PSYCHOANALYSIS OF LITTLE HANS: DELEUZE AND GUATTARI'S CASE AGAINST FREUD

[Küçük Hans'ın Psikanalizi: Deleuze ve Guattari'nin Freud'a İtirazları]

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ABSTRACT

Freud's psychoanalysis of Little Hans is a defining moment in psychoanalytic theory, because it marks the first psychoanalytic attempt ever to analyze childhood as an actuality rather than a set of recollected experiences. This article aims to explain Deleuze and Guattari's dismissal of Freud's interpretation as an act of silencing the children that is meant to corroborate his own theories of psychosexual development and particularly the Oedipus complex. Deleuze and Guattari are not against psychoanalytic interpretation in and of itself as a creative intervention into the lived actuality of the analysand, but they think that Freudian psychoanalysis misses the opportunity by tracing every aspect of individual existence back to familial figures and relationships. While Freud considers the case of Little Hans as a verification of his theory of sexuality, Deleuze and Guattari regard the case as a perfect example of how psychoanalytic suggestion often distorts the utterances of the analysand for its own interests, thereby failing altogether to grasp the logic of becoming as an escape from familial determinations.

Keywords: Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Sigmund Freud, Little Hans, Oedipus complex, suggestion, becoming.

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ÖZET

Freud'un Küçük Hans vakası psikanaliz kuramı açısından bir dönüm noktası teşkil eder, çünkü burada psikanalizin nesnesi, ilk kez, hatırlanan deneyimler bütünü olarak çocukluk değil, aktüel bir çocuktur. Bu makalenin amacı, Freud'un Küçük Hans'ın sesinin asla duyulmamasına neden olan yorumlarına Deleuze ve Guattari'nin getirdiği elestirileri acıklamaktır. Deleuze ve Guattari, analiz edilen birevin

gerçekliğine yaratıcı bir müdahale olarak psikanalitik yorumlamaya kendi içinde karşı olmamakla

birlikte, Freudcu psikanalizin bu firsatı, bireyleri ailevi ilişki üçgenine hapsetmesi itibarıyla, heba ettiğini

düşünmektedir. Freud, Küçük Hans vakasını kendi cinsellik kuramının somut bir kanıtı olarak okurken, Deleuze ve Guattari'ye göre Freud'un bu vakaya ilişkin tespitleri, psikanalitik telkinin analiz edilen

bireyin sözcelerini birtakım kuramsal çıkarlar için çarpıtmasının ve psikanalitik yorumlamanın ailevi

belirlenimlerden bir kaçış imkanı olarak oluşun mantığını kavramak konusundaki başarısızlığının açık

bir örneğidir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Sigmund Freud, Küçük Hans, Oidipus kompleksi,

telkin, oluş.

Lévi-Strauss, a trained philosopher who later pursued an anthropological research agenda, explains his view of structural anthropology by invoking an interest of his that dates back to his childhood: geology (Lévi-Strauss, 1992, p. 56). For Lévi-Strauss, when a geologist examines a stone, she engages in a double

project. First, she investigates the history of this particular stone situated in a particular environment with all the mutations, transformations, corrosions it has undergone. However, she is at the same time

interested in the general structure of these transformations, that is, the general or universal structure

within which the individual history of this particular stone is situated. This universal structure, for Lévi-

Strauss, informs the histories of all other stones, not as an essence all stones carry within themselves or

as a form the stones must conform to, but rather as a spatio-temporal order in which all these particular

histories enter into a differential relation, thereby generating the singularity of each event. Lévi-Strauss

identifies a similar structural organization in psychoanalysis, whose emergence is contemporaneous with

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his structural anthropology. According to him, the significance of Freud's psychoanalytic method lies in the fact that it takes the human subject as a "tableau vivant" through which not only the current state of the psychoanalyzed subject is interpreted, but also the general laws of psychoanalysis are extracted. In psychoanalysis, personal history is never simply a history of the conscious states of the subject in question. The human subject is a temporal unfolding, whose present state is always mediated by a baggage of past experiences that are linked to the present moment, in conformity with the laws of the unconscious. The challenge of psychoanalysis is, therefore, to show the important role the unconscious plays in the formation of our conscious states. For this purpose, psychoanalysis often turns to childhood as a reservoir of experiences, re-situating the subject in a father-mother-child triangle, which is supposed to explain the psychosexual development and deviations of the individual in question.

Freud's idea that sexuality does not start with adolescence was revolutionary. For him, human sexuality is shaped mainly by a series of encounters and experiences that take place during infancy and childhood. Before children are introduced to a social world in which they will develop an ego with corresponding feelings of shame, guilt and morality, they are all polymorphously pervert (Freud, 1962, p. 57). Pathological psychosexual inclinations take root from this early phase of human life. Everybody carries with them the mark of their childhood experiences and their relationships with their parents for the rest of their lives.

Given the significance of childhood in Freud's psychoanalytic interpretations, the case called "Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-year-old Boy" (Freud, 2003, p. 3-122), concerning the phobia of a child nicknamed Little Hans, might be an opportunity to study the psychoanalytical notion of childhood in detail. Little Hans is a special psychoanalytic case, because Freud's analysis does not involve the interpretation of the memories or past experiences of an adult. For the first time in the history of psychoanalysis, the subject of psychoanalytic interpretation is a child in flesh and bones. This lack of experience, however, does not seem to intimidate Freud; on the contrary, he considers the case an opportunity to collect empirical data from a child, so that he can further vindicate his theories of psychosexual development. Another peculiarity of this case is the fact that Freud does not regularly meet and speak to Hans in person. Instead, it is Little Hans' father, Marx Graf, already an adherent of Freud's theories, who periodically sends his conversations with Hans to Freud for several years, along with his own interpretations. Freud, in turn,

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interprets Little Hans' behaviors in light of the father's testimony (Freud, 2003, p. 4). In a certain sense, there are actually two psychoanalysts working on the case, collaborating to understand and solve Little Hans' phobia of horses, and particularly his fear of being bitten by a horse.

The analysis covers a period of approximately three years, ending when Hans is five years old. In terms of Freudian stages of psychosexual development, Hans is passing from the anal stage to the phallic stage. The phallic stage is the period during which children devote their interest to the opposite sex; boys in this period, for instance, start to feel an enmity for their fathers, and simultaneously develop a fear of castration. For Freud, the ultimate resolution of this conflict between the male child and the father takes place when the boy identifies with his father, such that he stops seeing his father as an enemy to be destroyed. Given the age of Little Hans, Freud expects the case to act as a laboratory for familial interactions during these ages, and the Oedipus complex in particular.

The case of Little Hans has been constantly revisited and reinterpreted throughout the century after its publication. Especially the interviews with Little Hans and his father that recently became available have significantly transformed the overall approach to the case in psychoanalytic circles. These interviews reveal Little Hans' mother's continued mistreatment of Hans's little sister, who in her later life commits suicide. In light of this biographical detail, Ross argues that Little Hans' fear of horses cannot be associated exclusively with his Oedipal complex, but is also "a communication of the traumatic abuse in the home" (Ross, 2007, p. 779). Similarly, Blum emphasizes that Freud already knew about the mother's personality, because she had requested Freud's help before giving birth to Hans (Blum, 2007, p. 752). Apparently, Freud also knew that Little Hans' parents had ongoing marital issues, and wanted to have another child after Little Hans, only with the hope of saving their marriage (Blum, 2007, p. 753). What is more striking is that the case material itself involves Little Hans' reports of her little sister being beaten by his mother ("Would you like to beat the horses the way Mummy smacks Hanna?") (Freud, 2003, p. 63), but Hans' father, Freud, and all later interpreters seem oblivious to the severity of the situation (Blum, 2007, p. 754).

As a matter of fact, Freud pays attention only to a few elements in Little Hans' story. First, Little Hans does not seem to like his father. Second, he is not happy about the birth of his baby sister Hanna. Third, Little Hans is interested in "widdlers", and he initially thinks everything has a widdler, including his

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father, his mother, horses, chairs, and tables. Fourth, and most important of all, he has a phobia of horses, which affects him to such a degree that he does not want to leave home.

Freud's proof for Hans' dislike of his father is the fact that he feels happier when his father is away in Vienna for work and enjoys the opportunity of spending more time with his mother (Freud, 2003, p. 20). Hans' fondness for his mother translates into a dislike towards Hanna, his baby sister, born when Hans was three and half years old. Whenever he has to share his mother's attention with someone else, be it his father or little sister, Hans gets utterly upset. According to Freud and Hans' father, his dislike toward his rivals is so strong that it induces a fear of death. In fact, Hans seems to develop a fear of taking a bath after Hanna's birth. He occasionally voices his concern about the possibility of falling down in the bathtub, and of his mother letting him go (Freud, 2003, p. 53). Freud interprets this fear as an indirect expression of Little Hans' dislike for his little sister. For Freud, Little Hans is actually fantasizing about her mother letting go of Hanna in the bath, and the guilt of this phantasy manifests itself as a fear of bathing in Little Hans himself.

Hans is also very afraid of horses and carts, which he occasionally comes across when he is out with his mother. For Freud, this fear is closely associated with the Oedipus complex, and reflects Little Hans' fear of losing against his father. Freud thinks that the muzzle and the blinders of horses are an evidence of Hans' identification of horses with his father (Freud, 2003, p. 38-42). After what seems to be a slight improvement in his condition, Hans' phobia gets worse day by day, and becomes much worse after his recovery from a physical illness. He starts to feel more and more anxious about horses coming in his bedroom. Hans' father and Freud try to help Little Hans overcome his fear through various suggestions, all of which are built on the assumption that the origin of Hans' phobia is his Oedipal conflict. Freud thinks that Hans finally resolves this conflict after hearing about a dialogue between him and his father, in which Hans tells his father that he now thinks himself as the father of his imaginary children and not their mother any more. Then, he confirms his father's suggestion that he would like to be as tall as his father and marry his mother. Moreover, he now imagines his father as the grandfather of his imaginary children. Thanks to this concession, Hans' perceived tension with his father finally ends (Freud, 2003, p. 77).

Freud anticipates the possible criticisms against his interpretation of Little Hans' phobia. The first

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hypothetical criticism that Freud responds to is the fact that Hans is not really a "normal" child, and hence it would be a mistake to generalize the findings of this case to all children. Freud takes this accusation lightly because of the clear-cut distinction it assumes between normality and abnormality. For Freud, illness is just "a purely pragmatic summation concept", and any classification based on this concept requires perpetual revision (Freud, 2003, p. 115). There are many instances in the text where Freud emphasizes that the case study was possible only because Hans had a very intimate relationship with his family, and therefore did not hesitate to share his opinions with his father and Freud himself. For Freud, "Hans does not conform to the image of a degenerate child with an inherited tendency to nervous disorder, but is in fact a prepossessing, cheerful fellow, well-proportioned and intellectually lively, a delight to others besides his father" (Freud, 2003, p. 114). His phobia is by no means a condition that belongs exclusively to him, and in no way does he substantially differ from an average child of his own age group.

The second hypothetical criticism Freud argues against is the possibility of a suggestion mechanism operating in the analysis, that is, the claim that in following the instructions of his father, Little Hans could not give original and independent responses. Freud accepts that Little Hans' father is at times rather suggestive, and he does not deny either that his way of asking questions had a significant impact on Little Hans' responses. However, despite the high level of suggestion in the exchange between Little Hans and his father, Freud defends the case by arguing that that the level of suggestive influence in this particular case is not more than the level of suggestive influence in the analyses of older patients. For him, suggestion is acceptable, and indeed a very crucial part of psychoanalytic intervention, as long as it does not take the form of flat-out coercion. After all, "psychoanalysis is precisely not an objective scientific procedure but a therapeutic intervention" (Freud, 2003, p. 86). The absence of coercion in the case of Little Hans convinces Freud that the father's influence on Hans' utterances and behaviors is of an acceptable level for the purposes of psychoanalytic interpretation. For Freud, Little Hans exhibits "sufficient independence of mind" (Freud, 2003, p. 87). In comparing the case of Little Hans to other cases of adult analysis, Freud avoids giving the case of Little Hans special status, but his affirmation of suggestion taints the credibility of his adult analyses. However, it should still be noted that while Freud's contemporaries would take the utterances of children as silly and unreliable, Freud ventured to go in the opposite direction, regarding Little Hans' responses as worthy of psychoanalytic interpretation (Freud,

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2003, p. 85).

Deleuze and Guattari, in their various works, develop a trenchant criticism of Freud's psychoanalytic model both in its general assumptions and concerning the specific case of Little Hans. The questions they pose to Freud sometimes match the questions of the hypothetical opponents that Freud tries to nip in the bud, but at other times they seem to catch Freud off guard. In those criticisms, Deleuze and Guattari do not necessarily argue against Freud's theory of the unconscious, nor do they try to strip psychoanalysis off of its interpretive and creative power. What they are concerned about is rather the outcome of psychoanalytic interventions on the desires of the psychoanalyzed individual. Their problem with Freud's psychoanalytic model, and especially with his notion of Oedipus complex, is that Freud confines the analysand within a behavioral scheme, in which he or she cannot but eventually settle. Deleuze's succinct remark that "psychoanalysis has produced everything-except exits" explains how in his view psychoanalytic creativity has been put to wrong use (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 103).

This failure stems from two tendencies inherent in many psychoanalytical traditions: first, they tend to block the formation of utterances to the point that the psychoanalytic exchange between the analyzer and the analysand turns into a monologue; and, second, they underestimate the value of desire as production. The psychoanalytic exchange between the analyzer and the analysand is a kind of boxing match between competitors in different weight categories in that whenever psychoanalysis appears to listen to the analysand, it ends up silencing her. The situation is even worse with children: it is always a "card trick of the forced choice" (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 81). There always remains a big gap between what children actually say and how those utterances are interpreted. In a group project focusing on the most well-known psychoanalytic cases involving children, namely, Little Hans, Little Richard, and Agnes, Deleuze collaborates with Guattari, Parnet, and Scala to show how psychoanalysts do not let children "produce an utterance without having it reduced to a prefabricated or predetermined grid of interpretation" (Deleuze, 2007, p. 89). According to Deleuze, children always explore milieus and draw maps of them, and parents are merely a milieu that children travel through, and "not the coordinates of everything that is invested by the unconscious" (Deleuze, 1998, p. 62). In Freudian psychoanalysis, however, the unconscious is always eventually connected to either objects or persons, but never to trajectories. Deleuze frequently emphasizes how Freud systematically assimilates indefinite articles in

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the utterances of the analysand to a familial order, such that "a horse", for instance, can only mean "my

dad", while the productive nature of desire functions in conformity with the logic of indefinite articles,

preventing them from being overridden by conjugal relations. For Deleuze and Guattari, the logic of

indefinite articles and infinitives is the logic of becoming. Freud's interpretations, however, constantly

block the movement of becoming by relocating the subject in a familial triangle. Freud always retraces

the unconscious back to memory, ignoring the complex trajectories that children follow for the sake of

preserving an Oedipal model. In its radical impoverishment of Little Hans' world, Freud's interpretation

of the case of Little Hans appears as "an example of child psychoanalysis at its purest":

[t]hey kept on BREAKING HIS RHIZOME and BLOTCHING HIS MAP,

setting it straight for him, blocking his every way out, until he began to desire his own shame and guilt, until they had rooted shame and guilt in him, PHOBIA (they barred him from the rhizome of the building, then from the rhizome of the street, they rooted him in his parents' bed, they radicled him to his own body, they fixated him on Professor Freud). Freud explicitly takes Little Hans's cartography into account, but always and only in order to project it back onto the family photo. (Deleuze & Guattari,

1987, p. 14) (emphasis in the original)

According to Deleuze, Little Hans' description of a horse is nothing but a list of affects. For Freud,

however, the image of a horse falling down or being whipped has nothing to do with any aspect of the

libido, but is a mere representation of Hans' symbolic struggle against his father. Whenever Little Hans

is worried about the idea of a pulling horse falling down, it must be a manifestation of his death wish

against his father. Whenever Little Hans speaks of a horse, it stands for nothing but the figure of the

father for Freud.

When Hans explains his phobia of horses to his father, he mentions "something black" around the mouth

of the horses (Freud, 2003, p. 38). For his father, this image must come from the black leather strap

covering the mouth of a horse like a muzzle; and being something located around the mouth, the muzzle

can stand for nothing but a moustache. This symbolism constitutes the main foundation for the father's

claim that Hans's fear of horses is actually a repressed form of Little Hans's dislike of him. What is more,

he associates blinders around a horse's eye with his own glasses.

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The father is so busy interpreting Little Hans' words in conformity with the Freudian framework that he

simply disregards what Hans is saying. First of all, what Hans has in mind when he says "something

black", is something made of iron (Freud, 2003, p. 41). It does not seem to refer to the muzzle-like strap

around the mouths of horses. Secondly, when his father asks Hans whether the black thing reminds him

of a moustache, he says it does, but only insofar as the color is concerned. A few days later, when his

father asks him again to describe what this black thing looks like, Hans now uses the word "muzzle",

which his father introduced into the dialogue a few days ago. When Hans starts using the word "muzzle"

to explain his phobia, Hans's father interprets this as Hans' eventual acceptance that the black thing

stands for a moustache. From "something black" to "father's moustache"... Hans' father does everything

he can in order to transpose Little Hans' fear to a familial order.

Another crucial instance in Hans' dialogue with his father is when the father interprets Hans' dislike of

a new baby sibling as a will to father the baby. The conversation below demonstrates Little Hans'

confusion:

I [the father]: I think you do wish Mummy would have another baby after all.

Little Hans: But I don't really want it to happen.

I: But you can still wish.

Little Hans: Wish, yes.

I: Do you know why it's something you wish? Because you'd like to be the Daddy.

Little Hans: Yes...How does it go?

I: How does what go?

Little Hans: Daddies can't have babies, so how does it go if I'd like to be the Daddy.

I: You'd like to be the Daddy and be married to Mummy, you'd be as tall as me and

have a moustache and you'd like Mummy to have another baby. (Freud, 2003, p. 73-

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At this point in their exchange, Hans' father points to the paradoxical nature of Little Hans' desire: he

does not want any new baby siblings, since he does not want to share his mother with anyone else; but

he must also be wishing it since he wants to be the Daddy. The peculiarity of this dialogue lies not only

in the fact that Hans is yet again forced to adopt the narrative his father has in his mind, but also that the

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father relates this dialogue to Hans' fear of horses by taking the overloading of horses as a symbol for the pregnancy of Hans' mother (Freud, 2003, p. 64). While exposing the contradictions holding sway over Hans' desires, the father, in fact, reveals a contradiction in his own reasoning. On the one hand, Hans's father regards Hans' fear of horses, the equivalence between "something black" and the moustache in particular, as a manifestation of Hans' rivalry with him. On the other hand, he takes the horses to represent Hans' mother's pregnancy insofar as the overloading of horses is concerned. Hans' father does not see any problem with associating the same figure both with the father and with the mother as long as the conjugal structure necessary for Freud's interpretations remains intact.

Freud's reading of Hans' interest in widdlers is another instance of forced interpretation. Widdlers are a very curious topic for Little Hans, and Little Hans' father does not neglect to take note of it from the very beginning of the case. In fact, Little Hans has a peculiar conception of widdlers. He is so intrigued with widdlers of different things that he often compares them: horses have big widdlers, while Hanna's widdler is very tiny. Hans thinks that widdlers get bigger by time, so his mother and father must have very big widdlers, as big as that of a horse. When Hans comes to realize that tables and chairs do not have widdlers, Freud thinks that, for Little Hans, the widdler is also a mark that serves to distinguish living beings from inanimate objects. For Freud, Hans' interest in widdlers is a reflection of his interest in his own body as a male and his fear of castration. In Little Hans' conception of widdler, however, there remains something that Freud's interpretation cannot account for. Little Hans' interest in widdlers goes beyond a curiosity about the organic functioning of the body. As Deleuze and Guattari suggest, for Hans, the widdler does not specifically stand for the penis, but rather works like an element that traverses the series of man, woman, chair, table and horse, all at once. If horses do have widdlers while chairs do not, it is "because the elements of the chair were not able to integrate this material into their relations, or decomposed the relation with that material to the point that it yielded something else, a rung, for example" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 256). A widdler is not an organic structure but a machinic relationship that varies in these bodies according to their individual configurations. That is why, when Little Hans's mother threatens him about the doctor cutting his widdler, Little Hans does not seem very worried: "I'll use my botty", Hans quickly responds (Freud, 2003, p. 5). He does not exhibit a fear of castration at all (Deleuze, 2007, p. 91). For Little Hans, the body is more like an assemblage that can be reorganized in such a way to redistribute organic functions among its components.

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In seeking to discover the general laws governing the human conscious and unconscious, Freud had to collect reliable data from case studies in order to corroborate his hypotheses and assumptions. However, Freud himself was not satisfied with what he discovered in this particular case study. At the very end of the case of Little Hans, Freud confesses not to have learned anything new from it, and that everything he found out in the process was actually already available to him through his studies of older patients (Freud, 2003, p. 118). It seems that Freud was already so convinced about the strength of his theory that he did not need to study a child's case in order to collect actual data about children's psychosexual development. In fact, it is as though Freud knew what he would find out in this case study long before it began: "a great deal, if not most, of what little Hans shows us will prove typical of the sexual development of children" (Freud, 2003, p. 5). Freud is not interested in the case because he thinks he will learn something from Hans' phobia, but rather because Hans can provide yet another support for his own long-established assumptions.

Deleuze's criticism that psychoanalytic conversations with children prevent them from speaking and exploring milieus is also closely linked to a temporal problem underlying Freud's interpretation of Hans' phobia. As noted above, the primary move of Freudian psychoanalysis is the temporal displacement of the conscious subject by way of providing him or her with an unconscious. For Freud, the unconscious is closely related to memory, and it is through the study of childhood experiences that one can understand the psychosexual history of a human subject. If the conscious subject is regarded as an entity thinking and acting in the present, the introduction of an unconscious adds yet another layer of time to the temporal unfolding of the subject in question. By emphasizing the role that memory plays in lived actuality, Freudian psychoanalysis substantially undermines the preponderance of presence in understanding human behavior.

The essential difficulty of this case, which Freud seems to ignore in his interpretation, is the difference between the recollection of childhood as a past experience and the present experience of childhood as lived actuality. The basic problem with the psychoanalytic conception of childhood is that, as a construction of memory, childhood is never thought as contemporaneous with the actuality of the analyzed subject. For the psychoanalytic displacement to work, childhood has to be located somewhere in the past, that is, in a certain sense, reconstructed. The actuality of childhood, however, does not

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succumb to the interventions of Freudian psychoanalysis. If Freudian psychoanalysis fails to recognize the becoming-horse of Hans, which constitutes his way out from the troubled world of his parents, it is because becoming does not follow the tripartite structure of chronological time, but rather takes place in a different temporal order where the categories of past, present and future break away with their linear sequence. From Deleuze and Guattari's perspective, in the case of Little Hans, childhood is not a memory but rather an actual block of becoming that kindles lines of flight. These becomings are real; they take place here and now; but most importantly, taking the form of an escape, they materialize an alternative temporal displacement for the lived actuality of the conscious subject. Becoming-animal is Little Hans' only escape from his parents' impositions, "but psychoanalysis is there to close this final outlet" (Deleuze, 2007, p. 98). Contrary to the psychoanalytic constitution of the subject in reference to childhood memories and a familial past, becoming reveals that "a' child coexists with us, in a zone of proximity or a block of becoming, on a line of deterritorialization that carries us both off" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 294). Having freed itself from a notion of memory anchored in the past, becoming-child and other becomings help us become a child other than the one we once were in the past.

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