



What Animals Teach Us about Politics

Brian Massumi

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In *What Animals Teach Us about Politics*, Brian Massumi takes up the question of "the animal." By treating the human as animal, he develops a concept of an animal politics. His is not a human politics of the animal, but an integrally animal politics, freed from connotations of the "primitive" state of nature and the accompanying presuppositions about instinct permeating modern thought. Massumi integrates notions marginalized by the dominant currents in evolutionary biology, animal behavior, and philosophy— notions such as play, sympathy, and creativity—into the concept of nature. As he does so, his inquiry necessarily expands, encompassing not only animal behavior but also animal thought and its distance from, or proximity to, those capacities over which human animals claim a monopoly: language and reflexive consciousness. For Massumi, humans and animals exist on a continuum. Understanding that continuum, while accounting for difference, requires a new logic of "mutual inclusion." Massumi finds the conceptual resources for this logic in the work of thinkers including Gregory Bateson, Henri Bergson, Gilbert Simondon, and Raymond Ruyer. This concise book intervenes in Deleuze studies, posthumanism, and animal studies, as well as areas of study as wide-ranging as affect theory, aesthetics, embodied cognition, political theory, process philosophy, the theory of play, and the thought of Alfred North Whitehead.

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