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The Death of an Animal



Akira Mizuta Lippit

An Animal Writes—

No animal was harmed in the making of this film. Appended to films in which animals (including fish and sometimes insects) appear to have been injured or killed, the American Humane Association's (AHA) sanctioned disclaimer underscores the persuasive impression of reality in cinema and its effect on the representation of violence.¹ Its purpose is to reassure audiences that despite the semblance of violence, no harm has been inflicted on any animal in the actual

world *outside of the film*, and to protect distributors from legal claims. Cinematic realism, the disclaimer suggests, is not contiguous with outside reality. An outside agency, the AHA provides a vigilant assurance that the world within a film, *this film*, is not what it seems. Although its autonomy has been questioned, the AHA is meant to serve as an independent outside body that determines with its sanction the precise border between the inside and outside of the film. "No animal was harmed" occupies this very borderline. The AHA disclaimer inscribes onto the film an ethical spectatorship

that protects, as it were, the interior, diegetic dimension of the film from the outside world.

“No animal was harmed” thus divides the film’s interior and exterior dimensions, distinguishing the worlds within and without the film, fiction from fact. On the inside animals appear to be harmed; on the outside they are protected. As a film nears its end and the credit sequence begins, films that have depicted violence against animals disavow—in those final moments of the film, at the threshold of the diegesis—that violence against animals.² “No animal was harmed” marks the intervention of a linguistic phrase that attempts to frame the picture and limit the responsibility of the film and its fictions. *It states*, as it were, for the animal that cannot speak, that cannot defend its rights. A kind of animal right, or writing. The disclaimer and entire credit sequence signal the return of the film to the order of language. It functions as a *parergon*, a frame that surrounds and defines the film. Using a spatial logic peculiar to frames, the *parergon* occurs both inside and outside of the film, and serves as a transition for the spectator from the world of cinema—which is also, but not exclusively, linguistic—to the world of language.

“A *parergon*,” says Jacques Derrida, “comes against, beside, and in addition to the *ergon*, the work done [*fait*], the fact [*le fait*], the work, but it does not fall to one side, it touches and cooperates within the operation, from a certain outside.”³ The *parergon* frames the work, translates it, renders it—in the case of films—as language. A language contaminated, however, by the very fact that it touches the work from the unique topology of “a certain outside.” Photographic arts inflict, according to Francis Bacon, a specific brutality, a “slight remove from fact,” that returns the viewer “onto the fact more violently.”⁴ The fact opens onto a vast exteriority, and photography and film bring that exteriority closer by framing (the slight remove of) violence. Bacon, whose work also features an element of animal violence, suggests that the photograph’s slight displacement from reality enhances the impression of a violent reality. The *parergon* establishes such a remove. It opens an interstice between the inside and outside, part of neither, in contact with both. At once imaginary and material, the *parergon* implements an economy of reality that is based neither in fact nor language, but in the phantasm of their contact. A chimerical hybrid, the *parergon* consists of flesh and words that converge, in this case, on the figure of the animal, coming “against, beside, and in addition” to it.

The *parergonal* inscription, which is not linguistic, not yet or no longer only a language, renders ethics

as a *zoon*, a *zoologos*, a living language bound by an intimate relation to animality. Derrida has called the peculiar relation of language to animality “*l’animot*.” The term embodies, for Derrida, a critique of the uses of the animal in language, ethics, and philosophy. In “L’animal que donc je suis,” Derrida writes:

Interpretative decisions (in all their meta-physical, ethical, juridical and political consequences) thus depend on what is presupposed by the general singular of this word *Animal*; I was tempted, at a given moment, in order to indicate the direction of my thinking, not just to keep this word within quotation marks, as if it were a citation to be analyzed, but without further ado to change the word, indicating clearly thereby that it is indeed a matter of a word, only a word, the word “animal” [*du mot “animal”*], and to forge another word in the singular, at the same time close but radically foreign, a chimerical word that sounded as though it contravened the laws of the French language, *l’animot*.⁵

The difference between *animaux* and *animot* operates only in the visual, graphic, and written domain of language, but when spoken, that difference vanishes into the sonic fusion of homonymy. Derrida’s term registers the break between singular and plural uses of the animal as word, but also between image and sound, flesh and word, language and its wild side. Like the multiplicities that are said to roam within the animal, the *animot* carries a multiplicity within a singularity, a multilingual and *anagrammatical* chaos within its grammar.⁶ As Derrida suggests, an outlaw word that breaks the laws of language (French), outside the law of language.

“No animal was harmed” is a type of *animot*, a singular/plural phrase that legislates the fantasy of animal death while disclaiming that no animal in the world outside of the film was harmed. (No *real* animal, no animal that inhabits the planes of the real, was harmed.) The *animot* situates the boundaries between the inside and outside worlds in the form of a word that is at once animal and non-animal. A language of the outside. Derrida’s notion of the *animot* can also be thought of as an *animetaphor*—a trope of animality that is itself profoundly anti-metaphoric and *anotropic*; that exposes the impossibility of a rhetorical relation between animality and language.⁷

The animal disclaimer illuminates the anxiety that the apparent injury of an animal provokes, especially in dramatic narrative films, where the effects of reality

are, perhaps ironically, strongest. The differing modes of realism in narrative and documentary films offer a striking contrast in the treatment of animal death, requiring, in the case of fiction film, a legal disclaimer or frame that separates the work from the world. Prompted by a long history of filmmaking in which animals were regularly wounded and sometimes killed during production, the disclaimer acknowledges both the frequency of violent representations and the advances in film technologies that have made the staging of actual violence unnecessary. The phrase performs a legal function, protecting the distributor from claims of unnecessary cruelty toward animals. “No animal was harmed” also serves a taxonomic purpose, separating the two principal film genres, fiction and documentary.

The disclaimer, applied to dramatic films that have passed the AHA review, does not regularly appear in those films—nature films, for example—where the seemingly reliable status of reality has been foregrounded. Frederick Wiseman’s institutional animal films, *Primate* (1974) and *Zoo* (1993), are two such examples, as are numerous wildlife documentaries and TV programs. Those documentary works, which display violence against animals by people as well as other animals, derive their value from the strict adherence to actuality, from the premise that animals *have* been harmed in the making of the film. Beyond a discomfort with the histories and genres of film, the disclaimer also reveals a totemic anxiety, one that surpasses the humanitarian concern for animals as living creatures and exposes a unique unease with the death of the animal as spectacle and as such.

What is the difference, if any, between killing animals and human beings? Do different ethics of representation guide those two forms of violence? No comparable disclaimer appears for human beings, “no human being was harmed in the making of this film.”⁸ If film audiences need to be reassured that no animals were harmed, why aren’t similar reassurances applied to human beings who appear to have been wounded or killed, since violence against human beings occurs far more frequently in the mainstream narrative cinema? The human counterpart to this disclaimer assumes a different form: “All resemblances to persons living or deceased is purely coincidental.” Different taboos seem to restrict animal and human representation: animals cannot be harmed, individual human beings resembled. The injunction against copying the human form, especially in the era of mechanical reproduction (from automata to photography), is familiar, and has been well documented in the anecdotal histories of photography and film. In addition to its legal purpose, again to pre-

clude charges of endangerment and abuse, the human disclaimer suggests a trace of religious or irrational anxiety, a fear of the double, *doppelgänger*, or mirror reflection, what in psychoanalysis is sometimes called “spectrophobia.” Through a logic made possible by psychoanalysis the two taboos—copying human beings and killing animals—can be said to form an integrated system. Copying the human figure amounts to a form of killing if it is seen as eliminating the singularity thought to establish human identity. Killing a particular animal suggests that animal’s individuality, disturbing the frequent representation of animals as constituting packs or hordes. The two modes of violation are linked by the singularity ascribed to humanity and the multiplicity that is said to determine animality. Taking this logic one step further, to imitate another human being is to assail that individual’s singularity and force it to become, like an animal, multiple; to kill an individual animal is to grant it singularity, allowing it to become unique, to become-human. The two disclaimers share a structural disposition as linguistic phrases appended to films in the supplemental credit sequence, where a film’s debts are acknowledged. Both phrases determine—following another etymology of the word “credit”—systems of belief, even faith. Both ward off an anxiety produced by a film—embodied not just in its content or narrative, but by its uncanny materiality that drives the spectator outside of language toward an experience of ecstasy, of standing outside, of brief psychosis. Death, mimesis, ecstasy, psychosis, and spectacle are some of the *animots* that converge upon the animal and human figures inscribed on the parergon.⁹

Another specter haunts the representation of violence against animals, especially violence that leads to death. According to a logic peculiar to Western thought from Epicurus to Heidegger, animals are incapable of a proper death. That is, because animals are said to have no knowledge of death as such, they simply perish without experiencing death as death.¹⁰ There is no death, according to this belief, proper to the animal. Georges Bataille offers this summary: “What marks us [humanity] so severely is the *knowledge* of death, which animals fear but do not *know*.”¹¹ For those who hold to this view, the inability of animals to know death follows from the perceived absence of language among animals. Language brings consciousness and with it, the consciousness of consciousness and its absence, or death. In this light, to have language is to have death. Without language, according to this sophism, animals have neither consciousness nor death. It should be stated definitively, as many have tried to do, that animals do have language. Philosophical conceptions of

language, linked to untenable notions of subjectivity, consciousness, and self, have failed to accommodate the language of animals as language. Perhaps this is what Derrida means by *animot*, an expansion of language, an outside language, parergonal, which speaks from the place of an irreducible exteriority.

Another place that opens from the exteriority of language can be found in the topoi of cinema, which, like the animal, complicate the economies of death. There is no proper death of the animal and no death as such in cinema. Both media haunted by the shadow of death and the absence of language, stake a space beyond the conventions of language and death. The death of an animal on film is thus an impossible spectacle—speculative and spectral, linked to cinema through the magical process of animation. Against the impossibility of animal death, cinema provides artificial life, anima, animation, and the possibility of reanimation. Film, perhaps the emblematic technology of the late nineteenth century, keeps animals from ever truly dying by reproducing each individual animal death in a fantastic crypt. It multiplies and repeats each unique death until its singularity has been erased, its beginning and end fused into a spectral loop. Cinema reconciles the paradox of animal death (animals die but are incapable of death) through a fantasy of reanimation, projected into and then outward from the apparatus.¹²

A fantasy machine. As a machine, cinema provides not only a spectacle but also a vehicle for projection. Defined by Jean Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis as an “operation whereby qualities, feelings, wishes, or even objects, which the subject refuses to recognize or rejects in himself, are expelled from the self and located in another person or thing,” projection can be seen as a mechanism that neutralizes the dilemma of animal death.¹³ Thus, cinematic projection was sutured to a form of cultural projection that posited an animal ontology in the spaces and frames of film. From its inception cinema projected life and vitality—the principle of animation—and assumed from early on the role of a fantastic technological zoo. Two modes of projection, filmic and psychic, bind cinema to animals, technology to life. Hervé Aubron argues for the inherent relationship of cinema to the animal, linked historically to postindustrial spectacles. “The animal inevitably questions the origins of cinema because the animal was its first model. But also because cinema was fused with animals in its earliest stages.” The rapid proliferation of zoological parks and fairs in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries coincided with industrialization and the advent of cinema. “Imprisoned, exhibited, trained (and sometimes even staged) for pub-

lic viewing, the animal and the animated image appear to form two contemporary spectacles.”¹⁴ At the end of the twentieth century, Temple Grandin linked animality to visual thinking, to the capacity to “think in pictures.”¹⁵ Grandin’s animal visuality and cinematography—*cinemality*—led her to the slaughterhouse to implement a mode of killing animals she calls “humane slaughter.” In a more speculative register, the animal inhabits cinema through its principal mechanism, animation—to make move, live, animal.

Electric Animal—

Among the earliest spectacles of film, animal, and electricity stands Thomas Edison’s 1903 actuality, *Electrocuting an Elephant*. In an effort to sabotage the development of AC (alternating current) electrical generators, which delivered electricity at a higher voltage and to greater distances than his own DC (direct current) systems, Edison embarked on a campaign to discredit the AC system and its primary proponent, the Westinghouse Electrical and Manufacturing Company. Edison’s strategy involved a series of public events in which he and his associates electrocuted stray dogs and cats with AC currents of one thousand volts. Throughout 1887 Edison staged the electrocution of hundreds of animals in West Orange, New Jersey. Edison’s campaign was so successful in disseminating the idea of high-tension electricity as a sheer, swift, and lethal agent that the New York State Legislature, in a rare show of bipartisan cooperation, adopted in 1888 “a statute providing for the use of the ‘electric chair’ in place of hanging as a means of capital punishment.”¹⁶ Through a delusional but symptomatic economy, the projection of guilt onto the condemned animals made the progression from animal to human electrocution possible. An ethical phantasm at the base of animal and human murder binds the two modes of electric killing.¹⁷

Edison’s legacy of animal killings is recorded in the one-minute film, *Electrocuting an Elephant*. Filmed at Coney Island’s Luna Park, the single-reel “actuality” shows in long shot the electrocution of Topsy, a park elephant that had killed three men. The evocation of the animal’s name in accounts of the electrocution served to anthropomorphize the elephant and render it almost human in its criminality. Edison’s execution of the criminal animal, explains Lisa Cartwright, “proved to be an attraction almost more popular, and undoubtedly more dramatic, than a docile animal.”¹⁸ The film consists of a complex mixture of cinematic elements, including a camera pan and several jump cuts, or tem-

poral lapses. In the opening moments of the film, Topsy is led in shackles to a clearing accompanied by several men. The scene suggests not so much the destruction of an animal as the execution of a criminal. Through a gradual anthropomorphosis, this opening renders the elephant first guilty, then pathetic. Topsy advances from the background to foreground, creating the effect of a zoom; she approaches the camera, which pans to follow her movements, framing her briefly in a close-up. This proximity generates an air of theatricality, a tragi-comic gravity. The film then jump cuts to the camera position that remains largely intact throughout the rest of the film. Topsy is framed in a slight high-angle long shot, a Coney Island marquee visible in the background. She shuffles her feet and surveys the ground with her nose before suddenly tightening. After a moment, smoke erupts from Topsy's feet (which had been placed in special devices that introduced the current into her body) and she falls forward to her right. The camera adjusts slightly, panning left, to center the fallen elephant.

The elephant quivers on the ground as life and movement leave its body. What follows is perhaps the most macabre moment of the film. In what appears to be a temporal lapse, the camera stops, then resumes filming. The interruption is registered by a slight jump cut. When the scene of the dying elephant resumes, a human figure returns with it, fading into the background behind the lifeless elephant's body. As the film ends, this human figure exits to the left. The ghost-like man at the end of the film, who appears in the frame like a Méliès trick, provides a haunting relief, as if the elephant's life had leapt, through an illicit pact, into this human form that appears from nowhere into the diegesis, into the dying world of the animal. A strange image of the afterlife appears in this final scene—a form of elephant survival.¹⁹ It is as if the human being is there to accompany the elephant to the other world, an agent of the transition from one existential state to another. Or, the spirit of the elephant appears to transfer to the man. The human figure hovers on the surface of the shot, never fully absorbed—an ectoplasmic manifestation of the anthropomorphosis that infuses the electrocution. Edison's current, his electrical charge, destroys and reanimates the elephant.

In the span of a minute, the elephant collapses. The moment of death, captured on film, is made visible by the elephant's sudden loss of muscular activity. One sees its animality cease in a moment. That moment of Topsy's death, which would otherwise determine a temporal and existential singularity, is destined in the film to return, inscribed in the very instant of death as

a repetition. "The Edison Manufacturing Company must have banked," concludes Cartwright, "on the fact that in 1903 audiences would have paid not only to observe an intervention in the 'regulated activity' of the 'living being' but to study this intervention again and again on film, just as the laboratory scientist might watch just such a film over and over to analyze the execution of 'life.'"²⁰ Life and death are marked in the film by repetition, a repeatability that renders life and death automatic and electric. Topsy's life and death are dissected in the film, witnessed as an automated look or *autopsy* of the elephant that remains after Topsy's death in the form of the film. The dying animal in Edison's film is survived by the film; Topsy lives on and survives as the film, which transfers the anima of the animal, its life, into a phantom archive, preserving the movement that leaves the elephant in the technology of animation. *Electrocuting an Elephant* signals, early in the history of film, an uncanny transference of life from the animal to film, illuminating in the exchange a spectral metaphysics of technology.

Figuring Animal Death—

While animals can be seen, in a speculative fashion, to fuel film and technology, the apparatus stalls when animals are used as metaphors of film and technology. The frequency of animal figures from Etienne-Jules Marey's and Eadweard Muybridge's pre-cinematic photographs to the animations of Winsor McCay and Walt Disney suggests an affinity between animality and cinema that defies, in the end, figurability.²¹ The animal metaphor in film turns out to be most often an animetaphor, a trope that collapses under the surge of an electric semiotic. That is, the figure of the animal disturbs the rhetorical structures of film language. In particular, animals resist metaphorization. Sergei Eisenstein's metaphoric slaughterhouse scene in *Strike* (1924) and the hunting sequence in Jean Renoir's *Rules of the Game* (1939) offer two examples of animal death that problematize the figurative value of such representations. Eisenstein's depiction of class struggle between the forces of capital and those of labor concludes with a massacre. Striking workers are attacked, pursued, and destroyed by armed soldiers, like cattle in a slaughterhouse. And then real cattle appear, lacerating the diegesis with animal figures—actual and metaphorical.²² As the soldiers eliminate the striking workers, the film audience sees scenes from a slaughterhouse. The final sequence of Eisenstein's film concludes with a trope: the slaughter of the striking workers is like the killing of defenseless animals.

Simile, metaphor, allegory: the worker is like an animal, the assault like a slaughter, the story of capital discovered in the narrative of human-animal relations.

The economy of work, the brutality of labor relations to which Eisenstein alludes in his figure of animal slaughter, is interrupted by animals that take the place of actors who would be, in Eisenstein's estimation, unable to achieve the required degree of realism. Eisenstein explains his decision to move outside of the diegesis by inserting the animal trope in order "to avoid overacting among the extras from the labour exchange 'in the business of dying.'" He wanted "to excise from such a serious scene the falseness that the screen will not tolerate but that is unavoidable in even the most brilliant death scene."²³ Eisenstein concludes his explanation by adding that he sought "to extract the maximum effect of bloody horror." The excess acting, which destroys the realism of the scene through a surfeit of humanity, is supplanted, in Eisenstein's logic by the "bloody horror" of the animal massacre. The fact impresses the brutality more forcefully onto the spectator. The filmed slaughter of animals produces through animetaphor an actuality that cannot be staged or performed. Eisenstein's animals intervene at the limits of representation, here the death of human beings. Those workers "in the business of dying" are unequal to animals in the task of dying on screen; the labor of the worker-actor is better effected by the animals that—reversing the direction of their roles as metaphors—perform in the film *like human beings*. Within the diegesis of *Strike* workers die like animals, outside of it animals perform death like human actors. Eisenstein inserts the documentary footage of animal slaughter to make a rhetorical point—that workers in the factory are treated like cattle. But the actuality of the animal slaughter supercedes the metaphor and imposes from outside the diegesis a taste of death, of the real. Eisenstein's animals are parergonal, never fully inside nor outside the diegesis but against, beside, and in addition to it, surrounding *Strike* with an animetaphorical frame.

The transposed rules and economies of work to play, labor to leisure, also leads, in *Rules of the Game*, to a moment of animal death. The hunting scene in Renoir's film employs the death of the animal, of animals, as a deferred metaphor that folds the narrative into and through itself to the outside, rupturing the tissues of diegetic space with another intervention of documentary footage. During the hunt, the film appears to tear open and encounter, like the members of the hunting party, the radical exteriority and brutality of the outside world. (Renoir's film stages the games that

distinguish the classes, the rules that separate inside from outside.) The film's shifts in film stock and lighting signal the intrusion of actuality in the form of a documentary mode. Shots of animal killings, mostly rabbits and pheasants, appear to depict actual killings. Vivian Sobchack describes one distinctive shot of a wounded rabbit twitching before perishing as a "documentary moment" that produces "extratextual knowledge." "The generalized referentiality of the fauna in that film is abruptly transformed by the rabbit's death leap as it is shot, the viewer's extratextual knowledge suddenly positing the rabbit's existence beyond the frame of the fiction into the documentary space of an 'elsewhere' where it lived its rabbit life."²⁴ The knowledge is extratextual because it enters the film from without, exposing the diegesis to the brutality of the outside (a brutality of the outside that is replicated within the film's diegesis, in the narrative). Following Sobchack's reasoning, the intrusion of another syntax, another mode of cinema, but also of a discernible exteriority, disrupts the fictional space of the film. It underscores the eruption of violence in the game, the hunt, which will eventually take the life of the other outsider, the aviator André Jurieu. Mistaken for another, Jurieu is shot and killed like an animal, according to the poacher Marceau, who witnessed the killing. "He rolled over like an animal, when you're hunting."²⁵ The extratextuality to which Sobchack refers may originate in the anti-figurative deictics of photography, which, Roland Barthes claims, points without speaking. Extratextuality signals the proximity of another or outside language that speaks in the idiom of an *animot*, as homonymy. The aphasia of the photograph operates according to a hysterical imperative—it sees by conceding language, pointing always toward the outside.

"To die like a rabbit," which implies a meaningless, unconscious death at the hands of a vastly superior force, seems, in *Rules of the Game*, to have lost its metaphorical value in the extratextuality of the scene. The death of the rabbit, as Sobchack concludes, effects a becoming-animal in the sense described by Deleuze and Guattari, that strips the expression of its metaphorical purpose. As a trope, Renoir's slaughter of rabbits, like Eisenstein's scene of slaughter, pierces the figurative language of the expression "to die like a rabbit" by animating the metaphor. It becomes, in *Rules of the Game*, a living, animate metaphor, an animetaphor. To die like a rabbit becomes animetaphorical, actual, in the biomechanical drives of the film world. As Sobchack suggests, to die like a rabbit in Renoir's film is to experience and suffer a surfeit consciousness of



Workers emerge in a pack in *Strike*.

death. To experience the death of the rabbit as an impossible and ecstatic death.

Fable

As opposed to documentary moments of animal death in narrative films, another type of animal film uses animal figures allegorically throughout the entire work. In the tradition of George Orwell's 1945 *Animal Farm* (animated film version by John Halas, 1955) and countless Disney films that feature animals in parabolic roles, Georges Franju's *Blood of the Beasts* (1949) employs animal figures to convey at least one displaced narrative. Like *Animal Farm* or *Bambi*, for instance, *Blood of the Beasts* suggests a pedagogic subtext, conveyed through and on the animal body. The film's commentary, written by naturalist and pioneer wildlife filmmaker Jean Painlevé, situates the film as an expanded allegory that alludes to French complicity with the Nazi genocide. *Blood of the Beasts* differs from other animal fables in the grisly actuality it depicts. Franju refuses to let the allegorical elements overpower the superficial content of his film, which portrays in documentary form the systems and rituals for the killing of animals in two Parisian slaughterhouses. The

film never settles comfortably in one form or another, disinterested documentary or charged allegory.²⁶

After a prologue displays the impoverishment and ruin of postwar Paris, the film shifts to the slaughterhouse at Vanves. As the narrator notes, despite the prominent statue of a proud bull on display, the Municipal Slaughterhouse "specializes in the slaughter of horses." Following a brief introduction of the tools of the trade, a horse is brought in for slaughter. Framed in a long shot at eye level, the horse is readied for death. A low angle close-up precedes a swift blow from a spiked apparatus to the horse's head, which flattens the animal onto the slaughterhouse floor. The velocity of the horse's collapse recalls Edison's elephant electrocution. (In contrast to Edison's film, however, which portrays the elephant Topsy as criminal, *Blood of the Beasts* depicts the slaughterhouse workers as indifferent killers.) From a high angle, we see the horse's lips severed, then its throat slit to drain its blood. After the gruesome killing, depicted between shifting high and low perspectives, the horse is dismembered and sorted into parts that will eventually be absorbed, the narrator notes, into an array of commercial products.²⁷ At the next slaughterhouse, cows and sheep are systematically killed, then dismembered, by whistling and

singing workers, a number who have been disfigured from their activities. On the apparent disinterest of the butchers (one of the film's features), Franju and Painlevé quote a passage from Baudelaire, "I will strike thee without anger or hatred, like a butcher."²⁸ From pathological dispassion to pathologies of passion, the filmed killings of animals—actual and staged—initiate ethical and affective economies specific to the parergonal function of animetaphors.

Outside Animality —

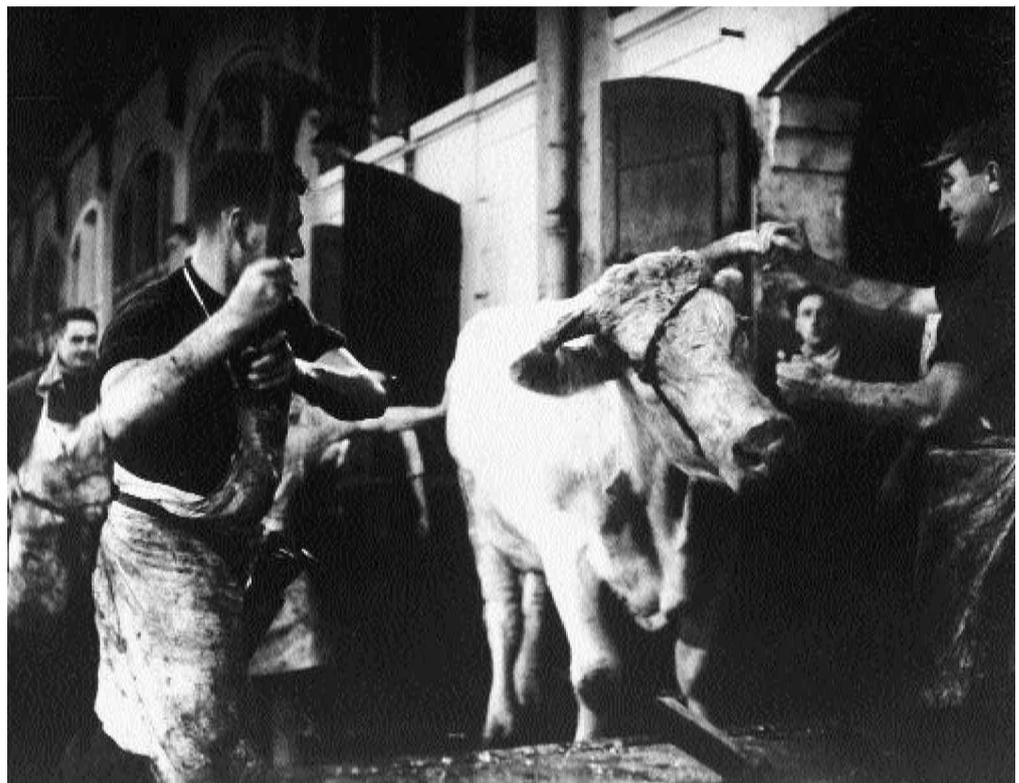
The disjunction of the here and now sustains to a great degree Peter Kubelka's *Our Trip to Africa* (1961-66), which documents an Austrian safari to Kenya and includes numerous animal killings by professors on vacation. At various moments during the film, the hunters enumerate their kills, a hippopotamus, zebra, giraffe, lion . . . most often gunned to death. Among the persistent features of Kubelka's film is the disruption of synchronicity between sound and image. Expected sounds (gunshots, exclamations, human and animal voices) miss their cues and adhere instead to images that displace the film always outside of the natural orders it appears to depict. Film is remarkable, according to Kubelka, precisely for its ability to separate sounds

from their sources, to disrupt the synchronicity of sounds and images. It works against the properties of nature. Kubelka explains his use of the frame, the expanses of the screen, the temporicity that opens between the frames, and his economies of image and sound.

My economy is one single frame and every part of the screen. So I feel that every frame that is projected too much makes the whole thing less articulate. So I always work in frames. Even the African film, which doesn't seem to be like that, because it's very natural, is worked frame by frame. I have twenty-four communication possibilities per second, and don't want to waste one. This is the economy. And the same is with the sound. Because one of the major fields where cinema works is when sound and image meet. So, the meeting of every frame with the sound is very important. That means you must have the same economy with sound as you have with the image.²⁹

Each frame is capable of generating and sustaining its own meaning. The collision or "weak succession" of frames and sounds produce meanings that push the ex-

The slaughterhouse
in *Blood of the Beasts*.



perience of the film away from an organic rendering of the world and toward, rather, an ecstatic one. "I want out, I want other laws, I want ecstasy . . . With this film I was after the cinematographic ecstasy."³⁰

Kubelka reaches toward the outside of film, its ecstatic dimension, by tearing film sound from its natural synchronicity with imagery and replacing it elsewhere. For Kubelka, the gesture occurs through the movements of metaphor, to bring across, or graft.³¹ It also happens, in *Africa*, over the repeated scenes of animal death, a kind of animal ecstasy. Animal death and the artificiality of metaphors establish Kubelka's parergon in *Africa*. Kubelka refuses to give the animal deaths in their totality by denying the synthesis of sound and image, preferring instead a kind of metrical displacement or deferral of each death that results in, to use another of Derrida's homonyms, *différance*. Separating the cry from the scene of death, the gunshot from causality, Kubelka drives the film outward, postponing the animal deaths indefinitely. Kubelka describes the synchronicity of the natural world and the enhancement of its exteriority in film. "And how does the lion exist? It exists by sync events. When the lion attacks he roars . . . each step he takes makes a sound. Sound and image sync events always link up in nature, and these clusters of sound and image make up the outside world."³² The interiority of the film world provides for Kubelka the ecstatic possibility of evading natural laws (synchronicity) through the single frame, through speed. "I am not dependent on the natural flow of events in cinema." For Kubelka, cinema makes possible a form of ecstasy that is directed inward, toward an interiority, an ecstasy of the inside.

The scenes of animal death in *Our Trip to Africa* determine parergonal moments precisely when the sun-dering of sound and image exposes the film's interior dimension to a radical exteriority. Of the many such parergonal moments in *Africa*, Jonas Mekas comments on one: "Or the eye, when the dying lion lifts his eye and looks directly into the camera accusingly and forgivingly and then dies. If there is a great moment in cinema, this is one."³³ The look of the dying animal brings the spectator across the threshold of the film, the contact animetaphoric. Kubelka's animal deaths, which play to slivers of music, laughter, voices, and ambient sounds, forge a slight shift from fact that ultimately thrusts the spectator outward, toward a greater recognition of their brutality.

In his experimental travelogue *Sans Soleil* (1982), Chris Marker incorporates a found footage scene of a giraffe killing, framed by or inserted within, a funeral service for animals in Japan. The action is introduced

in a series of parallel cuts that produces, like a Griffith chase sequence, a rapport between two scenes separated by time and space. In Japan, children attend a funeral and lay white chrysanthemums on the coffin. The banality of the ceremony is interrupted by the appearance of a llama (a sign draped on the animal reads "American camel llama"), as the narrator explains how Japanese views of death differ from those in the West. "The partition that separates life from death does not appear so thick to [the Japanese] as it does to a West-erner." The viewer learns that this funeral is for zoo animals that died during the year. As the camera tracks the movement of the children to the coffin from right to left and back again, Marker cuts to a long shot of a giraffe in the wild that moves across the frame from right to left. The movement match creates a rhythm between the back and forth of the children and the giraffe, connecting the shots against the shift in grain and color that suggests not only a spatial but also a temporal dislocation.

The first appearance of the giraffe lasts only briefly, no more than two or three seconds. The scene returns to the funeral, as the narrator notes that the children are curious about death, "as if they were trying, in order to understand the death of the animal, to stare through the partition." A quick cut shows a TV image of an assassin pointing a gun toward the lower right hand side of the frame, accompanied by the sound of a gunshot that echoes electronically. The shot is immediately followed by a cut to the giraffe, facing left, which takes a bullet and stumbles to the ground. On the soundtrack, Marker introduces music that resembles an electronically altered Noh score.

The giraffe rises and begins to run from right to left. A second shot, also accompanied by an electronic sound effect, explodes and the giraffe begins to bleed from two points at the base of its neck. The second bullet has pierced its neck and opened both an entry and exit wound. The giraffe staggers, loses its balance, and falls to the ground. Its horrific choreography is enhanced by the Noh music, which renders the scene theatrical, like the familiar death scene in so many Japanese period or samurai films. A brief allusion to these films is made in the TV shot that initiates the killing.

The next cut, reminiscent of the jump cut in *Electrocuting an Elephant*, moves the camera closer to the giraffe's head and focuses on its eye, which appears to look toward the camera. (This look also evokes the numerous animal stares in *The Blood of the Beasts* and the empty look of Kubelka's murdered lion.) The camera slowly zooms out revealing the dying animal's

writhing body. In another echo of Edison's film, a slender oblong object enters the frame from the left. The camera adjusts slightly to reveal the figure of a man, presumably the hunter, who points his rifle at the giraffe's head and shoots it at point-blank range. The shot triggers a cloud of dust and smoke. The scene turns blue, like the hue of a television screen and transforms, for an instant, the entire event into a TV program.

Marker cuts again, returning briefly to the Japanese funeral for zoo animals. The shot begins as a close-up of a pair of gloved hands and pulls back in a brief but rapid zoom out. The shot, which depicts the hands of a member of the funeral staff, lasts only seconds, mimicking the brief cut to the giraffe at the beginning of the sequence. The scene ends with a return to the wild. The camera follows a vulture as it descends from the sky and flies across the frame from left to right. It lands near the fallen giraffe's head. Another vulture has already begun to pick at the giraffe, which appears to have been killed for no purpose, its carcass left to the elements. A final cut brings the camera closer to the scene and shows the vultures devouring the giraffe's eye. The scene concludes with one vulture probing deeply into the giraffe's now empty eye socket, the origin of the animal look extinguished.

In this scene from *Sans Soleil*, Marker's partition functions not only as the divide between differing views of life and death, animal and human being, East and West, but also between the rhetoric of zoography and ethnography. Like the children that "stare through the partition," Marker's look blurs the lines that separate humanity from animals: children mourn the animals as if they were people; a hunter kills a giraffe like a condemned *man*, as if it were guilty. The exchange of human and animal features takes place across the threshold of the imaginary partition. The death of the animal that interrupts the Japanese animal funeral functions less as a metaphor (its purpose in *Strike* and *Rules of the Game*), than as a parasitic figure that overtakes the body of the film. The death of the giraffe moves quickly from an apparent metonymy to an animetaphor, a trope that destroys the trope, as well as the rhetoric of the scene, by absorbing the killing of the giraffe into the funeral scene as an integral dimension of it. It serves as a trauma, a lost memory that seems to erupt from the animal's past. As if the film remembers in place of the animal that can no longer remember, remembers for the animal, remembers the animal. In so doing the film survives the giraffe (even as it commemorates it) and assumes the properties of a remembering animal, an organism distinguished by the capacity to remember.

Shifting the focus from the primary narrative to its supplement, Marker's dynamic between the narrated scene (the animal funeral) and the haunting figure (the killing of the giraffe) tears down the partition, ultimately dismembering the very logic of the narrative. The scene that began with the funeral slips into the found footage, which seems to emerge from the phantom registers of memory or trauma; Marker folds the exteriority of the found footage into the body of the film until the external and internal features are no longer distinguishable. Marker then reverses the structure, so the death of the giraffe takes precedence, the funeral an afterthought or *flashforward*. The animetaphoric giraffe, which appeared to emerge from the past and from outside, enters into the narrative, takes its place in the chronology of events (death followed by funeral), as if it belonged there. The giraffe lingers in the film like a revenant. Neither inside nor outside, anterior nor posterior, Marker's dying giraffe produces a temporality of survival: the chronic temporality of the narrative is survived by the simultaneity of the scene. The perpetual presentation of the scene, which repeats itself like Edison's elephant *already in the first instance*, suspends the narrative in a return of the same. A metempsychosis of the giraffe as film, destined to die again and again in a cycle of animation and reanimation.

Two Deaths—

If, according to the strained logic of Western metaphysics, the animal cannot die—to the extent that death is seen as an exclusive feature of subjectivity and is reserved for those creatures capable of reflecting on being as such in language—then the death of the animal in film, on film, marks a caesura in the flow of that philosophy of being. The animal dies, is seen to die, in a place beyond the reaches of language. In place of language, in the place where it does not take place, the death of the animal generates an *animot*, a parergonal word that breaks the laws of language and at its limit. Representations of animal death are similarly destined to the rhetorical economy of an animetaphor, a figure at the end of figuration, an anti-metaphor that carries with it, embodies, the metaphor. "No animal was harmed in the making of this film" serves as a form of erasure that brings the death of the animal back into the ethical folds of the human world. But the disclaimer—a disavowal of animal death—never resolves the crisis, only defers it.

The death of an animal takes place on screen in spite of its impossibility. Or, as a spectacle of im-

possibility unique to cinema. Death occurs contemporaneously with life. The animal lives and dies simultaneously, animal life and death forming a synthesis in the film. Animal death becomes an aspect of life, while animal life is secured in that capacity to die, to experience and represent death apart from the dialectics of language. A possibility of death not bound by the anxious topographies of language, this death is not a proper death, nor is the life a proper life: in the world of cinema, the animal *lives on*, survives. “Living on can mean,” says Derrida, “a reprieve or an afterlife, ‘life after life’ or life after death, more life or more than life, and better; the state of suspension in which it’s over—and over again.”³⁴ Beyond life and death, in the deferred ontologies of the parergon, the cinema animal survives.

The animal survives its death as a film, as another form of animal, captured by the technologies of animation. The cinema animal registers two distinct lives and two distinct deaths, one animal, the other technological. This duality echoes another notion of the duality of life and death in the biological sciences. Following Xavier Bichat’s assertion of “the co-presence of two ‘animals’ in every organism,” Giorgio Agamben posits two forms of life: organic life, which is oriented inward, like that of a plant, and animal life, which is marked by an organism’s relation to others, to externality.³⁵ Organic life designates the functioning of respiratory and circulatory systems, as well as other vital organs, whereas animal life comprises the operations of the senses and the psyche, such as the intermittence of consciousness and the passages of memory. At the very least, the two modes of life determine two modes or moments of death, termed by Bichat, organic and animal. Most importantly, perhaps, these two modes are frequently characterized, like Kubelka’s film, by a non-coincidence. The animal death can occur long before its organic counterpart, meaning that “life can survive itself.”³⁶ Says Agamben: “Just as in the fetus organic life begins before that of animal life, so in getting old and dying it survives its animal death.”³⁷ After the animal has died, the organism may survive, carrying, as it were, a profound but radically distant trace of the animal in the continued perseverance of the organism.

Can Bichat’s notion of animal and organic life be expanded to encompass a third form of life, a technological life or vitality, what Manuel DeLanda calls “nonorganic life”? Can the dialectic between organic and animal life sustain the parergon of a third form of life, a machinic life that supplements the dialectic function? DeLanda argues that even nonorganic systems

(chemical clocks, wave patterns, elemental stratification) can display signs of a self-organization common to organic life forms and participate, along with organisms, in the evolutionary process.³⁸ Nonorganic life forms, which DeLanda collects under the genus of a “machinic phylum,” exhibit a full range of the features of life and, perhaps most importantly, interact with organic life forms to generate complex systems. Cinema, whose organization of images, sounds, and movements, always exceeds the intentions of any single author, may determine a distinct species within DeLanda’s machinic phylum. And if nonorganic life forms can, like their organic counterparts, die, could one posit the notion of a technological death? A technological death that defies death through repetition and initiates a mnemotechnics of life and death, a supplement that extends organic and animal lives into the technologies of memory.

The desire to move from organic life to nonorganic life, to survive the fragility of flesh in the taxidermic frames of cinema, to transpose anima to animation drives the refrain of Peter Greenaway’s *A Zed and Two Noughts* (1985) or *ZOO*, in the form of a series of time-lapse images of decaying animals that periodically interrupt the narrative. Two brothers, haunted by the deaths of their wives, begin to film the decay of first plant, then animal bodies, ultimately themselves. The time-lapse films form an evolutionary refrain as Greenaway accelerates the frame-by-frame disappearance of life, but also the transfer of life to film.³⁹ Life begins in the film, ends in it, is survived by it, as film. Greenaway’s time-lapses occupy a liminal space within the film’s diegesis: they are part of the narrative but also serve as pauses that desynchronize the diegesis.

In *ZOO*, the time-lapse scenes seek to capture the precise moments when the disappearances and transfers of life occur, generating a fantasy of the frame. Greenaway draws attention to the frame, to the movement between and within the frame, and the illusion of movement that propels film animation. Each frame probes the moment, the fractions of time, for some sign of the transition from life to death, death to reanimation, the movement or *metaphor* from one form of life to another, organic life to nonorganic life, organic death to technological survival.

From parergon to frame, the work of the outside returns to the heart of the inside, the place that is at once metaphoric and anti-metaphoric, the organ that is organic and machinic, “ecstatic,” in Kubelka’s words. On film, the death of the animal moves from an impossible *event* into the shadows of a machine that

makes new forms of life and death possible. Cinema forms a parergon around life and opens a space between two imaginary realms, life and language. The animal, which is neither fact nor figure, occupies the parergonal space made possible by film animetaphorically. Cinema is an animal, animality a form of technology, technology an aspect of life. A life forged in the radical reanimation of the conditions of vitality as such.

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Notes

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1. Only films that have been rated “Acceptable” by the American Humane Association (AHA) are allowed to utilize the disclaimer. “‘Animal’ means,” according to AHA guidelines, “all sentient creatures including birds, fish, reptiles and insects.” The Western Regional Office of the AHA’s Film and Television Unit, which opened in Los Angeles in 1940, has, since 1980 assumed the role of monitoring animals in film and television productions. According to its website: “In 1980 the entertainment industry entrusted AHA with the sole authority to protect animals used in film and television through a contract with the Screen Actors Guild. We prevent mistreatment of animal actors by reviewing scripts and working with trainers and producers prior to production and by being present on sets when significant animal activity takes place.” The AHA code mandates that no animals may be “killed, injured, overworked or caused discomfort.” Among the specifics, fish can only be kept out of water for thirty seconds. AHA monitors were granted law enforcement powers in 1997. Even though no fish appear in the film, Steven Soderbergh’s *Schizopolis* (1996) opens with the claim: “No fish were harmed during the making of this film.”
2. But not against human beings. In Martin Scorsese’s *Bringing Out the Dead* (1999), the following lines appear on the penultimate credit: “American Humane Association was on set to monitor the animal action. No animal was harmed.” The sentences are followed by what appears to be an inspection number. The film, which features scenes of human injury and death, scores of corpses and phantoms, contains only two scenes with animals. One involves a pet dog licking the hand of the film’s protagonist, Frank Pierce (Nicholas Cage), and the other shows tropical fish from an overturned aquarium, suffocating and twitching on the floor. If nothing else, the emphasis on animal safety in a film that barely features animals and depicts instead a relentless array of human injury produces a strange sense of displacement.
3. Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 54.
4. Francis Bacon, in David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon* (Oxford: Alden Press, 1987), 30.
5. Jacques Derrida, “The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow),” trans. David Wills, *Critical Inquiry* 28 (Winter 2002): 409. “L’animal que donc je suis,” in *L’animal autobiographique: Autour de Jacques Derrida*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet (Paris: Galilée, 1999), 291-92. Derrida’s title plays on Descartes’s *cogitatum*, but also on the doubled meanings of the conjugated verb “suis,” which can be read as “am” and “follow”: “The animal therefore that I am, that I follow.” The title is itself an *animot*.
6. On the inherent multiplicity of animals, see Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 232-309. “What we are saying is that every animal is fundamentally a band, a pack. That it has pack modes, rather than characteristics” (239).
7. For a sustained discussion of *animetaphorics*, see Akira Mizuta Lippit, *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 162-197. In *Electric Animal*: “Animal and metaphor, a metaphor made flesh, a living metaphor that is by definition not a metaphor, antimetaphor—“animetaphor” (165).
8. Human beings *are* sometimes harmed and even killed during the production of films. Among the notable instances is Brandon Lee’s ill-fated attempt to portray an undead human-animal hybrid in *The Crow* (1994), which was completed and released posthumously. In the film, Lee’s character Eric Draven dies twice. Lee himself was killed when a prop gun misfired during production. Lee’s unfinished scenes were manufactured filmically. “Digital movie magic,” writes Leonard Maltin, “enabled him to appear in the rest of the picture” (*Leonard Maltin’s Movie and Video Guide*, ed. Leonard Maltin, 1998 edition [New York: Signet, 1997], 289). Maltin’s invocation of “movie magic” appears to function here both colloquially and supernaturally. Both diegetically and extradiegetically, Lee survived his own death, proved undead, like an animal.
This statement appears at the end of *The Crow*: “The animals used in this motion picture were in no way mistreated and all scenes in which they appeared were under strict supervision with the utmost concern for their handling.”
9. Violence against human beings and animals blend in the specular idiom of racism, where the distinctions between humanity and animality collapse. The 1991 beating of “black motorist” Rodney King by members of the Los Angeles Police Department, for example, illustrates the moment of convergence between human and animal violence and spectacle. Rodney King—at times a “gorilla,” at others “bear-like,” and as he himself later put it, “like a cow being slaughtered”—was beaten *like an animal*. The force of this episode, however, arose not from the racist violence as such, but from the status of its visibility and apparent invisibility. See in this regard, Akira Mizuta Lippit, “Rodney Kingdom: Mnemotechnics and the Animal World,” in *Women & Performance* 9:2, 18 (1997): 53-80.
Frank Darabont’s *The Green Mile* (1999) illustrates the confusion between race, humanity, and animality. Based on a novel by Stephen King (who also wrote *Pet Sematary*), this film is set almost entirely on death row, named in the

narrative “the green mile.” A kind of interior outdoors, a corridor that leads to an ultimate exteriority. The narrative concerns an African-American “giant,” falsely convicted of raping and then murdering two white girls. The convict, John Coffey (Michael Clarke Duncan) possesses, like Jesus Christ, with whom he shares initials, the power to heal the sick by taking the illness into his own body, “taking it back,” as he calls it. Coffey, described in the film as “a force of nature” and assumed to be “retarded,” possesses only minimal powers of language. In a central sequence prison guards and inmates mourn the death of a small mouse, stomped to death by a sadistic prison guard. Using his gift, Coffey brings the mouse back to life. In *The Green Mile*, the racism of the judicial system and the ritual murder of black men are elided by JC, who elects to heal in sequence, a prison guard, a mouse, and the warden’s wife while the death row inmates are electrocuted one after another. In the midst of the carnage, JC resurrects only the mouse. The affective economy of *The Green Mile* resembles Nazi love, which is capable of deep affection toward animals while perpetrating genocide. The film ends with a disclaimer: “American Humane Association was on set to monitor the animal action. No animal was harmed.”

10. For a sustained discussion of this axiom and the crisis to which it leads, see Lippit, *Electric Animal*, 27-73.
11. Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone, 1991), vols. 2 and 3, 82. Bataille’s own position with regard to this idea is more ambivalent than that of some of his predecessors. For Bataille, the repulsion of death distances human beings from themselves, necessitating eroticism, which returns the self-conscious being to itself. The knowledge of death, which facilitates a knowledge of self, engenders the repulsion of death, and by extension self, which must then be transformed back into a desire for life through eros.
12. Mary Lambert’s *Pet Sematary* (1989) and its sequel, *Pet Sematary II* (1992), actualize the fantasy of animal reanimation by introducing a zombie animal cemetery where dead animals, once buried, return to life. Eventually, deceased human beings are also buried there in an effort to bring them back. One character describes the cemetery, which is designated by a child’s phonetic spelling, “se-matary,” as a “place where the dead speak.” The transition from animal to human reanimation occurs when the protagonist couple’s youngest child is killed in an accident and they bury him in the *sematary* (beyond it actually, in an “Indian” burial ground). Following the return of the pet cat, the young boy, who barely speaks to begin with, signals his altered state with a disembodied voice (produced in an echo chamber) that seems to exist apart from him. This zombie voice consists primarily of laughing sounds and few words. *Pet Sematary* ends with an exaggerated disclaimer; “No animals were harmed in any way during the making of this film” (emphasis added).
13. Jean-Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Norton, 1973), 349.
14. Hervé Aubron, “L’espoir inconnu de l’escargot,” in *Vertigo* 19 (1999): 11. The entire issue is devoted to the subject of animality and film.
15. In *Thinking in Pictures*, Temple Grandin attributes her animality to autism, which, she claims, allows her to see the world like an animal. Grandin links the capacity to see the world as an animal to a form of cinematic or videographic visuality that sees, records, and plays back. “Cattle vision is like having wide-angle camera lenses mounted on the sides of your head” (*Thinking in Pictures: And Other Reports from My Life with Autism* [New York: Vintage, 1995], 145). Grandin’s research has contributed to the more humane treatment of animals in slaughterhouses. She claims that one third of the cattle and hogs are handled in facilities she has designed or helped to design. See in this connection, Errol Morris’s film about Grandin, *Stairway to Heaven* (1998).
16. Matthew Josephson, *Edison: A Biography* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1959), 348.
17. Adorno discusses the economy of a “pathic projection” that makes possible the transition from killing animals to killing human beings in his fragment, “People Are Looking at You” (*Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott [London: Verso, 1974], 105). The phantasmatic leap through the “manic gaze” of the dying animal is made possible by an *animot*, an incantation that is meant to protect the violent perpetrator, “It’s only an animal.” For further discussion of this passage, see Lippit, *Electric Animal*, 167-69.
18. Lisa Cartwright, *Screening the Body: Tracing Medicine’s Visual Culture* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 17.
19. Montaigne believed that elephants practice religion. In “Apology for Raymond Sebond,” Montaigne writes: “We can also say that the elephants have some participation in religion, since after many ablutions and purifications we see them, raising their trunks like arms and keeping their eyes fixed toward the rising sun, stand still a long time in meditation and contemplation at certain hours of the day” (Michel de Montaigne, “Apology for Raymond Sebond,” in *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame [Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1958], 343).
20. Cartwright, *Screening the Body*, 18.
21. Walt Disney’s animated feature film *Bambi* (1942), memorable in part for its disturbing view of animal killing, in particular of Bambi’s mother at the hands of hunters, represents an intersection of fable and form, allegory and animality. (It is worth noting that the traumatic killing of Bambi’s mother takes place off-screen. The camera follows Bambi’s flight, the death of his mother registered by the sound of an off-screen gunshot. Nor are the killers ever seen in the film. The economies of visuality in the animal world are a compelling aspect of Disney’s film.) Besides the allegorical readings the narrative inspires, the animal form itself provided, for Disney and his animators, a set of aesthetic and metamorphic challenges. Matt Cartmill describes Disney’s response to his animators who pleaded for permission to anthropomorphize the animal form, to be allowed to give the animals human features and gestures. “No, answered Disney and the film’s directors; human-looking postures and movements were forbidden. The animators gritted their teeth and began imagining themselves into the bodies of deer, learning to express human feelings with shifts in weight support and gait patterns, with head and neck posture, and the flicks of the ears and tail” (*A View to a Death in the Morning: Hunting and Nature*

- through *History* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993], 169). Cartmill narrates, in a chapter titled “The Bambi Syndrome,” the becoming-animal of *Bambi*, from a misanthropic 1924 novel by Viennese author Siegmund Salzmann (later Felix Salten) to the various versions of the Disney script, which evolved into a virtually languageless film. “The final script contains less than a thousand spoken words, and all the hero’s lines put together account for less than two hundred of them. Almost the only sound effects in *Bambi* are a few gunshots, rabbit thumps, and bird songs. *Bambi* is essentially a silent movie: a wordless, rhythmical ballet performed to an orchestral accompaniment” (174). The gradual disappearance of words in the final version of the film suggests a movement toward the animal and away from the fable.
22. In a telling contrast, Charlie Chaplin, whose enthusiasm for socialism was perhaps more tempered than Eisenstein’s, similarly breaks the diegetic tissue with an animal metaphor in *Modern Times* (1936). The first shot of the film—between the clock face that serves as a background for the opening credits and epigraph and the shot of factory workers exiting the subway on their way to work—consists of a flock of white sheep (one black sheep in the middle, an *a priori* metaphor for Chaplin’s machine-jamming character) moving from the background to foreground in a high-angle shot. What is peculiar about this animal metaphor, perhaps, is the fact that it occurs before the diegesis has been established. It serves as a transitional shot between the credits and diegesis, a parergon that frames several *animots*: “like sheep” and “black sheep,” in particular. For Chaplin, these workers, even when they are not being slaughtered, are like animals. Mechanized labor makes animals of human beings. Chaplin’s metaphor suggests that the workers in Eisenstein’s *Strike* have always been animals waiting for slaughter, their animality inherent in their labor.
 23. Sergei Eisenstein, “The Montage of Film Attractions,” in *S. M. Eisenstein: Selected Works, Volume I, Writings, 1922-34*, ed. and trans. Richard Taylor (London: BFI, 1988), 43.
 24. Vivian Sobchack, “Toward a Phenomenology of Nonfictional Film Experience,” in *Collecting Visible Evidence*, ed. Jane M. Gaines and Michael Renov (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 246.
 25. A virtually identical sequence and structure of killing unfold in Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí’s *L’Age d’or* (1930), which opens with a brief documentary on scorpions. This segment ends with the death of a rat, which has been stung by a scorpion. The documentary mode (voice-over and film texture) situates the scenes to come in a metaphorical framework. One reads the institutions of Western culture in general (nation, government, society, and family) and the Catholic Church in particular as metaphors of scorpions’ poison. The death of the rat is echoed in a later scene when a gamekeeper, in a flash of anger, shoots a boy (described by Linda Williams as his son), once from behind and again, to finish him off, as he lies on the ground wounded. “The gamekeeper grabs his gun and shoots the boy, who falls like a rabbit” (Linda Williams, *Figures of Desire: A Theory and Analysis of Surrealist Film* [Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981], 121).
 26. For a searching analysis of Franju and horror, see Adam Lowenstein, “Films Without a Face: Shock Horror in the Cinema of Georges Franju,” *Cinema Journal* 37.4 (1998): 37-58. Lowenstein calls Franju’s cinema “shock horror”: “the employment of graphic, visceral shock to access the historical substrate of traumatic experience” (37).
 27. The framing and angling of animal scenes in general, deaths in particular warrant a separate study. The uses of long shots and close-ups, high and low angles, and camera movement among other aspects of mise-en-scène, as well as the frequency with which those shots are intercut, establish specific relations between the viewer and the spectacle. A more systematic inquiry into those elements may be revealing.
 28. From “L’Héautontimorouménos”: “Je te frapperai sans colère/Et sans haine, comme un boucher . . .”
 29. Jonas Mekas, “Interview with Peter Kubelka,” in *Film Culture Reader*, ed. P. Adams Sitney (New York: Praeger, 1970), 287-88.
 30. Peter Kubelka, “The Theory of Metrical Film,” in *The Avant-Garde Film: A Reader of Theory and Criticism*, ed. P. Adams Sitney (New York: Anthology Film Archives, 1978), 158.
 31. Kubelka has been steadfast in his theories of the metrical film, metaphor, and graft. See Jean-Claude Lebensztejn’s 1998 interview with Kubelka, “Entretien avec Peter Kubelka,” in *Les Cahiers du Mnam 65* (automne 1998): 95-112. “On prend une chose et on y met une autre puis on recommence et on voit—et ça c’est la métaphore. Je prends le terme métaphore dans un sens très vaste, porter ailleurs, et la synthèse” (97). (“We take something and put it besides something else, repeat and look—that is metaphor. I take the term metaphor in a very vast sense, to transport elsewhere and synthesize.”)
 32. Kubelka, “Metrical Film,” 157.
 33. Mekas, “Peter Kubelka,” 287.
 34. Jacques Derrida, “Living On: Border Lines,” in *Deconstruction and Criticism*, ed. Harold Bloom et al., trans. James Hulbert (New York: Continuum, 1979), 77.
 35. Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone, 1999), 152. Agamben’s readings are from Xavier Bichat, *Recherches physiologiques sur la vie et la mort* (Paris: Flammarion, 1986).
 36. *Ibid.*, 151.
 37. *Ibid.*, 152.
 38. Manuel DeLanda, “Nonorganic Life,” in ed. Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter (New York: Zone, 1992), 129-67. For DeLanda, organic and nonorganic life forms are not necessarily separate systems. Just as organisms occupy larger nonorganic systems—the earth itself, according to DeLanda—nonorganic systems inhabit organisms. “There is a sense, then, in which we are all inhabited by processes of nonorganic life. We carry in our bodies a multiplicity of self-organizing processes of a definite physical and mathematical nature—a set of bifurcations and attractors that could be determined empirically, at least in principle” (153).
 39. Among the various allusions to evolution that Greenaway makes is the use of a blue neon sign that spells ZOO. Sometimes shot from behind, Greenaway rearranges the sign to read OOO, an anagram of zoo that restores all of the animals to a state of decay, but also to primordial ooze.