

Joan Gordon

Animal Viewpoints in the Contact Zone of Adam Hines's *Duncan the Wonder Dog*

"No animal confirms man, either positively or negatively." (Berger 5)

"It is a significant fact, that the more the habits of any particular animal are studied by a naturalist, the more he attributes to reason, and the less to unlearned instincts." (Darwin 46)

How dare we attempt to speak for other animals? *Duncan the Wonder Dog* (2010) by Adam Hines is a stunning and award-winning graphic novel that portrays animal viewpoints in a number of ways from the anthropomorphic to the radically estranged. Its setting is an alternative America in which other animals are not only sentient, but they can speak: yet these animals are still objectified, commodified, and abused by humans, and a terrorist animal rights organization has arisen to fight violently for animal rights. This science-fictional approach tackles the problem of speaking for other animals by recognizing a wide variety of ways in which to do so, as well as by considering the problems of speaking for "the subaltern," to use Gayatri Spivak's term. The result is a complex work that lives in Mary Louise Pratt's contact zone of cultural interaction.

Duncan the Wonder Dog handles the difficulty of speaking for the subaltern by composing an autoethnographic text about the contact zone. I will be using this method of postcolonial analysis not to show how the graphic novel allegorizes postcolonialism among human beings, but instead to demonstrate how postcolonialism offers useful tools for understanding the posthumanism of animal subjectivity. I will analyze how both text and illustrations negotiate the great difficulties of presenting animal viewpoints, at once acknowledging and contesting the inevitability of such presentations as anthropomorphic. Pratt's contact zone emphasizes the importance of pictorial communication in the contact zone to overcome problems of transmission using a variety of pictorial styles, and thus the range of scholarship on picturing animals, from Berger to Baker to Crist, will be a crucial part of my examination.

Adam Hines's *Duncan the Wonder Dog* is a remarkable, almost 400-page graphic novel that is apparently "merely the opening salvo in what the artist forecasts will be a 2600-page epic in nine volumes, to be completed over the next twenty-five years" (DiFilippo

1). It won a number of awards when it first arrived, immediately went out of print, but now is available again. In the story, an animal rights terrorist organization, Orapost, is led by a psychopathic macaque named Pompeii, while other animals search for other less violent ways to gain rights, and humans engage and recognize the other species' sentience with various degrees of perception. There are a number of sub-plots as well: some, for example, "humanize" the FBI agents who are searching for Pompeii, while another shows a romance between a human woman and a gibbon, and there is a particularly moving interlude about the life of a pet dog. Still other sections might be described as lyric episodes that focus on individual animals in their natural or domesticated situations. Except for the cover, the entire book is done in black and white, but with great variety in drawing styles, format, and even texture.

I have outlined elsewhere, in my entry on "Animal Studies" in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction* (2009), how well suited science fiction is "as an exploratory site for animal studies" (331) since it allows one to "imagine the relationships of humans with other animals" as various sciences and philosophies propose, and can give voice to speculative alien viewpoints of animals other than ourselves (332). By adding images to the mix, the graphic novel adds a non-verbal tool to show further ways to communicate, relate, and think beyond words. Co-witnessing, commonality, reciprocity between human beings and other animals have been the themes of my writing about science fiction for a long time now: most recently in terms of exchanging gazes and exchanging words.¹ In those articles I have been using the word "amborg" to refer to all animals, human and otherwise, in their liminal positions as they "acknowledge the presence and sentience of other species" to co-witness subjectivity ("Gazing" 191), what Pratt would call a contact zone. Now I am building on these ideas to examine how such liminality is portrayed. Science fiction and the graphic novel provide what Eileen Crist calls "interested participation"(61) for both the writer and the active reader, combining attention to scientific observation with artistic rendering and the rhetoric of fiction.

A number of graphic novelists have recognized the power of the form in testifying for animal rights. A recent issue of *Antennae* (16 [Spring 2011]) was devoted to graphic novels, although a scan of its articles and valuable annotated bibliography (82-98) confirms the suspicion that, while animals are major players in comix, they do not play themselves or illustrate their own concerns very often. More often the animals in comix are stand-ins for human beings, there to amuse or to illustrate human "beastliness" such

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as racism or violence. There are, of course, notable exceptions. *Pride of Baghdad* (2006), drawn by Niko Henrichon and written by Brian K. Vaughan, who wrote *Y: the Last Man* (2002-08, collected 2008-11), is based on a real event — the escape of a pride of lions from the Baghdad Zoo during a 2003 bombing raid — and is deeply concerned for the plight of animals in zoos and during wartime. Sue Coe's *Sheep of Fools ... A Song Cycle for Five Voices* (with Judith Brody, 2005) is an agonizingly vivid and dramatically operatic exposé of how sheep have suffered as domestic animals. Her *Pit's Story* (2000) is an equally upsetting imagined letter from beyond the grave of a dog who has endured every aspect of cruelty inflicted by human beings. All of these graphic novels co-witness real-life events using their fictional tools.

Other science-fictional graphic novels besides *Duncan* are concerned with animal rights. *Elephantmen*, written by Richard Starkings (collected 2008-2010), concerns human-animal hybrids, chimeral creatures raised to be nothing more than sentient killing machines: while their treatment as ostracized immigrants in the series invites metaphors of identity politics, there are also a few sharp comparisons to animal testing. The episode "Tusk," for example, begins with several quotations from the "Texas A and M Health Science Center Website 2006" about "animals and hazardous materials," "animals and recombinant genetic materials," and "animals and radioactive materials" and then shows the human/animal chimeras undergoing tortuous experimentation with nerve gas. Similarly, the section called "The Elephant in the Room," has a brief reference to animal poaching.

A slimmer volume, *We3* by Grant Morrison and Frank Quitely (2004, collected 2005), is quite widely known in discussions of animal studies and graphic novels. Indeed, when I began collecting works to explore, every source I consulted, from my local comix dealer to an article in *PMLA* ("The Android and the Animal" by Ursula Heise [2009]), cited this work. Originally published as a three-part series by Vertigo, this novel uses somewhat stylized renderings of the animals — here household pets, including a dog, a cat, and a rabbit — that have been surgically altered into cyborg weapons. Panels are dynamic and highly colored, similar to Japanese comix such as *Ghost in the Shell* (1989+). The cyborg weaponizing of the pets, like the weaponizing of the chimeras in *Elephant Men*, clearly makes this sf. The creatures of *We3* can speak but have limited capacities, the authors imagining how real pets might speak if they had the ability.

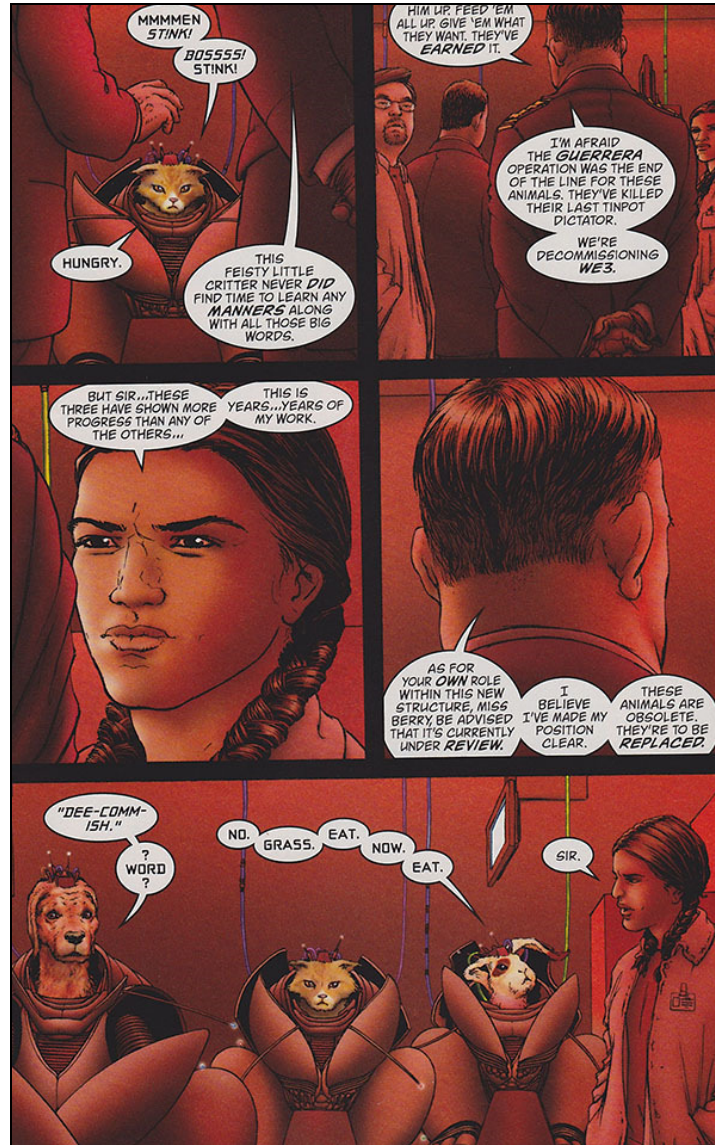


Figure 1

We3 grapples with the ethical problems of seeing animals as property and objects for research. Figure 1 shows a negotiation between the technical language of objectification and the subjectivity that pictures and the ordinary language of action introduce. In the first panel the cat speaks and in the second an air force officer first wants to reward the animals for their work, recognizing their subjectivity, and in the next breath denies it by using objectifying technobabble: "We're decommissioning We3," he says. "These

animals are obsolete. They're to be replaced." The final panel on the page makes clear the editorial view of the author: the animals, whose faces confront us, rendered in a somewhat sentimental way, speak. The dog expresses incomprehension — "Dee-comm-ish?" — while the rabbit can only speak of what it needs — "No/grass/eat/now/eat." These are sentient and innocent victims of the military-industrial complex, their bodies compromised by military-industrial augmentation, and bewildered by human machinations.

While these other examples of graphic novels address animal subjectivity in powerful ways, none goes to the remarkable lengths that Hines does in recognizing so many kinds of sentience, so many ways to use anthropomorphism, so many ways to acknowledge both the connections and the significant differences between ourselves and other animals. Indeed, this novel's ability to recognize and somehow express the profound, mysterious, and abyssal otherness of our fellow species sets it apart from the others and makes it an extraordinary contribution to science fiction and to the graphic novel.

Hines's graphic novel emphasizes the variety of ways there are to be sentient and to be the subject of a life² by employing multiple story lines from the politically charged to the moodily evocative, multiple styles from the realistic to the abstract, multiple relationships from human-human to human-other-animal to inter-species to intra-species, and, especially, multiple viewpoints from the purely human to the anthropomorphic to the mysteriously alien non-human. It wrestles with the fact that humans cannot represent non-human animal viewpoints without anthropomorphism any more than they can represent non-human alien viewpoints in sf: we can only imagine the world for which our brains, bodies, and experiences equip us. We do, however, understand everything through analogy, comparing the unknown to the familiar, and both science fiction and the graphic novel provide vivid analogical possibilities. Science fiction allows us to imagine the alien being or alien world by comparing it to other animals than the human, other spaces than our own familiar ones, estranging and enriching our understanding of the world we thought we knew. The graphic novel can visualize such comparisons. Thus, they provide contact zones.

Mary Louise Pratt's idea of the contact zone allows us to explore, through *Duncan the Wonder Dog*, how the graphic sf novel serves as a powerful genre in which to engage with the alien viewpoint of other animals. Pratt defines contact zones as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as

they are lived out in many parts of the world today" (1). That is exactly the space where all the animals, human and otherwise, live in Hines's book. The contact zone is an unstable place where things fall apart, but in which other things arise. Pratt also uses the term "autoethnographic text ... in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them" (2; emphasis in original). Such texts "[i]nvolve a selective collaboration with and appropriation of idioms of the metropolis or the conqueror. These are merged or infiltrated to varying degrees with indigenous idioms to create self-representations" (2). In the contact zone, where everything is in flux, ordinary representation cannot work but the hybrid form of the autoethnographic text, which employs techniques from all the points of contact — from the indigenous as well as the metropolitan — provides a space for communication. Hines's graphic novel imagines an autoethnographic text in which all kinds of animals grapple with "highly asymmetrical relations of power" through imaginative transculturation, Pratt's term for "processes whereby members of subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted by a dominant or metropolitan culture": in other words, it employs human language and drawing. When Pratt describes "some of the literate arts of the contact zone" — "autoethnography, transculturation, critique, collaboration, bilingualism, mediation, parody, denunciation, imaginary dialogue, vernacular expression" — she is describing the literate arts of *Duncan the Wonder Dog*.

The specific work which Pratt uses to illustrate her ideas is a "letter" from the Incan Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, written in both Quechua and Spanish, and sent to King Philip III of Spain in 1613. This letter contained "almost eight hundred pages of written text and four hundred of captioned line drawings" and was called *The First New Chronicle and Good Government*. It was, then, for all practical purposes a graphic novel, one in which Guaman Poma both appropriated Spanish forms for his own purposes and introduced indigenous ones in order to reveal to the dominant culture not only how the subordinated culture sees itself and but how it sees the dominant one. Pratt connects this autoethnography with a more recent "creation of the contact zone, the *testimonio*" (2; emphasis in original). The *testimonio* is defined as "a genre of literature that retells historical events using literary elements such as dialogue, poetry and metaphors from an eyewitness perspective" and was used by Los Desaparecidos [The Disappeared] of Argentina (del Sarto and Herbert). By providing the emotional intensity and vividness, along with the artistic control, of literature, *testimonio*

transcends the rawness of personal outpourings and the detachment of historical accounts.



Figure 2

One of the first scenes in *Duncan the Wonder Dog* (Figure 2) is a discussion between a tiger, drawn with some realism, and a monkey, drawn in a more stylized manner, about their situation in a circus (16-32). The tiger is an old hand, while the monkey is young, new to the circus, and afraid of what is to come. The rendering suggests that realism comes with maturity, as the outlines are, figuratively as well as literally, filled in. The monkey, who has named himself Euclid, is reading from the vegetarian mathematician Pythagoras, while the tiger, self-named Mercodonus, introduces the notion of Dharma from Hindu thought. I emphasize the self-naming because it concisely demonstrates how these animals are, in their own world, independent subjects, without requiring human naming, an act which they anticipate but refuse to adopt since it is clear that the circus management oppresses them in violation of their sovereignty. In the circus, in spite of their ability to speak, the animals are merely representatives of their species rather than individual subjects.³ Their discussion of human concepts shows how they adapt human culture to fit their own situation in a "selective collaboration with and appropriation of idioms of the ... conqueror" in acts of "transculturation" (Pratt 2). Mercodonus and Euclid engage in a dialogue, telling stories and critiquing the ideas of Pythagoras and of Hinduism to mediate between their subjective states and their imprisonment. One can see parallels between these animals, made invisible by their objectification, imprisonment, and expendability, and Los Desaperecidos, "disappeared" from their families as if they had never existed, denied even the evidence of their death. This section of Hines's novel serves as a kind of imagined testimonio, exposing the situation of these circus animals by drawing an analogy to Los Desaperecidos while retaining an understanding that these animal personalities do not merely stand in for Los Desaperecidos but have their own individual existence and suffering.

While Pratt's discussion is meant to illuminate postcolonial discourse among humans, we see that it works equally well when applied to the problems of the human artist portraying animal viewpoints in a work not meant allegorically to be about human rights, but literally about animal rights. John Berger, writing about photographs of animals, points out that in the associated ideology of such productions, "animals are always the observed. The fact that they can observe us has lost all significance" (16). Speaking about the circus's cousin, the zoo, Berger reminds us that "even if the animal is up against the bars, less than a foot from you, looking outwards in the public direction, *you are looking at something that has been rendered absolutely marginal*" (24; italics

in original). Mercodonius the tiger knows this and is teaching his grim knowledge to the monkey: for Mercodonius, this marginalization is their dharma, their destiny. Adam Hines, through his transcultural project, attempts to recenter the animal's gaze through an act of imaginary autoethnography, as he imagines the zoo from the other side of the bars.

The centrality of animals' gaze, of considering their viewpoints, is vital to Hines's commitment to animal rights. In an interview with Noelene Clark in the *Los Angeles Times*, Hines says that "[a]nimal welfare is *very* important to me, and the series is not meant to be allegorical" (italics in the original). He contrasts his work to many comics using animal characters by saying: "And to answer why I wanted to write about the relationship between animals and humans, it's that it was rare to me to see one that wasn't intended to be a parable for some other political injustice" (2). While we can draw parallels between liberation group Orapost and Al-Qaeda or PETA, for instance, or between the situation of many of the animals and that of some humans, that is not Hines's intention, even though "I would not want to influence anyone's personal take by my original intent" (2). While we might see the parallels between the plight of Mercodonius and Euclid and that of some humans, and while their philosophical musings are anthropomorphic, their conversation takes place in their cages as they await their performance, and the minimal and often cruel circumstances for animals in circuses are at the foreground of our understanding of the passage.

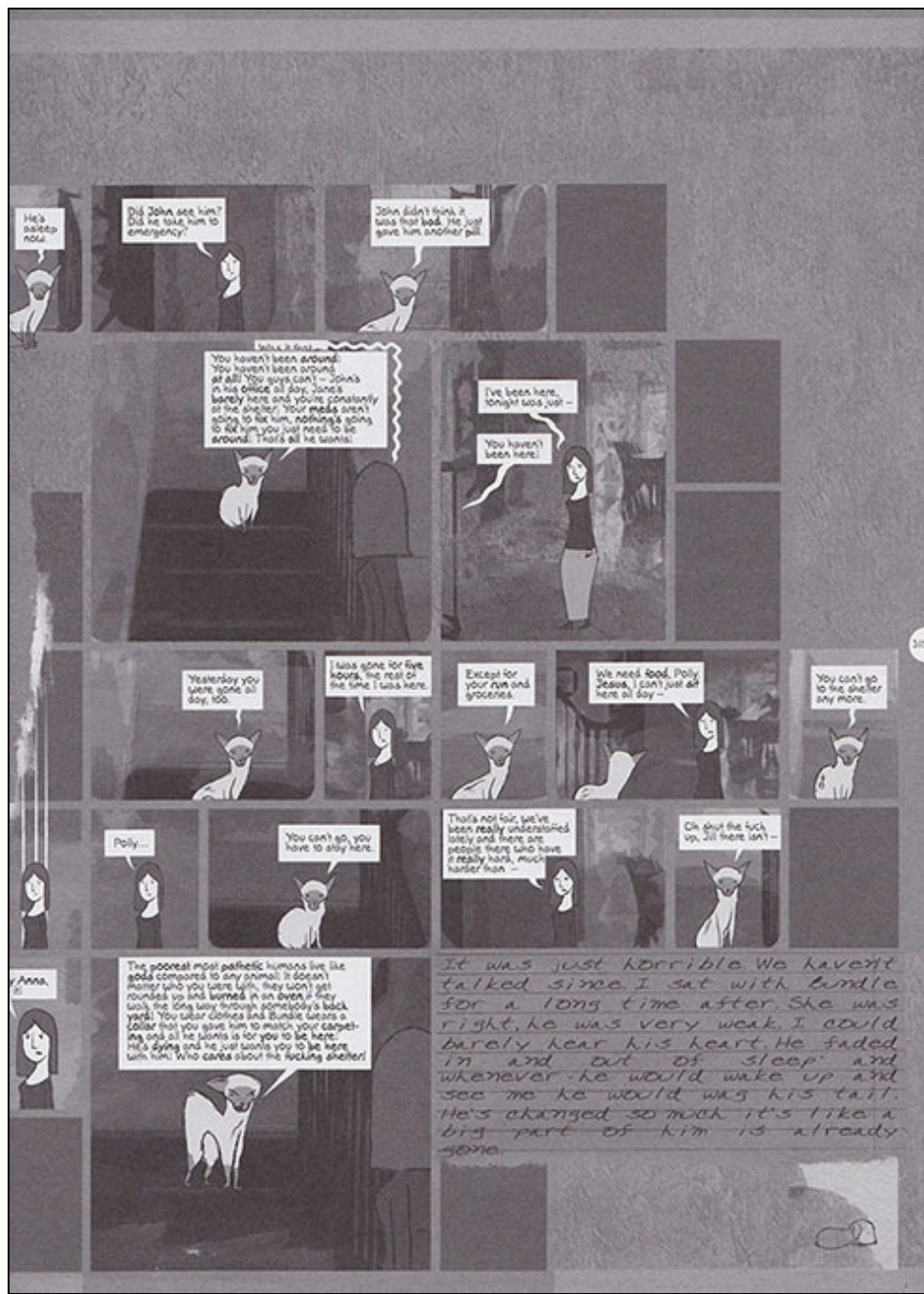


Figure 3

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Equally animal-centered is an extended interlude about a pet dog that movingly depicts the limitations put upon other animals in the practice of pet-keeping (293-327), another human-centered activity. The point is made absolutely clear by the family cat Polly in her boldface tirade to the dog Bundle's "owner" (figure 3):

The poorest most pathetic humans live like gods compared to any animal! It doesn't matter who you were with, they won't get rounded up and burned in an oven if they walk the long way through somebody's back yard! You wear clothes and Bundle wears a collar that you gave him to match your carpeting and he's dying and he just wants you to be here with him! Who cares about the fucking shelter! (emphasis in original; 315)

The cat makes points that parallel the policy of PETA on pets:

We believe that it would have been in the animals' best interests if the institution of "pet-keeping" ... never existed.... This selfish desire to possess animals and receive love from them causes immeasurable suffering, which results from manipulating their breeding, selling or giving them away casually, and depriving them of the opportunity to engage in their natural behavior. They are restricted to human homes, where they must obey commands and can only eat, drink, and even urinate when humans allow them to.

The philosopher Martha Nussbaum might say that, according to PETA, Bundle, and, it seems, Adam Hines, pets are kept from a "dignified existence" (326). Nussbaum's evocative word is "flourishing." She names some of the qualities of a dignified existence in which an animal might flourish:

Adequate opportunities for nutrition and physical activity; freedom from pain, squalor, and cruelty; freedom to act in ways that are characteristic of the species (rather than to be confined and ... made to perform silly and degrading stunts); freedom from fear and opportunities for rewarding interactions with other creatures of the same species, and of different species; a chance to enjoy the light and air in tranquility. (326)

As much as I love and dote upon my cats, if I am honest, I have to admit that, neutered and staying indoors, they are restricted in their freedoms and, other than brief hunts for the mice that rarely oblige them by coming into the house, they have few opportunities

to "act in ways that are characteristic of the species." None of the animals in these examples from the novel – neither Mercodonius and Euclid, nor Bundle and Polly – can flourish.



Figure 4

In the central moment (figure 4), the workman and the cow talk while waiting for the truck that will haul her away. She gasps in her extremity:

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I saw... up on the mound (breath)... I saw the building (breath) ... before they moved it ... and in the dirt (breath) ... I saw our prints (breath) ... I saw them in the dirt (breath) ... going in (breath) ... But I didn't see any (breath) ... going out (breath). (73)

The workman's response? "If you think a broken leg is bad, pal, just keep talking" (73). The cow demonstrates her understanding of the flourishing she is denied through not only her words but through her reasoning. The workman is emotionally stunted by his effort to deny her dignity. This section shows the effect (and affect) of cross-species communication, how both human being and bovine are changed, and not for the better, by the conflict between consciousness and action that speech has made obvious. In this contact zone, both are degraded.

The passages discussed so far, and many more, make it clear that major issues of animal rights are explored and powerfully interrogated through artistic devices that Pratt would call autoethnography or, perhaps, testimonio. Because they all involve talking animals, they are also anthropomorphic in that they put words in the animals' mouths that they cannot use in our world. Language-use is something that humans cite as a difference between ourselves and other species, although ethologists are beginning to question the sharpness of the divide as they study crows and prairie dogs, for instance. Following Pratt, we could say that Hines appropriates the tools of the dominant culture using the literate arts of the contact zone in order to give other animals their voice.

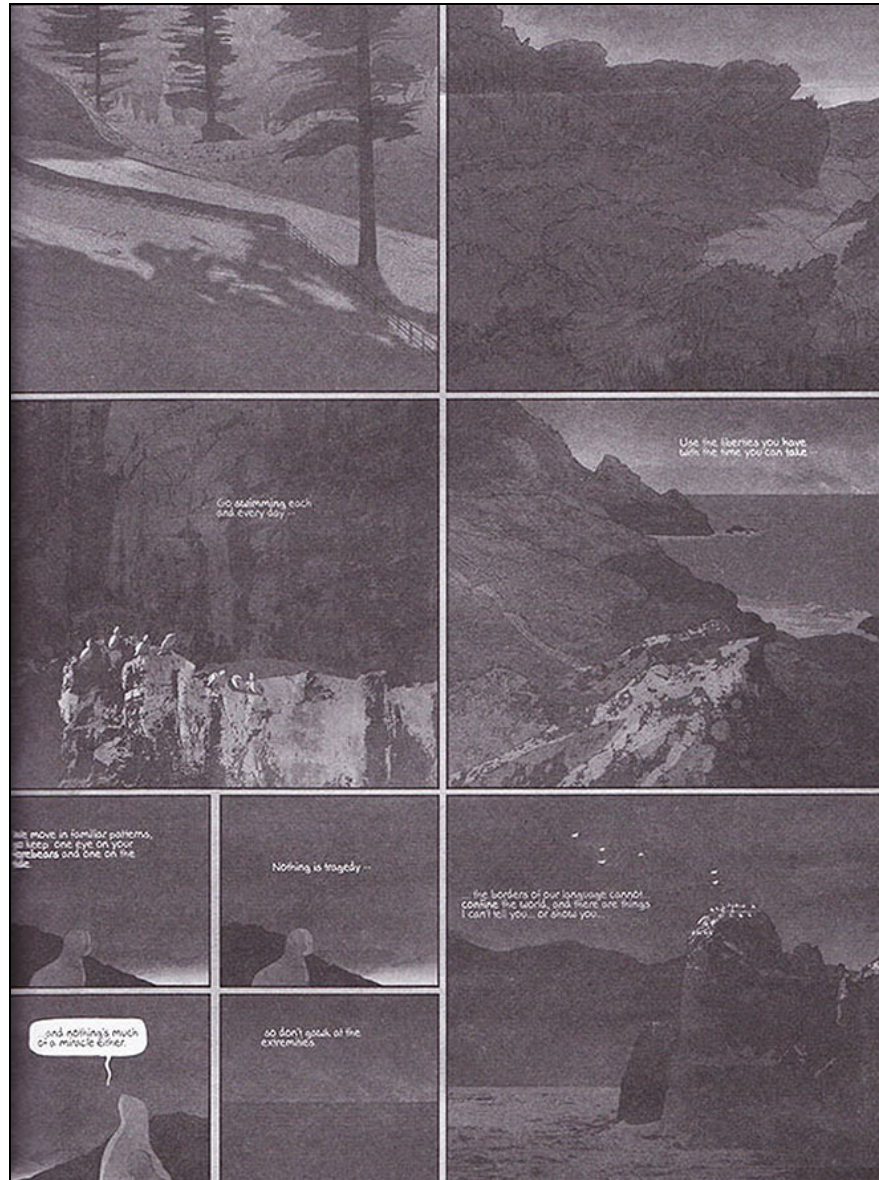


Figure 5

Crows and prairie dogs aside, it is certainly anthropomorphic, of course, to imagine other animals reading and discussing Pythagoras, or to imagine that they can confront the slaughterer with words. In a number of remarkable sections, however, *Duncan the Wonder Dog* imagines a more alien animal viewpoint: these sections, concerning undomesticated and flourishing beings, feel hallucinatory or dream-like, as if the

thinking processes are truly and radically different from the human. As an example, one section (figure 5; 117-119) imagines the thoughts of a seal through words, a few in a speech bubble, most floating above the scene, acknowledging the gaps between species in their communication, experience, and thinking, as the seal seems to say "... The borders of our language cannot confine the world, and there are things I can't tell you ... or show you ..." (117). Hines uses the floating text and the bubbles to indicate that what the seal employs is not exactly human speech. The seal's utterances are emotionally evocative and emphasize its interaction with the physical world of the sea, like a testimonio, but are not in any way technical or scientific, such as an historian or ethologist might use. By imagining other ways than the human for animals to express themselves, Hines is employing what Eileen Crist calls the ordinary language of action.

Crist, in her book *Images of Animals: Anthropomorphism and the Animal Mind* (1999), makes an important distinction between the effects of the ordinary language of action and scientific language in our discussions of animals:

The use of the ordinary language of action reflects a regard for animals as acting subjects; the immanent, experiential perspective of animals is treated as real, recoverable, and invaluable in the understanding of their actions and lives. Technical language, on the other hand, paves the way toward conceptualizing animals as natural *objects*; animals are constituted as objects in an epistemological sense, through conceptions that are extrinsic to their phenomenal world of experience. (2; emphasis in original)

Hines's imagined autoethnography, his fictional testimonio on behalf of other animals, uses the "ordinary language of action" to "recover" the "immanent, experiential perspective of animals." Does he really recover the seal's perspective? No, he cannot: but his imagining acknowledges the seal's subjectivity. In his refusal to objectify, to make other animals into symbols of human traits and situations, or into objects to study, in his use of active and evocative language, in his expression of the ineluctability of the other animal's alien thought patterns through statement, graphic style, and illustration, in his concentration on individual animals rather than representative ones, Hines both acknowledges and sidesteps the problems of the center speaking for the margins of which Spivak warned in her famous postcolonial clarion call, "Can the Subaltern Speak" (1988). I addressed Spivak's ideas in my essay "Talking (for, with) Dogs" (2010) by suggesting that science fiction permits the possibility of communication between, not subalterns, but "alterns." Where Spivak warns against speaking of the

subaltern as sf's "monolithic collectivity" (73), using the objectifying language of the intellectual, I note that sf's ability to speak for the alien or other animal attempts to restore individual voices. Like Spivak, Crist is concerned to be mindful of individual subjectivity, using a similar term to "altern" as she discusses animal subjectivity and "the understanding of others as 'alter subjects'" (60).

Eileen Crist argues that the kind of "ordinary language" which recovers animal subjectivity, and which she sees in the writing of naturalists, is a valid kind of anthropomorphism that allows us to understand the lifeworld of other animals more than does what she calls the "mechanomorphic" technical or scientific language employed by socio-biologists and ethologists, which turns other animals into objects of study. In a wonderful chapter on "Lifeworld and Subjectivity: *Naturalists' Portraits of Animals*," Crist introduces Alfred Schütz's term "Verstehen," "the understanding of action from the actor's point of view," which she then applies to writing about animals. Using vivid examples from the early twentieth-century naturalists George and Elizabeth Peckham and Jean Henri Fabre on wasps, she illustrates how:

the shared vocabulary of objects, actions, and events..., episodic description, that is, the narration of concrete here-and-now events ... in virtue of a thickness of description that virtually transports the reader into the scenery; and the plethoric use of action verbs, in the active voice ... presents animals as authors of their actions. (86)

Elsewhere in the chapter she emphasizes "the relentless visual quality" of the writing (76). The naturalists acknowledge through these techniques the "lifeworld," or the "everyday world where things, activities, relations, and events have experiential significance," a world in which "[s]ubjects are always already ceaselessly engaged in meaningful activity" (54), of the animals they observe. And these animals are not mere examples of the generalized animal but individual and distinct subjects like Derrida's animot.

To recuperate the term "anthropomorphism," Crist differentiates her use of the term from "the unwarranted or erroneous attribution of human mental experiences to animals" that scientists have scoffed at, and offers another definition:

The anthropomorphism of naturalists is the effect of representing animal life in the language of the lifeworld. In rendering action meaningful and authored, animals emerge as subjects. In turn, the portrayals of animals as subjects allows the existence of mental life to supervene with forcefulness and credibility. (83)

This is, I argue, the kind of anthropomorphism of Adam Hines as he puts words in the mouths of his fictional animals. It acknowledges their lifeworlds and subjectivity and, as Crist says, forms "a textual invitation to the reader to co-witness" (77). Hines "formulates" or puts words in the mouths of other actors to explain what they are doing (Crist, 69, introducing a term from Garfinkel and Sacks). But these techniques are not meant to offer definitive explanations, or to speak for the objectified margins from some subject position of power. Instead, such formulations recognize "that the meaning of animal action is sometimes intractably opaque from a human perspective." However opaque an action may be, it is not, thereby, "intrinsically meaningless and experientially empty" (Crist 61). The naturalist suggests possible meaning through rhetorical techniques that connect the experiences of human beings to the experiences of other animals in order to advance an understanding of their common world.

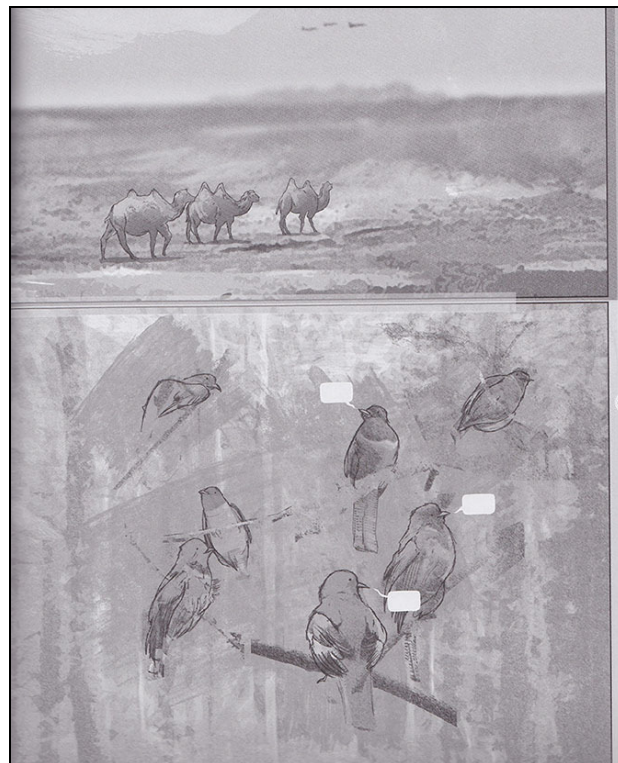


Figure 6

When Hines uses speech bubbles and floating words, as we have seen, he is suggesting different ways of "speaking." He has other techniques as well. In figure 6, he shows what appear to be wild Bactrian camels crossing the desert. What they think, if anything, about the fighter planes flying overhead or about other things is not shown. In the panel below, he shows birds with blank speech balloons, suggesting that although they are speaking we cannot understand it at all, or that they speak without content as we understand it. What the animals in these panels may be doing or why, what they are communicating, is "intractably opaque" but not meaningless and empty. The ethologists and socio-biologists Crist differentiates from the naturalists equate the opaque with the empty so as to avoid seemingly unscientific anthropomorphism, but Crist recognizes something valuable in the naturalists' formulations. In her discussion of "others as 'alter subjects,'" "the interplay of perceptual perspectives both is and is not reciprocal" (60), so "interested participation is integral to the perception of [the other animal] as an alter subject" (61).

Naturalists use a kind of anthropomorphism, then, to set up analogies between themselves and the animals they observe, forming a sympathetic feedback mechanism that not only affects the animal being observed but the naturalist who observes as well. Schrödinger's thought experiment considers only the cat affected by the observer. Hines's experiment moves beyond Schrödinger's, also taking into account the effect on the observer. Naturalists who allow themselves to reason through analogy about the animals they study begin to "attribute more to reason, and less to unlearned instinct" (Darwin 58); human beings who exchange words with other animals in Hines's alternate world find out something quite similar, whether it teaches them compassion or not, but readers who enter Hines's world are hard put to ignore the testimonio. The testimonio suggests how important this kind of interested participation is, since it combines witnessing with the unifying arts of fiction so that writer and reader become co-witnesses of what might otherwise be unimaginable. Crist reminds us that "unimaginable" does not mean "meaningless" and that visuality and the language of action suggest meaning behind what we cannot understand.

By combining the language of action with pictorial representation to imagine the alter subject, the alter, the amborg, Hines creates, not the literal autoethnography of Guaman Poma, but the imagined autoethnography of *Duncan the Wonder Dog*. It

imagines and uses a variety of ways in which to speak, acknowledging the absolute alterity and opacity of the other voice while still building analogical bridges across that divide, so we can imagine what the margins might say back to the center without succumbing either to the objectification of the other or to some foolish version of anthropomorphism. While the techniques and vocabulary of postcolonialism work well in analyzing *Duncan the Wonder Dog*, I am resisting their usual direction, which would turn other animals into metaphors for the concerns of postcolonialism. Rather, postcolonialism provides exciting analogies to understand how we view other animals. While Hines is limited, as we all are, by our human brains and bodies and experiences, he finds a way to bridge the gap. The animal in his case does not, as John Berger says, "confirm man, either positively or negatively," but remains its ineluctable self. It is we who change.

NOTES

1. Those articles are "Gazing Across the Abyss" (2008), in which I lay out my definition of "amborg," and "Talking (with, for) Dogs" (2010).
2. "Subject of a life" is Tom Regan's term. We are, he says "each of us the experiencing subject of a life, a conscious creature having an individual welfare that has importance to us whatever our usefulness to others" (363).
3. On the matter of sovereignty, Derrida has much to say (see *The Beast and the Sovereign* [2008], as well as both Vint and McGuirk). He also has a great deal to say about the significant difference between the anonymous representative versus the individual subject (see *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (2006) as well as my "Talking (for, with) Dogs").

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