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New Comparative Poetics

**Insects in Literature
and the Arts**

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Acknowledgments

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Beeing and Time

A Kiss of Chemoreception, A Taste of Trophallaxis (and the Bug in Dasein's Mouth)

Virgil W. BROWER

Illinois bees ... They're damn near retarded.
They're crawling all over the ground.

~ Jeff Snowbarger¹

The philosopher is ... the animal on a level
with the surface – a tick or a louse.

~ Gilles Deleuze²

Globe, laissez faire ta fourmi.

~ Victor Hugo³

In sections (embedded, bored into, on or just under the skin) of Jacques Derrida's 'Typewriter Ribbon', there are prehistoric memory traces. He is discussing a passage from Rousseau's *Confessions*, at the intersection of 'quasi-incest' and pleasure: 'No, I tasted pleasure, but I knew not what invincible sadness poisoned its charm. I was as if I had committed an incest'.⁴ At this point something starts bugging Derrida. Two insects swarm and interrupt him, invoking associations on time, memory, death, and pleasure.

A few years ago, when I was reading these pages of Rousseau for a seminar ... a prodigious archive had just been exhumed ... In layers of fauna and flora were found, protected in amber ... the cadaver of an insect surprised by death, in an instant, by a geological or geothermal catastrophe, at the moment at which it was sucking the blood of another insect, some fifty-four million

¹ Jeff Snowbarger, 'Bitter Fruit', *Tin House Magazine* 11/2 (2009): 131-153.

² Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester & Charles Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 133.

³ Victor Hugo, *Les Travailleurs de la mer* (New York: Adamant Media Elibron Classics, 2006), 41.

⁴ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, qtd. in Jacques Derrida, *Without Alibi*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 129.

years before humans appeared on earth. Fifty-four million years before humans appeared on earth, there was once upon a time an insect that died, its cadaver is still visible and intact, the cadaver of someone who was surprised by death at the instant it was sucking the blood of another! ... It is one thing to know the sediments, rocks, plants that can be dated to this timeless time ... It is another thing to refer to a singular event, to what took place one time, one time only, in a nonrepeatable instant ... at some stigmatic point of time in which it was in the process of *taking its pleasure sucking* the blood of another animal, just as it could have taken it in some other way, moreover ... There are many things on earth that have been there since fifty-four million years before humans ... but rarely in the form of the archive of a singular event and, what is more, of an event that happened to some living being, affecting a kind of organized individual, already endowed with a kind of memory, with project, need, desire, pleasure, *jouissance*, and aptitude to retain traces.⁵

The event insects us. The event arrives 'at some stigmatic point' in time as insect. It *insects* the reader and cuts-in as an 'insexion'.⁶ Evental insexion *infects* the reader as it *infests* time; ever bugging us, here and now. A singular event captures the trace of an insect that, as a 'living' 'someone' with a relation to death, possesses the aptitude to retain traces and this trace-of-retaining-traces comes about as a prehistoric bug sucking the fluids of another; a singularity of two, beyond individuality. This story bursts into 'Typewriter Ribbon' as a jagged cut and seems a bit out of place in the text. Derrida quickly follows it with, 'I don't know why I am telling you this'.⁷ But three paragraphs later he *thinks* he remembers:

I didn't know, a moment ago, why I was telling you these stories of archives: archives of vampire insects ... But yes, I think I remember now, even though it was at first unconscious and came back to me only after the fact. It is because in a moment I am going to talk to you about effacement and prosthesis, about falsifications of the letter, about the mutilation of texts, of bodies of writing exposed to cutting no less than insects are (and 'insect', *insectum*, as you know, means 'cut', 'sectioned', and, like 'sex', *sexus*, *sectus*, it connotes section, separation, and so forth).⁸

⁵ Derrida, *Without Alibi*, 130-131; italics mine. Keep Derrida's account, here, of an insect *surprised at the moment of sucking* in mind when confronting an account given by Heidegger (discussed below) of an insect 'which started sucking [*Saugen*] and then interrupted its sucking [*Abbrechen des Saugens*]'. Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 249; *Gesamtausgabe*, band 29/30 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983), 362.

⁶ Hélène Cixous, *Insister of Jacques Derrida*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 130.

⁷ Derrida, *Without Alibi*, 131.

⁸ Derrida, *Without Alibi*, 132.

The memory remembered and the thought of remembering are, themselves, distinct; separated; disinsected. The dissection of text to which he is referring is the account of a typographical error made in the original text of his 1967 work, *Of Grammatology*, to one section of which he had included an epigraph from Rousseau: '*J'étois comme si j'avais commis un inceste*. [I was as if I had committed an incest]'.⁹ Yet the page proofs came to read '*J'étois comme si j'avais commis un insecte*. [I was as if I had committed an insect]'. With an admirable intersection of autobiographical associations (perhaps just as much heterothanatographical associations), he *thinks* he tells the story of ambered insects because he, too, once upon a time, was compelled to make the move from prehuman to human; from insect to the dread of incest. He had 'to rectify and to normalize' this 'perfect anagram (*incest/insect*)' and, hence, return 'from insect to incest, retracing the whole path, the fifty-four million years that lead from the blood-sucking animal to the first man of the *Confessions*'.¹⁰

If I may cut in... The texts smack of another link between the ambered insects and this passage from Rousseau. These sentences that set his insectation in motion, themselves, have another section. Like an unconscious repetition-compulsion, Derrida seems yet again to dissect and separate Rousseau's text which succored his ancient story of a vampire insect at the very moment that he explains and confesses his primal dissection and normalization of the same text back in 1967 (almost an ingenious performance of the autoimmunity of memory and confession). Before the memory of two memories and 'after the fact' of associating the Rousseau text with one, there is a more direct link of the *pleasures* between them. Between Rousseau's taste of pleasure [*je goûtai le plaisir*] and Derrida's description of an insect 'taking its pleasure sucking' there is an almost forgotten trace of gustative phenomena shared between an insect over fifty-four million years old and the first man of the *Confessions*.

One should keep the orality of this sucking insect, at least fifty-four million years old, in mind while recalling one of Derrida's earliest discussions of a trace 'older than "history" ... "older" than sense and the senses' and possibly 'more "ancient" than what is primordial'.¹¹ Yet the immemorial trace is, apparently, not older than *all* the senses. Derrida describes it as a trace 'older than seeing, hearing, and touching

⁹ See Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 95.

¹⁰ Derrida, *Without Alibi*, 133.

¹¹ Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 103.

[Plus "vieux" ... que le voir, l'entendre, le toucher].¹² The chemoreceptive senses of taste and smell somehow do not quite fit in (an uncanny and symptomatic Continental philosopheme that can also be found in Kant and Heidegger, discussed below). They are more often cut-out than allowed to cut-in; difficult to insect and easier to section-out. This divergent note in 'Typewriter Ribbon' uncovers the flimsy, yet solemn, possibility that this trace memory of prehistoric insects may have something to do with why Derrida keeps from implicating the chemoreceptions in the metaphysics of history, presence, and the senses in *Speech and Phenomena*. The question would remain, however: how could something be older than touch [*le toucher*] and not older than taste? There would be no latter without the former. Would there not? At least, there would be no taste without a certain kind of touch or contact, a phenomenal fact that would be (we shall see, below) much more apparent to insects than to humans.

The trace of an oral sensation survives the insectuous prehuman and the incestuous all too human. A living someone endowed with the aptitude to retain memory traces is, as such and since time immemorial, a living someone endowed with the aptitude to take pleasure in tasting and sucking. The event of a tasting-insect and the taste of pleasure with that insect's relation (as both a tasting-someone and a sucking-someone) to the world, death, and others is something to which we must return. In doing so, we move beyond the pleasure-taste ever limited to the human tongue as taste-organ (which Rousseau's poetic confession seems already to insinuate).

For Heidegger, 'insects have an exemplary function within the problematic of biology'.¹³ He does not explicitly state what the exemplary function is, but one can discern a similar role of insects in Freud as well who, in questioning an overall animality distinct from human beings, lists three exemplary insect communities before over-determining them as 'animal States'. Following Freud's explanation of the repressive ruthlessness of culture, Chapter VII of *Civilization and Its Discontents* begins:

Why do our relatives, the animals [*die Tiere*], not exhibit any such cultural struggle? We do not know. Very probably some of them – the bees, the ants, the termites [*die Bienen, Ameisen, Termiten*] – strove for thousands of years before they arrived at the State institutions [*staatlichen Institutionen*], the

¹² Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 103; *La Voix et le phénomène* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1967), 116. This book was published the same year as *Of Grammatology*, the text on which Derrida is reminiscing in 'Typewriter Ribbon'.

¹³ Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 241. Cf. 'animals in general and insects in particular [*die Tiere und insbesondere die Insekten*]'; Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 250; *Gesamtausgabe*, 29/30, 364.

distribution of functions and the restrictions on the individual, for which we admire [*bewundern*] them to-day ... we know from our own feelings [*Empfindungen*] that we should not think ourselves happy [*glücklich*] in any of the roles assigned in any of these animal States [*Tierstaaten*] ...¹⁴

Though he will move on to include other 'animal species' [*andere Tierarten*] at this point in the discussion, these primitive political entities to which he is referring are not so much 'animal States' as explicitly insect States; less *Tierstaaten*, than *Insektenstaaten*. This synecdochal generalization (on the verge of a fallacy of composition) from bees, ants, and termites to the animal kingdom on the whole is fragrant of a kind of exemplarity Heidegger grants insects with regards to animals and to biology on the whole.¹⁵ Freud continues:

we should not think ourselves happy in any of these animal States or in any of the roles assigned in them to the individual ... It may be that in primitive man a fresh access of libido kindled a renewed burst of activity [*Vorstoß*] on the part of the destructive instinct [*Destruktionstriebes*]. There are many questions here to which as yet there is no answer.¹⁶

The collective-living and state-apparatus of insects is unhampered by culture and this is to be admired, if not adored; *bewundern*. However, this comes at the cost of a kind of collective dreariness condemned ever to a kind of individual unhappiness. One reason Freud suggests for the difference between insect politics and human politics is that humans may have access to new energies from destructive drives. The admirable yet impossible political state comes about because bees, ants, and termites have little to no access to such energies and perhaps possess nothing resembling a death drive.¹⁷

¹⁴ Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. 21, trans. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-Analysis, 1955), 123 (emphasis mine); *Gesammelte Werke*, band XIV (London: Imago, 1948), 482.

¹⁵ A similar strategy can be found near the end of Part Five of René Descartes' *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason and Seeking the Truth in the Sciences* where flies and ants stand in for beasts in general: 'there is none that leads weak minds further from the straight path of virtue than that of imagining that the souls of *beasts* are of the same nature as ours, and hence that after this present life we have nothing to fear or to hope for, any more than flies or ants. But when we know how much the *beasts* differ from us, we understand much better...'; *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 1, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, & Dugald Murdoch (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 141 (italics added).

¹⁶ Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. 21, 123.

¹⁷ Note that in this passage, Freud does not say that insects have no such destructive drives but only that humans may have kindled new outbursts of activity by virtue of

In one of his most political texts, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Freud explains in detail the process of identification by which diverse group desires are projected onto a single political leader. This also entails certain aspects of sublimation, sexual latency, as well as

them. He also does not say, here, that insects have no libido but that humans may have had *fresh access* to it. How the seemingly all-too-human libido and destructive drives might relate to insects is beyond the scope of this essay, although we must grapple with the oral aspects of what may be some of their expressions in the insect world, below. Nor should it be overlooked that in *The Ego and the Id*, Freud does liken the death drive to 'the fact that death coincides with the act of copulation in some of the lower animals'. See *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 19, trans. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-Analysis, 1961), 47. So it is at least worth noting some of the libidinal and destructive facets that may be found in the respective discussions of insects by Schelling and Heidegger. Of course, the eliminative behavior or 'drives' found in both of their works should never simply be reduced to the death or destructive 'drives' of Freud, as if the term meant the same thing for these three very different thinkers. Schelling seems to describe a kind of latent sexual repression in insects as he explains bee productivity in terms similar to what Freud calls sublimation and the infantile latency period between the pre-genital and pubescent periods of sexual development. Though there is very little sexlessness in the animal kingdom, as he distinguishes the *sexual drive* from the *technical drive*, Schelling suggests that when 'there actually is sexlessness, there is yet an *other, specific* direction of the formative drive. The sexual drive and the *technical drive* are equivalent for most of the insects before they have passed through their metamorphoses. The sexless bees are also the only productive ones ... Most insects lose all technical drive after sexual development'. See F.W.J. Schelling, *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Keith R. Peterson (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004), 36-38 (emphasis added). Here, Schelling foresees an entomological bee-side to Freud's study of Leonardo da Vinci. The destructive drive one may find in Schelling with regard to insects seems a simple reproductive version of the relation between sex and death in a comparison he makes between the sexual drive of insects and those of plants. For both the 'highest summit' of 'formation' is the sexual drive. Once reproduction is achieved, 'the flowers fall to the ground and the transformed [that is, sexualized and post-coital] insect dies as soon as fertilization is accomplished, without having expressed any other drive'. As such, 'the same law that holds for the metamorphosis of insects also holds for plants'. F.W.J. Schelling, *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Keith R. Peterson (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004), 36-38. Other expressions of this so-called 'other drive' are suggested by Heidegger, for whom the animal relates to things in the world in a very primitive way. It *relates* to things but cannot *attend* to things. This relation is *negative*. He calls it the 'eliminative character [*Beseitigungscharakter*]'. It strives to eliminate that to which it relates itself. This 'can show itself as *destruction* [*Vernichten*]—as devouring [*Auffressen*]—or as avoidance of [*Ausweichen vor*]...'; Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 249-250; *Gesamtausgabe*, 29/30, 362-363 (emphases added). One version of this eliminative character is the behavior by which the Camberwell Beauty butterfly seeks light and, therefore, avoids or eliminates shade, another would be the sexual cannibalism or nuptial aggression of some insects. Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 251 (emphasis added). Whereas humans may be *driven* to destroy by *Treiben* in Freud, insects would be further *driven-on* to destroy by *Antrieben* in Heidegger.

over-determining (or cathecting) the leader, as one does a mate, lover, or love-object. Once again, he appeals to bees to explain the transformation: 'There must therefore be a possibility of transforming group psychology into individual psychology ... just as it is possible for bees in case of necessity to turn a larva into a queen instead of into a worker'.¹⁸ The method by which some insects seem to choose a new queen (e.g., among some ants) has to do with the way she smells; a chemoreception that one study calls 'chemical communication'¹⁹ which would be comparable to taste on the insect level (discussed in more detail, below). *If only in hypothetical amber*, there would have been millions of insurrections within prehistoric insect-politics based on chemoreceptive identification with the living queen prior to Freud's inaugural and parricidal anthropoid-politics based on the eating of the dead father.

The cooperative sects of insects supplement Freud's interest in politics and group psychology. This emerges again in one of his scant discussions on telepathy, alluding to the possible psychic capabilities of insects. In his lecture called 'Dreams and Occultism', which was never delivered to an audience, he writes:

It would seem to me that psycho-analysis, by inserting the unconscious between what is physical and what was previously called 'psychical', has paved the way for the assumption of such processes as telepathy. If only one accustoms oneself to the idea of telepathy, one can accomplish a great deal with it – for the time being, it is true, only in imagination. It is a familiar fact that we do not know how the common purpose comes about in *the great insect communities*: possibly it is done by means of a direct psychical transference of this kind. One is led to the suspicion that this is the original, archaic method of communication between individuals and that in the course of phylogenetic evolution it has been replaced by the better method of giving information with the help of signals which are picked up *by the sense organs*.²⁰

This distinction Freud suggests between communication by telepathic transference of thoughts and that by 'signals' picked up by 'sense organs' must be reconsidered alongside the chemoreceptive and communicative capacities of the insect world.

¹⁸ Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 18, trans. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-Analysis, 1955), 124.

¹⁹ Patrizia D'Ettore, et al., 'Does She Smell Like a Queen? Chemoreception of a Cuticular Hydrocarbon Signal in the Ant *Pachycondyla inversa*', *The Journal of Experimental Biology* 207 (2004): 1085-1091.

²⁰ Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 22, trans. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1955), 55 (italics mine).

It is misleading to use the word *taste* in a discussion of insects (or even some amphibians). To do so always falls prey to a kind of hominization or anthropomorphism, since taste is strictly an oral phenomenon limited to the tongue in humans. This is why some neurobiologists forsake the term *taste* for the more precise term *contact chemoreception*.²¹ Contact chemoreception would be, for lack of a better term, among the insect's sense of taste. Insects can taste or, better, receive chemical stimuli upon physical contact, with various parts of the body. Bees, for example, do not only 'taste' with their mouthparts (the proboscis and antennae) but also with gustatory receptors located on their legs, thorax, abdomen, and even parts of their wings.²² If, as Edmund Husserl suggests, 'the entire surface of the [human] Body serves as a touch surface, and the [human] Body itself is a system of touch organs',²³ then it is perhaps not unhelpful to consider that much of the surface of the insect body serves as a 'taste' surface and the insect body itself is a system of 'taste' organs; tiny scuttling tongues that crawl or fly.

When Freud speaks of telepathy he means the transference of a thought,²⁴ which, perhaps, could include the transference of a memory. A recent study tries to make the case that a communication of information from one ant to another, which it calls an 'associative olfactory memory', appears to take place in various ant colonies that participate in cooperative foraging. The latter is a mouth-to-mouth exchange of food called *trophallaxis*, which, apart from the sharing of food, also plays a role in the recognition of nestmates. (For the taste of all mates is no small matter.) Certain worker ants remain close to the base while foragers scavenge elsewhere for food. It is brought to the workers and exchanged

²¹ R.F. Chapman, 'Contact Chemoreception in Feeding by Phytophagous Insects', *Annual Review of Entomology* 48 (2003): 456.

²² Maria Gabriela de Brito Sanchez, et. al., 'Electrophysiological and Behavioural Characterizations of Gustatory Responses to Antennal "Bitter" Tastes in Honeybees', *European Journal of Neuroscience* 22 (2005): 3061. Winging it, on the fly, 'taste' finds itself on the hymen; amidst the 'hymenologies' or 'hymenographies' discussed by Derrida. The taste of the hymen would include the 'filmy membrane' that comprises 'the wings of certain insects (bees, wasps, and ants, which are called hymenoptera) ...'; Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 213.

²³ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, Second Book, *Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz & André Schuwer (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989), 73; lines 24-26; [68].

²⁴ See also Freud's earlier discussion of the 'omnipotence of thought' as it relates to 'a telepathic message' in *Totem and Taboo. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 13, trans. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1955), 85-87.

by sipping it mouth to mouth. The study suggests that trophallaxis allows 'an ant in the nest to access information related to an unknown source recently visited by a nestmate'.²⁵ The idea is that the feeding ant not only ingests food, but that the taste of the food is accompanied by the transference of an olfactory memory that allows the receiving ant, once fed, to locate the source of the food even though it has never been to that source. The memory of scent does not come from smelling that scent but rather tasting it with direct contact. Taste precedes, if not creates, memory. The experiment placed ants in a maze whereby those fed, after trophallaxis, could locate the food and *most of* those not fed could not. The neurology of this study seems a bit lacking and the experimenters' use of the word 'memory' sounds a bit equivocal and tendentious. But should it not also be considered (though the experimenters do not) that the nest ant, as it trophallacts, not only tastes the taste of the food but also the taste of the foraging ant, itself? The feeder is as much in contact with the other ant as with the food and the forager shares its selftaste as much as the provisions.²⁶ The point would be that the transference, of sorts, alleged to occur in insect communities may have something to do with their expanded sense of taste (which is not confined to their mouthparts) and their constant contact with one another.

As such, ants disclose the possibility of thought transference between those who taste one another or even the possible link between a memory and the act of saying-words-to-oneself, which would immediately associate those words with the taste of one's own mouth or teeth. *Comme si entre deux fourmis algériennes*, Cixous and Derrida seem to transfer thoughts with one another as they taste one another in uncanny writings on ants, taste, and telepathy.²⁷ Two scuttling hyperdreamers find themselves

²⁵ Yael Provecho & Roxana Josens, 'Olfactory Memory Established During Trophallaxis Affects Food Search Behaviour in Ants', *The Journal of Experimental Biology* 212 (2009): 3221-3227.

²⁶ As such, one could supplement the olfactory tele-chemoreception with the gustatory contact chemoreception when considering what (if anything) ants have to teach cybernetics: 'The odors perceived by the ant seem to lead to a highly standardized course of conduct; but the value of a simple stimulus, such as an odor, for conveying information depends not only on the information conveyed by the stimulus itself *but on the whole nervous constitution of the sender and the receiver of the stimulus as well*'. Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics, or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1961), 157 (italics added).

²⁷ On the ants shared between Derrida and Cixous, see Jacques Derrida, "'Fourmis'", *Lecteurs de la Différence Sexuelle*, in Hélène Cixous, *Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (New York: Routledge, 1997), 119-127; Hélène Cixous, *Insister of Jacques Derrida*, 131-133. On the tastes shared between them, see Hélène Cixous, *Portrait of Jacques Derrida as a Young Jewish Saint*, trans. Beverly Bie Brahic (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 79, 90; Hélène Cixous,

connected like foraging *fourmis*, who *readtaste* not only what the other writes, but what the writing of the other is saying. Between the two, analysis 'flutters' through the air like 'pollen' as they recount their dreams to one another 'with a greediness for *tastetexts*'.²⁸ Could a transference of thought come about as one says – or even thinks – to oneself the words of another (said by another), which simultaneously tastes self and other; one's selftaste and the other's words (and hence tastes of the other)? As such, Derrida trophallacts the reader as he delivers his 'note' that '*all words are ants*'.²⁹ These two Algerian ants discover how reading, as such, is a trophallacting of *tastetexts*. Positing the human tongue that both tastes and speaks (and which simultaneously tastes its own selftaste while speaking) with the contact chemoreceptive legs of certain insects, consider the remarkable comment by Merleau-Ponty that an aphasic patient 'cuts himself off from his voice as certain insects sever one of their own legs'.³⁰ The bee in Dasein's ear is the very possibility by which the aphasic moves beyond the mere auto-affection of hearing-oneself-speak³¹ to a non-speaking tongue that can now focus on one's constant chemoreceptive contact with oneself, to the auto-affection of tasting-oneself-not-speak as a bee-ing beyond Being that communicates (even if it no longer speaks 'human'³² or Dasein) only insofar as it wags,³³ flicks, and flies with wings that taste. If, as Giorgio Agamben suggests, it is 'perhaps time to call into question the prestige that language [*linguaggio*] has enjoyed and

Hyperdream, trans. Beverley Bie Brahic (Malden: Polity, 2009), 14, 151; Cixous, *Insister of Jacques Derrida*, 124, 126-128. On the *telepathy* and *tele-phonics* shared between them, see Jacques Derrida, *H.C. for Life, That is to Say...*, trans. Laurent Milesi and Stephan Herbrechter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 17-18; Jacques Derrida, 'Telepathy', trans. Nicholas Royle, in Peggy Kamuf & Elizabeth Rottenberg (eds.), *Psyche: Inventions of the Other*, vol. 1, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 226-261, especially the telephone on 241 and 'telepathy-calls' on 247 as well as the kisses on 130, 243; Cixous, *Hyperdream*, 74-76, by one who 'can never get enough kisses' on 125; Hélène Cixous, *Philippines: Prédelles* (Paris: Galilée, 2009), 73-101.

²⁸ Cixous, *Insister*, 137 (italics added).

²⁹ Derrida, 'Fourmis', 121 (italics added).

³⁰ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (New York: Routledge, 1962), 163.

³¹ See, e.g., Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 76-80, 86, as well as the discussion of the autoaffection of 'hearing (understanding)-oneself-speak' that is indicted to have 'dominated the history of the world during an entire epoch, and has even produced the idea of the world...', Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 7-8.

³² See Neil Smith, 'Chomsky's Science of Language', in James McGilvray (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Chomsky*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 21.

³³ On the 'wagging dance' and the so-called 'language' of bees, see Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Routledge Classics, 2001), 62-63.

continues to enjoy in our culture', perhaps such a call needs to do more than simply demote it to a level 'no more efficacious than the signals insects exchange [*non è più efficace dei segnali che si scambiano gli insetti*]'.³⁴ Instead, perhaps it is time to further investigate the efficacy of chemoreceptive signals among insects (if they are 'signals') in order to reevaluate the role played by the sense of taste in *la langue humaine*.

For Heidegger, the insect lives, but it does not exist.³⁵ His discussion of insects focuses on moths, beetles, but most importantly bees. The task is to show that the animality, of which insects are exemplary, relates to being and the world in a quite different way from humans. Humans may *attend* to the world. Insects are merely *captivated* by things in the world. Humans can *be*. Insects can merely *behave*. Insects, then, display the difference between *being* and *behaving*. As such, they do not truly relate to the world but are *given over*³⁶ to the world, *taken* or *captivated* by things.³⁷ The world is *given* to humans. Insects are *given over* to the world.

³⁴ Giorgio Agamben, *The Sacrament of Language: An Archaeology of the Oath* (Homo Sacer II, 3), trans. Adam Kotsko (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 71; *Il Sacramento del Linguaggio: Archeologia del Giuramento* (Homo Sacer II, 3) (Roma-Bari: Gius, Laterza & Figli, 2008), 97.

³⁵ Heidegger says this about a dog rather than an insect. Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 210.

³⁶ Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 247.

³⁷ Similarly, the moth's relation to the flame, for Heidegger, shows that the moth does not attend to the world or the flame but merely behaves. The moth does not attend to the flame because it is a captive to its own light-seeking behavior. Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 251. Cixous thinks the insect and the flame alongside love: 'You never do see the presence of a gleam of memory in the unknown person you accidentally love [*aime*]. And yet perhaps we flung ourselves [*nous nous sommes peut-être jetés*] at his façade faces pressed to the window of this visage the way an insect [*comme l'insecte*; there's no 'way' in the French] fluttering toward the light receives the command to fling itself into the flames [*se jeter dans le brasier*]' . Hélène Cixous, *Manhattan: Letters from Prehistory*, trans. Beverley Bie Brahic (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), 105; *Manhattan: Lettres de la Préhistoire* (Paris: Galilée, 2002), 138. One does not so much *fall* in love as *fling* or *throw* oneself into love as a moth to a flame. It is noteworthy that in the original hand-written manuscript of *Manhattan*, the writer-that-Cixous-is seems, at first, to have been thinking about falling in love before some insect flutters toward her with the command to refrain from falling in order to illuminate the throws of love. She strikes the *faH* through, which is omitted from the published text. In the Cixous Archive at the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* one may read: '*Et pourtant nous nous sommes peut-être jetés sur sa façade (tombés) écrasés...*'; *Manhattan, Manuscrit autographe*, 109. Perhaps love (maybe even libido) is a way by which humans are captivated by the other; the other that is not so much *given* to them (as Heidegger would have us believe) but rather the beloved other to which even humans and Dasein are *given over*.

He gives the example of a beetle's 'relation' to the blade of grass. For the beetle, it 'is not a blade of grass at all'. It is not something that can become hay to feed cows, but is rather 'simply a *beetle-path* [*Käferweg*] on which the beetle specifically seeks beetle-nourishment [*Käfernahrung*], and is not just any edible matter [*Freßbaren*] in general'.³⁸ Heidegger's 'beetle-path' intersects with Gilles Deleuze and Hélène Cixous, as well as what is sought and found there. Deleuze frames the entire denotable world of things as 'edible' with an analysis of a Lewis Carroll's duck and its relation to a worm (possibly a caterpillar or an insect larva). The duck *finds* it because it is edible. Deleuze cites Carroll, who has the duck say, 'when I *find* a thing [*quand je trouve une chose*] ... it is generally a frog or a worm [*c'est en général une grenouille ou un ver*].'³⁹ Vermin are for finding and eating. Whether on the duck-path or the beetle-path, one *finds* in order to kill, devour, ingest, or introject. The blade of grass is to Heidegger's beetle as the worm is to Deleuze's duck.

Cixous, however, scuttles to and fro between Heideggerian paths [*Wege*] and Deleuzian finds [*trouvailles*]. She *finds a path* that escapes from both as she displaces the act of finding from the predator to the prey and dislocates the path from the beetle to the predator that seeks and finds beetles. Between Heidegger's 'beetle-path' (on which the beetle finds beetle nourishment) and Deleuze's duck-path (on which the duck 'finds' the worm as duck nourishment) is Cixous's beetle that *finds itself* beyond the path of appropriation and rather on the path of its predatory other. Instead of being found on its own path, it finds itself on the other's path. 'The beetle lies in the path of the lizard / *Le scarabée se trouve justement sur le chemin du lézard*'.⁴⁰ The beetle does more than simply lie there on its back. It finds itself [*se trouve*] on the lizard-path and does so quite rightly; justly [*justement*]. Cixous's beetle is a parable of *justice*. Justice emerges in finding-oneself on the very path that seems to forbid it – where one is supposed to find only the edible other – the predatory path that balances between either *the finding* of only those to eat or *the found* as only those to be eaten.

As 'edible matter', in its relation to death, the beetle survives on the edge of the event; on the path of the event (be it the event of a duck, lizard, or Derrida's 'geological or geothermal catastrophe'). Cixous reveals the crack [*l'écart*] in the path of the lizard [*chemin du lézard*]. Her beetle not only finds its own nourishment (with which it is supposed to be utterly captivated) but finds and discovers itself as the other's nourishment;

³⁸ Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 198; Gesamtausgabe, 29/30, 292.

³⁹ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 25-26; *Logique du Sens* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1969), 38 (emphasis added).

⁴⁰ Cixous, *Manhattan: Letters from Prehistory*, 89, 115 (emphasis added).

that other that is captivated by the beetle, itself. In relating to death and finding itself edible it slips through the cracks and breaks free from the lizard-path and the Heideggerian 'beetle-path', the two paths on which it was previously captive; sur-viving and escaping, a little less captivated. Only in this precarious moment, at a time when all involved think that '*le scarabée est cuit*' – that the beetle is toast; its goose cooked (to borrow from Brahic's translation) – does it *live-on*; evading its own behavior as surviving another's behavior. Prior to this, the beetle was dead meat on a lizard-, duck-, or even Dasein-path. Yet the event insects the path: 'Just when the man is about to scoop it up ... the beetle scuttles off ... and exits the scene alive [*Au moment où l'homme s'apprête à le ramasser ... le scarabée repart ... et sort de la scène vivant*]'.⁴¹

Both Heidegger and Schelling address experiments in which the thorax of an insect is cut away. Schelling recounts that once the hind-parts of a maggot or butterfly are removed from the head, 'they still undertake all sorts of motions'.⁴¹ In a bit more detail, Heidegger revisits an experiment by the biologist, Jakob von Uexküll, where a bee is placed before a bowl of 'so much honey that the bee was unable to suck up the honey all at once. It begins to suck and then after awhile' stops sucking and flies off, upon recognizing – apparently – that there is too much honey for it to ingest. But, 'if its abdomen is carefully cut away while it is sucking, a bee will simply carry on regardless even while the honey runs out of the bee from behind'.⁴² Heidegger believes that this shows, '*conclusively*', that 'the bee by no means recognizes the presence of too much honey', nor even 'the absence of its abdomen'. Therefore, 'the bee is simply taken by its food'.⁴³

Though, earlier, he had warned his readers that 'it is questionable whether what we call human seeing is animal seeing',⁴⁴ here, Heidegger is all-too-human. He seems confidently to proclaim the *tongue*, alone, to be the instrument of taste for animals, when he states: 'we can anatomically identify the eyes, ears, and tongue with which the animal sees, hears, and tastes'.⁴⁵ In his discussion of the bee experiment, its wings are limited to instruments of flying away once it is satiated and its mouthparts – as taken by, or captivated by, food – are only allowed to relate to something as food. But contact chemoreception suggests that these relations do *not* exhaust the capacities of wings, legs, and mouthparts in the realm

⁴¹ Schelling, *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, 146, fn.

⁴² Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 242.

⁴³ Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 242.

⁴⁴ Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 219.

⁴⁵ Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 216.

of insects. He has been misled down an erroneous *Daseinweg* by his assumption of the exemplary function of insects in biology. Cutting away the thorax deprives the bee of certain chemoreceptors and denies it certain taste-based behavior.

No wonder Heidegger *finds* the bee taken by its food, since he cuts away part of its capacity to relate to a thing beyond that thing's mere edibility; sections away the very receptors that allow insects to be less captivated by matter-as-food. Heidegger, the anti-Kafka,⁴⁶ sectsperiments with a reverse-metamorphosis: *one morning this bee finds itself inexplicably transformed from an insect into a monstrous human*. The sociality of the sects and sex of insects (exemplary, as Heidegger would have it, in this case more so than other animals) discloses that the sense of taste (as contact chemoreception) can do much more than simply eat. In fact, does not this discrepancy at least invite the possibility that *the sense of taste is precisely what does not eat*? Of course one tastes as one eats, but a tasted or 'tastable' object is not necessarily to be eaten; e.g., kissing or oral sex. And, perhaps, it is worth considering that insofar as one tastes something, one is not (or not *yet*) properly eating it and insofar as one is eating 'edible matter', one is not (or *no longer*) truly tasting it. As such, eating annuls tasting. (Perhaps tasting is to eating as gift is to economy or justice is to law.) If it is the case, as studies try to show, that chemoreception in insects does not simply relate to food, edible matter, or nourishment (but also, for example, to the selection of future queens as well as sexual partners or the recognition of nestmates) then Uexküll's bee experiment may show how the oral-organs of an insect *can be* captivated by food, but it does not necessarily follow that this is the case for the insect-organism, on the whole.

Since *Dasein* or human being is limited to tasting with its tongue (only one of its mouthparts), one could go so far as to say that what Heidegger is actually doing (through Uexküll's experiment) is surgically manipulating the insect into a creature that tastes by its mouth, alone, thereby depicting the bee as more human than insect.⁴⁷ Heidegger defines

⁴⁶ 'Let us imagine that Kafka wrote a novel about the bureaucratic world of ants or about the Castle of termites: in that case, he would have ... written ... a dark novel, a realist novel, an idealist novel, a roman-à-clef-genres that one could find in the Prague school ... None of these were part of Kafka's writing project. Had he written about the justice of the ants or the castle of the termites, the whole realm of metaphors, realist or symbolist, would have returned'; Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 38.

⁴⁷ The anthropomorphism haunting bisected insect experiments is further discernible in George Orwell's 1940 essay, 'Notes on the Way', where he compares an insect 'cut in half' to human beings and the severed thorax of a wasp to the soul of 'modern man'.

this insect at its least insect-like. In bisecting an insect from its thorax, precisely its insecthood is sectioned away. The experiment, at its core, is an insectectomy, rendering it more human than bee; closer to Being than bee-ing. Bee-halving does not uncover behaving but rather cuts the bee off from its very beeing and does more to disclose the behaving of human Being than the bee-having of insect beeing.

It is noteworthy that when Heidegger lists the *possible* senses of animals there is an odd omission of the sense of taste. 'Yet animality must be so constituted in its specific manner of being in general that the potentiality for such possibilities as *seeing, hearing, smelling, and touching* [*Sehen-, Hören-, Riechen-, Tastenkönnen*], belongs to it'.⁴⁸ Perhaps Heidegger thinks smelling includes taste, no doubt familiar with Immanuel Kant's claim that 'smell is, so to speak, taste from a distance'.⁴⁹ This omission is particularly cogent in regards to the taste-organs of insects in comparison to Heidegger's dissociated definition of an *organ*, insofar as it limits and defines the capability of an organism.

He recalls 'a rather cruel trick I once played on a wasp. He was sucking jam on my plate, and I cut him in half. He paid no attention, merely went on with his meal, while a tiny stream of jam trickled out of his severed oesophagus. Only when he tried to fly away did he grasp the dreadful thing that had happened to him. It is the same with modern man. The thing that has been cut away is his soul, and there was a period ... during which he did not notice it'; *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, vol. 2, *My Country Right or Left 1940-1943* (Boston: Nonpareil Books, 2000), 15. One should not fly off too quickly or pass over the fact that Orwell describes a moment whereby he thinks the wasp stops eating and *tries to fly away*, which would call into question the very conclusions Heidegger draws from the same kind of experiment about the insect's captivation to its food.

⁴⁸ Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 218; *Gesamtausgabe*, 29/30, 320. Keep in mind that *Tasten* is not the German verb for 'to taste' but rather 'to touch' (or grope). The German verb 'to taste' is *Schmecken* (or perhaps even *Kosten*) neither of which appears, here, in Heidegger's text.

⁴⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. Victor Lyle Dowdell (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), 45. Here, in his 'anthropology' of all places, Kant is a bit bug-like as he thinks smell in terms of taste and closer to appreciating the contact chemoreception of insects than Heidegger seems to be. This is all the more interesting alongside one of Kant's pre-critical writings, 'Dreams of a Spirit-Seeker', where he includes the sense of smell among those of 'immediate contact' (i.e., the contact receptions of taste and touch) as he considers 'the other three senses, which differ from sight and hearing insofar as *the object of sensation is in immediate contact with the organs of sensations*'; Immanuel Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy*, trans. David Walford & Ralf Meerbote (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 332; [Third Part, Anti-Caballa]. In this early work, it is as if Kant forgets the distance he will associate with smell in his later work; forgets (or ignores) that smell is no more a sense in 'immediate contact' with 'the object of sensation' than could be said for 'sight and hearing'. At the very least, smell is not in contact with the sense-object in the immediate way that touch and taste are.

An organ is, for Heidegger, stamped by an organism with a particular capacity for sense. He only directly explains this in terms of the eye and seeing:

The organ, the eye, for example is surely for seeing with. This 'for seeing' is not some arbitrary property which applies to the eye, but is the *essence* of the eye. The eye, the organ of sight, is for seeing ... every living being can only ever see with *its* eyes.⁵⁰

Can the essence of Heideggerian organs be translated into the chemoreceptive organs of insects? Insects stamp their organs a bit differently. It may be the case that every *human* being 'can only ever' taste 'with *its*' tongue. Yet, by way of chemoreception, it would not necessarily be the case that 'every living being' can only ever taste with its tongue; nor that every living being can only ever touch with its limbs; nor that every living being can only ever fly with its wings. Of course, Heidegger could easily be amended to respond that *every living being can only receive chemical stimuli (on par with the human senses of taste and smell) with its chemoreceptive organs*. The contact chemoreceptions of taste and smell (along with the fact that those chemoreceptions occur simultaneously with the non-chemical contact reception of touch sensations in insects) call into question Heidegger's understanding of organs and, at the very least, do not fit so neatly into his schema.⁵¹ Further, it is quite likely that Heidegger is stressing the ownness, *eigen*, or appropriate phenomenological insularity of *one's own* sense organ when he emphasizes the possessive pronoun '*its*'. Yet wouldn't the memory transference study on ant trophallaxis problematize such a claim of phenomenal appropriation, as well? If an olfactory memory can be

⁵⁰ Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 218-219. A paper focused on insects confronted, here, with Heidegger's generalization of the seeing-organ cannot refrain from referring to one of Chomsky's comments on organ complexity. 'Then you look around at organisms in the world, and it turns out they're all mixed up. *There are some that have both the insect compound eye and the mammalian lens eye, just in different parts of the body ... that's not a general theory; it's just a highly specific account of how this particular development took place. If you look at the next organ, you don't know*'; Noam Chomsky, *The Generative Enterprise Revisited* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 179 (italics added).

⁵¹ Heidegger almost directly displays a certain unopenness to contact chemoreception when he tries to make a connection between the organs of higher animals with the behavior of unicellular organisms in terms of touch. When 'one of these apparent limbs of an animal comes into contact with another animal consisting of the same substance it never flows over into the other or combines with the cellular content of the other. This means that *the organ is retained within the capacity of touch...*'; Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 225. As illuminating as this is in terms of the sense of touch, it perhaps does not go without saying that it would so easily apply to the touch of a chemoreceptor that is always more than mere contact.

transferred during trophallaxis, then it becomes difficult to maintain, for example, that an ant can only ever smell and taste with *its* mouthparts.

The story Heidegger recounts of insect sexuality would be a perversion, in the clinical sense, and is almost a perfect parable of the two fundamental human drives according to psychoanalysis. But whereas there is always an ambivalence between the two primal human drives for Freud (no love uncontaminated by hate, and vice versa), Heidegger's point would be that there could be no such ambivalence in the insect precisely because it is not *being-with* the other, but merely captivated by the other (a non-ambivalent disjunction: either love or hate, always dissociated from its opposite). He describes this 'as being driven from one drive to another'.⁵² Heidegger does not attribute the story to a specific insect, but it is one often associated with the sexual cannibalism or nuptial aggression of the Praying Mantis though it is also found in some crickets and even some toads.

Schelling reminds us that 'insects, even after the major organs (head and heart) are taken from them, still exercise technical drive and [also] reproduce'.⁵³ Heidegger goes into more detail with a story of oral insect perversion.⁵⁴

The comportment of insects within the instinctual sphere we describe as the sexual drive offers us one of the most striking examples of this peculiarly eliminative character proper to all behavior. It is well known that after copulation many female insects *devour* the male of the species. After copulation the sexual aspect disappears [this is the end of the story for Schelling's Romanticism], the male acquires the character of prey and is eliminated. The one animal is never there for the other simply as a living creature but [and here's the non-ambivalent either/or:] is only there for it *either* as sexual partner *or* as prey – in either case only in some form of 'away'. Behavior as such is always some form of elimination.⁵⁵

It should be mentioned that, oftentimes, such sexual cannibalism is observed more in captivity than in the field and even though it *may* be clear that, as prey, the male is a form of 'away', it is not entirely clear how, as sexual partner, it is a form of 'away'. This dissociation of drives or relations does not always hold, since the male seems to be able to hold the character of prey and sexual partner at the same time. The female may

⁵² Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 249.

⁵³ Schelling, *First Outline of a System*, 146; fn.

⁵⁴ Perverse insofar as decapitation would be a form of *reverse-castration* by which the female insect renders the male what, in psychoanalytic terms, is called a partial object; all genital instead of a cohesive body, much like the mother is rendered a mere breast by the human infant during the oral phase of sexual development.

⁵⁵ Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 250 (emphasis added).

bite off the head of the male prior to, or even during, copulation and it has been suggested that this may be a way by which she, upon decapitating him, forces the movements of his body to be even more rigorous in its delivery of sperm. So it seems that the headless male, as such, could have the characters of both prey and partner, simultaneously.

Heidegger further develops eliminative behavior to explain the rejection of external stimuli. This behavior is negative because Heidegger believes it arises 'because the animal's behavior expresses a *kind of rejection* on the part of the animal with respect to what it relates to ... In this *rejecting things from itself* we see the animal's *self-absorption*'.⁵⁶ As such, both his conceptions of rejection and self-absorption are heavily reliant on the example he has just given on the sexual cannibalism of insects – a very oral or taste-based phenomenon – either in the chemoreceptors that help in choosing the partner by tasting him, or in the mouthparts that will in turn devour him. (Although in being *devoured* the other is perhaps *no longer* tasted, as suggested above.)

Perhaps this very mode of rejecting the world which is simultaneously a self-absorption is an evolutionary remnant that Freud postulates as the beginnings of the death drive in humans on the cellular or even pre-cellular⁵⁷ level. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud gives us his own account of rejection and self-absorption. The cortical layer of the bubble [*Bläschen*]⁵⁸ or vesicle (which is not quite a 'cell') that dies off does so in order to check the nature of external stimuli. He writes: 'it is enough to take small specimens of the external world, to *sample it* [*zu verkosten*] in small quantities'.⁵⁹ Four years later, he adds to this insight by moving from the physical cell to the psychical unconscious. 'It is as though the unconscious *stretches out feelers* [*Fühler*] ... towards the external world and hastily withdraws them as soon as they *have sampled* [*verkostet haben*] the excitations coming from it'.⁶⁰ In each case, the German word being translated for the verb to *sample* is *verkosten*, whose root, *kosten*, along with *schmecken*, are the two words in the German language for the act or sense of tasting. In perception, the ego or the unconscious – and,

⁵⁶ Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 252.

⁵⁷ Freud's hypothesis seems to make more sense as a prebiotic *bubble* [*Bläschen*] than a biotic cell.

⁵⁸ Sigmund Freud, *Gesammelte Werke*, band XIII (London: Imago, 1940), 26-28.

⁵⁹ Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 18, 27 (emphasis added); *Gesammelte Werke*, band XIII, 27 (emphasis added).

⁶⁰ Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 19, trans. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1961), 231 (emphasis added); *Gesammelte Werke*, band XIV, 8.

perhaps, even the most primitive biological celluloid – spends its life projecting a thousand little tongues (which would be *non-oral tongues*) into the world in an inexhaustible game of cathexis and protection. What Freud calls *cathexis* seems but a hair's breadth away from what Heidegger calls *self-absorption* and Freudian *protection* could perhaps be translated into the Heideggerian animal *rejecting things from itself*.

Where insects were, egos will be.

These *feelers-that-taste*, *Fühler-that-kosten*, by which Freud explains the ambivalence between the libido and the death drive is so apt to describe the contact chemoreception of insects (i.e., antennae, but also legs, wings, and abdomens) that it almost hard to believe that these are not exactly the anatomical and physiological analogues he had in mind all along, though he makes no direct reference to them. It may be that the human tongue, itself, is that very link between phylogenesis and ontogenesis for which Freud so tirelessly searched and theorized. *The psyche functions as bug*, by which it is ever haunted *as if it had committed an insect*. It samples the world as an ant tastes its nestmate. The logic of reality-testing, if not the very vocation of the unconscious, is an interiorization of the capacities of ancient full-body tongues that once crawled all over the ground or flew through the air. Feelers that taste seem destined to come about in beings that come to taste only with tongues anchored in their mouths; psychic reminiscences of contact that, 'once upon a time', tested worlds and tasted pleasures from which they are now ever exiled. As yet, human *being* relies on its oral *behavior* and the speaking animal is an unconscious animal because it has a bug scuttling about in its mouth.

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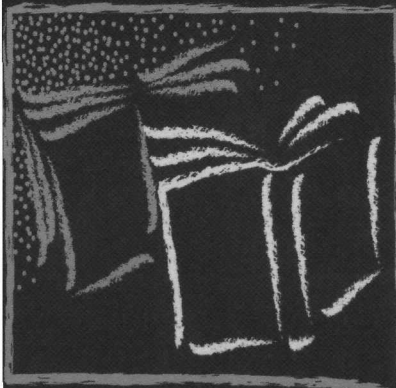
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