From the very beginning, Breton’s goal was to replace the bourgeois habits and customs based on a western emphasis on practicality and expediency with his view of the true catalyst for intellectual and moral advancement: the unconscious. In his *Manifesto of Surrealism* Breton declared:

We are still living under the reign of logic... Under the pretense of civilization and progress... forbidden is any kind of search for truth which is not in conformance with accepted practices. It was, apparently, by pure chance that a part of our mental world which we pretended not to be concerned with any longer—and, in my opinion by far the most important part—has been brought back to light. For this we must give thanks to the discoveries of Sigmund Freud. On the basis of these discoveries... the human explorer will be able to carry his investigations much further, authorized as he will henceforth be not to confine himself solely to the most summary realities. The imagination is perhaps on the point of reasserting itself, of reclaiming its rights.²⁵

Indeed, Freud was foundational for the Surrealists, since his conception of psychoanalysis offered them a means of not only exploring the depths of their unconsciousness but also decoding and making meaning of their discoveries. Moreover, Freud’s text on dream analysis, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), provided the Surrealists with a way of interpreting dreams—and dream-inspired paintings—as expressions of repressed, unconscious thoughts and libidinal desires.²⁶ Hence, the most general, underlying tenet of Surrealism was that by tapping into the unconscious and adopting practices of psycho- and dream analysis, artists could give

²⁴ André Breton, *Mad Love*, trans. Mary Ann Caws (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 117.

²⁵ André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), 9-10.

²⁶ See Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, translated by Joyce Crick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

free reign to inner fears, anxieties, and sexual desires; and in so doing, they could—or, at least, they had hoped they could—overthrow the bourgeois suppression of the irrational forces underlying human behavior, thereby revealing the true, raw mechanisms of thought.²⁷

Tanning shared Surrealism's fundamental goal of overcoming the boundaries, conventions, and binaries—such as male/female, proper/improper, and animal/human—pervasive in western bourgeois thinking. To subvert bourgeois norms meant to subvert the very notion of ideologically ensconced views of reality; and for this, Surrealism was, for many years, Tanning's "vehicle."²⁸ Nevertheless, as New York art critic John Gruen recalls from his 1988 interview with Tanning, there were certain tenets of Surrealism that Tanning found "suspect," namely their "emphasis on sexual symbolism, and... their overreliance on Freudian psychoanalysis as an inspiration for subject matter."²⁹ These were aspects of the movement that Tanning wanted neither to embrace nor to perpetuate. As Gruen declares, "[Tanning's] imagery may have suggested these preoccupations, but her intent lay elsewhere."³⁰ Above all, Tanning's early work was not about dredging up her own unconscious desires, as prescribed by Surrealism

²⁷ For Breton, the major catalyst for reaching the unconscious was through automatism. Automatism (also referred to as automatic writing or drawing) surfaced through the practice of writing or drawing guided, not by the logic of conscious articulation, but by the random words, images, or directions of the pen that immediately came to mind "directly" from the unconscious. Thus, Surrealism came to be defined by Breton as "Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express—verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner—the actual functioning of thought." See Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, 26.

²⁸ Carruthers, "Dorothea Tanning and Her Gothic Imagination," 136.

²⁹ Gruen, "Among the Sacred Monsters," 182.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 182.

and its reliance on psychoanalysis; rather, it was about acknowledging the unconscious as a constitutive part of life and “leaving the door open to the imagination.”³¹

Tanning further distanced herself from Surrealism when it became apparent that her view of it as a philosophical movement was being eclipsed by its conversion into an artistic movement. Recalling Breton’s definition of Surrealism, Tanning explains, “Surrealism... was pure psychic automatism by which we propose to reveal by speech, by writing, by any and all other means the real working of thought. What happened was that the ‘all other means’ jumped in, the artists.”³² While Tanning was indeed one of the Surrealist artists, she maintained a firm belief that Surrealism was a way of life rather than a way of painting.

For Tanning, Surrealism became problematic when other artists embraced the movement as nothing more than a formula for making pictures: “I was deeply impressed by surrealism for about 15 years... But, by 1955, it was becoming forced: all kinds of wrong and tired interpretations were taking over.”³³ She believed that art was not meant to be static; it should constantly be reinvented and reformulated to sustain the audience’s attention and the work’s viability. In one of her unpublished and undated journals, Tanning wrote, “Art is a steadily evolving procedure... It doesn’t necessarily advance, it simply and inexorably changes like the colored lights, like the weather, like the northern lights.”³⁴ Thus, although her general creative goals of capturing and painting “unknown but knowable states” remained the same over the

³¹ Gruen, quoting Tanning in *Ibid.*, 182.

³² McCormick and Tanning, “Interview with Dorothea Tanning,” 38.

³³ Dorothea Tanning in an interview with Eloise Napier. Eloise Napier, “Her Infinite Variety,” *Harpers & Queen* (September 2004): 229.

³⁴ Dorothea Tanning, unpublished journal (#2), Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive, New York, NY, p. 33.

years, Tanning never intended to maintain a single stylistic approach to that goal or to remain a “Surrealist painter” throughout her career.³⁵ By the mid-1950s she found it necessary to separate herself definitively from the Surrealist idiom and explore new ways to communicate through her paintings.

In *Between Lives*, Tanning recalls how she first began to put space between herself and her Surrealist beginnings as a painter: “I began to chafe just a little at the reliance on precisely painted elements of the natural world in order to present an incongruity.”³⁶ Further, she explains, “Beginning, roughly, in 1955, after a period of painting direct, simple images as statement... my painted compositions began to shift and merge in an ever intensifying complexity of planes.”³⁷ Indeed, in 1955, Tanning fulfilled her increasing desire to break away from Surrealism with her debut of *The Ill Forgotten*—a hazy canvas splashed with bold patches of color, shifting planes, and minimal figuration (fig. 1). In the prismatic, iridescent paintings that followed the lead of *The Ill Forgotten*, Tanning created nebulous labyrinths of intertwining lines, colors, and fragmented figures. From 1955 onward, gone are the vivid, precise renderings of static figures that characterized Tanning’s early career; they gave way to intense, dynamic images of intermingling bodies, swirling together, suspended in space.

By splintering her canvases and merging her figures into one another and across multiple planes, Tanning encouraged an active rather than passive experience of her art. That is to say, by painting her figures and biomorphic shapes in a state of constant flux, shifting through space with no comprehensible beginning or end, Tanning demanded from her audience a more

³⁵ Jouffroy and Tanning, “Interview with Dorothea Tanning,” 55-57. This quotation will be discussed further in chapters in chapters to come.

³⁶ Tanning, *Between Lives*, 213.

³⁷ Ibid.

concentrated participation in order to comprehend and discern the amalgamation of motifs in each painting. Her maze-like images continually prod viewers into an intense concentration in order to work their way through the visual puzzles. Thus, beginning with *The Ill Forgotten*, and especially in the five paintings that will be discussed extensively in chapter four, Tanning abandoned her Surrealist narratives and figurative scenes that represent otherworldly possibilities to her viewers, and instead began to create images that summon her viewers and lead them directly into new possibilities as they unfold on the canvas. From 1955 onward, Tanning effectively and consciously assumed a more clearly defined artistic role: “Working for change. To overturn values. The whirling thought: change the world. It directs the artist’s daily act.”³⁸

Overturning values had always been one of Tanning’s main objectives. Both in her approach to art and to life, she maintained “a firm nonacceptance of what is there and the will to impose what is not there,”³⁹ and she remained committed to showing her audience that there is always more than what meets the eye. Tanning painted from what Marina Warner terms the *inner eye*: the underlying “desire to make unperceived objects of fear and fantasy stand before one’s eyes as if they were real.”⁴⁰ Throughout her oeuvre, Tanning’s enigmatic, phantasmagorical imagery challenges the values that modern western societies place on comfortable, familiar, and recognizable phenomena. Further, skeptical of Enlightenment-based beliefs that true knowledge is attainable through conscious rationalism and sound reasoning,

³⁸ Tanning, *Between Lives*, 326. Although this desire to overturn values characterized Tanning’s earlier Surrealist phase as well, it is through her post-1955 paintings—as chapters three and four will demonstrate—that Tanning became more overtly engaged in making art with politicizing and radicalizing functions.

³⁹ Tanning, afterword to *Dorothea Tanning*, 349.

⁴⁰ Marina Warner, *The Inner Eye: Art Beyond the Visible*, (London: National Touring Exhibitions and Hayward Gallery, 1996), 11.

Tanning, like the other Surrealists, maintained that irrational thoughts and behaviors are equally as significant to the production of knowledge as rational ones. This is not to say, however, that Tanning's art rejects Enlightenment ideals altogether. In fact, many of her paintings critically question societal norms that are based on faith, tradition, and widespread preconceptions; a similar emphasis on challenging conventions and encouraging individuals to think for themselves lay at the heart of the Enlightenment.⁴¹ However, while the western reliance on rational thinking stressed—and continues to emphasize—the knowability of an objective reality based on science and reason, as well as the human “quest for dominion over...the forces of nature,”⁴² Tanning remained convinced that “there are so many realities,” and that logic and rationalism only account for a fraction of them.⁴³

Tanning used art in different ways throughout her career to offer alternative versions of reality. In the early phase of her career, Tanning did so by creating paintings that present blatantly illogical and implausible scenes full of phantoms, human/animal hybrids, gravity-defying motion, and ominous interiors. These works, such as *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, *Maternity*, and *Interior with Sudden Joy*, address the everyday issues that straight-laced bourgeois norms attempted to repress, including the pains and anxieties of growing up, the dull tedium of suburbia, impulsive behaviors, and irrational fears. Tanning's later paintings, by contrast, no longer depict scenes of illogical incongruities; instead, they disrupt familiar perceptions of reality by presenting turbulent maelstroms of bodies suspended in fragmented spaces. As the problems

⁴¹ See Immanuel Kant, “An Answer to the Question: ‘What is Enlightenment?’” in *Kant: Political Writings*, edited by H. S. Reiss, 54-60 (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁴² Akira Mizuta Lippit, *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 78.

⁴³ Jouffroy and Tanning, “Interview with Dorothea Tanning,” 51.

associated with modern western culture became more pressing and urgent, Tanning's paintings became more tumultuous. Indeed, the uncertainties of life confronted in her paintings did not merely concern Tanning; they haunted her. She once confessed that "feverish thoughts of warheads, ethnic strife, mass media, megalomaniac avant-gardistes with their shipwreck philosophies, chemical conflicts, the population explosion and the progressive desecration of the earth" kept her awake at night.⁴⁴

There was, significantly, one additional concern that increasingly surfaced in Tanning's paintings over the years: the wavering relationship between human beings and the rest of the animal kingdom. While many of Tanning's motifs are centered primarily on the problems of human life—such as maternal anxieties and the stifling moral conventions of the bourgeoisie—there is also a remarkable presence of animal motifs throughout her oeuvre which suggests that nonhuman creatures faced urgent problems of their own. In Tanning's animal paintings, which typically involve the close interaction and/or intertwinement of animal and human entities, one can detect her deeply rooted conviction that humans and animals are immanently bound to each other and that the concerns of one species are inseparable from the affairs of the other. Thus it is clear: Tanning did not merely want to "change the world" for her human audience; rather, her most pressing objective was to change the world for both its human and animal inhabitants.

As Tanning recalls in *Between Lives*, her politicizing urge to overturn conventional values and to change minds had possessed her from her early years onward: "All too sure of my own convictions, I would write, when away from home, preachy letters to the family...telling them how to think, to change their false values for real ones, to live more meaningful lives, to

⁴⁴ Tanning, *Dorothea Tanning: 10 Recent Paintings and a Biography*, n.p.

extend their horizons, and so on.”⁴⁵ This polemical attitude reverberates throughout her oeuvre, but becomes expressed in a markedly different way in her fragmented, multifaceted paintings from the 1950s and 1960s. Indeed, given the almost ironic way in which Tanning describes her “preachy letters” and sure convictions, it seems as if her shift in painting may correspond to her own abandonment, or at least reevaluation, of her earlier didactic impulse. Significantly, it was not enough for Tanning to continue illustrating the problems of the world and presenting them to viewers through precise, direct—almost “preachy”—figuration. It became increasingly necessary for Tanning to more actively confront her concerns, and, more importantly, to incite her viewers to act with her—to engage with her ideas in a conversation rather than viewing the paintings as a one-way representation of Tanning’s own vision. It was precisely through her obscure, almost cryptic post-1955 paintings that this incitement might be accomplished.

The following chapter will examine various instances in which Tanning expressed—sometimes explicitly, and sometimes surreptitiously—an unrelenting belief that animals and humans are immanently connected in the world. It will also consider the problems plaguing animal life that may have prompted Tanning’s investigation of human/animal relationships in the first place. Subsequent chapters will then attempt to theorize Tanning’s politicizing approach to art, ultimately demonstrating how her post-1955 paintings function as events, actively leading their viewers into a visual world of perpetual, inter-species becomings, which in turn subvert the western tendency of humans to claim supremacy over the rest of the natural world.

⁴⁵ Tanning, *Between Lives*, 18.

Chapter II

Supremacy: Humanity's Problem Drug

Traditional western philosophy has largely been predicated on the anthropocentric tenets of humanism. Generally speaking, western attitudes throughout history have posited that human beings—capable of logic, reason, and self-awareness—are ontologically superior to the rest of the natural world, which is presumed to lack the capacity for rationality and subjectivity. Historically, humans have separated themselves from animals, objectifying them as the nonhuman, unthinking “other” in order to dominate and exploit them. As Wendy Woodward asserts in *The Animal Gaze: Animal Subjectivities in Southern African Narratives*, the “dualistic bedrock tenets of western humanism... objectif[y] animals as ‘absolute others’ and hence as beings over whom humans may legitimately claim mastery.”¹

Indeed, anthropocentrism looms large throughout western history. According to animal studies scholar Kari Weil, the western oppression of animals—and, more particularly, the denial of animals’ interconnectedness with human beings—harks back to Aristotelian philosophy: “Since Aristotle, man (as used in most texts) has been defined as the ‘rational animal,’ distinguished from other animals by his (and, more recently, her) ability to think and to reason.”² This distinction between the rational human and the irrational animal-other is based largely on

¹ Wendy Woodward, *The Animal Gaze: Animal Subjectivities in Southern African Narratives* (Johannesburg, South Africa: Wits University Press, 2012), 51.

² Kari Weil, *Thinking Animals: Why Animal Studies Now?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), xv.

what animal studies scholar Akira Lippit refers to as the “common anthropological myth”—a myth which “seeks to explain the development of animals and human beings as distinct entities.”³ This myth, underlying western anthropocentrism, presupposes nonhuman animals to be incapable of language, and therefore unable to express logical and reasonable thought processes—an assumption that has come under intense scrutiny in recent years.⁴

In addition to the denial of language and reason to animals, another major contributing factor to the prevailing anthropocentric attitude in the West is the emphasis of western religions on creationism. Christianity and Judaism posit that God created humans as unique beings. The widespread belief in monotheism has tinged western philosophy with the proud notion that humans were created as a unique and exalted species, immanently distinct from the animal world. As posthumanist scholar Cary Wolfe explains, “the place of the animal as the repressed Other of the subject, identity, logos, and the concept [of humans] reaches back in Western culture at least to the Old Testament.”⁵ Indeed, the presumption that humans possess the unique and unmatched ability to express rationalized thought perpetuates a deep-seated, western anthropocentric tradition initiated by longstanding theological beliefs.

³ Akira Mizuta Lippit, *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 17.

⁴ For an excellent overview and critical analysis of the denial of reason to animals in Western philosophy, see Richard Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals: The Origins of the Western Debate* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993). Sorabji asserts that despite the fact that the “philosophical treatment of animals in Ancient Greece began as early as Pythagorus in the sixth century BC, or even Hesoid in the eighth,” the animals’ crisis (the continual mistreatment and misunderstanding of animals in the West) was most intensely “provoked when Aristotle denied reason to animals.” Sorabji, 7.

⁵ Cary Wolfe, introduction to *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal*, ed. Cary Wolfe (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), x.

Over the years, numerous philosophers have debated the position of humans and animals in relation to each other; the supposedly limited cognitive abilities of animals (as opposed to the “advanced” abilities of their human counterparts) have been equally deliberated upon, with little consensus. However, an emphasis on those qualities that *distinguish* humans from other animals—namely their ability to reason—has remained foremost in western human/animal debates.⁶ As the twentieth-century French philosopher Jacques Derrida argues, “logocentrism is first of all a thesis regarding the animal, the animal deprived of the *logos*, deprived of the *can-have-the-logos*: this is the thesis, position, or presupposition maintained from Aristotle to Heidegger, from Descartes to Kant, Levinas, and Lacan.”⁷ In other words, humans and animals have persistently been defined as two distinct and opposing categories, based on notions of what “advanced,” rational humans *can* do versus what “primitive” animals *cannot* do. Until only recently, much less scholarly and philosophic attention has been given to the shared qualities that *bond* humans and animals.

New light began to be shed on the connections between humans and animals in the nineteenth century, when Charles Darwin posited that all animals—human and nonhuman—came to existence through a process of evolution rather than divine creation. Outlined in his two major publications—*On the Origin of Species* (1859) and *Descent of Man* (1871)—Darwin’s studies made a groundbreaking impact on western philosophy by maintaining that humans are

⁶ While a historiography of animal philosophy is beyond the scope of this thesis, interested readers may consult Linda Kalof and Amy Fitzgerald, eds., *The Animals Reader: The Essential Classic and Contemporary Writings* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007) for a more in-depth overview. Other helpful sources include: Matthew Calarco, *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); and Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco, eds., *Animal Philosophy: Ethics and Identity* (New York and London: Continuum, 2004).

⁷ Jacques Derrida, *The Animal that Therefore I Am*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet, trans. David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 27.

inextricably related to other animal species, and that all animals—human and nonhuman—have evolved from a *common origin* of biological descent rather than divine origin. In *Descent of Man*, he proclaims,

Even if it be granted that the difference between man and his nearest allies is as great in corporeal structure as some naturalists maintain...[h]is body is constructed on the same homological plan as that of other mammals. He passes through the same phases of embryological development. He retains many rudimentary and useless structures...which we have reason to believe were possessed by his early progenitors.⁸

Thus, Darwin finds no justification in “placing man in a distinct kingdom” from nonhuman animals.⁹ Darwin’s writings on nature and evolution inaugurated the “shock” of “deanthropocentrism—man toppled from the pinnacle of creation or displaced from the center of the universe.”¹⁰ According to Lippit in *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife*, “Darwin’s work profoundly altered the terms of philosophical, psychological, scientific, and sociological theory, causing a veritable reorganization of the epistemological order.”¹¹ Lippit continues,

Not only did Darwin challenge the foundations of religious orthodoxy (among many controversial extrapolations, Darwin’s findings pointed toward the historical inaccuracy of Biblical creation, the essential relationship between human beings and primates, and the dynamism of species), they also assailed many of the tenets of metaphysics, not least of which insisted upon a rigid distinction between humanity and animal.¹²

⁸ Charles Darwin: *Descent of Man And Selection in Relation to Sex* (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 2004), 122-123.

⁹ Darwin, *Descent of Man*, 123.

¹⁰ Margot Norris, “Darwin’s Reading of Nature,” in *Beasts of the Modern Imagination: Darwin, Nietzsche, Kafka, Ernst, & Lawrence* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 26.

¹¹ Lippit, *Electric Animal*, 74.

¹² *Ibid.*, 75.

Indeed, as Lippit indicates, Darwin's investigations of fossils, plants, insects, and other traces of wildlife and the ways in which they are connected fundamentally challenged the creationism-fuelled, exalted position of humans. Darwin effectively placed *Homo sapiens* in a web of other animals and living organisms, "all trying to make an earthly living and so evolving in relation to one another without the sureties of directional signposts that culminate in Man."¹³ By proposing that humans originally descended from animal beings (most directly apes), and are therefore animals themselves, and by arguing that both humans and other nonhuman animals share the ability to communicate with each other, Darwin undermined the belief that only humans possess logic and the means to express logical thought.¹⁴ In doing so, he also overturned the eighteenth-century Enlightenment emphasis on reason and rationalism, which situated humans at the center and head of the natural world based on their capacity for reason.

Darwin's writings prompted a widespread critical questioning of western humanity's ongoing attempt to dominate, tame, and exploit nonhuman beings. Above all, by looking at "the term species as one arbitrarily given, for the sake of convenience, to a set of individuals closely resembling each other," Darwin problematized the categories and binaries that have been fallaciously elevated in western thought as necessary and predetermined.¹⁵ Thus, he initiated the

¹³ Donna J. Haraway, *When Species Meet*, vol. 3 of *Posthumanities*, ed. Cary Wolfe (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 11.

¹⁴ Darwin devotes his 1871 text *Descent of Man* to outlining the shared abilities and biological characteristics between various animals, including humans and other animals. Notably, Darwin was neither the first nor the only natural scientist to illuminate the physical and cognitive similarities between humans and apes, though he remains most closely associated with theories of evolution. For the perspective of another well-known scientist grappling with the same issues at the time, see Thomas H. Huxley, *Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1863).

serious study of the *relations*, rather than the *distinctions*, between humans and animals. His consideration of the shared abilities and biological characteristics common to both human and nonhuman animals has led many scholars to assume responsibility for rethinking the human/animal binary opposition.

The Rise of Animal Studies

The critical examination of human/animal relationships, prompted by Darwin, reached an apex toward the end of the twentieth century. The anthropocentric “othering” of animals in western culture has stimulated, over time, the widespread mistreatment, exploitation, and marginalization of animals. In recent decades, however, humans have become more aware of the negative consequences and crises—which this thesis will address in the following pages—resulting from their unjust collective behavior toward animals; this awareness has both prompted and been enlarged by scholarship in the field of animal studies. Wolfe explains, “What began in the early to mid-1990s as a smattering of work in various fields on human-animal relations and their representation in various endeavors...[has] galvanized into a vibrant emergent field of interdisciplinary inquiry called animal studies or sometimes human-animal studies.”¹⁶ In his book, Lippit offers a possible reason for why the field of animal studies has gained so much attention in recent years. He writes,

¹⁵ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, (Cricket House Books, LLC., 2010), Google eBook, 32.

¹⁶ Cary Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 134. While Wolfe uses the term “interdisciplinary” in this definition, he uses the term “multidisciplinary” later in the same chapter in order to indicate the importance for each discipline to contribute something unique and specific to the field of animal studies. See Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?*, 151.

No longer a sign of nature's abundance, animals now inspire a sense of panic for the earth's dwindling resources. Spectral animals recede into the shadows of human consumption and environmental destruction. With the prosperity of human civilization and global colonization, ecospheres are vanishing, species are moving toward extinction, and the environment is sinking, one is told, into a state of uninhabitability.¹⁷

To be sure, the rapidly increasing human domination and exploitation of animals and the natural world is beginning to backfire as the environment progressively deteriorates. It has become apparent that the need for reflection and change is urgent; humans must revise their treatment of the natural world as something to be conquered and utilized. The purpose of animal studies is to prompt and foster this necessary revision; the burgeoning multidisciplinary field of animal studies scholars and activists shares the fundamental aim of reconfiguring traditional modes of thought and cultivating new, more mutual relationships between humans and animals.

Notably, the purpose of animal studies is not merely to humanize animals, raising them to the status of "human-like" and subsuming them into the artificial, conceptual world constructed by human beings. Rather, the main purpose of animal studies, as it is examined in this thesis, is to deconstruct that artificial world, to "place the presupposition of the human into question," therefore destabilizing the very prejudices and assumptions that have guided humans in their domination of the natural world.¹⁸ By calling into question the widespread western perception of animals as the inferior nonhuman-other, the ultimate goal of animal studies is to put an end to the harsh and unjust realities that animals face in the modern world.

¹⁷ Lippit, *Electric Animal*, 1.

¹⁸ Nicholas Gane, "When We Have Never Been Human, What Is to Be Done?: Interview with Donna Haraway," *Theory Culture Society* 23 (2006): 140.

As cultural and animal studies scholar Randy Malamud writes in his introduction to *A Cultural History of Animals in the Modern Age*, “When a person and a nonhuman animal encounter each other, the animal generally ends up somehow the worse for this meeting.”¹⁹ Such is the fate of animals in modernity, which will be defined in this thesis as a period of time in the West, beginning roughly with the Industrial Revolution and culminating in the present. Malamud asserts, “human culture has become more powerful—and thus, more dangerous to nonhuman animals—than ever before.”²⁰ Rapid technological advancements since the industrial age have increasingly led to “global warming, habitat destruction, oil tanker spills, and radioactive and other toxic emissions.”²¹ And as cities grow at increasing rates, the outlying residential suburbs result in further displacement of wild field animals. Equally pervasive and no less destructive is the human exploitation of animals for food, experimentation, and entertainment. Rather than living on farms, cattle and hogs are most often bred and fed in feedlot-like factories and “processed like manufactured commodities.”²² They live in harsh, unnatural, and unsuitable conditions, only to be killed—often by machines—and neatly packaged and distributed as food. Moreover, as art critic and writer John Berger asserts in “Why Look at Animals?,” “Nearly all modern techniques of social conditioning were first established with animal experiments.”²³ Animals are artificially tested in laboratories for the effects of pharmaceutical drugs, chemicals,

¹⁹ Randy Malamud, introduction to *A Cultural History of Animals in the Modern Age*, ed. Randy Malamud (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), 3.

²⁰ Ibid., 1.

²¹ Ibid.

²² John Berger, “Why Look at Animals?: For Gilles Aillaud,” in *About Looking*, by John Berger (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 11.

²³ Ibid.

pesticides, and cosmetics, and they are also frequently subjected to behavioral and cognitive experimentation.²⁴

Clearly, human interaction with animals in the West is largely based on utility. Because humans use animals as food and as experimental specimens, animals play a fundamental role in human life; yet most humans experience little, if any, *natural* interaction with nonhuman animals, as most human/animal encounters are artificially mediated by human inventions. The predominant presence of animals in circuses and their great function as domesticated pets only increases the artificiality of human/animal relationships in the modern world, and it certainly results in the problematic displacement of animals from their natural environments.²⁵ The construction of public zoos, which began in the late nineteenth century, further contributes to the marginalization of animals; animals are uprooted from their natural habitats and regions, and transported around the globe to be held captive in controlled and contained artificial environments.²⁶ Moreover, Berger argues that in zoos, as in aquariums and even in animal picture books and magazines, animals become exploited and presented to viewers as visual spectacles—mysterious and fascinating nonhuman *others* turned into mere representations, existing in mediated spaces that “will never be entered by the spectator. All animals appear like fish seen through the plate glass of an aquarium.”²⁷

²⁴ For an excellent overview of the effects of animal experimentation in modernity, see Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 3-132.

²⁵ For a broader discussion of the commodification of animals in Western society, see Berger, “Why Look at Animals?: For Gilles Aillaud,” 1-26. See also Malamud, ed., *A Cultural History of Animals in the Modern Age*.

²⁶ An examination of the negative effects that public zoos have had on animals can be found in Berger, “Why Look at Animals?: For Gilles Aillaud,” 19-26.

As this discussion has demonstrated, the sober reality confronting animals today is rooted in the unbridgeable fissure that traditional western philosophy has placed between human and nonhuman animals. Insofar as humans continue to assert their own supremacy and high distinction, objectifying animals and denying them the ability to communicate intelligibly and live purposeful lives beyond their service to humans, animals will always continue to be marginalized, instrumentalized, and exploited.

Dorothea Tanning's Perspective on Animals

By and large, efforts made in the direction of atonement—to make right all of the problems that human inventions and careless behaviors have caused for animals and the environment—are still in the stage of infancy. It was only in the 1990s, by Wolfe's estimation, that the serious, multidisciplinary inquiry and investigation of human/animal interactions began to take shape. For this reason, Tanning was decades ahead of her time. As explained in the introduction, Tanning expressed, both in her art and in her writings, a deep concern for animals and the nature of their existence in the modern world decades before the field of animal studies was born. Now that more scholars from a variety of disciplines are becoming aware of the urgency of animal inquiry, it is possible to revisit Tanning's paintings and to understand how they can contribute to this new effort toward coexistence with nonhuman animals.

Living in America and Europe throughout almost the entire twentieth century, Dorothea Tanning witnessed the human domination over animals and the natural environment at its apex.

²⁷ Berger, "Why Look at Animals?: For Gilles Aillaud," 14. Here, Berger is engaging with the "spectacle" as representation detached from reality. His assertion may be informed by the Situationist International founder Guy Debord's well-known text, *The Society of the Spectacle*. See Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1994).

The rapid rise of factories, cities, scientific and technological advancements, as well as the catastrophic environmental destruction resulting from two World Wars, all contributed to the unprecedented strain on animals in an increasingly human-made world. Indeed, all of this arose from a growing sense of imperialism in the West—an increasing belief that humans are exceptional and superior, and that the rest of the world is theirs for the taking.

This thesis will posit and discuss the idea that the growing divide between humans and animals in the modern age was a major source of inspiration for Tanning's oeuvre. As the last chapter explained, Tanning used her art to address—and often critique—many aspects of bourgeois society, such as gender roles, strict behavioral standards for children, and religious conformity. Her critical examination of these bourgeois customs has been extensively mulled over by her interpreters, as demonstrated in the introduction. Significantly, most of these issues of daily life are traced back to Tanning's depictions of human (and mostly female) bodies. However, the constant presence of animal bodies in Tanning's paintings cannot be ignored, for they indicate her unwavering concern for the marginalization and mistreatment of animals in the modern world.

As an animal lover, an alternative thinker, and a skeptic of the human reliance on logic and rationalism, which is inextricably bound to the human quest for supremacy over the natural world, Tanning was far from oblivious to the problems that animals faced (and continue to face); neither was she silent about her disapproval. In her first autobiography, *Birthday*, Tanning recalled an experience of intense contemplation that she had at a John Cage concert:

I found myself rolling on a sea of strong feeling, shamelessly involved with my planet: sorry for every rent in every fabric, for tormentor and tormented, for lost dogs, for *all* dogs... Elegant broken legs of horses, elephants that die assassinated in the savannah [sic], swarmed by flies. For fish out of water, flopping. Ah, don't look. For bulls made fools of by strutting morons. As much distress suffuses me about a clubbed snake as about a fallen bird, a maimed toad

and the seals. Bears in traps, steel jaws biting through their mangled arms... Most terrible of all, our own human pain, compounded as it is by hopeless pride and prideful hope, ingredients in the nepenthean formula, Supremacy: a problem drug, widespread, habit-forming, unchecked, planetary poison shared by all but poet and madman, artists both. Outraged and outwitted, they see no way to help.²⁸

Consistently refuting western society's attempt to master nonhuman beings, Tanning, in this moving passage from her autobiography, holds strongly to the belief that human and nonhuman animals are connected—that they are part of the same world and that their actions affect each other, suggesting that the exalted human pride and quest for superiority not only harms animals but also plagues humanity, like a problem drug. For Tanning, human notions of supremacy need to be eradicated, and here again, she considered it artists' duty to try to change the situation. In fact, in a 1974 interview with Tanning, Alain Jouffroy noted that in many of her works there appears to be a confrontation with some undisclosed enemy. When asked who or what that enemy was, Tanning replied, "Civilization, you might say...the forces of so-called civilization."²⁹ Indeed, as this chapter has demonstrated, the growth of civilization in the West—the organization and development of advanced human societies—comes at the animals' expense, and Tanning was apprehensive about the impending consequences.

Undermining the anthropocentrism of western civilization, Tanning seemed to believe that while humans are indeed their own species of animals, they are animals nonetheless, and therefore have no reason to deny their bonds with nonhuman animals or lay claim to any kind of superiority. This notion echoes throughout Tanning's oeuvre, especially in her paintings of

²⁸ Dorothea Tanning, *Birthday* (Santa Monica and San Francisco: The Lapis Press, 1986), 169-170.

²⁹ Alain Jouffroy and Dorothea Tanning, "Interview with Dorothea Tanning," in *Dorothea Tanning*, by Sune Nordgren, John Russell, Dorothea Tanning, Alain Jouffroy, Jean-Christophe Bailly, and Lasse Söderberg (Malmö, Sweden: Malmö Konsthall, 1993), 57.

dogs³⁰—most of which were based on Tanning and Ernst’s dog, Katchina.³¹ In the 1992 exhibition catalogue, *Dorothea Tanning: Hail, Delirium!*, Tanning asserts: “A dog (my dog)... over the years, shows up in many avatars, as constant as a talisman.”³² In her early paintings, such as *Interior With Sudden Joy* (1951) and *Portrait de Famille (Family Portrait)*, 1954), Katchina frequently appears, often in the presence of a human, to remind viewers that animals still exist in their world and must not be ignored. Further, in many paintings, including *Tableau Vivant (Living Picture)*, 1954), *Le Soir à Salonique (Evening in Salonika)*, 1965) and *To the Rescue* (1965), the dog is the only figure in the image that makes direct eye contact with the viewer; thus, the dogs engage not only with the human figures accompanying them in the

³⁰ In 1989, Tanning also completed a series of fourteen drawings under the title *Messages*, which juxtaposed simians (most often a gorilla) and bicycles. In these drawings, Tanning proposes a dialogue between organic, primitive life (hence, the primate), and the mechanical human inventions. In an artist’s statement in the *Messages* exhibition catalogue (1990), Tanning wrote: “The gorilla remembers too, back to the eye of time, when somehow he was left behind, Man jumped on a bicycle and sped away and does not now remember. But the bicycle is full of dreams, fast and slow, and the gorilla is full of silence, and here I am an artist who has promised to bring them together.” See Dorothea Tanning and Robert C. Morgan, *Dorothea Tanning: Messages: March 2-31* (New York: Nahan Contemporary, 1990), 21. In these drawings, as with her dog paintings, Tanning demonstrates empathy for—and complicity with—animals in her efforts to bridge the ever-widening gap between human and nonhuman beings.

³¹ The name “Katchina,” given by Ernst, is based on the “kachina dolls” carved and utilized by the Hopi Indians in Arizona. Traditionally, kachina dolls are believed to embody the spirit of the being it depicts, such as a deity, an animal, or a deceased ancestor. See Helga Teiwes, *Kachina Dolls: The Art of Hopi Carvers* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1991). In addition to Katchina, Tanning and Ernst later had another dog called Groucho, who also appears in some of Tanning’s paintings. However, there is no evidence that *all* of the dogs in Tanning’s oeuvre were based on actual, individual dogs. Moreover, there is no evidence that Tanning was at all interested in the kachina dolls; thus, although her representations of Kachina and other dogs could possibly be interpreted in terms of the kachina dolls of the Southwestern Hopi tribe, this thesis takes a different approach.

³² A statement provided by Dorothea Tanning in Roberta Waddell and Louisa Wood Ruby, eds., *Dorothea Tanning: Hail Delirium!* (New York: New York Public Library, 1992), 89.

images, but also with the human viewers outside the picture. The dogs' gaze, as depicted in Tanning's works, is akin to what Woodward calls the "animal gaze;" that is, "a gaze, initiated by the animal, meditative in its quietness and stillness and which compels a response on the part of the human, as it contradicts any assumed superiority of the human over the nonhuman animal."³³ For Woodward, the animal gaze challenges the binary distinction between humans and animals: "In acknowledging the [animal] as a subject capable of looking... the [human]...challenges the human-self and animal-other divide, by responding to the [animal] as a fellow being, rather than as an inferior one."³⁴ In effect, the animal gaze, possessed by so many of Tanning's dogs, which make direct eye contact with the viewer, provides the animals with agency and intentionality by directly addressing and appealing to viewers on the other side of the picture plane. Woodward notes, "The central issues here are whether the human acknowledges subjective kinship with animals and what potential emerges."³⁵ In other words, one can conclude that the dogs in Tanning's paintings play key roles by addressing audiences and making themselves seen, their

³³ Woodward, *The Animal Gaze*, 1. In this book, Woodward discusses the notion of the animal gaze in relation to various representations of animals in African literature; however, her concept of the animal gaze is equally applicable to the study of the visual arts. It should be acknowledged, though, that a number of theories of the gaze exist beyond Woodward's notion of the animal gaze. One often-cited and widely investigated example is Jacques Lacan's conception of the gaze in a book from his published seminars entitled *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Here, the notion of the gaze is based on the idea that any given subject may become uneasily aware of the fact that he or she is being looked at and has, in effect, become the *object* of a gaze. Although an investigation of Lacan's ideas is beyond the scope and aim of this thesis, readers interested in his discussion of the gaze should consult Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 1964, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan, book XI of *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1978). Conceptualizations of the gaze are also central to feminist film theory. For a useful historical overview of key essays about the gaze and its implications for feminist film theory, see E. Ann Kaplan, *Feminism and Film* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000).

³⁴ Woodward, *The Animal Gaze*, 1.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

relationship to humans known, and their awareness of their own marginalization part of the paintings' subject.

While it is, of course, impossible to truly *know* what animals are thinking, much less how they feel about their current subservient position in the human-dominated western world, this lack of certainty does not mean that the animals' awareness of their own condition was not a concern for Tanning. In another of her autobiographies, a passage provides a telling glimpse of her personal understanding of the dog's role in art as well as in life. Written as a scenario in which a dog at a drink-stand on a beach speaks to a journalist, the dog in Tanning's passage says:

In my opinion, the dog's role in painting is preponderant. His image, in close relation with that of the human being, is indispensable to the existence of a work of art. Without his ineffable presence a picture is but a somber spot without light, without mystery, without evidence, without memory, without fire, without destiny. Alas! The disappearance of the dog signals the collapse of that edifice known as modern art. Up to us to resuscitate it! (He is almost overexcited.) Up to us to paint him in all his glory! Masterpiece, disasterpiece—that's the shape of the future! (He hits the counter with his little fist.) Revolt, yes! Revolution, no! Us dogs are bled white! The tactile has replaced the cerebral. All is meaningless trepidation. And it's not over. We will grow weaker and weaker until the final breakdown... (He covers his eyes with his paw.)... My life is so full of tragic figures. Nevermore is my home... You can laugh at the past. You cannot laugh at the future. We must, at any cost, save the lives of our younger plants and planets.³⁶

The above passage is similar to a poem Tanning later published in *Coming to That* in 2011, entitled "At the Seaside," in which the dog, once again speaking to journalists in a similar scenario, declares:

In my view...the dog's role in survival is preeminent. Its presence is indispensable to man—and woman. A dogless beach is but a somber waste, without shadow, without substance, without even sand... That's how the world

³⁶ Dorothea Tanning, *Dorothea Tanning: 10 Recent Paintings and a Biography: October 16-November 15, 1979* (New York: Gimpel-Weitzenhoffer Gallery, 1979), n.p.

crumbles. The tactile has replaced the cerebral, all is meaningless trepidation. And it's not over. Smoking ashes will be the sum of man's supremacy.³⁷

In both of these scenarios, Tanning provides the dog with a voice. She asserts the dog's capacity for self-awareness; the dog recognizes his own struggle in the modern world and calls upon his listeners to join him in his revolt against the "disappearance of the dog," or, indeed, the disappearance of all animals. In the second scenario, Tanning stresses the necessity for humans to reincorporate animals back into their world, asserting that the dog's (or all animals') presence is indispensable to the survival of humans. Here, she strives to debunk the "common anthropological myth," which was explained at the beginning of this chapter as a myth capable of positing and perpetuating the ontological discontinuity between humans and animals. According to Lippit, "by displacing animals from the phenomenal world, humanity disrupts the delicate balance between human beings and animals... a balance that had, in fact, constituted the very humanness of the human world."³⁸ Following Jean-Francois Lyotard, Lippit continues, "dehumanized beings, human beings that [sic] have broken their primordial link to nature, are an ironic legacy of humanism."³⁹ In other words, by denying the animality inherent within humanity, humans lose part of their humanness.

There are two ways in which severing the link between humans and animals might result in the "dehumanization" of the human world. On the one hand, western philosophy has traditionally defined humans in terms of a dialectical relationship to animals. Thus, by denying altogether any link between humans and animals, humans lose the very quality which has

³⁷ Dorothea Tanning, "At the Seaside," in *Coming to That* (Minneapolis, MN: Graywolf Press, 2011), 34-35.

³⁸ Lippit, *Electric Animal*, 19-20.

³⁹ Ibid., 20.

traditionally given them their sense of self: being the most advanced, intellectually superior species in relation to all others. On the other hand, for those who agree, as Tanning did, that humans and animals are immanently connected and inextricably intertwined—and who agree that humans are not superior to animals but are their equals, their fellows in the animal kingdom—the abandonment of the human/animal bond signals the collapse of humanity just as it signals the collapse of animality. Because humans are themselves animals, by “othering” nonhuman creatures, they are, in effect, “othering” parts of themselves. Humans not only lose the external, animal “other” upon which they have traditionally defined themselves, but they also eliminate the “otherness” within, that is, the animal aspect of their own composition. Humans diminish their own selves when they deny their relation to animals; they impoverish their existence, as well as their potential for survival, for the destruction of one species brings the destruction of the other. “That’s how the world crumbles.”

In both of Tanning’s dog scenarios cited above, the artist warns her readers of the fragile circumstances if humans do not stop the marginalization and oppression of animals, with such statements as, “You cannot laugh at the future.” “Smoking ashes will be the sum of man’s supremacy.” In her writings as in her art, Tanning explores bonds between human and nonhuman animals, in the belief that it is only through the acceptance of these bonds that the fragile plight of animals in the modern world may cease and both human and nonhuman animals may survive.

Tanning was certainly not the only Surrealist to address through art the relations between humans and animals. Because animals have traditionally been perceived in the West as irrational beings incapable of conscious, logical thought, some Surrealists, such as Georges Bataille and Wilfredo Lam, viewed them as conduits for tapping into the unconscious. For them, the confrontation of the supposedly irrational, “primitive” animal with the “civilized” and rational

human carried the transgressive potential “to destroy the validity of all such bounded concepts” of human reason and propriety.⁴⁰ Hence, these Surrealists were interested in animals *not* for the sake of understanding them as humans’ equals—as did Tanning—but for the purpose of exposing the “disturbing, violent, primitive, animal-like aspects of humankind.”⁴¹ Nevertheless, there were other Surrealist artists who shared Tanning’s interest in exploring the more positive, mutual bonds between human and nonhuman animals.

One Surrealist in particular with whom Tanning and her art have been compared in terms of animal paintings is Argentine-born Leonor Fini. In “Women’s Work: The Transformations of Leonor Fini and Dorothea Tanning,” Annette Levitt proposes that both Tanning and Fini were fascinated with “the breaking of boundaries, with transformations and metamorphoses.”⁴² Examining such works as Fini’s *Petit Guardian Sphinx* (*Little Sphinx Gardien*, 1946) and *L’oeil du poisson* (*Fish Eye*, 1978), and Tanning’s *La Truite au bleu* (*Poached Trout*, 1952) and *Birthday* (1942), Levitt insists, “In their art, these women reveal that they have accepted, have returned to the ancient wisdom that humans, animals, and the earth are all linked, indeed are at times interchangeable.”⁴³ In their paintings, humans and animals interact with each other; in some cases, they share bodies, creating a human/animal hybrid. Refusing to be bound by “the

⁴⁰ Louise Tythacott, “Georges Bataille: An Anthropology of Otherness,” in *Surrealism and the Exotic* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 229.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 216.

⁴² Annette Shandler Levitt, “Women’s Work: The Transformations of Leonor Fini and Dorothea Tanning,” in *The Genres and Genders of Surrealism*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 89.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 94.

restraints of Western rationalism,” Tanning and Fini’s paintings celebrate the interconnectedness of all living beings.⁴⁴

As noted in the introduction, it has been argued that the artists’ gender and their interest in human/animal relationships are not coincidental. Levitt claims,

As women...[Tanning and Fini] have merely done what came naturally, as have other female artists associated with the Surrealists...unselfconsciously pushing the envelope, testing limits (both personal and aesthetic), living, thinking, believing, and creating without reference to norms. Transformation for them is part of life; defiance of physical laws is as natural as defying one’s parents or other authority figures.⁴⁵

Levitt’s notion that it is “natural” for women to undermine conventions, and that they do so *unselfconsciously*, is problematic. Not only does it perpetuate the longstanding, sexist western assumption aligning men with culture, rationality, and intellect, while women are reduced to nature, irrationality, and instinct, but it also denies artists like Tanning and Fini agency. It suggests they were only naïve and unaware of the subversive, political, and anti-western ideas underlying their works, and that they were, moreover, “merely” doing what they do best: being defiant.

In her text, Levitt goes on to assert that while male Surrealists utilized the idea of the female, “attuned to nature or to madness, who thus functioned as intermediaries for the men and their closed psyches, the women [artists] needed no translators of nature or the unconscious.”⁴⁶ Of course, Levitt is not alone in her presumption that it was merely natural for women to defy western rationalist ideals; as her text indicates, it was a widely held belief among the male

⁴⁴ Levitt, “Women’s Work,” 94.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 110.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Surrealists at the time. However, notwithstanding the historically common acceptance of the ideologically based culture-versus-nature binary between men and women, it is necessary to divorce the subversive content of Tanning's work from her gender; in other words, she did not paint human/animal encounters merely because she was a naturally defiant woman. Rather, as an intellectual, she was painfully aware of the negative consequences of the western marginalization and mistreatment of animals, and she recognized the fallacy of anthropocentrism. As an artist, she embraced the goal of making other people aware of the problems that arise—for both human and nonhuman animals—from anthropological myths of human superiority.

Apart from Tanning and Fini, another Surrealist painter, similarly interested in the theme of interdependency between animals and humans, was Remedios Varo. Her exploration of human/animal relationships is particularly evident in her cat paintings, such as *Sympathy* (1955), in which a woman patiently strokes the back of a cat who has just spilled a glass of milk. In this painting, the physical contact between human and animal creates a transfer of energy, suggested by the electrical sparks surrounding the woman and her cat. According to cultural and feminist theorist Nancy Vosburg, "Here, Varo has turned a quotidian incident (the spark of static electricity) into a reflection on the interconnectedness between humans and animals."⁴⁷ Indeed, one can locate many similarities between the themes in Tanning's figurative depictions of animals and those of Varo and Fini, namely their shared interest in exploring the bonds between human and nonhuman beings. Moreover, Tanning's mythical creatures, such as the winged lemur confronting her in her self-portrait *Birthday* (1942), could be compared to other Surrealist

⁴⁷ Nancy Vosburg, "Strange Yet 'Familiar': Cats and Birds in Remedios Varo's Artistic Universe," in *Figuring Animals: Essays on Animal Images in Art, Literature, Philosophy, and Popular Culture*, eds. Mary Sanders Pollock and Catherine Rainwater (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 87.

trends, such as Max Ernst's frequent representation of "Loplop, Bird Superior," his alter ego.⁴⁸

As artist and historian Paula Lombard writes in "Dorothea Tanning: On the Threshold to a Darker Place," this artist's animal motifs indicate a "questioning of human spiritual and intellectual superiority" that "led many Surrealists to adopt 'alter ego' animal images."⁴⁹

According to this view, the adoption of animals as alter egos constitutes a pictorial metaphor or personal totem in which an artist grants him- or herself the "superior" qualities of a particular animal through association. For example, as French writer Jacques Viot notes, "According to Max Ernst, even men might fly if only they stopped letting themselves be tamed,"⁵⁰ thus implying that, through Loplop, his alter ego, Ernst might be able to emulate the bird's untamed freedom.⁵¹

⁴⁸ For more information on Ernst's Loplop, as well as numerous examples of his art, see Werner Spies, *Max Ernst: Loplop: The Artist's Other Self* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983).

⁴⁹ Paula Lombard, "Dorothea Tanning: On the Threshold to a Darker Place," *Women's Art Journal* 2 (Spring – Summer, 1981): 51.

⁵⁰ Jacques Viot, *Cahiers d'Art* (Paris), Special Max Ernst Number, 1937, 68-69, quoted in Werner Spies, *Max Ernst: Loplop: The Artist's Other Self* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983), 10.

⁵¹ Another view of the metaphorical relationship between humans and animals is proposed by James Fernandez in "The Mission of Metaphor in Expressive Culture." Fernandez argues that humans, particularly in their youth, gain their identity by "predicating some sign-image, some metaphor upon themselves." In this way, humans first become "objects to themselves, by taking the point of view of 'the other,' before they can become subjects to themselves... This taking the other, this predication upon the pronoun, is a process that has for millennia turned to the animal world." Significantly, for Fernandez, this initial predication of identity leads ultimately to the mastery of these predications. There is a "movement from the sense of similarity between animals and men to the sense of difference," as humans find new sign-images other than animals upon which to predicate the subject. Fernandez's article may be helpful for understanding the alter-ego trend in Surrealism, although he is not interested in alter-egos per se. See: James Fernandez et al., "The Mission of Metaphor in Expressive Culture [and Comments and Reply]," *Current Anthropology* 15 (June, 1974): 122. However, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter, the relationship between humans and animals at hand in Tanning's art does not conform to this notion of metaphorical predication.

Due to Tanning's relationship with Ernst and her early association with the Surrealists, it might be tempting to interpret Tanning's dog imagery as the adoption of an alter ego. In that case, her dogs would possess some sort of quality or attribute that Tanning longed to embody, and which she could have emulated through representing herself as a dog. However, the possibility that Tanning painted dogs because she wanted to be like them suggests that she viewed them as some "other" to which she could only relate through metaphorical representation. On the contrary, this thesis, in the following chapters, will stress that Tanning viewed dogs (and, indeed, all animals) as allies. Hence, she painted not only animals but, more importantly, the *bonds* and connections that humans have—or can have—with fellow animals, rather than the links that they wish they could or "might" have, *if only* humans and animals were not so different.

In addition to the notion of the alter ego, Tanning's dog motifs could also be interpreted in terms of traditional canine symbolism. According to Hans Biedermann's *Dictionary of Symbolism*, dogs are "symbolically associated primarily with loyalty and vigilance," as well as protection and guardianship.⁵² To be sure, many of Tanning's paintings represent the loyal relationship between humans and their animal companions. As this thesis argues, Tanning felt a kinship with nonhuman animals—a bond of interdependence between species of the same animal kingdom. Indeed, the loyalty with which dogs have generally been associated throughout history adds an additional layer of meaning to Tanning's paintings; the loyalty that dogs symbolize relates to the loyalty and the kinship that binds human and nonhuman animals together.

⁵² Hans Biedermann, *Dictionary of Symbolism*, translated by James Hulbert (New York and Oxford: Facts On File, Inc., 1992), 97.

However, the purpose of this project is to go beyond the figurative dimension of Tanning's work. The dogs in Tanning's paintings do not function merely as symbols; they are more powerful than that. They are granted agency and "their own contributions to the plot."⁵³ They intermingle with the human figures, who share their space, and they address, through direct eye contact, their external audience. As Woodward declares through her research on animal intentionality and subjectivity in literature, the granting of agency to animals underscores the "potential" of a "shared world," rather than the "absent animals who haunt the texts [or images]... through being deployed symbolically, characterized as cardboard cut-outs."⁵⁴ In other words, Tanning's painted dogs are not mere motifs or readymade symbols that she pastes into the human world; rather, they are collaborators who actively work with their human counterparts to show their viewers the *possibilities* that can come of new human/animal relationships. Through Tanning's post-1955 paintings, the nature of this collaboration becomes most effective.

While it is clear that Tanning's early figurative paintings display numerous similarities to the work of other Surrealist artists, the main focus in this thesis is on the works Tanning completed after 1955, which break from her earlier conventional figuration and transform into a much more fluid and abstract imagery. This shift distinguishes Tanning's animal paintings from those of her fellow Surrealists, such as Fini and Varo, and it enables her art to function in a more operative, effective way, since she was able to move her paintings beyond the realm of figuration, and place them in the domain of events, thereby strategically beckoning her audience to become more interactively engaged in experiencing and contemplating her paintings' messages.

⁵³ Woodward, *The Animal Gaze*, 16.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Rather than representing things (in the figurative or mimetic sense), Tanning attempted to represent or encode feelings. She wrote, “What of the human enigma, the magic of hallucination, powers of the eye, man’s baffling consciousness, the relations between human beings, animals, and all living things, including stones?... When I paint I try to represent my feelings about some of these things... Representation is separate from description.”⁵⁵ Indeed, in her post-1955 works, Tanning does not represent or imitate figures and objects in narrative settings as she had in the earlier phase of her career. In her later work, her mode of representation evolves into a matter of expression; her paintings become more connotative, rather than denotative. And, as will be explained further in chapter four, rather than merely painting “things” as they are in the world, she also paints the all-important relationships *between* things.

Tanning once wrote, “I want to seduce by means of imperceptible passages from one reality to another. The spectator is caught (oops!) in a net from which he can extricate himself only by going through the whole picture till he comes to the exit. My dearest wish: to make a picture without any exit at all, either for me or for him.”⁵⁶ This quotation is applicable to almost all of Tanning’s post-1955 paintings. The purpose of her abstract, enigmatic style of painting was to invite her viewers’ rapt involvement with the works, leading them into an array of possibilities no longer limited to such conventional binaries as artist versus viewer or speaker versus audience. In effect, the audience becomes part of the art, entangled in the work and urged, by the maze-like composition, to actively find the solution or the way out. While working their way through the image, viewers also confront an additional binary, the human/animal binary, which is challenged by Tanning’s compelling conflation of human and nonhuman bodies.

⁵⁵ Dorothea Tanning, unpublished journal (#2), Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive, New York, NY, p. 81.

⁵⁶ Tanning, *Dorothea Tanning: 10 Recent Paintings and a Biography*, n.p.

After 1955, Tanning begins to ask more of her audience than mere looking. She seeks to transcend her viewers' detached status from the work of art so that they become part of the performance of making meaning. Her paintings begin to ask more questions than they answer, particularly of humans' relationship to nonhumans, and their resolution relies as much on the viewers' imagination as on Tanning's own artistic vision. To fulfill their polemical purpose, the works depend on active viewer engagement. As Tanning asserted, she wanted to trap her audience in her kaleidoscopic images; and, as the following chapters will posit, she sought her viewers' compliance ultimately in order to destabilize and reconfigure their preconceptions—namely, the erroneous western assumption that humans are somehow entirely independent of and superior to nonhuman animals—through first reconfiguring their interactions with her paintings.

The following chapter will discuss what it means for Tanning's paintings to function in the domain of event; that is, how “representation” can operate as a dynamic *experience* rather than as a static image or pronouncement. Moreover, in order to ground these ideas of event and experience in Tanning's concern for the human/animal relationship, the concept of the “becoming-animal,” as theorized by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, will be introduced, arguing that the “becoming-animal”—a dynamic disruption of boundaries between humans and animals—takes shape in Tanning's post-1955 abstract paintings.

Chapter III

From Seeing to Becoming

As chapter one proposed, beginning in the mid-1950s, Dorothea Tanning demonstrated an increasing urge to utilize her art as a politicizing mechanism, to engage viewer participation, and to incite action through her paintings. No longer content with producing static and figurative images—which presented fantastical and imaginary scenarios while employing recognizable modes of representation—Tanning began to paint enigmatic and largely nonfigurative, abstract compositions. These dynamic compositions necessitate an active, rather than passive, engagement on behalf of the viewer. They are not to be merely seen by the viewer, but *experienced*. As such, Tanning’s post-1955 paintings function in the domain of events. That is to say, they function primarily as expressive, experiential occurrences, rather than as purely representational images. However, as the following chapters will demonstrate, this distinction does not mean that what is represented, i.e., the content and subject matter, is insignificant in comparison to the painting style or mode of expression. Rather, subject matter and style work collaboratively in Tanning’s paintings to produce the resulting outcome: the artwork-as-event, as opposed to the artwork-as-object.

To clarify the notion of the event and the way it relates to Tanning’s oeuvre, this thesis employs the theoretical insight of the twentieth-century French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. In particular, it is in Deleuze’s solo work that the concept of “event” is most clearly elucidated; and it is in the collaborative books *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and*

Schizophrenia and *What is Philosophy?* that Deleuze and Guattari most fully develop the concept of a very specific type of event, the becoming-animal. As this chapter will argue, the concepts of becoming and the event provide important clues for understanding Tanning's post-1955 paintings and what this author has identified as their politicizing function. The following pages will explain Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the becoming-animal, as well as the many complex ideas upon which it is built, in order to then demonstrate how Tanning's paintings function as becomings-animal.

First, however, it should be noted that this chapter is not intended as a complete and thorough analysis of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy. As many scholars have noted, the works of Deleuze and Guattari—both collaborative and independent—are very complex and often intentionally confounding. Deleuzian scholar Joe Hughes writes, "Deleuze is a philosopher who never uses a word without transforming and often reinventing its sense."¹ Similarly, Ronald Bogue asserts, "[Deleuze] is an inveterate neologizer and inventor of concepts... His arguments are often dense, and they always entail a thought that proceeds by means of paradox. Although carefully structured and gracefully crafted, his chapters frequently challenge readers' abilities to follow the arabesques of the general line of reasoning."² To be sure, a comprehensive analysis that would do justice to Deleuze and Guattari's ideas is beyond the scope of this project. Nor is it the intention here to apply their theories to Tanning's oeuvre in any formulaic or systematic way. Rather, this thesis will use a selection of their ideas as a point of departure for elucidating

¹ Joe Hughes, *Deleuze's Difference and Repetition* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009), 1.

² Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 7.

Tanning's paintings, while also nuancing the applicability and relevancy of Deleuze and Guattari's theories to the study of art in general.

An Introduction to Deleuze and Guattari

This chapter will provide a basic and necessarily simplified summation of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical project in order to arrive at their conception of a unique event called the becoming-animal. In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari write, "We believe in the existence of very special becomings-animal traversing human beings and sweeping them away, affecting the animal no less than the human."³ Elsewhere, they describe becoming-animal as "absolute deterritorialization," explaining that, "to become animal is to participate in movement...to cross a threshold...to find a world of pure intensities where all forms come undone, as do all the significations, signifiers, and signifieds, to the benefit of an unformed matter of deterritorialized flux."⁴ Within this definition, Deleuze and Guattari introduce a specific vocabulary of becoming, which is intrinsic to their entire philosophical project. To begin with, deterritorialization is a kind of transformation.⁵ It means, essentially, to be broken of one's habits—to be broken of one's habitual and customary thoughts, modes of

³ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 237.

⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 13.

⁵ In more complex terms, Deleuze and Guattari define deterritorialization in chapter seven of *A Thousand Plateaus* through a series of theorems. On page 172, they describe deterritorialization as a "movement" in which organism is "removed" from its "stratum" and reconnected to other strata. Later in the chapter, on pages 190-191, deterritorialization is associated with a line of "creative flight...forming strange new becomings." See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 167-191.

perceiving, thinking, feeling, and relating to other beings. To be deterritorialized means to be destabilized, and to abandon one's ordinary way of being in the world. Deleuze and Guattari's use of the term "threshold" in this definition is also significant; for them, the concept of the threshold is opposed to limits. The threshold "lies beyond the limit."⁶ It is the liminal space *between* two beings. Unlike limits, a threshold between beings—such as between humans and animals—is not *reached*; rather, in becoming, it is *crossed*. Crossing the threshold invites deterritorialization, and thus brings change. As we will see, the kind of change that Deleuze and Guattari seek is the kind that enables a "world of pure intensities where all forms come undone." The term "intensities" is also crucial for understanding Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical project. However, in order to fully grasp their use of the term and its significance for the becoming-animal, it is helpful first to examine Deleuze's conception of difference, which he most thoroughly elucidated in his book, *Difference and Repetition*.

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze posits a theory of difference-in-itself; that is, he outlines a theory of difference that moves beyond the traditional conception of difference as an empirical relation between two terms, each with a prior identity of its own. For Deleuze, "identity persists, but is now a something produced by a prior relation between differentials."⁷ He writes, "We tend to subordinate difference to identity in order to think it... We also have a tendency to subordinate it to resemblance...to opposition...and to analogy... In other words, we

⁶ Leonard Lawlor, "Following the Rats: Becoming-Animal in Deleuze and Guattari," *SubStance* 37 (2008): 172.

⁷ Daniel Smith and John Protevi, "Gilles Deleuze," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2013), ed. Edward N. Zalta: n.p., accessed March 11, 2013, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/deleuze/>. Though an online encyclopedia entry, this source provides a wealth of credible information, as both authors have published extensively on Deleuze's writings.

do not think difference in itself.”⁸ In Deleuze’s view, in order to think difference properly in and of itself, it cannot be preceded by identity. Identity may “exist as a principle, but as a second principle, as a principle *become*,” which would “revolve around the Different.”⁹ In other words, identity is conditioned by difference and, moreover, it is not a form of static *being* but, rather, it is a product of dynamic *becoming*. In his theory of difference, Deleuze subverts all notions of fixity and stability in identity. He places difference at the heart of all creation; it is precisely through intrinsic difference and differential relations that all molar objects, subjects, and institutions come to be.¹⁰ Difference is fundamental to Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of becoming because it demonstrates that all things and beings *become*; that is, they are constructed, assembled, conditioned, and contingent upon their environment, and upon the other things and beings that they encounter. Thus it becomes evident, in this conception of difference in itself, how Deleuze and Guattari are able to provide significant insights into a new way of thinking about the relationship between human and nonhuman animals that combats the western tenets of humanism and anthropocentrism: if identities are based on differential relations, rather than being pre-given and static, then it is possible to abandon notions of humans as being intrinsically, fundamentally, and unequivocally different—in the traditional use of the word—from animals.

Related to Deleuze’s theory of difference is his conception of repetition. Like difference, Deleuze wants to think of repetition not as a resemblance or repetition of an “original self-

⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), xv.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁰ As this chapter will later explain, the term “molar” means the recognizable, extensive form of an entity when it is assigned a “fixed” identity.

identical thing,” but as repetition-in-itself.¹¹ Repetition, for Deleuze, is repetition *of difference*. With his theory of repetition, Deleuze borrows Nietzsche’s concept of eternal return. He writes, “Returning is being, but only the being of becoming. The eternal return does not bring back ‘the same’, but returning constitutes the only Same of that which becomes.”¹² What this means is that repetition is the “returning” or repetition of becoming, which is a concept of identity based on difference. Hence, it is the repetition of difference, not the repetition of the same. Ultimately, what the interrelated theories of difference and repetition demonstrate is that identity is contingent upon differential relations (difference), and that the creation of identity is an ongoing process (repetition), which continually yields new identities or modes of being in the world.

Now that the concepts of difference and repetition have been established, it is possible to return to Deleuze and Guattari’s use of the term intensity and to understand its importance for their conception of becoming. Deleuze explains that intensity is to be “understood as pure difference in itself.”¹³ Intensity is the quality of difference that determines extensive (quantitative) identities. The distinction between intensity and extensity is not merely a distinction between internal and external properties; rather, it is a question of divisibility. Intensities refer to properties that cannot be divided, added to, or subtracted from, without changing in nature and kind. Examples of “*difference of intensity*” include: “differences of level, temperature, pressure, tension, potential,” and color.¹⁴ A qualitative change—a change in

¹¹ Smith and Protevi, “Gilles Deleuze,” n.p.

¹² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 41.

¹³ Ibid., 144.

¹⁴ Ibid., 222.

intensities—results in a “change in kind.”¹⁵ For Deleuze, intensities are the pure differences that combine within a body to form a particular identity. Moreover, because all beings are comprised of intensities, it is possible to think of them as multiplicities. This means that rather than constituting a unity or totality, or a fixed identity, beings are composed of multiple intensities (differences), which condition their extensive properties (their form and appearance) at any given moment. A becoming—which, as described in the definition given above, opens up into a world of pure intensities—takes place when one being’s intensities come into contact with another being’s intensities, and in so doing, they both become reconfigured. This reconfiguration of intensities results in a change in the nature of being; that is, it results in a becoming.

The idea of becoming (specifically, the becoming-animal) will be more closely examined later in this chapter; first, however, it will be helpful to turn to the notion of event in order to situate becoming as a *type* of event. The term “event” is used in various ways throughout Deleuze’s personal work and in the collaborative projects between Deleuze and Guattari. This thesis, however, is concerned with the event as it is conceived in Deleuze’s book *The Logic of Sense*. In this book, Deleuze distinguishes between ideal, incorporeal events, and actual spatio-temporal states of affairs (actual occurrences that take place in ordered time and space).¹⁶ His primary concern is with ideal events. He defines the ideal event as “a singularity—or rather a set of singularities,” which are “turning points and points of inflection.”¹⁷ Thus, as Philip Goodchild explains in his book *Gilles Deleuze and the Question of Philosophy*, events are turning points in

¹⁵ Smith and Protevi, “Gilles Deleuze,” n.p.

¹⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester and ed. by Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 53.

¹⁷ Ibid., 52.

which “we pass from one state to another.”¹⁸ These singular points are “events of rupture,” of transformation.¹⁹

To reiterate, the events that interest Deleuze are not chronological states of affairs that take place in the ordered time and space of the present. Rather, they take place in the “floating, nonpulsed time proper to Aeon, in other words, the time of the pure event or of becoming, which articulates relative speeds and slownesses independently of the chronometric or chronological values that time assumes” in the ordered, spatio-temporal world.²⁰ While Deleuze acknowledges that, “with every event, there is indeed the present moment of its actualization”²¹ (its existence in time and space), there is also an aspect of the event that exists only in the past and in the future, in free-floating time, because it is purely virtual; it is real, but incorporeal. This is the pure event that remains immaterial, in “pure *reserve*.”²²

An event remains in “reserve” as a concept, which can be recalled again and again, and actualized or acted upon differently each time it is experienced. In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari state, “Concepts are events;” a concept “speaks the pure Event.”²³ The significance of the pure event—and its incorporeal, conceptual existence—is that it creates a problematic. In

¹⁸ Philip Goodchild, *Gilles Deleuze and the Question of Philosophy* (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press; London: Associated University Press, 1996), 54.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 263. As will be explained in the following chapter, the notion of the event existing in free-floating, indefinite time is also closely related to Bergson’s conception of time as duration.

²¹ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 151.

²² Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press), 156.

²³ Ibid., 36; 21.

The Logic of Sense, Deleuze writes, “The mode of the event is the problematic. One must not say that there are problematic events, but that events bear exclusively upon problems and define their conditions.”²⁴ In other words, an event affects thought and offers up a problem for contemplation. Goodchild explains that events—particularly events that seem unfamiliar or unrecognizable—“form a problem for thought, and they force us to think.”²⁵ Indeed, this notion of being “forced to think” was important for Deleuze and for Deleuze and Guattari’s project as a whole. However, to understand the implications of a “forced” thought, one must first understand what this notion rejects: the dogmatic image of thought.

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze develops his entire theory of difference and repetition in opposition to the “dogmatic image of thought.” He writes,

According to this image, thought has an affinity with the true; it formally possesses the true and materially wants the true. It is *in terms of* this image that everybody knows and is presumed to know what it means to think... Thought remains subject to this Image which already prejudices everything... We may call this image of thought a dogmatic, orthodox, or moral image.²⁶

The dogmatic image of thought, which has overtaken western philosophy as well as western attitudes in general, is the assumption that the fundamental purpose of thinking is to attain “true” knowledge. It presupposes that humans are naturally capable of thought, and that “everybody knows what it means to think and to be.”²⁷ The dogmatic image of thought thus relies on the Cartesian notion of the Cogito (“I think”): the notion that identity of the self is based on the ability to think; to think is to exist, therefore everyone naturally *thinks*. Deleuze, in contrast,

²⁴ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 54.

²⁵ Goodchild, *Gilles Deleuze and the Question of Philosophy*, 40.

²⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 131.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 130.

disputes the presumption that thinking is a natural and automatic human exercise; for him, *real* thinking is forced. He argues that what is traditionally considered to be “thinking” is merely recognition, and he defines recognition as “the harmonious exercise of all the faculties upon a supposed same object: the same object may be seen, touched, remembered, imagined, or conceived.”²⁸ An object is recognized when all of the faculties, “perception, memory, imagination, understanding,”²⁹ work harmoniously, each agreeing that they are perceiving, remembering, imagining, and understanding the same object. Recognition thus presupposes that all thinking subjects possess common sense; that is, it presupposes that there exists a “unity of all the faculties” in any given subject.³⁰ Another characteristic of the dogmatic image of thought is that it prevents difference from being understood as difference in itself. Rather, the image of thought subordinates difference to representation; it reduces difference to “an object of representation always in relation to a conceived identity, a judged analogy, an imagined opposition or a perceived similitude.”³¹ In each of these cases, identity is understood as a given, rather than as something that is constructed and contingent.

In opposition to the above characteristics of the dogmatic image of thought—its assumption that thought is a natural process, its reliance on recognition, and its subordination of difference to fixed notions of identity—Deleuze constructs a differential theory of the faculties in

²⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 133.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 138.

order to demonstrate how real, productive forms of thinking are made possible.³² Again, for Deleuze, thinking is not a natural activity: “It cannot be regarded as a *fact* that thinking is the natural exercise of a faculty.”³³ Rather, “something in the world forces us to think,” and “this something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*.”³⁴ Significantly, the primary characteristic of this “fundamental encounter,” according to Deleuze, “is that it can only be sensed.”³⁵ Therefore, it is possible to conceive of Deleuze’s fundamental encounter as a sense-event. This is because, insofar as it is incorporeal and ideal, an event is also something that is sensed. Deleuze defines sense as “an incorporeal, complex, and irreducible entity...a pure event.”³⁶ It is not signified, represented, or lived in ordinary time and space. Rather, it is “that which is expressed... irreducible to individual states of affairs [or] particular images.”³⁷

In his analysis, Deleuze distinguishes between the “sensible” as it operates in recognition on the one hand, and the sensible as it operates in the encounter or event on the other. “In recognition, the sensible is not at all that which can only be sensed, but that which bears directly upon the senses in an object which can be recalled, imagined or conceived... It therefore presupposes the exercise of the senses and the exercise of the other faculties in a common

³² These characteristics constitute three of the eight postulates of the dogmatic image of thought laid out in Chapter 3 of *Difference and Repetition*. For a concise overview of the eight postulates, see Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 167.

³³ Ibid., 132.

³⁴ Ibid., 139.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 19.

³⁷ Ibid.

sense.”³⁸ In contrast, the object of encounter “is not the given but that by which the given is given. It is therefore in a certain sense the imperceptible... It is imperceptible precisely from the point of view of recognition...from the point of view of an empirical exercise of the senses in which sensibility grasps only that which also could be grasped by other faculties.”³⁹ What this means is that when an object is recognized, it is identified unanimously by all of the faculties, including sense. However, in the pure event, sensibility takes on a new role; it becomes the imperceptible expression or sensation that communicates between the subject and the object of encounter. Deleuze is interested in this pure event or “sensed” encounter, which eludes common sense—the harmonious ordering of *all* the faculties—and instead creates a discord among the faculties.

An encounter that awakens thought from its “natural stupor” is one that inflicts violence upon common sense and forces thought, posing problems.⁴⁰ The faculties become unhinged and effectively pushed to their limits, each inflicting “violence” on the other, breaking the ordered form of common sense.⁴¹ According to Deleuze, it is not representation or recognition that can create this discord of the faculties but, on the contrary, “free or untamed states of difference in itself...that which is at once both imperceptible for empirical sensibility... and at the same time that which can be perceived only from the point of view of a transcendental sensibility which apprehends it immediately in the encounter.”⁴² Significantly, then, the purpose of this encounter

³⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 139.

³⁹ Ibid., 140.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 139.

⁴¹ Ibid., 141.

⁴² Ibid., 144.

or event is to conceive of difference in itself and thus to escape the dogmatic image of thought. Deleuze explains, “In an encounter, what forces sensation and that which can only be sensed are one and the same thing... In effect, the intensive or difference in intensity is at once both the object of the encounter and the object to which the encounter raises sensibility.”⁴³ In other words, it is pure intensity or difference that is sensed in an encounter, producing a discord among the faculties and thereby forcing thought; at the same time, the differences and intensities that are sensed are precisely what form the object of thought. Thus, “rather than a reconciliation of the faculties, with thought, a ‘fractured self’ is constrained to think ‘difference in itself’ in ideas.”⁴⁴

Indeed, the event fractures or destabilizes a subject because he or she is no longer capable of seizing an object in a recognizable way; this failure of recognition reveals that the subject is, in fact, *not* a stable and unified “whole” possessing common sense and the natural capacity for knowledge. In a sense-encounter, the faculties do not cohere according to ordered common sense, and recognition cannot take place.

Significantly, the failure of recognition should not be taken as a negative outcome of an event or encounter; for, as this chapter has demonstrated, it is a means of fracturing an individual’s sense of stability and self, which is one of Deleuze and Guattari’s primary aims as it paves the way for the creation of the *new*. Moreover, it is only by moving beyond recognition that new, unconventional, and productive ways of thinking become possible. When thinking is subordinated to empirical recognition, one remains “imprisoned” by the doxa, or orthodox opinion.⁴⁵ Deleuze asserts, “The form of recognition has never sanctioned anything but the

⁴³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 144-145.

⁴⁴ Smith and Protevi, n.p.

⁴⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 134.

recognizable and the recognized; form will never inspire anything but conformities.”⁴⁶

Moreover, “What is recognized is not only an object but also the values attached to an object.”⁴⁷

Thus, recognition can only perpetuate already-established values. It can only think about things that have already been thought, and it can only produce knowledge that has already been produced.

Hence, the only way that beliefs, values, and attitudes—both personal and cultural—can be transformed is through some event or encounter that radicalizes thought and exposes it to something that is not already recognizable or established. Thus, the event is a *turning point*, a metamorphosis of one’s mode of being in the world or relating to the world. Deleuze writes, “The splendor and the magnificence of the event is sense. The event is not what occurs... it is rather inside what occurs, the purely expressed. It signals and awaits us.”⁴⁸ “Our” responsibility, then, is “to will and release the event, to become the offspring of one’s own events.”⁴⁹ Simply, “It is a question of becoming a citizen of the world.”⁵⁰

As this chapter has demonstrated, as a person’s faculties become unhinged during an encounter, the person’s entire sense of self also becomes unhinged. Thus the significance of this pure (ideal) event is not the physical state of affairs of what is “happening” but, rather, the incorporeal consequences of the encounter—the sense-event which produces a new mode of thinking and being, a turning point in existence. Deleuze asserts, “Personal uncertainty is...an

⁴⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 134.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 135.

⁴⁸ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 149.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 148.

objective structure of the event itself... It fragments the subject.”⁵¹ This is precisely the goal of Deleuze’s entire philosophical project: “To give birth to a new kind of community, a new kind of relationality between beings in the world.”⁵² In fact, it is possible, in Deleuze’s estimation, to do away with the notion of “being” altogether, arguing instead for a “categorical reversal according to which being is said of becoming, identity of that which is different, the one of the multiple, etc.”⁵³ In other words, a person no longer “is,” but “becomes.” One’s identity and position in the world is in constant flux, continually becoming and transforming into something else. An event, then, as a turning point, is a point of becoming. One can therefore understand becoming, and different types of becomings, as special kinds of events.

As this chapter has asserted, it is possible for a work of art, such as Tanning’s post-1955 paintings, to function as events—when considering “event” in the sense in which it has been outlined above. However, before the nature of art’s relationship to events can be fully grasped, it is necessary to define the particular type of event with which this thesis is concerned: the becoming-animal. The concept of “becoming” is pervasive throughout Deleuze’s work, but it is in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* that Deleuze and Guattari examine “becoming” and the specific notion of “becoming-animal” at length. The beginning of this chapter explained that to “become,” according to Deleuze and Guattari, “is to participate in movement... to cross a threshold... to find a world of pure intensities where all forms come undone.” To be sure, Deleuze and Guattari’s becoming is essentially a process of *undoing* the stable formation of the “self” and forging an “alliance” with an “other,” so that the self is no

⁵¹ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 3.

⁵² Katharine Wolfe, “From Aesthetics to Politics: Rancière, Kant and Deleuze,” *Contemporary Aesthetics (CA)* 4 (April 2006): n.p.

⁵³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 40.

longer a homogenous unity but a heterogeneous “threshold, a door, a becoming between two multiplicities.”⁵⁴ Recall that for Deleuze and Guattari, all beings are not “whole” individuals but, rather, multiplicities, such that they are comprised of multiple intensities (“pure differences”) that constitute their identity at any given moment. Moreover, multiplicities are constantly shifting as they come into contact with other beings, other multiplicities. Thus, all beings—people, animals, plants, and even inanimate objects—are in a constant state of flux, continually passing through thresholds and becoming something different.

It is not enough, however, to merely come into contact with another being in order for a becoming to take place. To reiterate, to become means to forge an alliance with something; thus, to become-animal means to forge an alliance with the animal. Deleuze and Guattari are quick to reject any association of becoming with mere imitation, resemblance, or metaphorical comparison.⁵⁵ To become an animal does not mean to imitate or to behave like it; rather, it means to enter into a “zone of proximity” with the animal. A zone of proximity, also sometimes referred to as a “zone of indiscernibility,” is a zone of affinity and alliance. It is marked by the “*copresence* of a particle,” i.e. a shared intensity.⁵⁶ According to Deleuze and Guattari, it indicates “‘something shared or indiscernible,’ a proximity ‘that makes it impossible to say where the boundary between the human and animal lies.’”⁵⁷ Another way to understand the zone of proximity is through Deleuze and Guattari’s use of the term “affect.” Following Spinoza, Deleuze and Guattari explain that an affect is what a body “can do,” its ability to act and to be

⁵⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 249.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 233-237; 273

⁵⁶ Ibid., 273.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

acted upon in a given assemblage of multiplicities.⁵⁸ In a becoming, one body's affects "enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body," and their affects join forces.⁵⁹ "Affect is not a personal feeling, nor is it a characteristic; it is the effectuation of a power...that throws the self into upheaval and makes it reel."⁶⁰ Thus, to become is to open oneself up to the powers and affects of another being or multiplicity; this is how an alliance is formed.

Deleuze and Guattari refer to this process of becoming and forming alliances as a process of involution: "Becoming is involutionary, involution is creative... to involve is to form a block that runs its own line '*between*' the terms in play and beneath assignable relations. [Emphasis added.]"⁶¹ This means that the significance of a becoming lies not in either of the two parties that enter into a zone of proximity, but in the "block of becoming" that is created *between* the two.⁶² This is an important notion to grasp in order to understand the implications of Deleuze and Guattari's becoming. In a becoming such as the becoming-animal, the human does not really *become* an animal, and the significance of the event is not the entity which one "becomes;" rather, it is the act of becoming itself. What is important is that one becomes anything at all, rather than remaining imprisoned by the presupposition that he or she is a static individual. "Becoming produces nothing other than itself... What is real is the becoming itself, the block of

⁵⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 256-257.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 257.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 240.

⁶¹ Ibid., 238-239.

⁶² Ibid., 238.

becoming, not the supposedly fixed terms through which that which becomes passes.”⁶³ Deleuze and Guattari continue:

A becoming is neither one nor two, nor the relation of the two; it is the in-between, the border or line of flight or descent running perpendicular to both. If becoming is a block...it is because it constitutes a zone of proximity and indiscernibility, a no-man’s-land, a nonlocalizable relation sweeping up the two distant or contiguous points, carrying one into the proximity of the other... The line or block of becoming...produces a shared deterritorialization.⁶⁴

As this quotation demonstrates, it is precisely the block of becoming, or zone of proximity and indeterminacy between two terms (multiplicities), that is the productive aspect of becoming, that which makes it innovative and radical. This is because, in a becoming, the focus is no longer on individual entities, but on their constant and shared processes of *deterritorialization*. As explained at the beginning of this chapter, deterritorialization destabilizes a body. It is, according to Deleuze and Guattari, a process of “decoding” a subject, breaking down his or her established codes, customs, habits, and supposedly fixed identity.⁶⁵ To be deterritorialized is to be “disoriented;”⁶⁶ it is to become a haecceity. “Haecceity” is a term that Deleuze and Guattari use in a specific way to describe a being that is no longer stable and fixed but instead enters into a state of flux and perpetual becoming: “You will yield nothing to haecceities unless you realize that that is what you are, and that you are nothing but that.”⁶⁷ A

⁶³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 238.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 293.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 221.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 283.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 262.

haecceity is not a fixed “person, subject, thing, or substance.”⁶⁸ It is, rather, a deterritorialized and desubjectified multiplicity or assemblage of multiplicities (since becomings form aggregates and conjunctions of two or more multiplicities). The entire process of becoming deterritorialized and yielding haecceities has the sole purpose of entering a “molecular” state of existence.

Deleuze and Guattari make a very important distinction between molecular and molar states of existence, and this distinction is crucial in order to understand the purpose of the becoming-animal. In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari write: “All becomings are molecular: the animal, the flower, or stone one becomes are molecular collectivities, haecceities, not molar subjects, objects, or form that we know from the outside and recognize from experience, through science, or by habit. If this is true, then we must say the same of things human.”⁶⁹ A molar entity is defined by its unified form, “endowed with organs and functions and assigned as a subject.”⁷⁰ A molecular haecceity, by contrast, is a multiplicity of elements or intensities that “somehow cohere without entering into a regular, fixed pattern of organization.”⁷¹ It is a “loose aggregate of heterogeneous terms related by events and affects.”⁷² Molar identities are the recognizable extensive forms and the categorical entities subsumed within an organized society and assigned a fixed position within that society; for example, an “I,” a woman, a man, a barking dog, or an oak tree. A molecular existence, on the other hand, is not subsumed into a stratified, organized world as a molar entity is. It is the intensive, unfixed

⁶⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 261.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 275.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Bogue, *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts*, 34.

⁷² Goodchild, *Gilles Deleuze and the Question of Philosophy*, 68.

flow of perpetual becoming upon which the molar order of existence is imposed. As such, it is not restricted to or restrained by assignable categories such as “human” or “animal” or “oak tree.” Thus, all becomings share the goal of becoming “progressively more molecular” so as to escape rigid classifications and restrictive codifications.⁷³

Molecular becomings also work to undermine the “great molar powers of family, career, and conjugality.”⁷⁴ This is because molecular qualities are those that escape the recognition of molar entities and established, orthodox values. Thus, becoming-molecular, in Deleuze and Guattari’s view, is the only way to move beyond the strict and pervasive “dogmatic image of thought,” which perpetuates established values, beliefs, and ways of viewing and categorizing the molar world. The distinction between molar and molecular states of existence therefore provides a key clue to understanding the purpose of the becoming-animal: to move beyond the conventional and orthodox molar distinction between the so-called fixed categories of humans on the one hand versus animals on the other, as well as all of the implied values, attitudes, and presuppositions that accompany that distinction.⁷⁵

⁷³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 248.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 233.

⁷⁵ By moving beyond a molar conception of identity, becoming disrupts notions of unified subjectivity and enclosing subject positions and classifications. In this way, Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy may be understood as escaping what Jacques Lacan refers to as the “symbolic order” (i.e. the order of language, which structures, frames, and mediates the customs, norms, rules, and other constructs of a given society). One might also think of this “escape” in terms of Guattari’s concept of transversality, which advocates constant movement across different subject positions, thereby escaping identitarian fixity and limitation. For more information on Guattari’s notion of transversality, see Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (London: Athlone, 2000); for Lacan’s discussion of the symbolic order see Jacques Lacan and Wladimir Granoff, “Fetishism: the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real,” in *Perversions: Psychodynamics and Therapy*, ed. Sándor Lorand and Michael Balint (New York: Gramercy Books, 1956), 265-276.

The molecular quality of becoming—that which enables it to move beyond molar institutions and doctrines—indicates the presence of a sort of activism underlying Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of becoming, aimed toward political and social change. Deleuze and Guattari claim that all becomings are not only molecular but also “minoritarian.”⁷⁶ To understand what this means, it is necessary to define “majority” and “minority” according to Deleuze and Guattari’s use of the terms. They argue that “majority” is not a quantitative term of measurement but rather the “determination of a state or standard in relation to which larger quantities, as well as the smallest, can be said to be minoritarian: white-man, adult-male, etc. Majority implies a state of domination.”⁷⁷ The majority is, in other words, the molar entity or category of entities that holds the upper hand in relation to all other molar entities. Thus, in most western societies, it is the adult, white, human male that constitutes the “majority,” despite the fact that there are usually more women, children, and nonhuman animals in that society. This is because, as we have seen, the western world is largely patriarchal, anthropocentric, and Eurocentric, marginalizing all non-white, non-male, and non-human beings as “others.” Hence, “there is an entire politics of becomings-animal,” in that “they express minoritarian groups, or groups that are oppressed, prohibited, in revolt, or always on the fringe of recognized institutions.”⁷⁸

Becomings are necessarily minoritarian because they are aimed at the destabilization of identity and being, and also at the “rupture with the central institutions that have established themselves.”⁷⁹ Becomings cannot overthrow fixed categories, binaries, and dualisms without

⁷⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 291.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 247.

first overthrowing their very origin, which is the established majority, or the standard to which all “others” are defined. For this reason, one can only become-minoritarian; that is, only a minority (such as a woman, animal, non-European, or child) can serve as a medium for becoming through which the one who “becomes” may abandon his or her molar identity and position in relation to the molar majority.⁸⁰ Becoming is, above all, a means for stripping all molar beings to expose the underlying molecular multiplicities, thereby entering a state of the in-between in which one can no longer be defined in relation to the molar standard of majority. It is only by doing away with fixed identities and categories that one can finally move beyond the restrictive dualisms and binaries of western thought.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 247.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 291. Deleuze and Guattari also argue that all becomings must first pass through a “becoming-woman.” In their view, it is “the special situation of women in relation to the man-standard that accounts for the fact that becomings, being minoritarian, always pass through a becoming-woman.” (See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 291.) In fact, according to Deleuze and Guattari, even a woman must first “become-woman” in order to become-child, -animal, etc. The notion that in order to become “other” one must also necessarily become-woman has sexist implications, as it essentializes women and typifies them as man’s closest “other” by positing that “woman” is the first minority through the standard male majority passes in the process of becoming. It is beyond the purpose of this thesis to analyze and apply all aspects of Deleuze and Guattari’s complex project to Tanning’s animal paintings. The focus here is purely on the notion of becoming-animal and the implications that it may have for a renewed outlook on human and nonhuman animal relationships. However, readers interested in engaging more closely with the feminist implications of their theories may wish to examine the writings of Luce Irigaray, a feminist scholar whose ideas of multiplicity intersect with Deleuze and Guattari’s, and who has productively built upon their ideas in her own project. See, for example, Luce Irigaray, *Thinking the Difference: For a Peaceful Revolution*, trans. Karin Montin (New York: Routledge, 1994). For useful secondary sources on the connections between Irigaray and Deleuze, see Tamsin Lorraine, *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experiments in Visceral Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); Rosi Braidotti, “Of Bugs and Women: Irigaray and Deleuze on the Becoming-Woman,” in *Engaging with Irigaray*, ed. Carolyne Burke, Naomi Schor, and Margaret Whitford (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 11-137; and Dorothea Olkowski, “Body, Knowledge and Becoming-Woman: Morpho-logic in Deleuze and Irigaray,” in *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*, ed. Ian Buchanan and Clarie Colebrook (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 86-109.

One such dualism that becoming seeks to undo is the human/animal or culture/nature dualism, which is overthrown by the becoming-animal. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the becoming-animal is a necessary confrontation between nature on the one hand and “the machines of human beings, the roar of factories and bombers,” on the other.⁸² In other words, it is a confrontational becoming between two terms, a human and an animal, which produces a third term: the becoming-animal. The becoming-animal is the zone of proximity between the human and animal, within which an alliance is formed.

Deleuze and Guattari lay out a series of rules and criteria for the becoming-animal. These will be reviewed briefly in the following pages in order to arrive at the more important concern, which is the opening that the becoming-animal creates for rethinking human and nonhuman animal relationships. To begin with, the becoming-animal is not just a becoming or a transformation of the human into the animal. As this chapter has explained, the significance of the becoming lies not in the two terms of becoming (the becomer and that which the becomer becomes), but in the process of becoming itself, the in-between. However, there is a structure to the becoming-animal that nonetheless explains what “happens” to the two initial terms. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the becoming is characterized by a “zigzag” rather than linear structure.⁸³ This means that a human does not become-animal while the animal remains static, nor that the human becomes-animal while the animal reciprocally becomes-human. Instead, the becoming is doubled: “That which one becomes becomes no less than the one that

⁸¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 277.

⁸² Ibid., 309.

⁸³ Ibid., 278.

becomes—[a] block is formed, essentially mobile, never in equilibrium.”⁸⁴ In other words, the human becomes-animal while the animal becomes something else. Catapulted into a state of disequilibrium, the two parties enter into a state of becoming-other, constantly progressing toward the molecular.

Another important element of the becoming-animal, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is that it always involves a “pack” animal. They write, “A becoming-animal always involves a pack, a band, a population, a peopling, in short, a multiplicity.”⁸⁵ They distinguish between three different kinds of animals: “State” animals, “individuated” animals, and “demonic” pack animals.⁸⁶ State animals are animals employed as emblems, such as an eagle used to symbolize freedom. Individuated animals are sentimental animals, such as family pets—which Deleuze and Guattari refer to as Oedipalized animals, treated by humans as animals with their own individual identities, personalities, and desires. Lastly, demonic animals are “pack or affect animals that form a multiplicity, a becoming, a population.”⁸⁷ Examples include wolves, lions, and other animals that travel in bands or herds. Deleuze and Guattari’s distinction between these three kinds of animals will be reexamined in the next chapter; for now, however, what is important is that in their view, a human can only enter into a process of involution or becoming with a pack animal. This is because the entire purpose of a becoming-animal is for a human to enter into an alliance with a nonhuman, thus becoming a multiplicity rather than a unified, stable “being.” Yet for Deleuze and Guattari, one cannot become something else if that something else also

⁸⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 305.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 239.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 240-241.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 241.

possesses a static, individual identity. Therefore, one can only become a multiplicity by entering into an involution with something that is itself already a non-individualized multiplicity—such as an animal that is part of a pack.

The final element of the becoming-animal is its preservation upon a plane of consistency.⁸⁸ The plane of consistency is the plane that brings the multiplicities into coexistence with each other. “All becomings are written... on this plane of consistency, which is the ultimate Door providing a way out for them. This is the only criterion to prevent them from bogging down, or veering into the void.”⁸⁹ The possible risk of a becoming-animal “veering into the void” is significant. For Deleuze and Guattari, just as all becomings progress toward the becoming-molecular, they are also processes of becoming-imperceptible. “The self is only a threshold, a door, a becoming between two multiplicities... And at each threshold or door, a new pact? A fiber stretches from a human to an animal, from a human or an animal to molecules, from molecules to particles, and so on to the imperceptible.”⁹⁰ Thus, for Deleuze and Guattari, “Everything becomes imperceptible, everything is becoming-imperceptible on the plane of consistency, which is nevertheless precisely where the imperceptible is seen and heard.”⁹¹ Indeed, all becomings are imperceptible and molecular; they are intensive becomings that go unnoticed in molar form. They can only be perceived on the plane of consistency, the product of

⁸⁸ This portion of Deleuze and Guattari’s theory becomes complex. This chapter will only provide a brief acknowledgment of the plane of consistency; a more thorough explanation lies beyond the scope of this project, but may be found in Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts*.

⁸⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 251.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 249.

⁹¹ Ibid., 252.

the becoming which records it, preserves it, and makes it known.⁹² Thus, in all becomings-animal, something must be created, such as a drawing, a piece of writing, or even a concept, in order for the becoming to be successful and productive.

Outlined above are the major characteristics of Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the becoming-animal. This theory undoubtedly provides a helpful tool for overcoming the dualistic "human-versus-animal-other" attitudes that pervade the western world. It describes an event in which a human comes into contact with an animal (this can be a real physical animal, an image, or a thought about an animal) and, through the force of a shared affect or immanent proximity with that animal, becomes deterritorialized, stripped of his or her habitual ways of relating to animals. In so doing, the human enters into a zone of proximity or indiscernibility in which he or she abandons his or her identity as a fixed, molar human in opposition to the molar animal, and instead considers the molecular forces conjoining the two. An alliance is thus formed between the two entities, and they are no longer human-versus-animal but rather two multiplicities belonging to one and the same dynamic, ever-changing universe.

The purpose of the becoming-animal is the purpose of all molecular becomings: they are all rushing toward becoming-imperceptible. "The imperceptible is the immanent end of becoming."⁹³ Becoming-imperceptible does not mean that a person becomes-other in order to pass progressively into oblivion or an empty abyss of nothingness. It means, rather, to form a complete rupture from one's molar self, to be just "like everybody else;" to go unnoticed, to be a

⁹² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 254. Deleuze and Guattari write, "It is a plane upon which everything is laid out, and which is like the intersection of all forms... It is a fixed plane, upon which things are distinguished from one another only by speed and slowness."

⁹³ Ibid., 279.

“stranger.”⁹⁴ All becomings are a question of eliminating and abandoning “everything that roots each of us (everybody) in ourselves, in our molarity.”⁹⁵ They all point toward an ultimate becoming of “everybody/everything,” giving rise to a new world of perpetual communication and transformation.⁹⁶ It is everybody’s task to be present in this world of pure haecceities, becomings, and events. Deleuze and Guattari thus conceive of a perpetually shifting, unfixed, and borderless world peopled by wandering “nomads.” Nomads are multiplicities that relate to the world through constant deterritorialization.⁹⁷ Nomadic existence, then, is characterized by a perpetual state of becoming in a “rhizomatic” world—a heterogeneous, unstable, and nonhierarchical universe.⁹⁸ Becoming-animal is a type of becoming that brings one closer to this nomadic form of existence, which is precisely the type of existence in which fixed values, belief systems, and identities may be overthrown. It is, in short, a revolutionary way of relating to the universe, of “widening the gap between oneself and the norm,” and finally becoming a citizen of the world.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 279.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 280.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 381. Deleuze and Guattari write, “With the nomad... it is deterritorialization that constitutes the relation to the earth.”

⁹⁸ Ibid., 21. Deleuze and Guattari define the rhizome as follows: “Unlike a structure, which is defined by a set of points and positions, with binary relations between the points...the rhizome is made only of lines [of deterritorialization]... In contrast to centered (even polycentric) systems with hierarchical modes of communication and preestablished paths, the rhizome is an acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system.”

⁹⁹ Paul Patton: *Deleuze and the Political* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 7.

Art as an Event?

According to Deleuze and Guattari, there is an important relationship between becoming and the arts. It should be noted from the outset that their discussion is based on three separate kinds of art: music, writing, and painting (which could also be extended to other material art forms, such as sculpture). Each of the arts relates to becoming in its own way. This thesis focuses primarily on painting; but the relationship between becoming and painting could and should be considered relevant to the study of the other arts as well. The following pages will outline the connection that Deleuze and Guattari make between the becoming-animal and art, but will also nuance this connection in order to come to new understandings of how art can function as a becoming-animal.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari write: “Becoming-animal is only one becoming among others... Fibers lead us from one to the other, transform one into the other as they pass through doors and across thresholds. Singing or composing, painting, writing have no other aim: to unleash these becomings.”¹⁰⁰ In this quotation, Deleuze and Guattari propose that becoming is unleashed through painting, meaning through the *act* of painting, not through the painting-object that is created. Thus, when the philosophers relate becoming to art, they are relating it primarily to the process of art-making. They claim, “The artist is a seer, a becomer.”¹⁰¹ Artists create their work with affects as their tool, “seizing them in becomings;” in other words, creating art by way of their own becomings.¹⁰² Hence, when an artist paints an animal, he or she

¹⁰⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 272.

¹⁰¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 171.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 169.

does not imitate or portray the animal but, according to Deleuze and Guattari, becomes the animal. Deleuze and Guattari explain the process as follows:

Suppose a painter ‘represents’ a bird; this is in fact a becoming-bird that can occur only to the extent that the bird itself is in the process of becoming something else, a pure line and pure color. Thus imitation self-destructs, since the imitator unknowingly enters into a becoming that conjugates with the unknowing becoming of that which he or she imitates. One imitates only if one fails, when one fails. The painter and musician do not imitate the animal, they become-animal at the same time as the animal becomes what they willed.¹⁰³

In this passage, Deleuze and Guattari indicate that the artist may become-animal through painting an animal. The artist paints an animal and experiences an affect—an immanent power or force of sensation—which he or she seizes and embeds into the work of art. Deleuze and Guattari write, “Life alone creates such zones where living beings whirl around, and only art can reach and penetrate them in its enterprise of co-creation.”¹⁰⁴ Thus, in their conception, the process of making art is a process of becoming-animal; a work of art, then, is a product of becoming.

In their theory of becoming and its relation to art-making, Deleuze and Guattari are primarily interested in the *creation* of art as the process of becoming-animal. However, the question remains how the becoming-animal relates to the *reception* of art. It should be noted that Deleuze and Guattari do acknowledge that a painting’s viewer may become-animal along with the artist. They assert, “Artists are presenters of affects, the inventors and creators of affects. They not only create them in their work, they give them to us and make us become with them, they draw us into the compound.”¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, becoming-animal remains for Deleuze and

¹⁰³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 304-305.

¹⁰⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 173.

Guattari a process initiated and experienced by the artist; the viewer's involvement in this process is only secondary. Becoming-animal is, for these philosophers, fundamentally a process of artistic creation. The question, then, is how art functions in the public realm, in relation to viewers, *after* its initial creation by the artist and without subordination to the artist's supposed becoming. By the same token, is it possible to altogether abandon the notion of the "artist's becoming," and thus consider the becoming-animal not as the production of art, but as the production of thought and a new way of conceiving the world? The following paragraphs will explain how this is, in fact, possible.

In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari define and distinguish between the three forms of thought: art, science, and philosophy. These three forms of thought have a common goal: "confronting chaos."¹⁰⁶ Ronald Bogue explains,

Chaos itself is unthinkable, immeasurable...common sense, received truth, orthodox opinion, good form, and so on are among the means whereby humans protect themselves from chaos. Philosophy, science, and art must struggle against chaos, concede Deleuze and Guattari, but only in order to use chaos in a common battle against the protective shield of doxa, the 'already thought and perceived.'¹⁰⁷

Thus, philosophy, science, and art are all forms of *radicalized thought* that engage with chaos in order to combat the dogmatic image of thought explained in the first section of this chapter. Yet each of these forms of thought does so by creating a distinct type of thought. For Deleuze and Guattari, philosophy is the creation of pure concepts, art is the creation of embodied,

¹⁰⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 175.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 197.

¹⁰⁷ Bogue, *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts*, 175.

materialized sensations, and science is the creation of functions or systems.¹⁰⁸ The primary focus in this thesis is on the relationship between philosophy and art.

While both philosophy and art are types of radical “thought,” Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between thought that is accomplished through the creation of concepts versus thought that is accomplished through the creation of materialized sensations.¹⁰⁹ As explained in the first section of this chapter, Deleuze and Guattari argue that concepts are pure events that pose problems for thought. Hence, they write, by “[creating] concepts, philosophy brings forth events.”¹¹⁰ Thus, philosophy is capable of creating fully immaterial thoughts or incorporeal events, while art creates materialized sensations that seek to restore the infinite as thought.¹¹¹ Hence, when considered from the perspective of artistic production, art does not function as a pure event in which new concepts are created. However, a work of art *can* be considered as a work of philosophy because it *can*, in confrontation with a viewer, create new ideas. That is to say, once a work of art is produced and offered to the viewer as a body of philosophical work, and once an encounter takes place between a viewer and the work, the production of new concepts indeed becomes possible. Hence, it is possible to move beyond the notion of the “artist’s becoming” so as to consider the becoming-animal not only as the production of a work of art but also as the creation of radicalized thought and a new way of conceiving the world.

The encounter between a viewer and a work of art can incite a conceptual becoming in which ideas, concepts, or problems for thought are created. This type of conceptual becoming is

¹⁰⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 15-34.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 198.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 199.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 197-198.

constitutive of the Deleuzian pure event, the event of singularities or turning points. These events are capable of “transforming” or deterritorializing whomever experiences them. They are ideal events characterized by a turning point in one’s attitudes, beliefs, values, and ways of relating to the world.

The question of how a work of art may incite this “turning point” within an encounter remains. This thesis posits that Deleuze’s theory of the “fundamental encounter,” which disrupts one’s faculties and forces a person to think beyond recognition, is precisely what allows a work of art to function as a becoming. The fundamental encounter is one in which a subject—such as a viewer of a work of art—encounters something unfamiliar, something that cannot be recognized or readily deciphered. Because that “something,” such as a painting, is not easily decipherable, the viewer experiences a discord of the faculties, a destabilization of common sense and recognition. The viewer cannot *know* the painting’s meaning because he or she cannot grasp it in its entirety through all of his or her faculties (perception, memory, imagination, and understanding); rather, the viewer can only *sense* the painting’s meaning. Section one of this chapter explained that what is sensed within a work of art is its mode of expression, or, in Deleuze’s words, “that by which the given is given.” Thus, to sense something (rather than perceive it, recognize it, and “know” it) is to experience it through *intuition*.¹¹² In other words, it is to be “affected” by the work of art and to create concepts, meanings, and thoughts about it without identifying the tangible origin of those meanings.¹¹³

¹¹² Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 100. Deleuze borrows the concept of intuition, and its related concept of duration, from Henri Bergson. These ideas will be considered further in the next chapter.

¹¹³ Recall that “affect” is the power to act or to be acted upon; thus, a work of art’s “affect” is the sensational force that it exerts upon the viewer. This notion will be discussed further in chapter four.

In sum, a painting may function as an incorporeal event when its presence creates a destabilizing encounter for a viewer. That is to say, when a viewer encounters a work of art that is not easily decipherable or recognizable according to the common sense of the faculties, that encounter can force the viewer into new ways of thinking. The type of thinking that is prompted by this type of encounter is genuinely productive thinking that moves beyond established and conventional ways of understanding and relating to the world. Moreover, the new thoughts produced in the sense-encounter with a painting are guided by the painting's representational elements. With any event there is the incorporeal, "hidden expression" of the event (its pure, conceptual component) and the physical "representation" or "body" in which it is encompassed.¹¹⁴ The concept is limited by its extrinsic representation. The purpose of representation, then, is to "limit the actualization of the event... to make the instant all the more intense;" in other words, to construct parameters that limit the concepts that are expressed and created by the event.¹¹⁵

It is finally possible to understand what it means for Tanning's post-1955 paintings to function as events. The elusive, web-like paintings destabilize the viewer through their modes of expression; and, as in Deleuze's encounter, they force the viewer to think, to become engaged, and to grapple with the material that is presented. This encounter or event poses problems and ideas to be contemplated by the viewer, and these ideas are limited and guided by the painting's representation. Hence, in Tanning's paintings, the animal imagery—especially the images that portray the intermingling of human and animal bodies—guides the viewer to contemplate human and animal relationships and to create new, unorthodox thoughts and ideas about those

¹¹⁴ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 145-146.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 147.

relationships. This thesis proposes that the encounter with Tanning's post-1955 paintings has the ability to prompt a conceptual becoming-animal in which viewers are forced, or at least incited, to abandon their established ways of understanding and relating to animals in order to arrive at a new way of coexisting and forming alliances with their nonhuman counterparts. The following chapter will examine a small selection of Tanning's paintings in order to demonstrate how their compositions might destabilize (deterritorialize) their viewers, and to explain what the implications of this destabilization might be for reconfiguring the relationship between human and nonhuman animals in the modern western world.

Chapter IV

Engaging with Tanning's Post-1955 Paintings

With the help of Deleuze and Guattari's theories, chapter three argued that Tanning's post-1955 paintings function as events capable of forcing thought and eliciting conceptual "becomings." In such becomings, viewers may be deterritorialized—that is, decoded and broken of their common modes of perception and understanding—as they enter into a new way of thinking and relating to the world around them. This argument will be illustrated in this chapter through a discussion of what the painting-as-event looks like. The following pages will outline the major characteristics of Tanning's paintings that enable them to function as such powerful, thought-provoking becomings-animal. Additionally, while Tanning's experimentation with new painting methods around 1955 resulted in a newfound style that she employed well into the 1980s, this analysis will focus on five of her paintings from the 1950s and 1960s, which exemplify the disruptive and radicalizing power of her work: *Insomnias* (1957), *Kenningar* (1961), *Chiens de Cythère* (*Dogs of Cythera*, 1963), *Memoires d'un Touriste* (*Memories*, 1964), and *To the Rescue* (1965).

What ultimately contributes to these paintings' disruptive capabilities is that they defy recognition. Recognition is defined by Deleuze as "the harmonious exercise of all the faculties [perception, memory, imagination, and understanding] upon a supposed same object;" it takes place when a subject comprehends an object according to the rationalized, "common sense"

ordering of the faculties.¹ Chapter three explained that, according to Deleuze’s “differential theory of the faculties,” it is only in an encounter with something that is unfamiliar and elusive to common sense identification and recognition that genuine, novel thinking is possible. Recognition is merely the subordination of thought to common, orthodox opinion—the dogmatic image of thought.² It is only capable of perpetuating conformity to already-established values, and of producing knowledge that has already been produced and accepted by popular opinion as “true” knowledge. By contrast, *genuine* thought, for Deleuze, must move beyond recognition. And the only way to move beyond recognition is by subverting the harmonious ordering of the faculties and throwing them into a discordant chaos. Once this is achieved, it is no longer possible to *recognize* something in its molar, extensive form, but only to *experience* it through molecular sensation, or in other words, to be *affected* by it.³ Thus, in order for a painting to prompt a viewer into new and genuine ways of thinking, it must disorient the viewer. It must deny him or her the ability to rationalize and codify the image. It must, ultimately, produce an affect that can only be *sensed*, but not recognized, by the viewer.

Deleuze and Guattari consider affect as the ability for somebody or something to act and to be acted upon. A painting’s affect, then, is its ability to act upon a viewer; it is the force or power of the painting to engage the viewer and incite him or her into an active participation and interaction with the work of art. According to Simon O’Sullivan in “The Aesthetics of Affect:

¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 133.

² See *Ibid.*, 130-133.

³ *Ibid.*, 139. Deleuze writes, “Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*. What is encountered... may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed. In this sense it is opposed to recognition.”

Thinking Art Beyond Representation,” the bundles of affects—or, as Deleuze and Guattari call them, the blocks of sensations—that make up a work of art are its “*asignifying*” (or, rather, nonrepresentational) intensities.⁴ They are the molecular, intensive qualities that run “beneath, beyond, even parallel to signification.”⁵ Thus, one might think of a painting’s affects as the *way* that it communicates, rather than *what* it communicates. As this chapter will argue, the affects or blocks of sensation in Tanning’s paintings are found in her strategic treatment of line, color, form, and spatial composition.

Affects are precisely what enable a painting to carry out what Deleuze declares is art’s basic task: to “render visible forces that are not themselves visible.”⁶ To make the unseen seeable, to make the imperceptible perceptible—according to Deleuze, this is painting’s primary goal. “It is not a matter of reproducing or inventing forms, but of capturing forces.”⁷ In other words, the affective aspect of a painting is not merely the forms that the painting represents, but the asignifying forces and relations between the forms. To be sure, it seems that this “capturing” of forces was precisely Tanning’s goal. She once asserted, “Unknown but knowable states. I try to capture and paint them.”⁸ Elsewhere, she claimed, “I want to seduce [the viewer] by means of imperceptible passages from one reality to another. The viewer is caught in a net from which

⁴ Simon O’Sullivan, “The Aesthetics of Affect: Thinking Art Beyond Representation,” *Angelaki* 6 (2001): 126.

⁵ *Ibid.*: 126.

⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 48.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Alain Jouffroy and Dorothea Tanning, “Interview with Dorothea Tanning,” in *Dorothea Tanning*, by Sune Nordgren, John Russell, Dorothea Tanning, Alain Jouffroy, Jean-Christophe Bailly, and Lasse Söderberg (Malmö, Sweden: Malmö Konsthall, 1993), 57.

there is no escape save by going through the whole picture until he comes to the exit.”⁹ These “imperceptible passages” are precisely her paintings’ nonrepresentational affects (her configuration and treatment of lines, colors, and forms), and they are imperceptible only from the viewpoint of common sense recognition. Moreover, the alternative realities, the “unknown but knowable states” to which they give rise, are not to be understood as imaginative, parallel universes. Rather, they are the present world experienced in an alternative way that is in constant flux and does not conform to the doxa of the dogmatic image of thought (the subordination of thought to representation and recognition). Hence, the fundamental role of the “imperceptible passages”—the sensations and affects—in Tanning’s paintings is to not only reveal the world emptied of its clichés and conventions, but to also “seduce” the viewer, to draw the viewer into the painting, where he or she may, in theory, become entrapped and thus forced to think his or her way out of it.

According to Deleuze, every artist’s mind (in fact, *everyone’s* mind) is plagued by clichés.¹⁰ For artists, clichés are already embedded in every canvas, “more or less virtually, more or less actually,” before the painter begins painting.¹¹ They populate the canvas, “so that the painter does not have to cover a blank surface but rather would have to empty it out, clear it, clean it.”¹² Generally speaking, clichés are “ready-made perceptions, memories, phantasms;” they are the habits, customs, and norms that are reproduced and spread throughout society

⁹ Dorothea Tanning, *Dorothea Tanning: 10 Recent Paintings and a Biography*, ed. Dorothea Tanning (New York: Gimpel-Weitzenhoffer Gallery, 1979), n.p.

¹⁰ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 71.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

through common practice.¹³ Following Deleuze, Daniel Smith explains that clichés are “anonymous and floating images, ‘which circulate in the external world, but which also penetrate each of us and constitute our internal world.’”¹⁴ According to Smith, Deleuze considers clichés to be “precisely what *prevents* the genesis of [a new] image, just as opinion and convention prevent the genesis of thought.”¹⁵ In other words, clichés appeal to recognition, and thus preclude alternative and unconventional modes of seeing and thinking about the world.

Clichés appear in art in the form of figuration, as the “illustrative and narrative reproductions or representations,” which are measurable and recognizable.¹⁶ They can be overcome, however, and indeed *must* be overcome in order to produce affects and sensations capable of summoning a viewer into the painting-event and exposing him or her to new, radical ideas. Deleuze’s discussion of the “diagram” in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* is helpful for understanding how an artist such as Tanning may successfully dismantle clichés; and, as this chapter will argue, it also provides significant clues for understanding the disruptive, deterritorializing force of Tanning’s paintings.

A painterly diagram, which Deleuze summarizes as an “operative set” of “nonrepresentative, nonillustrative, and nonnarrative” zones, line-strokes, and color-patches, is a means for artists to introduce chaos and “catastrophe” into a work of art.¹⁷ Deleuze bases his

¹³ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 71.

¹⁴ Daniel W. Smith, introduction to *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, by Gilles Deleuze, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), xxiii.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 74.

¹⁷ Ibid., 82-83.

conception of the painterly diagram on Francis Bacon's notion of the "graph."¹⁸ It is a set of accidental slips of the hand, manual traits, "irrational, involuntary, accidental, free, random" marks on the canvas, which give rise to a frenetic composition that is independent of strict figuration, representation, and common sense "optical organization."¹⁹ For Deleuze, as for Bacon, the diagram is capable of subverting rationalized, ordered clichés because it is created involuntarily, and therefore it is accidental and irrational rather than cerebral.²⁰ It is not the intention here to suggest that Tanning's paintings are composed of accidental and involuntary slips of the hand; any argument regarding the level of consciousness involved in the production of her paintings would be based purely on assumption and guesswork. However, the general concept of the diagram as an operative set of lines, zones, and color-patches that inject visual chaos into a painting and subvert ordered clichés is a profitable way of understanding Tanning's paintings.

In his book on Francis Bacon, Deleuze declares, "The diagram is indeed a chaos, a catastrophe."²¹ According to Tom Conley in his afterword to *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, the "compositional strategy" of the diagram is to construct a "flexible matrix in which

¹⁸ Deleuze cites Bacon's explanation of the "graph" (diagram) in Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 160 (n. 3).

¹⁹ Ibid., 82.

²⁰ One might compare Deleuze's conception of the diagram, with its involuntary and accidental marks, to the Surrealist technique of automatic drawing. (See chapter two of this thesis, footnote 23). However, whereas the Surrealists used automatism psychoanalytically, as a means to access the unconscious to uncover and decode irrational desires and impulses, Deleuze viewed the "free, random" energy of the diagram purely as a means to create visual disorder and confusion that defy rationalization and recognition.

²¹ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 83.

expansions, contractions, shifts in mass, new shapes, and unforeseen torsions come forward.”²²

Deleuze, similarly, describes the diagram as a “catastrophe” in which “bodies are thrown off balance...the planes collide with each other; colors become confused and no longer delimit an object.”²³ One might describe Tanning’s paintings in precisely the same way.

In each of the five paintings in this present study, one finds a web of scrambling, tortuous bodily forms, bright vivid hues juxtaposed with subdued hues, indistinct masses floating in unfixed space, and an overall chaotic, frenzied entanglement of color-patches, line-strokes, and abstract shapes. These are, in short, diagrammatic paintings. Yet in addition to chaos, certain compositional elements remain that may guide the viewer’s interaction with the paintings; the turbulent interplay of expansion and contraction, revelation and concealment, also creates rhythm, so that the almost overwhelming chaos does not preclude the viewer’s ability to enter into the painting and to take something new and meaningful away from it. As Deleuze explains of the diagram, “It is a violent chaos in relation to the figurative givens [or clichés], but it is a germ of rhythm in relation to the new order of the painting.”²⁴ Thus, the diagram creates a sort of rhythmic or organized chaos that is nonetheless constructive. In her autobiography *Between Lives: An Artist and Her world*, Tanning suggests that it was precisely her goal to create this type of organized chaos in her works. Describing her personal approach to making art, she writes, “You are surprised and uneasy... it was, after all, your hand, your will, your turmoil that has produced it all, this brand-new event in a very old world. Thus you may think: Have I brought a

²² Tom Conley, “A Politics of Fact and Figure,” afterword to *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, by Gilles Deleuze, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 146.

²³ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 96.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 83.

little order out of chaos? Or have I merely added to the general confusion?”²⁵ Indeed, as Tanning’s remarkably proto-Deleuzian words indicate, it requires a careful and strategic balance of chaos and rhythm in order to simultaneously draw in, while also disrupting and disorienting, her viewer’s consciousness.

Thus far, this chapter has suggested that in order for Tanning’s paintings to function as thought-provoking events (conceptual becomings), they must deterritorialize their viewers. They must present viewers with an alternative way of looking that impedes recognition; breaking free of the trap of recognition is the only way to achieve a new manner of perceiving, thinking, and relating to the world. A painting may “reach” a viewer in such a way through its affects—its intensive, nonrepresentational traits that appeal to sensation rather than recognition. Affects are not merely the colors, lines, planes, and forms in Tanning’s paintings, but the *relations between them*. Thus, it is Tanning’s strategic *configuration* of these formal elements that enables her paintings to have a disruptive and deterritorializing impact on her viewers. The following pages will demonstrate how Tanning employed and manipulated color, line, space, and form in her paintings to this end.

In her autobiography, Tanning recalls the moment that she began working on *Insomnias*. “Beginning, roughly, in 1955...my painted compositions began to shift and merge in an ever intensifying complexity of planes. Color was now a first prerogative... I was very excited and called it *Insomnias*.”²⁶ Indeed, color assumes a much more significant role in Tanning’s prismatic abstract paintings than it had in her earlier figurative paintings. It no longer defines and illustrates individual forms. Instead, color-patches float upon the canvas, like “spreading stains,”

²⁵ Dorothea Tanning, *Between Lives: An Artist and Her World* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 326.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 214.

as Mary Ann Caws describes them.²⁷ In *Insomnias* (fig. 2), sporadic splashes of blues, oranges, yellows, and purples flicker across the otherwise subdued, light grey canvas. Charles Stuckey describes the composition as a “color storm” that engulfs the human and animal bodies and prevents them from “revealing themselves as full, tangible entities.”²⁸ Bodies are indeed present in *Insomnias*—the child-like human body just below the canvas’s center, and the dog to the left of the child, for example—but they struggle against the turbulent hues, never fully emerging. Color is thus liberated from its enslavement to contour. It traverses contours, bringing the body masses and the background into a fluid continuity. As in Deleuze’s diagram, background and body-mass are “no longer in a relationship of form to ground, but a relation of coexistence or proximity modulated by color.”²⁹

The intermittent dispersion of colors across the surface of *Insomnias* defies logical explanation, and color is thus freed from its subordination to recognizable and rational modes of representation. The same could be said for each of the five paintings in this study, in which color takes on its own vitality. Particularly in *To the Rescue* (fig. 3), color binds figures in a strategically confusing manner. The light green, for example, flows energetically between body-masses, and then dissipates into the surrounding field of variegated color. These sporadic stains of the same green throughout the canvas make it difficult to discern where the figures end and the field begins. “Parts of the figures can be clearly seen, others only felt as a merging with the

²⁷ Mary Ann Caws, “Person: Tanning’s Self-Portraiture,” in *The Surrealist Look: An Erotics of Encounter* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999), 73.

²⁸ Charles Stuckey “Insomnias,” in *Dorothea Tanning: Insomnias: Paintings from 1954-1965* (New York: Kent Gallery, 2005), 11.

²⁹ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 98.

ground.”³⁰ In this painting Tanning clearly employs color through relations of tonality rather than relations of value—that is, through the juxtaposition of pure colors and tones rather than the contrasting values of shadow and light. In both of these paintings, the bodies and biomorphic masses are rendered not so much through an illusionistic method of shading but through a modulated and variegated use of broken tones. Deleuze refers to this juxtaposition of tones as a “haptic” use of color. He explains that, “when relations of tonality tend to eliminate relations of value...we will speak of a haptic space and a haptic function of the eye, in which the planar character of the surface creates volumes only through the different colors that are arranged on it.”³¹ As Ronald Bogue explains in *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts*, this haptic or “tactile, palpable, sensual use of color...most patently reveals art’s ability to embody sensation, to harness forces within a material, sensate world.”³² Haptic color counters the “dominant conventions of classical representation... and perspectival space.”³³ Hence, with its chaotic, kaleidoscopic amalgamation of diverse tones, Tanning’s “haptic” use of color is capable of subverting the common sense optical organization of depth and contour by the rational mind.

Tanning’s strategic application of color is also capable of subverting conventional understandings of space and time. Deleuze argues that the rendering of polychromatic body-masses upon a canvas “is one way of introducing time into the painting...the variation of texture and color on a body” might indicate “a temporal variation.”³⁴ In other words, for Deleuze, the

³⁰ Alison Rowley, “Lapses of Taste,” *Women’s Art Magazine* (1995): 18.

³¹ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 107.

³² Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 190.

³³ *Ibid.*, 159.

use of fleeting, broken tones indicates the passage of time by connoting temporariness and variation. Alternatively, the larger, more open fields of subdued color indicate the “eternity of time, that is... the eternity of the passage in itself.”³⁵ Thus, as a whole, Tanning’s treatment of color throughout her canvases communicates a sense of passing time that is independent of organized space. As Jean Cristophe Bailly observes, Tanning achieves “an art of time experienced rather than space simulated. The *space* of such experienced time is a slippage or slide.”³⁶ In order to understand the kind of nonspatialized time one encounters in Tanning’s paintings, it is helpful to turn to French philosopher Henri Bergson’s concept of duration.

Bergson was an important philosopher for Deleuze, and, as this chapter will demonstrate, his concept of duration finds many parallels in Deleuze’s understanding of events and becoming. It also provides an insightful way for thinking about Tanning’s compositions in relation to the becoming-animal. Essential to Bergson’s philosophy is the belief that reality is in a constant state of flux that can only be grasped through intuition within the flow of duration.³⁷ Like becoming, duration is an ongoing process that connects the past, present, and future into an enduring continuity. In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson writes, “Duration is not merely one instant replacing another; if it were, there would never be anything but the present... Duration is the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances.”³⁸ Bergson also

³⁴ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 42.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 115.

³⁶ Jean Christophe Bailly, “Image Redux: The Art of Dorothea Tanning,” in *Dorothea Tanning*, by Dorothea Tanning, Jean Christophe Bailly, and Robert C. Morgan, trans. Richard Howard (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1995), 24.

³⁷ Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 113.

asserts that it is necessary to distinguish “the substantial duration of things” from the conventional concept of “time spread out in space.”³⁹ In other words, duration is opposed to spatialized time, being itself an immeasurable flux.⁴⁰ It is essentially a notion of time independent of space; it is a continuous experience of the world in a perpetual state of becoming.

In *Thinking in Time: An Introduction to Henri Bergson*, Suzanne Guerlac explains that for Bergson, “duration becomes synonymous with existence—with life as perpetual change and invention of novelty.”⁴¹ She continues, “Duration ‘means invention, creation of forms, continual elaboration of the absolutely new.’”⁴² Hence, the connection between Bergson’s duration and Deleuze and Guattari’s becoming is evident. For all three of these French philosophers, the real, *pure* events in life are those that yield new results: new thoughts, new perceptions, and new ways of existing in the world that substitute perpetual change, transformation, and flux for notions of fixed subjectivity.

Presenting time as pure duration, rather than as a thread of instantaneities mapped into measured space, is thus an additional way that artists such as Tanning may unsettle her viewers and deny them the ability to rationalize and “recognize” her images. Significantly, duration—like

³⁸ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911), 4.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 361.

⁴⁰ Henri Bergson, “Concerning the Nature of Time,” in *Key Writings*, by Henri Bergson, Keith Ansell-Pearson, John Mullarkey, and Melissa McMahon (New York: Continuum, 2002), 211.

⁴¹ Suzanne Guerlac, *Thinking in Time: An Introduction to Henri Bergson* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 6.

⁴² *Ibid.*

Deleuze's event and becoming—is experienced through sensations of “affects.”⁴³ In other words, it is experienced through pure intuition. Bergson differentiates between intuition and analysis: intuition is the inner experience and sensation of an object, while analysis is merely an objective knowledge of something as it exists in ordered space.⁴⁴ He asserts, “We call intuition here the *sympathy* by which one is transported into the interior of an object in order to coincide with what there is unique and consequently inexpressible in it. Analysis, on the contrary, is the operation which reduces the objects to elements already known.”⁴⁵ Time conceived as inner duration is in a constant state of what Deleuze may refer to as “molecular” movement and flux; and, as a becoming, it may only be accessed through intuition—that is, through sensation and affect, rather than empirical recognition.

In his essay, “Introduction to Metaphysics,” Bergson describes the elements necessary for someone to experience an image, such as a work of art, as a duration:

No image will replace the intuition of duration, but many different images, taken from quite different orders of things, will be able, through the convergence of their action, to direct the consciousness to the precise point where there is a certain intuition to seize on. By choosing images as dissimilar as possible, any one of them will be prevented from usurping the place of the intuition it is instructed to call forth, since it would then be driven out immediately by its rivals.⁴⁶

⁴³ Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, 5. Though this is not a direct quote from Bergson, Guerlac's use of the term “affect” is helpful for understanding Bergson's project and how it relates to Deleuze and Guattari's.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 50.

⁴⁵ Henri Bergson, “Introduction to Metaphysics,” in *The Creative Mind*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1968), 190. Bergson's distinction between intuition and analysis parallels Deleuze's distinction between sensation and recognition, which I have already explained in great detail in chapter three.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

The crucial point of this passage is the requirement that in order for a painting to be experienced and sensed as a duration, there must be a ceaseless tangle of images competing for the viewer's attention, whereby no image ultimately takes over. (If one image or form were to take precedence over the rest, it would become an all-too-easily recognizable focal point; the composition would then run the risk of settling into an ordered spatialization, which would prevent the intuitive sensation of duration.) Tanning's abstract paintings, particularly *Insomnias* and *Dogs of Cythera* (fig. 4), fulfill the requirement.

In both paintings, swarms of human and canine bodies stagger across the canvas, continuously competing with each other and with other less identifiable forms and color-patches for the viewer's attention. In *Insomnias*, there is no successive ordering of these forms that might indicate the chronological unfolding of spatialized time. Rather, the body parts and colors swim freely and disorderedly around the empty white space located near the center of the composition. Far from providing a focal point, this empty white space is countered by neighboring blots of intense colors, creating a strong visual tension. The tension is never resolved; the forms never settle into a logical ordering of space and time. Instead, the sporadic dispersal of bodies and colors in *Insomnias* defies organization and throws the element of time into a perpetual and immeasurable flux.

Similarly, in *Dogs of Cythera*, the irregular distribution of bodies and body parts throughout the canvas thwarts spatial temporality. The continuous oscillation of forms between emergence and recession creates a flow of duration rather than a linear passage of time. Instead of marking successive instances or occurrences mapped onto the canvas, the same colors and biomorphic shapes are repeated in various parts throughout the composition simultaneously. In

other words, the colors and bodies in this and similar paintings are simultaneities rather than isolated, individual instants.

In *Dogs of Cythera*, deep blue tones billow across the fragmented surface in an illogical manner, appearing inexplicably in numerous areas at once, as if driven by some unseen force or spasm. Similarly, a dog's face emerges unexpectedly amidst the turbulent canvas in multiple locations. Catriona McAra compares this simultaneous distribution of canine bodies to the visual effects of a kaleidoscope: "A little dog appears in a variety of guises numerous times on this vast canvas as if Tanning trained her lens on Katchina or Groucho (the names of her trusty pets)... This is similarly the case with the distinct areas of color intensity arranged inversely and directly as they would be seen through a kaleidoscope."⁴⁷ As McAra suggests, the similarities between Tanning's paintings and the kaleidoscope are telling.⁴⁸ She asserts, "The kaleidoscope shows us a different view which both whimsically reassembles, and profoundly disrupts, a naïve trust of the visual sense's role in the construction of knowledge."⁴⁹ The same can be said of Tanning's prismatic or "kaleidoscopic" paintings, which splinter and fracture "reality" into something entirely disorienting and unfamiliar—something that is not constant, but is constantly fleeting and transforming.

⁴⁷ Catriona McAra, "Kaleidoscope Eyes: Cytherean Voyages in the Post-Surrealist Practice of Dorothea Tanning," in *Dorothea Tanning: Unknown but Knowable States* (San Francisco: Gallery Wendi Norris, 2013), 14.

⁴⁸ McAra is not the only scholar to have noted the visual connection between Tanning's paintings and the kaleidoscope, though she is, to my knowledge, the only one to have used this connection as the basis for her analysis. Other scholars who have noted the kaleidoscopic nature of Tanning's post-1955 paintings include Bailly and Caws. See Bailly, "Image Redux," 31; and Caws, "Person: Tanning's Self-Portraiture," 73.

⁴⁹ McAra, "Kaleidoscope Eyes," 12.

The ability for Tanning's paintings to disorient viewers and overturn their conventional values and assumptions is largely dependent on their disruption of time. Indeed, the "simultaneity of flow" within a pure duration—expressed in Tanning's paintings through the disjointed, kaleidoscopic distribution of colors and forms—opposes the common sense spatial ordering of distinct and successive moments. It indicates a conception of time radically independent of space, demanding a new and unconventional way of looking at and experiencing the paintings.

To experience a painting as pure duration is to experience it as an event. This is because the conception of time that constitutes inner duration is precisely the kind of free, immeasurable time that Deleuze attributes to the pure event (and hence to becoming).⁵⁰ For Deleuze, "the time of the pure event or of becoming" is the "floating, nonpulsed time proper to Aeon...which articulates relative speeds and slownesses independently of the chronometric or chronological values that time assumes in the other modes."⁵¹ Deleuze's notion of floating time, "*Aeon*: the indefinite time of the event," parallels Bergson's notion of inner duration.⁵² Both are opposed to "*Chronos*: the time of measure that situates things and persons, develops a form, and determines a subject"—in other words, spatialized time.⁵³ Yet, if Tanning's paintings present a disruptive conception of time insubordinate to space, then they do so by also presenting unordered, spontaneous spatial arrangements. The disruption of time and the disruption of space go hand in

⁵⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 263.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 262.

⁵³ Ibid.

hand, and the nonpulsed time in Tanning's work finds correspondence in the paintings' non-metric, continually shifting spaces.

There is no linear perspective in any of the five paintings considered here; no focal point, no horizon line, no ordering of foreground, middle ground, and background, all of which may be thought of as what Deleuze and Guattari call striation. In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between striated space and smooth space. Striated space—when considered in terms of a work of art—is closed, sedentary, and delimited by horizon lines and pictorial borders.⁵⁴ Its opposite is smooth space, which is “infinite, open, and unlimited in every direction... it does not assign fixed and mobile elements but rather distributes a continuous variation.”⁵⁵ Striated space corresponds to ordered, chronological time. Deleuze and Guattari write, “Striated is that which intertwines fixed and variable elements, produces an order and succession of distinct forms, and organizes horizontal melodic lines and vertical harmonic planes.”⁵⁶ In pictorial terms, it characterizes Tanning's earlier figurative works of art, such as *A Parisian Afternoon (Hôtel du Pavot, 1942)* (fig. 5) and *Self-Portrait* (1944) (fig. 6), which communicate a sense of depth and spatial organization, and which are also framed on either side of the canvas by the strategic placement of tall buildings (*A Parisian Afternoon*) and landmarks (*Self-Portrait*). In contrast, Tanning's later paintings encompass—or, rather, are encompassed by—overwhelming smooth space.⁵⁷ Horizon lines and framing devices disappear;

⁵⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 475.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 475-476.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 478.

⁵⁷ Because of their oscillation between figuration and abstraction, one could possibly view these paintings as a combination of both smooth and striated space. However, as the

the spatial planes become multidimensional, scrambled, and disorderly. Rather than organizing a succession of distinct forms, the smooth spaces in Tanning's later paintings present "continuous variation, continuous development of form."⁵⁸ Bodies come to the fore, but immediately recede back into the turbulent color storms. In both *Kenningar* (fig. 7) and *Memories* (fig. 8), for example, sporadic splashes of color fill the canvas in all directions as the picture planes fracture into multiple overlapping and interwoven layers. There is no distinction between foreground and background in either painting, as the background becomes intertwined with the various shapes and blocks of colors. As Anna Lundström observes, the "fragmented pictorial world" of these later works "emerges at the surface level of the painting."⁵⁹ She continues,

In these peculiar abstract paintings, hyper-realist details float in a spatiality that seems to operate outside our customary orientation in terms of up and down, in front and behind, depth and surface. The paintings nevertheless remain works in which viewers can lose themselves. The many islands of motifs appear to overlap and interpenetrate one another, while their facets form folds and nooks and crannies which incite the viewer's imagination. And yet it all happens on the same plane: at the very spot where the surface of the canvas passes into the space of the exhibition.⁶⁰

Here, Lundström points out an important characteristic of Tanning's post-1955 paintings. Their disruption of customary spatial orientations and their overlapping motifs create a seemingly infinite number of interpenetrating layers; yet all of this takes place upon a single, albeit fractured, surface plane. There is no illusion of depth—at least not of the sort that viewers may logically follow based on conventional linear perspective. Rather, as in *Kenningar*, for

following pages will demonstrate, Tanning's use of figuration remains largely unstable, and the compositions, as a whole, convey smooth space.

⁵⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 478.

⁵⁹ Anna Lundström, "Bodies and Spaces: On Dorothea Tanning's Sculptures," *Konsthistorisk tidskrift/Journal of Art History* 78 (November 2009): 122.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

example, the continuous oscillation of forms between revelation and concealment results in a confrontation between the viewer and a single chaotic surface. Yet this surface, as Lundström points out, is still one in which viewers may “lose themselves,” precisely because of its constantly fleeting oscillation of colors, lines, and forms. The confrontation between the viewer and the painting at the surface level—“at the very spot where the surface of the canvas passes into the space of the exhibition”—contributes to the power of this and similar paintings to integrate the viewer and elicit participation.

The elimination of conventional pictorial planes in both *Kenningar* and *Memories* decreases the gap between the viewer and the painting. In these paintings, the viewer does not observe from a distance the static illustration of a spatio-temporal scene or narrative event (in the traditional sense of the word); rather, he or she is confronted by a dynamic explosion of forms that seems to be taking place right before his or her eyes. The indeterminate blocks of color, the biomorphic shapes, and the canine bodies “take their place” in a shallow *smooth* space, invading and disrupting the viewer’s comfortable territory.⁶¹

The relationship between the smooth space of Tanning’s paintings and their integration of the viewer is significant. According to Deleuze and Guattari, “In striated space, one closes off a surface and ‘allocates’ it according to determinate intervals, assigned breaks; in the smooth, one ‘distributes’ oneself in an open space, according to frequencies and in the course of one’s crossings.”⁶² In other words, striated space closes the painting off from the viewer. A distance is created between the ordered space enclosed within the painting and the viewer’s own space outside of the painting. Smooth space, on the other hand, is open to the viewer. The viewer may

⁶¹ Lundström, “Bodies and Spaces,” 125.

⁶² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 481.

enter into the space (albeit mentally rather than physically); this kind of integration is encouraged, not inhibited, by smooth space. As Lundström reminds us, it is a space in which viewers may lose themselves.⁶³ Moreover, due to the disruptive and chaotic nature of smooth space, one perhaps cannot help but to become lost in the canvas. Once again, Deleuze and Guattari's ideas are useful here: "There are two kinds of voyage, distinguished by the respective role of the point, line, and space... What distinguishes the two kinds of voyages is neither a measurable quantity of movement, nor something that would be only in the mind, but the mode of spatialization, the manner of being in space, of being for space. *Voyage smoothly or in striation, and think the same way* [emphasis added]."⁶⁴ What this passage indicates is that smooth space and striated space define more than certain ways of arranging forms on a canvas; they also define a "manner of being in space" and a corresponding way of thinking. For Deleuze and Guattari, smooth space encourages a nomadic way of being in space; thus it also encourages nomadic thinking.⁶⁵

In chapter three, I explained that nomadic existence is characterized by constant deterritorialization and perpetual becoming. Nomadic thinking, then, is a type of thinking that encourages constant revision, transformation, and renewal. This is the kind of thinking that smooth space promotes. Being itself a nomadic space, "the smooth always possesses a greater

⁶³ Lundström is referring to the space conveyed in Tanning's paintings, not to Deleuze and Guattari's term "smooth space." One can nonetheless draw a connection between the two because, as this chapter argues, the nature of space conveyed in Tanning's paintings is comparable to Deleuze and Guattari's smooth space.

⁶⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 482.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 481.

power of deterritorialization than the striated.”⁶⁶ In other words, smooth space is open to a greater level of conceptual becoming and radical thinking than logic-based striated space could ever allow. Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge as much in their assertion that, “Voyaging smoothly is a becoming, and a difficult, uncertain becoming at that.... all becoming occurs in smooth space.”⁶⁷

Indeed, smooth space is precisely the space of all pure, Deleuzian events: “Smooth space is filled by events or haecceities, far more than by formed and perceived things. It is a space of affects, more than one of properties. It is *haptic* rather than optical perception.”⁶⁸ In aesthetic terms, then, a painting that presents smooth space would be one that privileges affects and forces—the abstract relationships between colors, lines, and forms—rather than accurate illustration of recognizable, perceptible “things.” Non-metric smooth space in art is indeed the space of pure events and becomings, as was the case with nonpulsed time. The smooth spaces in Tanning’s paintings are therefore the open spaces for becoming.

Earlier, this chapter posited that Tanning evokes smooth space by fracturing her picture plane into seemingly infinite levels of interpenetrating motifs. She achieves this largely through her abstract treatment of multidirectional lines. For Deleuze and Guattari, when it comes to the visual arts, it is precisely the nomadic or abstract line that constitutes a smooth space: “The nomad line... has a multiple orientation and passes *between* points, figures, and contours: it is positively motivated by the smooth space it draws... The abstract line is the affect of smooth

⁶⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 480.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 482; 486.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 479.

spaces.”⁶⁹ In striated space, “lines or trajectories tend to be subordinated to points: one goes from one point to another. In the smooth, it is the opposite: the points are subordinated to the trajectory.”⁷⁰ The multidirectional abstract line in smooth space follows its own unpredictable trajectory. Its fundamental purpose is not to outline forms, nor to serve as a horizon. “*A line that delimits nothing, that describes no contour...that is constantly changing direction, a mutant line of this kind that is without...beginning or end and that is as alive as a continuous variation—such a line is truly an abstract line, and describes a smooth space.*”⁷¹ As a *mutant* line, the abstract line is not a contour but a “line of flight without beginning or end;” in other words, it is a line of deterritorialization, of *becoming*.⁷²

Abstract lines abound in each of the five paintings discussed here—indeed, in all of Tanning’s post-1955 paintings. In *Memories*, for example, inexplicable lines appear out of nowhere, from no apparent origin, and travel freely across the canvas to intersect and join forces with other abstract lines. It is virtually impossible to follow any of the lines to a definitive stopping point, as they blend together in some areas and turn sharply in others, eluding the viewer’s grasp at every point. Only one figure stands out in this painting: the sudden appearance

⁶⁹ Ibid., 496. Deleuze and Guattari base their abstract line on Wilhelm Worringer’s conception of the “Gothic or Northern Line.” See Ibid., 495-496, for their discussion of Worringer’s Gothic Line. See also Wilhelm Worringer, *Form Problems of the Gothic* (New York: G.E. Stechert & Co., 1920).

⁷⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 478. The difference between the striated and the smooth use of lines is also explained elsewhere by Deleuze and Guattari in terms of a punctual system (striated; lines are subordinated to points) versus a multilinear system (smooth; lines pass between points, but do not logically connect and order them; points are subordinated to the lines). See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 295-298.

⁷¹ Ibid., 498.

⁷² Ibid., 499.

of a dog's face near the bottom left-hand corner. Yet even the lines and contours that delimit the face soon disappear into the canvas, as seen in the abstract line traversing the right side of the dog's face. Similarly, in *To the Rescue*, lines that delimit one figure quickly cross over into other figures, so that it is difficult to tell where one body ends and the other begins; this, too, is characteristic of the abstract line in smooth space. In fact, one of the general characteristics of smooth space, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is that "there are determinations that are part of one another."⁷³ In *To the Rescue*, the figures—the dog on the right, and the unidentifiable biomorphic figures in the center—share determinations with each other. Bailly describes this "dual purpose of the line" as one of Tanning's "signature devices."⁷⁴ He writes, "A figure's or an object's delineation is also the drawing of its neighbor so that space as such is denied its breath."⁷⁵ However, in each case, the lines shared by two or more figures are not *subordinated* to the figures. For example, the dog at the far right of *To the Rescue*—just like the dog in *Memories* and the multiple dog-forms in *Dogs of Cythera*—does not emerge entirely from the background. It is not made manifest as a complete entity. For the lines that delimit the canine body immediately drift into the turbulent smooth space, at once serving as contour lines and as abstract lines, resisting striation. The "dual purpose" of Tanning's lines as both contour lines and abstract lines creates a network in which the figures in Tanning's paintings are inextricably bound to the web of lines in which they are entangled. The capturing of the figures enmeshed in the canvas is also extended toward the viewer, who becomes entrapped in the visual maze of ambiguous lines.

⁷³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 485.

⁷⁴ Jean Christophe Bailly, "Image Redux," 32.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

These are the lines of deterritorialization, leading viewers into unfamiliar spaces—the smooth spaces of becoming—and leaving them to their own devices to find their way out.

Tanning's abstract treatment of color and line in her post-1955 paintings creates disorderly, unconventional experiences of time and space for the viewer. Time is no longer spatialized; it is a duration. And space is no longer rationalized and striated; it is smooth and nomadic, always shifting. The chaos introduced by Tanning's nonillustrative color-patches and abstract lines is characteristic of Deleuze's catastrophic diagram. They destroy clichés and conventional figuration in order to expose viewers to a new, alternative view of the world. If Tanning's objective in these years was indeed to entrap her audience and “overturn values,” then the chaotic destruction of figurative clichés was her *modus operandi*. In order for her viewers to experience her paintings in a new, thought-provoking, revolutionary manner, it was necessary for her to show her viewers something different—to present ideas to them in a new, radical way. A new way of looking necessitates a new way of showing; Tanning's post-1955 abstract or “diagrammatic” paintings fulfill that need.

Of course, figuration did not altogether disappear from Tanning's work after 1955. In fact, human and animal bodies play a vital role in the revolutionary impact of her later works and their ability to function as conceptual becomings.⁷⁶ Chapter three explained that for every expression of the pure event, there is, according to Deleuze, an external representation which encompasses it. In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze writes,

⁷⁶ Deleuze would perhaps refer to the bodies in Tanning's paintings as “Figures.” A Figure is the form that figuration takes when altered by the diagram. See Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 71-90. This would certainly be one way to analyze the bodies in Tanning's post-1955 paintings, but Deleuze's discussion of the representation and expression in *The Logic of Sense* is better suited to this thesis, particularly because it is more closely related to his conception of the pure event.

By itself, representation is given up to an extrinsic relation of resemblance or similitude only. But its internal character... comes from the manner in which it encompasses, or envelops an expression... The expression, which differs in nature from the representation, acts no less as that which is enveloped (or not) inside the representation.⁷⁷

Expression is the nonrepresentational affect of the event, the event's concepts; but representation is the limit that envelops the expression and guides the event, setting parameters for its actualization. Representation sets limits for the expressive qualities—that is, the concepts—encompassed within and created by the event.⁷⁸ Extending this notion to Tanning's post-1955 paintings, the role of the bodily figures—or, as McAra describes them, “figurative fragments, like narrative ruins”⁷⁹—is to provide clues for the kinds of concepts embedded in the works. They work in conjunction with the expressive affects (the abstract lines and colors) to guide the viewer's experience of the paintings.

The figures in Tanning's paintings are the dogs, humans, and the unknown “in-betweens.” Often, the most discernible figure is the dog or group of dogs, or, in Tanning's words, “the emblematic dog as orchestrator of event.”⁸⁰ In *Kenningar*, *To the Rescue*, and *Memories*, for example, a single dog emerges from a swirl of indiscernible, metamorphosing bodies, presiding over them as they struggle, enfold, and collide with one another. Significantly, in each of these paintings and in *Dogs of Cythera*, the dogs are the only figures making direct eye contact with the viewer. Caws says of this eye contact, “the immense and immensely

⁷⁷ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester and ed. by Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 145.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 147.

⁷⁹ McAra, “Kaleidoscope Eyes,” 10.

⁸⁰ A statement by Tanning quoted in Roberta Waddell and Louisa Wood Ruby, eds., *Dorothea Tanning: Hail, Delirium!* (New York: New York Public Library, 1992), 102.

protruding eyes of the dog, not unseeing but—as the artist puts it—‘seeing in a different way’ guide our own to perceive what we might not have seen otherwise.”⁸¹ In other words, the dogs reveal new perspectives. They beckon the viewers and invite them into the composition, into the becoming-animal, leading them along the abstract lines, over and under the patches of nonillustrative colors, and into the scrambling mix of intermingled human and animal bodies.

Tanning employs haptic color and nomadic abstract lines to create spaces that disorient and deterritorialize her viewers. This is what places her paintings in the domain of events and becoming. Her treatment and configuration of formal elements in her abstract paintings defy easy, rationalized recognition; instead, they constitute the nonrepresentational, expressive affects that are experienced and sensed by the viewer. What one encounters in these paintings is not merely the human and animal bodies, but the relationships between them: their abilities to bind with, affect, disrupt, and become one another. It is not just humans and animals that are painted, but also the relations, forces, and zones of indiscernibility between them, which are conveyed through Tanning’s chaotic or diagrammatic implementation of line, color, and composition. These paintings require a new mode of participation, a new way of accessing and experiencing the images—one that summons the viewers to look molecularly, at the intensities, the relations, the *forces and rhythms* within the painting, which take precedence over figuration.

Thus the paintings have the ability to deterritorialize viewers, opening them up to transformation, because habitual modes of recognition and common sense perception are no longer sufficient when encountering these works of art. Viewers are forced to abandon their

⁸¹ Caws, “Person: Tanning’s Self-Portraiture,” 66. Here, Caws is writing about Tanning’s painting *Reality* (1973-83), but her analysis is also relevant to the other paintings in which a dog’s eyes boldly stand out in contrast to the other, less noticeable figures and body parts in the paintings.

customary ways of seeing and experiencing the images. It is precisely this disorientation that enables the paintings to then invite new forms of thought. This is because the paintings do not just disrupt visual clichés (i.e. conventional figuration), but they also disrupt conceptual clichés; they disrupt popular, orthodox notions about how humans and animals are “supposed” to interact. In the paintings studied here, there is no suggestion of any hierarchy that assumes the superiority of humans over animals. In fact, it is difficult at times to fully isolate and distinguish between the human and animal bodies at all, suggesting that perhaps it is a mistake to place such a wide, unbridgeable gap between human and nonhuman species, as western societies have done. Instead, Tanning’s works provide an alternative view of human and animal relationships in which they are immanently connected, coexisting in one and the same chaotic universe. The recurrence of animal bodies and the conflation of human and animal organs in Tanning’s paintings fulfill the “representative” function of events and set parameters around the concepts to which they give rise. In other words, they give the deterritorializing encounters with Tanning’s paintings specificity as conceptual becomings-animal.

Larger Ideas

From an early age, I turned towards a deep sort of universality—I mean a universality that rules out ‘foreignness’ and the intrinsic superiority of some beings over others... Sometimes, I even want to lose more of my separateness, to roll with the crowd, so to speak, well, to blend into an ocean of beings like a drop of water. Sometimes I think that would be the very best.⁸²

⁸² Jouffroy and Tanning, “Interview with Dorothea Tanning,” 63. Although this thesis takes a specific approach to Tanning’s oeuvre that does not concern shamanism, it is worth noting that in this quotation, Tanning’s ideas seem to intersect with certain shamanistic ways of relating to the natural world. Shamanism has been practiced for many centuries in regions around the globe. It is particularly widespread in Caribbean and African countries, but it is also widely practiced among various tribes in North and South America, including the Hopi tribe of

In the above quotation, Tanning reveals an inner belief and outlook of life that is remarkably congruent with Deleuze and Guattari's theory of becoming, which favors an imperceptible, nomadic existence in the world as the only way to abandon stratification and hierarchization among species, genders, and all other binaries. Though each of the five paintings considered in this present study were painted before Deleuze and Guattari wrote *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* and other texts, their theory of becoming introduces one method of "[ruling] out 'foreignness' and the intrinsic superiority of some beings over others," as Tanning had hoped to do. Every becoming, including the becoming-animal, is a means for achieving the sort of productive, bio-egalitarian anonymity for which Tanning strove. A human may achieve this oneness with the world via the becoming-animal, which is a way of moving beyond one's molar self and forming an alliance with an animal, thus developing new types of relationships (physical and/or conceptual) with animals that are no longer based on division and stratification. Theoretically, this becoming-animal would open the door to further types of becomings, until one has finally abandoned all ties to his or her molar identity and reached an entirely nomadic way of existing in and relating to the world.

To be sure, the present thesis does not argue that Tanning attempted to achieve this anonymity by becoming-animal through making art. Rather, it argues that Deleuze and Guattari's conception of becoming-animal provides an insightful way for understanding how Tanning's

southeastern Arizona. In many cases, shamans derive their powers to heal and alleviate traumas and illnesses by serving as hosts or intermediaries for animal spirits—including canines. For more information on shamanism in the Americas, see, for example, Roland B. Dixon, "Some Aspects of the American Shaman," *The Journal of American Folklore*, 21 (Jan. – Mar., 1908): 1-12. Significantly, Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming-animal has also been connected to shamanistic practices. For a brief examination of the connections between becoming-animal and shamanism, see Wendy Woodward, *The Animal Gaze: Animal Subjectivities in Southern African Narratives* (Johannesburg, South Africa: Wits University Press, 2012), 4-5; 54-56.

paintings might affect her viewers and spread her own ideas—how her art might “overturn values” as she so strongly hoped that it would.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, “We can be thrown into a becoming by anything at all, by the most unexpected, most insignificant of things... Anything at all can do the job.”⁸³ Moreover, they write that the reality of becomings-animal “resides not in an animal one imitates or to which one corresponds but in themselves, in *that which suddenly sweeps us up and makes us become*. [Emphasis added.]”⁸⁴ Thus, Tanning’s paintings can function as becomings-animal if one accepts that it is possible for a work of art to deterritorialize a viewer and force him or her into a new way of looking, and hence a new way of thinking about animals. “We are not in the world, we become with the world; we become by contemplating it. Everything is vision, becoming.”⁸⁵ Thus, the becoming-animal is not merely a process that an artist undergoes while painting. Rather, in the present analysis, it is a conceptual becoming that the painting creates for the viewer; the becoming-animal is the contemplation of a work of art and the new concepts and ideas to which it gives rise. It is both the expressive qualities of line and color and also the unstable yet very noticeably identifiable animal bodies in each of Tanning’s paintings in this present study that create the becoming-animal.

There is, however, one aspect of the becoming-animal that may seem to present an incongruity with Tanning’s paintings: Deleuze and Guattari’s firm denial that any becoming-animal may involve a domesticated animal or a family pet, insofar as “pet,” for them, specifies a particular function fulfilled by an “Oedipalized” animal. An Oedipalized animal is an animal that

⁸³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 292.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 279.

⁸⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press), 169.

has been integrated into the bourgeois familial structure. Deleuze and Guattari posit that pets are “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.”⁸⁶ Deleuze and Guattari view pets as “commodified, oedipalized, and anthropomorphic projections of their owner’s bourgeois individuality.”⁸⁷ Their fundamental problem with “pet-keeping,” as Alain Beaulieu explains, is that “pet lovers have human relationships with their animal companions...people talk to their dogs as they walk down the street as if the animal were a child.”⁸⁸ They thus fail to relate to animals on *animals’* terms and as animals themselves, and they instead project their own *human* “fantasies, emotions, and desires” onto their pets.⁸⁹

Deleuze and Guattari’s critical objection to pet-keeping is based on their argument that it humanizes animals and subsumes them into the Oedipal, “daddy-mommy-me triangle, the familial constellation in person.”⁹⁰ In *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, they explain, “What we are calling into question is the frantic Oedipalization to which psychoanalysis devotes

⁸⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 240.

⁸⁷ Kari Weil, *Thinking Animals: Why Animal Studies Now?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), xxi.

⁸⁸ Alain Beaulieu, “The Status of Animality in Deleuze’s Thought,” *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* 9 (2011): 70.

⁸⁹ Rosi Braidotti, “Animals, Anomalies, and Inorganic Others,” *PMLA* 124 (March 2009): 526.

⁹⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 51.

itself.”⁹¹ In their view, psychoanalysis (specifically, Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis), “assumes that the unconscious is a kind of theater where a self is staged and performed as the [O]edipal drama of mommy-daddy-child... On this view, unconscious desire is always motivated by lack; it is always referred to the mother the subject cannot have, the father the subject cannot be.”⁹² Hence, family “pets,” as projections of human desires, serve the Oedipalized function of filling some lack or emptiness (within the familial structure) of which the human may not fully be aware but nonetheless imposes upon the animal.

Because Tanning has confirmed that the dogs in her paintings are manifestations of her own dog, “(my dog) who, over the years, shows up in many avatars, as constant as a talisman,” it may seem that her paintings do not meet the qualifications or criteria of a “true” becoming-animal outlined by Deleuze and Guattari (since they argue that a human can never “become” with a pet). However, Deleuze and Guattari also acknowledge that “every animal is fundamentally a band, a pack... Any animal is or can be a pack.”⁹³ A dog is not necessarily an Oedipalized “pet” just because it is a dog. They explain, “There is always the possibility that a given animal, a louse, a cheetah, or an elephant, will be treated as a pet, my little beast. And at the other extreme, it is also possible for any animal to be treated in the mode of the pack or swarm... Even the cat, even the dog.”⁹⁴ It has been suggested, however, that Katchina was Tanning’s substitute for a child, since she and Ernst never had any children of their own. For

⁹¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 53.

⁹² Tamsin Lorraine, *Irigaray & Deleuze: Experiments in Visceral Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 117. See also Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 55.

⁹³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 241.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

example, an obituary published on The Telegraph's website on February 3, 2012 (three days after Tanning's death) claimed, "Tanning consistently refused to have children and instead lavished her attention on Pekinese dogs."⁹⁵ This assertion indeed imposes a very Oedipalized identity upon Katchina. However, for Tanning to have willingly not had children, and to have also firmly rejected many other bourgeois conventions as explained in chapter two (such as the customs of adhering to religion, going to college, settling down in a suburban home, marrying, taking a husband's last name, having children, etc.) it seems unlikely that she would have felt the need to compensate by treating her dogs as the children she never had.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that Oedipalized pets "invite us to regress, draw us into a narcissistic contemplation." Similarly, Wendy Woodward agrees that, "Perhaps more so than in relationships with any other nonhuman animal, humans see themselves reflected back narcissistically in their pets' eyes, who serve as mirrors for them."⁹⁶ In fact, she explains, "The very appellation 'pet-keeping', like 'dog-owning', is patronizing to the animal, and does not point to an egalitarian relationship with a resident dog."⁹⁷ However, Woodward acknowledges that not all "resident" animals are necessarily pets, and she believes that certain relationships with domestic animals can lead to a "broader understanding of the political situation of nonhuman animals... a bit like the clichéd 'Think local, act global' ecological directive."⁹⁸ In other words, the relationships between human and nonhuman animals that begin in the home

⁹⁵ "Dorothea Tanning," obituary by The Telegraph, accessed March 28, 2013, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/culture-obituaries/art-obituaries/9060213/Dorothea-Tanning.html>.

⁹⁶ Woodward, *The Animal Gaze*, 92.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 118.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 167.

with “resident” animals may potentially lead to a more cultivated and mindful relationship outside of the home, on a more global scale. Similarly, Keri Weil insists on “the singularity of each animal and of the relationships each demands.”⁹⁹ It is in these relationships, she argues, that “the animals we live with...challenge our views of ourselves and bring us to question the processes of domestication we, too, undergo in order to become the gender and species we think we are.”¹⁰⁰ Thus, both Woodward and Weil assert that all animals, even domesticated ones—when *not* treated as Oedipalized pets—have the ability to bring humans outside of their “selves” and into a new, desubjectified way of relating to the world. In other words, domesticated animals have the capacity for becoming.

There is evidence that suggests Tanning’s relationship with Katchina may have been the type of productive, “challenging” relationship advocated by Woodward and Weil *and* Deleuze and Guattari. In an unpublished journal, Tanning once wrote, “My relationship with Katchina, for all anyone knows, may conceal a perfect formula for discovering our meaning, it may even point the way towards extraordinary experience. Certainly these things are not to be had by direct questioning and laboratory methods.”¹⁰¹ As this quotation indicates, Tanning indeed believed that it was possible to learn something productive about the world—to discover and experience something radically new—through her relationship with Katchina. Not only that, but she indicates that it is perhaps only through her relationship with this dog, and not through “laboratory methods” (i.e. human reasoning and rationality praised in the West), that new

⁹⁹ Weil, *Thinking Animals*, xxi.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Dorothea Tanning, unpublished journal (#2), Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive, New York, NY, p. 59.

meanings and experiences are possible. Thus, it does not appear that, for Tanning, Katchina was an Oedipalized, *humanized* “pet.” Rather, she was a very real animal capable of “perfectly real” becomings.¹⁰²

However, the nature of Tanning’s relationship with Katchina ultimately does not matter; rather, what is important is how the dogs in Tanning’s paintings are presented to the viewer, and the kinds of relationships between humans and animals that they suggest. This is because while Deleuze and Guattari theorize the becoming-animal as a process that an artist experiences in the act of painting, I have argued that the becoming-animal can also be considered from the point of view of reception. In this view, becomings-animal are more than processes of art-making experienced by a painter; instead, they are conceptual becomings-animal that the paintings create for the viewers. They are the new modes of relating to and thinking about animals that Tanning’s paintings trigger once a participating viewer becomes actively engaged with them.

Each of the five paintings discussed here—as well as many of Tanning’s other paintings from 1955 onward—portray humans and animals intermingling and merging with each other in indeterminate, smooth spaces. These paintings possess “no horizons...rather, they maintain a deliberately vertiginous quality; never clear.”¹⁰³ Their dimensions are shattered; planes become fractured and incommensurable. Colors and lines break free from their traditionally representational functions and instead become forces of transformation: transformation of the figures within the painting, which are neither purely human nor nonhuman, but always metamorphosing; and transformation beyond the canvas, as viewers are forced into a new way of

¹⁰² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 238.

¹⁰³ Caws, “Person: Tanning’s Self-Portraiture,” 64.

seeing, comprehending, and experiencing the world around them, beginning with the paintings in front of them.

These paintings do not define the connections and relationships between human and nonhuman animals. They do not tell viewers what to think about animals and the position of animals in the human-dominated, modern western world. But they do ask questions. They reveal open-ended possibilities; they open up a space for new relationships to take place. They encourage viewers to question and perhaps revise their current perceptions of nonhuman animals, and to consider new ways of relating to them. These new relations would, ideally, be driven by what Rosi Braidotti refers to as a “deep bioegalitarianism, a recognition that we humans and animals are in this together. The bond between us is a vital connection...on terms that are no longer hierarchical or self-evident.”¹⁰⁴

Tanning’s paintings convey a world—our world, without binaries and presupposed hierarchies—in which all identities are called into question, and all of the earth’s inhabitants are in a constant state of flux and becoming, each reduced to “[nothing] more than an abstract line, or a piece in a puzzle that is itself abstract.”¹⁰⁵ Indeed, the paintings themselves are like puzzles: scrambled, out of order, but nonetheless coherent if the viewer is willing to think them through. Tanning’s paintings encourage us to participate, to put the pieces together, to think—genuinely *think*, in Deleuzian terms—about the possible connections and linkages between the pieces (the human and nonhuman bodies). It is up to the viewer to work through the puzzle and put the pieces together in his or her own way. Tanning does not give any answers, but her questions are profound. As Deleuzian events, her paintings pose problems. They create new concepts, new

¹⁰⁴ Braidotti, “Animals, Anomalies, and Inorganic Others,” 528.

¹⁰⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 280.

alliances between humans and animals, and offer them to participating viewers for contemplation. They do so, significantly, by denying viewers their comfortable dependence on recognition.

Few of the motifs in Tanning's post-1955 paintings are recognizable and conceivable according to logic-based western conventions of seeing and "thinking." They communicate instead through their affects—their unconventional and deterritorializing configurations of colors, shapes, and lines. The turbulent, maze-like canvases disrupt the rationalized, stratified, and mechanized modern world to which the western viewer belongs—certainly contrasting with the neatly constructed, institutional exhibition space—and they impose unfamiliar conceptions of space and time. Their deterritorializing aesthetic is what ultimately enables Tanning's paintings to incite her viewers into active contemplation. It is precisely this deterritorializing, contemplative encounter between the painting and participating viewer that this thesis has redefined as the conceptual becoming-animal.

Conclusion

The present thesis provides a fresh perspective on Tanning's art—one that beckons for a new wave of scholarship on Tanning's post-1955 paintings that will consider them in their own right, independent of Tanning's earlier Surrealist paintings. This study also illuminates Tanning's persistent use of animal motifs, which is largely overlooked in the scholarship on her works. By uncovering a new dimension of meaning buried within Tanning's oeuvre, this research aims to prompt further scholarship on the incorporation of animals both in Tanning's abstract paintings and in her earlier figurative paintings.

Most significantly, this thesis introduces a reading of Tanning's art that contributes to both animal and feminist studies. As mentioned in the introduction, feminist scholars Josephine Donovan and Carol J. Adams advocate in their book, *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*, a wave of feminism that demands justice and equality for *all* life-forms, positing that “no one creature will be free until all are free...until the mentality of domination is ended in all its forms.”¹ Thus by proposing an analysis of Tanning's paintings that champions a greater awareness of the interconnectedness of life and subverts the traditional western “othering” and marginalization of animals, this thesis also calls upon its audience to question and reevaluate *all* socially constructed and problematic binaries. Thus, the present research offers a new perspective on the feminist implications of Tanning's work. Moreover, this research provides a

¹ Josephine Donovan and Carol J. Adams, eds., *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 3.

reading of Tanning's art that contributes to the burgeoning field of animal studies. Chapter two examined some of the behaviors and customs in modern western society that have resulted in the marginalization and exploitation of animals. With the hope of reversing or at least halting the increasing domination of humans over animals and the catastrophic consequences that that domination has wrought on the environment, animal studies scholars have come together from various disciplines to ask new questions and form new hypotheses about nonhuman animals and their place in humans' lives. The present thesis has opened up a space for art history in this new multidisciplinary field of animal inquiry by demonstrating how Tanning's paintings can function as bodies of thought that create new concepts and ideas about animals and—more importantly—confront viewers and prompt them to consider these new ideas for themselves.

Curiously ahead of her time, Tanning's paintings ask new questions and explore new kinds of relationships between human and nonhuman animals that have only begun to be scrutinized in recent decades. By placing Tanning's paintings within the context of animal studies, this thesis proposes that a radically new way of thinking about human/animal relationships can stem from a new way of looking at them, and Tanning's post-1955 paintings indeed require a new, unconventional way of looking that does not rely on commonplace interpretation or familiar recognition. In each painting, the colors and lines go beyond their traditionally figurative and representational functions in order to convey the affects and relationships between the fluid bodies that they enfold. Contour lines become abstract and nonformal, and illustrative uses of color become haptic and energetic. Together, the nomadic abstract lines and haptic color-patches, distributed across continually shifting and overlapping planes, impose disorienting and deterritorializing configurations of time and space upon viewers; each composition confronts viewers with an altogether vertiginous and intentionally confounding

web of bodies and body parts. In this confrontation, the viewers, too, become entrapped in the web. It is precisely this sense of entrapment and confusion that enables Tanning's paintings to be politicizing and to incite viewers to move beyond the purely visual encounter and to actually experience the works of art, to interact with and think through them.

In her autobiography, Tanning explains that, in creating these abstract paintings, her wish was "to make a trap (picture) with no exit at all."² Indeed, by denying the viewer any easy or obvious solutions to her abstract, visual mazes, by shaking up the viewer's comfortable ways of looking—of recognizing only what is familiar and sound—Tanning's post-1955 paintings have the ability to stay with the viewer even after the visual encounter has taken place. Thus, they invite, even urge, the viewer to continue to confront and contemplate the new concepts and ideas about animals embedded in the paintings. In this way, Tanning's paintings can be understood as incorporeal Deleuzian events: turning points, points of transformation, through which new thoughts and new modes of relating to the world are formed.

This thesis has argued that Tanning's paintings function as a special type of incorporeal event: the Deleuzo-Guattarian becoming-animal. Chapter three explained that Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming-animal is based on the idea that all entities are immanently and molecularly connected, and that all identities are neither fixed nor stable because they are constantly being transformed in processes of becoming. Becoming takes place when one entity becomes deterritorialized and enters into an alliance or zone of mutual affect with another. Becoming-animal does not mean that someone physically transforms into an animal body; rather, it is a process of locating and acknowledging immanent connections and bonds with an animal—those zones of affect that are *already* molecularly present and shared by all species, despite the

² Dorothea Tanning, *Between Lives: An Artist and Her World* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 327

categories and distinctions opposed upon them by the logic-driven western world. In other words, becoming-animal constitutes a radical shift in consciousness: it is the ongoing process of cultivating new ways of thinking about and existing with animals as allies rather than “others.”

Although Deleuze and Guattari’s specific theory of becoming-animal was outlined decades after Tanning began painting the works included in this present study, Tanning’s paintings nevertheless open viewers’ eyes to a fluid world of becoming in which humans and animals intertwine and even, at times, become imperceptible from one another. These paintings, these “becomings-animal,” have politicizing and radicalizing functions, inviting viewers to take action, even if it is only by reconsidering and transforming their personal views about animals. After all, it is only by thinking about and seeing animals in a new light that any real progress can be made in how humans treat and interact with animals in the world.

In an illuminating quotation from an interview with Alain Jouffroy, Tanning asserts, “In the first years, I was painting *our* side of the mirror...but I think that I’ve gone over, to a place where one no longer faces identities at all. One looks at them somewhat obliquely, slyly. To capture the moment, to *accept* it with all its complex identities.”³ Not only does this quotation demonstrate a sort of proto-Deleuzian view of identity as contingent and fluid, as something that constantly “becomes” rather than simply “is,” but it also confirms the need for more scholars to study Tanning’s later paintings independently of her earlier figurative paintings in order to uncover what new messages and ideas they may hold. To be sure, Tanning’s post-1955 paintings have the capacity to expand viewers’ imagination to new productive and innovative ideas, and to new modes of existing in and with the world. Tanning has indeed gone to a place “where one no

³ Alain Jouffroy and Dorothea Tanning, “Interview with Dorothea Tanning,” in *Dorothea Tanning*, by Sune Nordgren, John Russell, Dorothea Tanning, Alain Jouffroy, Jean-Christophe Bailly, and Lasse Söderberg (Malmö, Sweden: Malmö Konsthall, 1993), 57.

longer faces identities,” and her post-1955 paintings take us there with her, should we choose to follow.

In his 1995 essay on Dorothea Tanning, Jean Christophe Bailly aptly writes,

It sometimes seems impossible to view these works of the sixties without a sense of frustration if not of perplexity... Attention spans are notoriously fickle. But the viewer must decide, just as one must decide whether to read a fine if recondite poem or content oneself with a bit of light verse. A will to experience, if one prefers the former, will often bring one into a realm of momentous event and personal enrichment.⁴

Indeed, participating in Tanning’s post-1955 “becomings-animal” holds rewarding possibilities for the viewer who allows him- or herself to be deterritorialized and opened up to the experience. Tanning’s enigmatic compositions, full of intertwining and interdependent human and animal bodies, reveal a nomadic, rhizomatic world of constant becoming that is never static nor fixed. They present “unknown but knowable states:” relationships and alliances between humans and animals that are not yet cultivated in the western world, but which can come to be by overturning current anthropocentric and phallogocentric preconceptions.⁵ These preconceptions are indeed destroyed in the becoming-animal, which “entails the displacement of anthropocentrism and the

⁴ Jean Christophe Bailly, “Image Redux: The Art of Dorothea Tanning,” trans. Richard Howard, in *Dorothea Tanning*, by Dorothea Tanning, Jean Christophe Bailly, and Robert C. Morgan, trans. Richard Howard (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1995), 33. Though Bailly makes no mention of Deleuze anywhere in his text, his reading of Tanning’s post-1955 paintings as having the capacity to bring a viewer into a “realm of momentous event and personal enrichment” is markedly consistent with Deleuze’s contemporaneous theorization of ideal events and encounters. It is curious that Bailly never mentions Deleuze, Guattari, or any other philosophers grappling with the same ideas. Nevertheless, Bailly’s interpretation of Tanning’s post-1955 paintings as “momentous events” provides a thoughtful perspective, upon which this thesis has built through the engagement with Deleuze and Guattari’s conceptualization of becoming-animal.

⁵ Quotation extracted from Tanning’s assertion, “Unknown but knowable states. I try to capture and paint them,” in Jouffroy and Tanning, “Interview with Dorothea Tanning,” 57.

recognition of transspecies solidarity on the basis of our being in this together—environmentally based, embodied, embedded, and in symbiosis.”⁶

The aim of this thesis has not been to situate Tanning’s post-1955 paintings as perfect illustrations of Deleuze and Guattari’s becoming-animal. In fact, these paintings complicate the two philosophers’ concept of becoming because they demonstrate the strength and significance of *visual* material—rather than purely philosophical ideas—for finding new, progressive ways of being in and relating to the world. Both Tanning and Deleuze and Guattari’s works are capable of creating becomings-animal, but they do so through different mediums. Where Deleuze and Guattari seek to deterritorialize their audience through their radical philosophical writings, Tanning’s paintings politicize viewers through their elusive, destabilizing imagery. Above all, her paintings necessitate a radical, challenging way of looking, which Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas help illuminate.

In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari assert, “the only way to get outside the dualisms is to be-between, to pass between...never ceasing to become.”⁷ Indeed, the world of becoming is a world of bioegalitarian coexistence, of mutual learning and respect, that moves beyond oppressive binaries and dualisms since all forms of “being” become purely contingent and malleable. Tanning’s post-1955 paintings, with their perpetually shifting and fluid spaces, intermingling bodies, and meandering lines and colors, provide us with a map of that world. Moreover, her unstable figuration of approximate,

⁶ Rosi Braidotti, “Animals, Anomalies, and Inorganic Others,” *PMLA* 124 (March 2009): 530.

⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 277.

amorphous figures suggest the continual process of metamorphosis, a mode of being in constant flux and transformation. Bodies, and hence identities, exist perpetually on the cusp of recognizability, but never become fixed or fully stabilized. Yet, remarkably, in each of the five paintings upon which this study is focused, a dog—the constant usher—peers out at us from the labyrinthine canvases, summoning our entrance.

Figures



Figure 1. Dorothea Tanning. *Le Mal oublié (The Ill Forgotten)*. 1955. 52 x 61 ¼ in. The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive, New York, NY. © The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive.



Figure 2. Dorothea Tanning. *Insomnies (Insomnias)*. 1957. 81 ½ x 57 ⅛ in. Moderna Museet, Stockholm. © The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive.



Figure 3. Dorothea Tanning. *To the Rescue*. 1965. 80 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 58 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH. © The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive.



Figure 4. Dorothea Tanning. *Chiends de Cythère (Dogs of Cythera)*. 1963. 77 ½ x 117 in. The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive, New York, NY. © The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive.



Figure 5. Dorothea Tanning. *A Parisian Afternoon (Hôtel du Pavot)*. 1942. 40 ½ x 17 ¾ in. The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive, New York, NY. © The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive.



Figure 6. Dorothea Tanning. *Self-Portrait*. 1944. 24 x 30 in. The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive, New York, NY. © The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive.



Figure 7. Dorothea Tanning. *Kenningar*. 1961. 31 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, New York, NY. © The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive.



Figure 8. Dorothea Tanning. *Memoires d'un touriste (Memories)*. 1964. 28 ½ x 36 ¼ in. The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive, New York, NY. © The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive.

Bibliography

- Adams, Carol J. *Neither Man nor Beast: Feminism and the Defense of Animals*. New York: Continuum, 1994.
- Allmer, Patricia, ed. *Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism*. Munich: Prestel, 2009. Published in conjunction with the exhibition “Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism” shown at Manchester Art Gallery.
- . “Of Fallen Angels and Angels of Anarchy.” In *Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism*, edited by Patricia Allmer, 12-27. Munich: Prestel, 2009. Published in conjunction with the exhibition “Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism” shown at Manchester Art Gallery.
- Atterton, Peter, and Matthew Calarco, eds. *Animal Philosophy: Ethics and Identity*. New York: Continuum, 2004.
- Bailly, Jean Christophe. “Image Redux: The Art of Dorothea Tanning.” Translated by Richard Howard. In *Dorothea Tanning*, by Dorothea Tanning, Jean Christophe Bailly and Robert C. Morgan, 13-49. New York: George Braziller, 1995.
- Beaulieu, Alain. “The Status of Animality in Deleuze’s Thought.” *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* 9 (2011): 69-88.
- Berger, John. “Why Look at Animals?: For Gilles Aillaud.” In *About Looking*, by John Berger, 1-26. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980.
- Bergson, Henri. “Concerning the Nature of Time.” In *Key Writings*, by Henri Bergson, Keith Ansell-Pearson, and John Mullarkey, 205-219. New York: Continuum, 2002.
- . *Creative Evolution*. Translated by Arthur Mitchell. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911.
- . “Introduction to Metaphysics.” In *The Creative Mind*. Translated by Mabelle L. Andison, 187-237. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1968.
- Biedermann, Hans. *Dictionary of Symbolism*. Translated by James Hulbert. New York: Facts On File, Inc., 1992.

- Birke, Lynda, and Luciana Parisi. "Animals, Becoming." In *Animal Others: On Ethics, Ontology, and Animal Life*, edited by H. Peter Steeves, 55-74. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999.
- Bogue, Ronald. *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Braidotti, Rosi. "Animals, Anomalies, and Inorganic Others." *PMLA* 124 (March 2009): 526-532.
- . "Of Bugs and Women: Irigaray and Deleuze on the Becoming-Woman." In *Engaging with Irigaray*, edited by Carolyn Burke, Naomi Schor, and Margaret Whitford, 111-137. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- Breton, André. "Artistic Genesis and Perspective of Surrealism." 1941. In *Surrealism and Painting*, by André Breton, translated by Simon Watson Taylor, 49-82. Boston, MA: MFA Publications, 2002.
- . *Mad Love*. Translated by Mary Ann Caws. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987.
- . *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Translated by Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972.
- Calarco, Matthew. *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
- Carruthers, Victoria. "Dorothea Tanning and Her Gothic Imagination." *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas* 5 (2011): 134-158.
- Caws, Mary Ann. "Person: Tanning's Self-Portraiture." In *The Surrealist Look: An Erotics of Encounter*, 61-93. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999.
- Caws, Mary Ann, Rudolf E. Kuenzli, and Gwen Raaberg, eds. *Surrealism and Women*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991.
- Chadwick, Whitney. "An Infinite Play of Empty Mirrors: Women, Surrealism, and Self-Representation." In *Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism, and Self-Representation*, edited by Whitney Chadwick, 2-35. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998.
- . *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement*. Thames and Hudson, 1985.
- Colvile, Georgiana M. M. "Women Artists, Surrealism and Animal Representation." In *Angels or Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism*, edited by Patricia Allmer, 64-73. Munich: Prestel, 2009. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism" shown at Manchester Art Gallery.

- Conley, Katharine. "Safe as Houses: Anamorphic Bodies in Ordinary Spaces: Miller, Varo, Tanning, Woodman." In *Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism*, edited by Patricia Allmer, 46-53. Munich: Prestel, 2009. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism" shown at Manchester Art Gallery.
- Conley, Tom. "A Politics of Fact and Figure." Afterword to *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, by Gilles Deleuze, translated by Daniel W. Smith, 130-149. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
- Darwin, Charles. *Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 2004.
- . *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*. Cricket House Books, LLC., 2010. Google eBook.
- Debord, Guy. *The Society of the Spectacle*. New York: Zone Books, 1994.
- Dekoven, Marianne. "Guest Column: Why Animals Now?" *PMLA* 124 (March 2009): 361-369.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Difference and Repetition*. Translated by Paul Patton. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- . *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*. Translated by Tom Conley. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
- . *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. Translated by Daniel W. Smith. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
- . *The Logic of Sense*. Translated by Mark Lester with Charles Stivale. Edited by Constantin V. Boundas. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983.
- . *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Translated by Dana Polan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
- . *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
- . *What Is Philosophy?* Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

- Derrida, Jacques. *The Animal that Therefore I Am*. Edited by Marie-Louise Mallet. Translated by David Wills. New York: Fordham University Press, 2008.
- Dixon, Roland B. "Some Aspects of the American Shaman." *The Journal of American Folklore*, 21 (Jan. – Mar., 1908): 1-12.
- Donovan, Josephine, and Carol J. Adams, eds. *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.
- The Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive. Accessed April 28, 2013.
<http://www.dorotheatanning.org/>.
- Fernandez James, John Blacking, Alan Dundes, Munro S. Edmonson, K. Peter Etzkorn, George G. Haydu, Michael Kearney, Alice B. Kehoe, Franklin Loveland, William C. McCormack, Daniel N. Maltz, Michel Panoff, Richard J. Preston, Charles K. Warriner, Roger W. Wescott, and Andras Zakar. "The Mission of Metaphor in Expressive Culture [and Comments and Reply]." *Current Anthropology* 15 (June 1974): 119-145.
- Fort, Ilene Susan, and Tere Arcq, eds. *In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States*. Munich: DelMonico Books; Prestel, 2012. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States" shown at The Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Museo de Arte Moderno in Mexico City.
- Fort, Ilene Susan. "In the Land of Reinvention." In *In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States*, edited by Ilene Susan Fort and Tere Arcq, 30-63. Munich: DelMonico Books; Prestel, 2012. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States" shown at The Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Museo de Arte Moderno in Mexico City.
- Foucault, Michel. "What is an Author?." In *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*. Edited by James D. Faubion. Translated by Robert Hurley and Others. Vol. 2 of *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*. New York: The New York Press, 1998.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Translated by Joyce Crick. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Gaarder, Emily. *Women and the Animal Rights Movement*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011.
- Gane, Nicholas. "When We Have Never Been Human, What is to Be Done?: Interview with Donna Haraway." *Theory Culture Society* 23 (2006): 135-158.
- Geis, Terri. "Artists' Biographies." In *In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States*, edited by Ilene Susan Fort and Tere Arcq, 218-

241. Munich: DelMonico Books; Prestel, 2012. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States" shown at The Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Museo de Arte Moderno in Mexico City.
- Goodchild, Philip. *Gilles Deleuze and the Question of Philosophy*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996.
- Gruen, John. "Among the Sacred Monsters." Interview. *ARTnews* 87 (March 1988): 178-182.
- Guattari, Félix. *The Three Ecologies*. Translated by Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton. London: Athlone, 2000.
- Guerlac, Suzanne. *Thinking in Time: An Introduction to Henri Bergson*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006.
- Haraway, Donna. *When Species Meet*. Vol. 3 of *Posthumanities*, edited by Cary Wolfe. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.
- Henderson, Linda Dalrymple. *The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.
- Hubert, Renée Riese. *Magnifying Mirrors: Women, Surrealism, and Partnership*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994.
- Hughes, Joe. *Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009.
- Huxley, Thomas H. *Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1863.
- Irigaray, Luce. *Thinking the Difference: For a Peaceful Revolution*. Translated by Karin Montin. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Jouffroy, Alain, and Dorothea Tanning. "Interview with Dorothea Tanning." In *Dorothea Tanning*, by Sune Nordgren, John Russell, Dorothea Tanning, Alain Jouffroy, Jean-Christophe Bailly, and Lasse Söderberg, 48-67. Malmö, Sweden: Malmö Konsthall, 1933. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "Dorothea Tanning" shown at the Malmö Konsthall.
- Kalof, Linda, and Amy Fitzgerald, eds. *The Animals Reader: The Essential Classic and Contemporary Writings*. Oxford: Berg, 2007.
- Kang, Soo Y. "Tanning's Pictograph: Repossessing Women's Fantasy." *Aurora* 3 (2009): 89-105.

- Kant, Immanuel. "An Answer to the Question: 'What is Enlightenment?'" In *Kant: Political Writings*, edited by H.S. Reiss, 54-60. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Kaplan, E. Ann. *Feminism and Film*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Lacan, Jacques. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, 1964*. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. Translated by Alan Sheridan. Book XI of *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1977.
- Lacan, Jacques, and Wladimir Granoff. "Fetishism: the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real." In *Perversions: Psychodynamics and Therapy*, edited by Sándor Lorand and Michael Balint, 265-276. New York: Gramercy Books, 1956.
- Lawlor, Leonard. "Following the Rats: Becoming-Animal in Deleuze and Guattari." *SubStance* 37 (2008): 169-187.
- Levitt, Annette Shandler. "Women's Work: The Transformations of Leonor Fini and Dorothea Tanning." In *The Genres and Genders of Surrealism*, 89-111. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.
- Lippit, Akira Mizuta. *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
- Lorraine, Tamsin. *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experiments in Visceral Philosophy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.
- Lumbard, Paula. "Dorothea Tanning: On the Threshold to a Darker Place." *Women's Art Journal* 2 (Spring/Summer, 1981): 49-52.
- Lundström, Anna. "Bodies and Spaces: On Dorothea Tanning's Sculptures." *Konsthistorisk tidskrift/Journal of Art History* 78 (November 2009): 121-130.
- Malamud, Randy, ed. *A Cultural History of Animals in the Modern Age*. Oxford: Berg, 2007.
- . "Famous Animals in Modern Culture." Introduction to *A Cultural History of Animals in the Modern Age*, edited by Randy Malamud, 1-26. Oxford: Berg, 2007.
- May, Todd. *Gilles Deleuze: An Introduction*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- McAra, Catriona. "Kaleidoscope Eyes: Cytherean Voyages in the Post-Surrealist Practice of Dorothea Tanning." In *Dorothea Tanning: Unknown but Knowable States*. San Francisco: Gallery Wendi Norris, 2013. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "Dorothea Tanning: Unknown but Knowable States" shown at the Gallery Wendi Norris.

- McCormick, Carlo, and Dorothea Tanning. "Interview with Dorothea Tanning." *BOMB* 33 (Fall 1990): 36-41.
- Napier, Eloise. "Her Infinite Variety." Interview. *Harpers & Queen* (September 2004): 226-231.
- Norris, Margot. "Darwin's Reading of Nature." In *Beasts of the Modern Imagination: Darwin, Nietzsche, Kafka, Ernst, & Lawrence*, 26-52. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.
- Olkowski, Dorothea. "Body, Knowledge and Becoming-Woman: Morpho-logic in Deleuze and Irigaray." In *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*, edited by Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook, 86-109. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000.
- O'Sullivan, Simon. "The Aesthetics of Affect: Thinking Art Beyond Representation." *Angelaki* 6 (2001): 125-153.
- Patton, Paul, ed. *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.
- . *Deleuze and the Political*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Poling, Clark V. *Surrealist Vision & Technique: Drawings and Collages from the Pompidou Center and the Picasso Museum, Paris*. Atlanta: Michael C. Carlos Museum at Emory University, 1996. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "Surrealist Vision and Technique: Drawings and Collages from the Pompidou Center and the Picasso Museum, Paris" shown at the Michael C. Carlos Museum at Emory University, and at the Detroit Institute of Arts.
- Rosemont, Penelope, ed. *Surrealist Women: An International Anthology*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998.
- Rowley, Alison. "Lapses of Taste." *Women's Art Magazine* (1995): 17-19.
- Russell, John. "The Several Selves of Dorothea Tanning." In *Dorothea Tanning*, by Sune Nordgren, John Russell, Dorothea Tanning, Alain Jouffroy, Jean-Christophe Bailly, and Lasse Söderberg, 10-29. Malmö, Sweden: Malmö Konsthall, 1933. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "Dorothea Tanning" shown at the Malmö Konsthall.
- Smith, Daniel W. "Deleuze on Bacon: Three Conceptual Trajectories in *The Logic of Sensation*." Translator's introduction to *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, by Gilles Deleuze, translated by Daniel W. Smith, vii-xxvii. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
- Smith, Daniel, and John Protevi. "Gilles Deleuze." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta (Spring 2013): n.p. Accessed March 11, 2013. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/deleuze/>.

- Sorabji, Richard. *Animal Minds and Human Morals: The Origins of the Western Debate*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- Spies, Werner. *Max Ernst: Loplop: The Artist's Other Self*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1983.
- Stuckey, Charles, "Insomnias." In *Dorothea Tanning: Insomnias: Paintings from 1954-1965*, by Charles Stuckey and Richard Howard, 9-17. New York: Kent Gallery, 2005. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "Dorothea Tanning: Insomnias: Paintings from 1954-1965" shown at Kent Gallery.
- Stuckey, Charles, and Richard Howard. *Dorothea Tanning: Insomnias: Paintings from 1954-1965*. New York: Kent Gallery, 2005. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "Dorothea Tanning: Insomnias: Paintings from 1954-1965" shown at Kent Gallery.
- Sundberg, Martin. "The Metamorphosis of Dorothea Tanning: On the Painting *Insomnias*: Between Facets and Details." Translated by Frank Perry. *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift/Journal of Art History* 79 (March 2010): 18-32.
- Tanning, Dorothea. Afterword to *Dorothea Tanning*, by Jean Christophe Bailly and Robert C. Morgan, 339-354. New York: George Braziller, 1995.
- . "Artspeak." In *Coming to That: Poems*, 44. Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2011.
- . "At the Seaside." In *Coming to That: Poems*, 34-35. Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2011.
- . *Between Lives: An Artist and Her World*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2004.
- . *Birthday*. Santa Monica, CA: The Lapis Press, 1986.
- . *Dorothea Tanning: 10 Recent Paintings and a Biography*. New York: Gimpel-Weitzenhoffer Gallery, 1979. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "Dorothea Tanning: 10 Recent Paintings" shown at the Gimpel-Weitzenhoffer Gallery.
- . "Souvenirs." Translated by Harry Mathews. In *Dorothea Tanning*, by Sune Nordgren, John Russell, Dorothea Tanning, Alain Jouffroy, Jean-Christophe Bailly, and Lasse Söderberg. Malmö, 33-41. Sweden: Malmö Konsthall, 1933. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "Dorothea Tanning" shown at the Malmö Konsthall.
- . *A Table of Content: Poems*. Saint Paul, MN: Graywolf Press, 2004.
- . Unpublished journal (#2). Dorothea Tanning Collection and Archive, New York, NY.
- Tanning, Dorothea, and Robert C. Morgan. *Dorothea Tanning: Messages: March 2-31*. New York: Nahan Contemporary, 1990. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "Dorothea Tanning: Messages" shown at the Nahan Contemporary Gallery.

- Teiwes, Helga. *Kachina Dolls: The Art of Hopi Carvers*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1991.
- The Telegraph. "Dorothea Tanning." Obituary by The Telegraph. Accessed March 28, 2013. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/culture-obituaries/art-obituaries/9060213/Dorothea-Tanning.html>.
- Tythacott, Louise. "Georges Bataille: An Anthropology of Otherness." In *Surrealism and the Exotic*, 215-229. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Viot, Jacques. *Cahiers d'Art* (Paris). Special Max Ernst Number, 1937. Quoted in Werner Spies, *Max Ernst: Loplop: The Artist's Other Self*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1983.
- Vosburg, Nancy. "Strange Yet 'Familiar': Cats and Birds in Remedios Varo's Artistic Universe." In *Figuring Animals: Essays on Animal Images in Art, Literature, Philosophy, and Popular Culture*, edited by Mary Sanders Pollock and Catherine Rainwater, 81-97. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Waddell, Roberta, and Louisa Wood Ruby, eds. *Dorothea Tanning: Hail Delirium!*. New York: The New York Public Library, 1992. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "Dorothea Tanning: Hail Delirium!" shown at the New York Public Library.
- Warner, Marina. *The Inner Eye: Art Beyond the Visible*. London: National Touring Exhibitions and Hayward Gallery, 1996. Published in conjunction with the exhibition "The Inner Eye: Art Beyond the Visible" shown at City Art Galleries in Manchester, Museum and Art Gallery in Brighton, Glynn Vivian Art Gallery in Swansea, and Dulwich Picture Gallery in London.
- Weil, Keri. *Thinking Animals: Why Animal Studies Now?* New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.
- Wemelsfelder, Françoise. "The Problem of Animal Subjectivity and its Consequences for the Scientific Measurement of Animal Suffering." In *Attitudes to Animals: Views in Animal Welfare*, edited by Francine L. Dolins, 37-53. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Wolfe, Cary, ed. Introduction to *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal*, edited by Cary Wolfe, ix-xxiii. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
- . *What is Posthumanism?*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.
- Wolfe, Katharine. "From Aesthetics to Politics: Rancière, Kant and Deleuze." *Contemporary Aesthetics (CA)* 4 (April 2006): n.p.
- Woodward, Wendy. *The Animal Gaze: Animal Subjectivities in Southern African Narratives*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Wits University Press, 2012.

Worringer, Wilhelm. *Form Problems of the Gothic*. New York: G.E. Stechert & Co., 1920.