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"It is a question of words, therefore. For I am not sure that what I am going to set about saying to you amounts to anything more ambitious than an exploration of language in the course of a sort of chimerical experimental exercise, or the testing of a testimony. Just to see."

—Jacques Derrida[1]

I

Let us begin with death. It is difficult to avoid the presence of death, killing, and sacrifice at all levels of inquiry into animal representation. Within this arena of morbidity the animal symbol or image is understood not so much as a sign of absence, or nonpresence, but as a symptom of a deeper and more permanent loss. John Berger has famously exemplified this in his account of the disappearance or radical alienation of animals under capitalism.[2] Furthermore, this is intensified by the idea that the symbolic networks that determine the relative status of living beings find their key dividing lines created and reinforced by the act of sacrifice: killing as the ground of difference.[3] This inextricable linkage of animal symbols and death

1. Jacques Derrida, "The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)," *Critical Inquiry* 28 (2002): 369–418, quote on 401.

2. John Berger, "Why Look at Animals?" in *About Looking* (London: Writers & Readers, 1980), pp. 1–24; on the impact and implications of this essay, see Jonathan Burt, "John Berger's 'Why Look at Animals?': A Close Reading," *Worldviews* 9 (2005): 203–218.

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becomes manifest in a bond between mourning and language that is somehow foundational to our sense of "the animal."[4] In addition, the absence of the possession of "language" by the animal is woven round with complex terminological strands: sacrifice, shame, redemption, and naming; in other words, terms that have their basis in classical and biblical accounts. This suggests, in turn, an anachronism in thinking about animal representation in contemporary history at the very least, if not for an even longer period. Jacques Derrida, in a text I will take as key in exploring many of these ideas, draws a direct line between himself and Adam in one of his late essays on the animal: "I have been wanting to bring myself back to my nudity before the cat, since so long ago, since a previous time, in the Genesis tale, since the time when Adam, alias Ish, called out the animals' names before the fall, still naked but before being ashamed of his nudity."[5]

This anachronism in the contemporary philosophization of the concept "animal" has significant consequences for the gaps it opens up, almost in spite of itself, between metaphysics (theology, ontology) and language on the one hand, and the animal's specific place(s) in the contemporary world on the other. The morbidity of the former runs deep. In response to some of Benjamin's and Heidegger's comments on the muteness of nature, the mute stupefaction of animality, and the melancholic mourning of that silence, Derrida remarks that "every case of naming involves announcing a death to come . . . receiving a name for the first time involves something like the knowledge of being mortal and even feeling that one is dying."[6] The permutations of language and death form, unform, and reform around the figure of the animal like partners in a waltz.

The ease with which such thinking lends itself to a grander metaphysics that seems far removed from the realities of human–animal relations need not, in principle, be objected to. These traditions have long constituted much of our thinking about other beings, worlds, nature, and so on. But this conceptual version of the "animal," with all the connotations of muteness and melancholy that underpin its symbolization, is a consequence of this thinking rather than constitutive of it, despite the claims of the theory that sacrifice is a foun-

3. Cary Wolfe, *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), chap. 3.

4. Akira Lippit, *Electric Animal: Towards a Rhetoric of Wildlife* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

5. Derrida, "The Animal That Therefore I Am" (above, n. 1), p. 390.

6. Ibid., p. 389.

dational act in the cultural categorization of beings. The animal is, in other words, a writing effect that latches onto a more generalized, and inflated, concept of otherness. Note the sequential logic here. The "ahuman" or "divinanimality" is the "quasi-transcendental referent." The not-quite of the prefix "quasi-" already hints at an ambiguous impurity in this notion of transcendence.[7] (A recognition perhaps that the animal is not quite so easily substitutable, that the equations of this particular system may be confronting a more resistant and problematic object than the too-many-names of the Other may be able to inscribe.) The ahuman is the "excluded, foreclosed, disavowed, tamed, and sacrificed foundation of what it founds, namely, the symbolic order, the human order, law and justice." This leads, in turn, to a grandiose conflation:

> [I]t is so difficult to utter a discourse of mastery or of transcendence with regard to the animal and to simultaneously claim to do it in the name of God, in the name of the Father or in the name of the Law. Must one not recognise Father, Law, Animal, and so on, as being, in the final analysis, the same thing—or, rather, indissociable figures of the same Thing? One could conjoin the Mother within that juncture and it would probably not change anything.

The idea of sacrifice is integral to the inflated logic at work here. Understood as essential to the structure of subjectivity, culture, and law, sacrifice is taken as defining the "us" and the "them," it provides the criteria for the "noncriminal putting to death" and the identity of those beings that it is acceptable to subject to total control. Sacrifice is the ground of classification for culture: "we can see how the law of culture arranges its species significations on a kind of grid."[8]

Derrida notes an unprecedented historical transformation that has taken place over the last 200 years, though its novelty is qualified: "This new situation can be determined only on the basis of a *very ancient* one."[9] The central shift, according to Derrida, is the manner in which the increase in forms of scientific knowledge leads to the development of new techniques of intervention and transformation of animals. This adds on to existing practices of things like mass sacrifice, hunting, domestication, and other modes of animal exploitation. In this, of course, Derrida is correct. But, the important thing to stress here is Derrida's insistence, which he repeats numer-

7. Jacques Derrida, "And Say the Animal Responded?" in *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal*, ed. Cary Wolfe (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), pp. 121–145. This and subsequent quotes can all be found on page 134.

8. Wolfe, *Animal Rites* (above, n. 3), pp. 100–101.

9. Derrida, "The Animal That Therefore I Am" (above, n. 1), p. 393 (emphasis added).

ous times within a small number of paragraphs, that all this is so well-known that there is no need to dwell on it. Derrida keeps repeating that we cannot forget, we cannot deny, we cannot "abuse the figure of genocide."

Evidently this is our most certain knowledge and hence somehow beyond question, beyond (or beneath) a speculative metaphysics, and beyond queries of language in a way that all the other issues for Derrida about animals still seem to be—as if we are sliding from a knowledge without question to a knowledge that we have no questions for. Or, to put it another way, a knowledge of the massacre of animals, which has no need of a philosophy. There is a further circularity here. Sacrifice is beyond philosophy, because it is foundational and yet it is also the unaddressed origin that such a philosophy creates—or cannot bring itself to face. Derrida, of all thinkers, should know better. Faced with an image of this scale of horror, he prefers to substitute a word:

> Everybody knows what terrifying and intolerable pictures a realist painting could give to industrial, mechanical, chemical, hormonal and genetic violence to which man has been submitting animal life for the past two centuries. . . . Instead of thrusting these images in your faces or awakening them in your memory, something that would be both too easy and endless, let me simply say a word about this "pathos."[10]

The "war"—Derrida's term—being waged over the animal by the opposing forces of violence and compassion becomes played out, or rather explored through, the face-to-face confrontation of a single human and a single animal, the naked philosopher and his cat.[11] This resonates with some pertinent remarks on war, sacrifice, and the face in his book, *The Gift of Death*. In World War I, the front brought enemies together "as though they were conjoined in the extreme proximity of the face-to-face." The loss and mourning of this "front" after World War II entailed the disappearance of this

10. Ibid., p. 395.

11. Ibid., p. 397. Derrida returns to the notion of the war against animals with a different tone in the second section of this essay, as yet untranslated: "[I] believe that Cartesianism belongs, under this mechanist indifference, to the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition of a war against the animal, of a sacrificial war as old as Genesis. And this war is not a mode of applying technoscience to the animal even when another mode would be possible or foreseeable; no, this violence or this war has been, up to now, constitutive of the project or the very possibility of technoscientific knowledge in the process of humanisation or of the appropriation of human [*homme*] by human, understood here in its most elevated ethical and religious forms"; see Jacques Derrida, *L'animal que Donc Je Suis* (Paris: Galilée, 2006), p. 140.

facing and a concomitant loss of identification of, and with, the enemy. After World War II, "one loses the image or face of the enemy, one loses the war and perhaps, from then on, the very possibility of politics."[12]

Applied to his writing on animals, it seems that Derrida has in mind, perhaps unintentionally, the structure of an earlier war to confront a later one. After all, the trend he identifies of the intensification of intervention in animal life developed hand-in-hand with trends toward the increasing public invisibility of slaughter and scientific interventions, such as vivisection, from the later nineteenth century on. This invisibility was to some extent helped by the very forces of compassion that sought to eradicate cruelty from public life and also, more tellingly, to sanitize the problematic processes of animal science and other uses of animal bodies, without getting rid of these very same processes.[13] To lose face, therefore, is to lose the possibility of identification, and hence identity itself: we cannot fight a war without a "front." But what if one were to stand naked at the sites of these procedures and interventions and face the animal there? Would that be "too easy and endless"?

The philosophical difficulty of sacrifice is thus twofold. To begin with, the formative, ritual, and, above all, visible elements of the act of sacrifice that give rise to the reinforcement of social and cultural identities, as well as linkages of living beings and victims to divinities and mythologies, have no place in the contemporary scenes of killing in science, industry, and agriculture. There are exceptions to this, especially in ritual celebrations such as wedding feasts and religious slaughter carried out during the Muslim festival of Eid ul-Adha, which commemorates the willingness of Ibrahim to sacrifice his son to God and the end of the Hajj. In general, however, the mass industrial scale of interventions in animal life does not feed the renewal and maintenance of cultural boundaries around notions of "culture" and the "law," but applies instead to the maintenance and transformation of bodies. This calls for a very different kind of analysis from one rooted in the reordering of linguistic categories and issues of self-identity (whether of individuals or of humans), and needs rather to account for the ways in which the biosciences fragment, transform, and reorder the identities of all living beings. Second, the anachro-

12. Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 17.

13. See, for instance, Hilda Kean, *Animal Rights: Political and Social Change in Britain since 1800* (London: Reaktion, 1998), chap. 2; Jonathan Burt, "Slaughter in Modernity," in *Killing Animals,* ed. Animal Studies Group (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), pp. 120–144.

nistic connotations of the notion of sacrifice aid the retreat backward into language rather than enabling us to face the very images that Derrida does not see as worthy of philosophical or speculative attention, curiously, because of this indubitable certainty.

By way of a slight digression, it needs to be noted that despite Derrida's failure to speculate *inside* of technology's role in human–animal relations, and despite an archaicizing trend within his analysis of the history of philosophy, his position is richer than my critique might suggest. This needs some acknowledgment. In the second part of his long essay on the animal, titled "L'animal que donc je suis (à suivre): II," he returns to the themes of the first part though in a slightly different register, and is in many ways more severe in his discussion of the domination of animals as expressed, tacitly or otherwise, in the philosophies of Descartes, Kant, Heidegger, and Lévinas. In his condemnation, he follows the spirit of Adorno's critique that the project to master nature is motivated by hatred, and explores Adorno's equation of animals with Jews, which, in turn, implies a short path from transcendental idealism to fascism.[14] This is not a war against animals, but a true holocaust. More importantly, a notion of "life" is addressed by Derrida in this second section when he observes that the "I am" of Descartes or the "*Dasein*" of Heidegger does not take its starting point from life. As he puts it, access to the pure "I am" suspends or detaches all reference to life—and thus the living body, the animal life:

> [T]he certainty of existence, the self-positioning, the self-manifestation of the "I am" does not depend on being-in-life [*l'être-en-vie*], but of thought, of a self-appearance which is not primarily determined as respiration, as breath or life, indeed of a thinking mind which does not appear primarily as life. It is only that which I would wish to retain on the threshold of the journey that awaits us (notably on the path which leads from Descartes to Heidegger and to its neutralisation of life).

However, he does not restore to us a notion of life within the terms of his own philosophy, which still remains ultimately, and yet always inconclusively, within the circularity implicit in tying language to morbidity.

Remaining within the logic of sacrifice can only reinforce the linkage of language to death, rather than ever challenge it. In Derrida's case, he too manifests this circularity in the mirror play of narcissism. The question of "seeing myself naked (that is reflect my image in a mirror) when, concerning me, looking at me, is this living crea-

14. Derrida, *L'animal que Donc Je Suis* (above, n. 11), pp. 140–146.

ture, this cat that can find itself caught in the same mirror? Is there animal narcissism? But cannot this cat be, deep within her eyes, my primary mirror?"[15] This reflects the fact that Derrida's preoccupation with death, which marks so much of his later work, dominates his reflections on animals as well. In 1998, a year after the conference at Cerisy at which he presented his work on animals, he said of Hélène Cixous at the same venue: "I who always feel turned toward death, I am not on her side, while she would like to turn everything and to make it round to the side of life."[16]

Akira Lippit has examined the philosophical consequences of the replacement of an economy of sacrifice by a modernity in which animals are in a perpetual state of vanishing. In a telling example, he describes how Jung uses the word "dehumanized" to describe a world in which, ironically, a connection with animals has been lost.[17] One implication that could be drawn from this terminology of modernity versus sacrifice, though Lippit does not put it in this particular way, is that a return to the notion of sacrifice would re-establish a connection with the animal world and, in turn, reaffirm what it is to be "human" or the boundaries of the human community. Nowadays, in a world where killing animals becomes so much less visible, the defining activities that express human power over other living beings are restructured around largely opaque, multi-layered, bureaucratized organizations (scientific, agricultural, industrial, and so on) comprised of large numbers of people, products, and images, thus making any defining gesture toward the "human" impossible on the basis of the act of killing. Sacrifice has been transformed and deterritorialized. As an aside, one might note that in certain strands of posthumanist writing, which also seeks to redefine the idea of human, the desire for the prosthetic enhancement of humans envisages a reworking of the boundaries between human and machine, rather than human and animal.[18] However, underlying this is the possibility that if the reworking of these boundaries is to be achieved in practice, they will largely be based on a science rooted in animal experimentation.

15. Derrida, "The Animal That Therefore I Am" (above, n. 1), p. 418.

16. Jacques Derrida, *H.C. for Life, That Is to Say* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 36.

17. Lippit, *Electric Animal (above, n. 4),* p. 17.

18. See, for instance, Robert Pepperell, *The Post-Human Condition* (Oxford: Intellect, 1995); Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingston, eds., *Posthuman Bodies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); Mark Poster, "The Information Empire," *Comparative Literature Studies* 41 (2004): 317–334.

The other strand of the equation between language and death is exemplified by those writers who claim that animals are not subject to death because they do not have language: "According to Leibniz, death requires a certain calculation toward finitude, toward 'infallible consequences,' and without such reflective faculties animals remain in the world undying."[19] The expression of such sentiments at the same time as the rise of rudimentary animal-based experimental sciences during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries is no coincidence.[20] There are two registers of death here marked by a very specific terminology. First, "the animal dies at the moment it is thrust into contact with abstraction, with language."[21] For the second, the ending of animal life has nothing to do with "language"; we find other words: vanishing, disappearing, haunting, but not "death."

One cannot but read a disconcerting poetics into the latter terms that prevents one from seeing them simply as a denial or a sanitization. Nor can one avoid the manner in which this terminology is haunted by obscure parallel histories. Derrida's discussion of the animal in the 1929–30 seminar of Heidegger's (translated as *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*) explores the use of *Benommenheit (*the state of being dazed) in relation to how the animal experiences the world as a lack. This coincides historically with debates about the development of electrical stunning prior to slaughter at exactly the same time—a technology in large part pioneered in Germany.[22] There is probably no direct connection between Heidegger's thinking and this debate. But stunning

19. Lippit, *Electric Animal* (above, n. 4), p. 36.

20. Andreas-Holger Maehle, "Literary Responses to Animal Experimentation in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Medical History* 34 (1990): 27–51; Andreas-Holger Moehle and Ulrich Tröhler, "Animal Experimentation from Antiquity to the End of the Eighteenth Century: Attitudes and Arguments," in *Vivisection in Historical Perspective,* ed. Nicolaas Rupke (London: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 14–47.

21. Lippit, Electric Animal (above, n. 4), p. 48.

22. Derrida, L'animal que Donc Je Suis (above, n. 11), p. 213: "And endlessly Heidegger speaks of deliberately contradictory things, to the effect that the animal has a world in the mode of 'not having.' The animal is 'deprived' and this privation implies that it has a sentiment: 'feels itself impoverished,' 'Ar-mut' [German: poverty], is a 'manner of feeling itself to be,' a tonality, a sentiment: the animal experiences the privation of this world. Thus no hierarchy, no teleology, no finalism, nor mechanism, and great tradition of Aristotelian negation, privation. Finally, the animal is described as 'enclosed' in this privation—and Heidegger speaks of an 'encircling,' of an engrossing, of a dazedness (*Benommenheit*), it is enclosed in a dazedness but with the sentiment of privation." On stunning during this period, see Jonathan Burt, "The Illumination of the Animal Kingdom: The Role of Light and Electricity in Animal Representation," *Society and Animals* 9 (2001): 203–228.

also evoked discussion of the nature of animal consciousness and sensation, in an effort to scientifically determine calibrations for their cessation: how to daze an animal as a preparation for death.

If language and death are so interlocked, then how does this tradition confront the imagery of death in other less textual contexts? How might we address the interplay of names, death, and the animal in visual imagery, for instance? Lippit again offers great insight into this when we approach the problem within the framework of morbidity:

> 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.[23]

Up to this point, we can see the power of the thesis. In the filmic image of death, the animal dies beyond the reach of language, so it cannot "die" as such. Indeed, as Lippit suggests, the animal never dies because it is constantly reanimated, repeating "each unique death until its singularity has been erased, its beginning and end fused into a spectral loop."[24] In that manner, cinema keeps the animal "alive"; away from the dialectics of language, it cannot undergo a "proper death." But then it is precisely language that gets the edges of its sleeve caught in that very same spectral loop.

Lippit continues in the same passage:

> [I]n 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.

The animot, incidentally, is a term coined by Derrida to challenge the singularity and homogeneity of the word "animal." As a homonym of "animaux," it plays on the idea of plurality while also suggesting that "animal" is only ever a word, and an inadequate one at that. The use of animot is to awaken us from a linguistic and philosophical complacency. So, what we appear to find at the limit of figuration is the impossible death of the animal, the animal living and dying simultaneously, but what we also find is a mirroring of that

23. Akira Lippit, "The Death of the Animal," *Film Quarterly* 56 (2002): 9–22, quote on 18.

24. Ibid., p. 12.

very movement by language itself. The anti-metaphor that embodies the metaphor (the death embodying the life, or might that be also the other way around?) is only a partial breaking, if even that, of the law of language, because the animot still makes good sense. It is overdetermined by a complex sequence of philosophical ideas and plays on words that sustain it, that make it legible.

The renaming of the animal is intended to do some of the work of a solution, but, of course, it makes little difference if the language around it is not also reformed or radicalized. Besides which, implicit in any renaming, or neologism, is some degree of forgetting—some partial effacement. In some ways, it is a reduction of animal problems to a principle that functions within the *legibility* of the animal: from animal to the *ani*-word. Thus the language of animot turns back on itself also. The loop of the language of morbidity is itself never broken, which explains both why Derrida is caught up in his narcissistic conclusion, as I mentioned above, and why he cannot bring himself to philosophize the absolute facts of animal killing. And the latter needs this, because there is no certainty as to what systems of signification arise from contemporary modes of animal death that might help clarify the relative positions of "human" or "animal." Certainly, it would not be the simplicities and singularities of a logic of sacrifice (the binaries of us and them, human and animal, and so on).

In fairness to Derrida, he is attempting to contest the sovereignty of the idea of the human though he cannot quite bring himself to abandon the question of the shape of the animal concept as something locked into issues of self-identity. In part, this is because he is preoccupied with establishing his credentials as a philosopher of animals, and hence his preoccupation with his personal identity and his private shame. However, as regards a pro-animal outlook, Derrida's sentiments are very much on the side of the angels. As he notes, "it would not be a matter of 'giving speech back' to animals but perhaps of acceding to a thinking, however fabulous and chimerical it might be, that thinks the absence of a name and of the word otherwise, as something other than a privation."[25] However, the fetishization of words (the presences and absences of language) as the pivotal point of analysis retains us within the problematic of terminologies, where all the puzzles are seen as residing, rather than sacrifice, which is taken as somehow being self-evident.

In conclusion, the denial of animal death goes to great lengths to enact this denial, and in that sense, despite its anachronism, follows the modern preference to face away. Lippit is, of course, correct to note that animal death onscreen defies the dialectics of language.

25. Derrida, "The Animal That Therefore I Am" (above, n. 1), p. 416.

However, the loop of birth and death and reanimation is itself a fiction: one never sees the same film twice.

II

> "This is the opposite of a cult of death. Between the two sides of the absolute, between the two deaths—death from the inside or past, death from the outside or future—the internal sheets of memory and the external layers of reality will be mixed up, extended, short-circuited and form a whole moving life, which is at once that of the cosmos and of the brain, which sends out flashes from one pole to the other. Hence zombies sing a song, but it is that of life."
>
> —Gilles Deleuze[26]

Lippit's work straddles a mid-point between the animal of language and the animal of film and indicates a question that is begged by the preoccupations of morbidity: How does the idea of *life* relate to the animal and animal representation? I do not wish to counterpoise too neatly life and death. But notions of livingness that derive especially from vitalism suggest an important series of oppositions between being and becoming, text and image, philosophy and film, and, more crucially, Derrida and Deleuze.[27] Livingness also suggests the possibility, as I shall show, that moving animals and moving images of animals have equal status in the biodynamics of human–animal relations; in other words, the animal image is never external, but is just as structuring and transformative as animals out there in the "world."

Because death is so striking, it is easy to overlook the state of livingness. Edmund Burke, in his essay on the sublime, noted that the performance of our duties depends on life, so we are strongly affected by whatever threatens it with destruction. However, he continues, "but as we were not made to acquiesce in life and health, the simple enjoyment of them is not attended with any real pleasure, lest satisfied with that, we should give ourselves up to indolence and inaction."[28] In other words, the notion of livingness, if I can gloss it thus, implies a state in which things can only ever be taken for granted—a state of neutral inactivity. Livingness is contrasted with the powerful passions, the possibility of sublimity, the grand event: "though they [i.e., life and health] put us in a capacity

26. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), p. 209.

27. On vitalism, see Frederick Burwick and Paul Douglass, *The Crisis in Modernism: Bergson and the Vitalist Controversy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

28. Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (London, 1757), p. 16.

of being affected with pleasure, they make no such impression by the simple enjoyment."[29] In the light of this, we can look for livingness precisely in places where animals are overlooked, in all senses of the word. Furthermore, "attention to life"—to use a phrase of Bergson's—requires more than just a quick glance.

Bergson's dismissive attitude to the cinematograph, particularly in *Creative Evolution*, and yet his central role in Deleuze's film theory has been much commented on.[30] However, what is relevant here is that Bergson and Deleuze conceive of the emergence of life, perception, subjectivity, and the brain within the frame of intervals, passages across a gap. Deviations, holes, cuts, unlinking, within which the positive force of self-differentiation (the "*élan vital*") that actualizes so many things emerges over time. In addition, duration is crucial for attending to life; becoming requires time. Already we can see the extension of an opposition between the morbidity that offers mirror-play, loops, anachronism, denial, predetermined narratives, and the negative, set against the positives of an open-ended becoming (Bergson sees living beings as "centres of indetermination"), newness (Deleuze sees the potential in cinema as "the organ for perfecting the new reality"), and a complex interplay of a mobile multiplicity of images.[31] In cinema, "movement [is] the immediate given of the image. This kind of movement no longer depends on a moving body or an object which realises it, nor on a spirit which reconstitutes it. It is the image which itself moves in itself."[32]

Deleuze's film theory offers an important lesson for the understanding of animal representation and its place within human–animal relations. This, despite the fact that apart from a reference to the donkey in Bresson's *Au hazard Balthazar* and a few scattered remarks about animals, no special attention is given to them in the two books on cinema.[33] The philosophical exploration of "the interval" draws attention to

29. Ibid., p. 13.

30. See, for instance, Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze and Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Gregory Flaxman, ed., *The Brain Is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); D. N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997). On the contrasts in Bergson's notion of perception and photography in *Matter and Memory* and *Creative Evolution*, see, for instance, Flaxman, ed., *The Brain Is the Screen*, pp. 97ff.

31. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 8; Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory* (New York: Zone, 2002), p. 36.

32. Deleuze, *Cinema 2 (above, n. 26),* p. 156.

33. Deleuze likens his cinema project to a exercise in classification akin to natural history; see Gilles Deleuze, "The Brain Is the Screen," in Flaxman, ed., The Brain Is the Screen *(above, n. 30),* pp. 365–373.

an essential image in the articulation of human–animal relations, whether they are both represented onscreen or whether the animal is onscreen and the humans are in the audience (or even perhaps vice versa). This gap—the distance between two beings looking at each other or coexisting within the same sphere of existence, an in-between that has no shape or even interest for Derrida—is given a visible form onscreen that could be described as being itself plastic or having a "tangible" thickness. The gap is just as much an image-object as the image-objects of animal and human.

We can offer two types of bond across the human–animal divide here, both of which are conceived on the basis of particular interruptions or splits. The first is *life*, described at one point by Bergson as the insertion of indetermination into matter, and which binds both human and animal as entities representing moments of the actualization of "élan vital."[34] Furthermore, evolution is not achieved by associations, but by dissociations.[35] The second is the *livingness* of bodies, where I define livingness as the mode of active coexistence whereby an individual's ability to live (or die) depends on the nature of its interaction with others. This coexistence does not require any form of identity between different species as such, but it does require an understanding that organisms in livingness are unavoidably co-constitutive (predator–prey relationships, relations shaped by domestication, parasites and immune systems, and so on). Here, the split is made apparent by the cinema of the in-between:

> It is the method of BETWEEN, "between two images," which does away with all cinema of the One. It is the method of AND, "this and then that." which does away with all the cinema of Being = is. . . . The whole undergoes a mutation, because it has ceased to be the One-Being, in order to become the constitutive "and" of things, the constitutive between-two of images.[36]

This is the anterior ground from which things can be spoken about. In his discussion of cinematic signs, Deleuze parallels Bergson's idea that life in evolution does not operate without directions; it has shape, even though there is no finite end-goal as such.[37] Deleuze writes that "even with its verbal elements, this is neither a language system nor a language. It is a plastic mass, an a-signifying

34. Henry Bergson, *Creative Evolution* (London: Macmillan, 1911), p. 132. On notions of life in Deleuze and Bergson, see Flaxman, ed., *The Brain Is the Screen* (above, n. 30), pp. 16–46.

35. Bergson, *Creative Evolution* (above, n. 34), p. 123.

36. Deleuze, Cinema 2 (above, n. 26), p. 180.

37. For instance, see Bergson, *Creative Evolution* (above, n. 34), pp. 109–110.

and a-syntactic material, a material not formed linguistically even though it is not amorphous and is formed semiotically, aesthetically, pragmatically."[38]

When we come to consider the manner in which living beings pay attention to each other onscreen as part of a mutual interplay of images, it is Bergson's picture in *Matter and Memory* of living images as constantly reflecting, refracting, and projecting light that best explains how we might see the cinematic representation of human–animal relations as a material and integral part of those relations, and not just as a detached image of them. Many authors have commented on the following passages so I shall just run through them briefly.[39] In Bergson's argument, interest or need of the body image governs the selectivity of perceptions, but he conceives this on the model of the reception of light:

> Everything thus happens for us as though we reflected back to surfaces the light which emanates from them, the light which, had it passed on unopposed, would never have been revealed. The images will appear to turn toward our body the side, emphasized by the light upon it, which interests our body.[40]

When objects are interacting, presenting all their sides to each other at once, then there is no conscious perception. Only when a reaction or a need comes into play does perception happen, and thus only certain aspects of an object can ever be perceived. At this point, Bergson equates perception as being like the effect of a mirage. However, the model here is not one where perception functions like photography, taking images from a fixed point. What exists instead is a profusion of photographs circulating in the aggregate of images that is the material universe; images that are themselves defined as "an existence placed half-way between the 'thing' and the 'representation.'"[41] Mirages and screens are thus key components of this visible universe:

> Is it not obvious that the photograph, if photograph there be, is already taken, already developed in the very heart of things and at all points of space? . . . we can regard the action of all matter as passing through it [i.e., the universe] without resistance and without loss, and the photograph of the whole as translucent: here there is wanting behind the plate the black screen on which

38. Deleuze, Cinema 2 (above, n. 26), p. 29.

39. Deleuze comments on this in Cinema 1 (above, n. 31), pp. 60–61. For a comprehensive account of Bergson's theory of the image, see Keith Ansell Pearson, *Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual: Bergson and the Time of Life* (London: Routledge, 2002), chap. 6.

40. Bergson, *Matter and Memory* (above, n. 31), p. 36.

41. Ibid., p. 9.

> the image could be shown. Our "zones of indetermination" play in some sort the part of the screen.[42]

One of the consequences of this is that it brings into play the importance of other eyes, human and nonhuman, because what is at issue here is not just how human–animal relations are articulated onscreen, but how they are composed, reflected in, and even understood by the eye-image itself as point of origin for the attention to life (at least for those species for which vision is wholly or mainly a key sense in interacting with different species).

There are, of course, many different kinds of eye. For instance, as Deleuze notes, Vertov realizes the materialist program of the first chapter of *Matter and Memory*, from which the above discussion of the photograph is taken, by making the cine-eye the eye in matter: "Vertov's nonhuman eye, the cine-eye, is not the eye of a fly or of an eagle, the eye of another animal. Neither is it . . . the eye of the spirit endowed with a temporal perspective, which might apprehend the spiritual whole. On the contrary, it is the eye of matter, the eye in matter."[43] The eye in/of matter is the eye on (as) the screen, which need be neither animal nor human, remaining subject to Bergson's argument concerning photographs at all points in space. These same photographs may be either translucent or find themselves fixed on a screen. However, this eye in/of matter onscreen can still be located within the "zone of indetermination" and thus characterizes livingness, marking a significant interval of interaction, a space between action and reaction. Such an interval is therefore as materially part of and imminent to human–animal relations as those off-screen.

Among the discussions of images and organisms, neither Deleuze nor Bergson has much specifically to say about animals in the context of film. However, there is one revealing passage on animal imagery in Bergson's *Creative Evolution*, which is part of his later attack on the cinematographic as representing a fixing of reality and a denial of becoming. He writes that

> there is the same relation . . . between the noting of phases of movement by the eye and the much more complete recording of these phases by instantaneous photography. It is the same cinematographical mechanism in both cases, but it reaches a precision in the second that it cannot have in the first. Of the gallop of a horse our eye perceives chiefly a characteristic, essential or rather schematic attitude, a form that appears to radiate over a whole period and so fill up the time of gallop. . . . But instantaneous photography isolates

42. Ibid., pp. 38–39.

43. Ibid., p. 81.

> any moment; it puts them all in the same rank, and thus the gallop of a horse spreads out for it into as many successive attitudes as it wishes, instead of massing itself into a single attitude, which is supposed to flash out in a privileged moment and illuminate a whole period."[44]

The reference here to Muybridge's iconic sequential photographs of galloping horses, which breaks movement down to instants so that film is merely a succession of frozen moments, is ironically not the "cinema" of the moving image, because Muybridge used a very different apparatus. Furthermore, as Deleuze emphasizes, Bergson is hooked on what he sees as failings in the apparatus, rather than paying attention to the effects. A galloping horse charging across the screen is clearly both privileged and illuminated, and thus it cannot but be the reproduction that "illusion" corrects to become the movement image.[45]

Of course, Bergson is using this as an example in his critique of the science of measurement that fails to come to grips with the flux of the world and subordinates time to space. And there are other levels to his critique of the cinematograph, such as the possibility that it represents a pre-ordered world rather than indicating an open future[46]—which would be the case, as I said earlier, if one ever saw the same film twice. But he is closer to his earlier world of multiple screens and photographs with the idea that the eye and the camera are only different by degree; the world is indeed full of "eyes in matter." Thus, the figure of the cinematograph and the photograph is a cornerstone of Bergsonian vitalism's articulation of active contact between organisms and some of the forms of that contact. Furthermore, the importance of the gap—the time of the interval between action and reaction in perception—reminds us of the need to take account of relations as unfolding, as signifying constantly changing distributions of responses, powers, and actions across the spaces between human and animal. This temporal emphasis is very different from the static model of the human–animal face-to-face that we considered earlier. Finally, the notion of the cinematograph, whether viewed positively or negatively, reminds us of the moder-

44. Bergson, Creative Evolution (above, n. 34), pp. 350–351. The first cinematic example in Laura Mulvey's *Death 24x a Second* is of the galloping white horse in Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera,* which is suddenly frozen into a still image. This marks, as she puts it, the transition from animate to inanimate, from life to death. Mulvey's thesis is that each still frame is a death; see Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (London: Reaktion, 2006), p. 13.

45. Deleuze, *Cinema 1* (above, n. 31), p. 2.

46. Bergson, *Creative Evolution* (above, n. 34), p. 358.

nity of vitalism. This technological apparatus, which is one of many that becomes integral to reshaping human–animal relations from the late nineteenth century on, represents a radically different shift from what has gone before.

III

"[A] line of sight can just as easily slice through the separation between subject and object as it can define it."

—Bill Viola[47]

The question I now wish to ask is: If we take into account the fluidities, gaps, and notions of becoming that we are inspired by Bergson and Deleuze to pursue (the principles of livingness), what does the visual articulation of human–animal relations look like under the aegis of this paradigm? As we have seen, the visual image conceived photographically is a key component in the way Bergson's vitalist philosophy describes the manner in which organisms attend to, or ignore, one another. While this is an advance on Derrida's more dyadic and static reflections on mutual attention between human and animal, what the attention to livingness needs to take into account are the different distributions of power and needs that actually fix the image, that prevent the light from simply passing through. Certainly, there is a conceptual irreducibility in the idea of the animal that is implied by an asymmetry in the concept "becoming-animal." Deleuze and Guattari write that

> if becoming animal does not consist in playing animal or imitating an animal, it is clear that the human being does not "really" become an animal any more than the animal "really" becomes something else. Becoming produces nothing other than itself. . . . This is the principle according to which there is a reality specific to becoming (the Bergsonian idea of a coexistence of very different "durations," superior or inferior to "ours," all of them in communication).[48]

47. Bill Viola and R. Violette, eds., *Reasons for Knocking at an Empty House: Writings 1973–1994* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1995), p. 143. For an article very pertinent to Bill Viola and the themes of this essay, see Mark Hansen, "The Time of Affect, or Bearing Witness to Life," *Critical Inquiry* 30 (2004): 584–626. Note his point that "technical expansion of self-affection allows for a fuller and more intense experience of subjectivity, that, in short, technology allows for a closer relationship to ourselves, *for a more intimate experience of the very vitality that forms the core of our being*, our constitutive incompleteness, our mortal finitude" (p. 589 [emphasis added]); see also his remarks on the interstice and time (pp. 590–591).

48. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Athlone, 1988), p. 238. For another version of humans as being almost like

In terms of becoming, the human is conceptually linked to the animal, even if impossibly so, but it does not work the other way: the animal is not linked to the human, but is directed toward a "something else."[49] Such an irreducibility and asymmetry seem crucial within the terms of this vitalist thinking; in other words, to conceive human–animal relations under the rubric "attention to life" would require that this asymmetry be taken into account not as an obstacle, but as the very condition of its representation. The sense of livingness requires the asymmetries of species difference, as it is the obstacles and resistances of this difference that give the necessary "intervals," the signs of life, their shape. Ethical difficulties that might arise from this are not due to species differences per se, but are due to the disempowerment of animals—something, to be fair, Derrida is better equipped to address than Deleuze. We can see how these various themes, especially those that concern the intermingling of need, life, and mutual attention, are articulated in film.

The alignment of the animal eye with the camera in Julio Medem's *Vacas* (1992) is part of a whole series of incomplete, partial parallels, or mirrorings, that run throughout the film.[50] For example, there are two feuding families that live above and below each other on the side of a valley, separated by a wood; two robot-like mannequins built of twigs and twine, one that turns with a scythe and one that falls with an axe, a trap for boars; and many further examples. The grandfather, Manuel Irigibel, whose leg is irreparably damaged by the wheel of a cart, will eventually hack off the legs of his old cow, Pupille (one scarcely needs to note the implication of the name in English), and place them under the revolving scything figure—a sculptural installation that would not be out of place among the images of Steve Baker's *The Postmodern Animal*.[51]

animals but not, see Deleuze, *Cinema 1* (above, n. 31), pp. 123–124: "Here the characters are like animals: the fashionable gentleman a bird of prey, the lover a goat, the poor man a hyena. This is not because they have their form or behaviour, but because their acts are prior to all differentiation between the human and the animal. These are human animals."

49. See Pearson's critique of becoming animal as an example of human narcissism and solipsism and his suggestion for the need for an "animal becoming"; Keith Ansell Pearson, *Germinal Life: The Difference and Repetition of Deleuze* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 186–189.

50. For a background account of this film, see Nathan Richardson, "Animals, Machines and Postnational Identity in Julio Medem's *Vacas*," *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 10 (2004): 191–204.

51. Steve Baker, *The Postmodern Animal* (London: Reaktion, 2000).

Manuel paints cows obsessively, multiplying the different forms of cow imagery within the film, alongside other, more obvious metaphorical parallels that arise between human and cow, such as those concerning issues of birth, pedigree, and bastardy. These ways of seeing multiply during the historical period of the film, which runs from the Carlist War of 1875 to the Spanish Civil War of 1936, a period that, among other things, is significantly transformed in its second half by car and camera. This multiplication of images goes hand-in-hand with a multiplication of eyes, best summarized by a scene in which humans, cow, and camera are all looking at the woodland floor, cutting to shots of insects as if seen through the narrow aperture of a microscopic lens—which is, incidentally, another eye entirely. Later, a couple will make love under both the eye of a cow and a portrait of a cow.

The animal eye–camera eye–human eye parallel is not a complete mapping, even despite the temptation to amalgamate the former two under the heading "inhuman." The gaps or intervals that constitute the differences among these eyes reflect differences of need, though within the restrictions of the same visual space of the local environment that the living beings are tied to. At one point, the grandfather in *Vacas* looks into the eye of a newly arrived pedigree cow with the remark, "You look pregnant, let's see what's in here." And sure enough, we disappear down a hole into a totally black screen—an echo of Bergson's remarks about the black screen and the mirage quoted above. The black screen behind the animal eye is such, because the perceiving image is not fixing the perceived images—it has no *need* to do so. The images pass through without hindrance. Furthermore, it could be said that what we see when we re-emerge through a widening aperture is a mirage: a beautiful, high mountain view across mists and peaks; an image that is, in terms of all the tight interlacings and entanglements of the film, apparently totally irrelevant. The passage through the cow's eye does not lead us back to ourselves, but always to a "something else." The passage is transformative, but transformative under what terms?

There is an unresolved ambiguity in this general picture of the coexistence of irreducibly different beings bound by sight amid interacting images, or the "different 'durations,'" all of whom are in communication—the structure of mutual attention. This refers back to the asymmetry in becoming-animal and the idea that one could not become "an animal" as such, a logical consequence of valorizing becoming over all else; in other words, where becoming-animal is only ever virtual and never actual, animal becoming is of a totally different order. The asymmetry can cut both ways: on the one

hand, it may indicate a more utopian situation of the coexistence of ever emerging difference; or on the other, it may highlight a more problematic inequality in becoming. Animal seeing in these films as a form of mute witness cannot be detached from the more general complex of being dominated. The passivity in the depiction of animal seeing is thus different from the passivity of human seeing. Does this imply different sorts of attention?

A semantic difference between "attention" and "interest" is important here. After all, in *Vacas*, a large camera on a tripod makes its appearance to record the growing material success of the Irigibels, an inflation of interest in both material and perceptual terms for the humans (from cows, to cows and paintings, to cows, paintings, and cameras, and so on). This complex linkage of eyes to economic, kinship, and perceptual relations can be found in a related example in Robert Bresson's *Au hazard Balthazar*. The donkey, Balthazar, is unresponsive and largely mute to a variety of abuses, beatings, and labors that he undergoes while all the time bearing witness; the eyes of Balthazar are a key figure throughout the film. Furthermore, the different episodes of his fate are intertwined with various local economies and vested interests: the indebted tenant farmer engaged in his legal battle, the miser, the drunkard who inherits, the smugglers. As for other forms of human–animal contact, the closest symbolic parallel in the film is also the closest emotional contact. However, the girl Marie's similarly unhappy situation to Balthazar's does not in any way narrow the unbridgeable gap between her and the impenetrable animal. Ultimately she will escape her environment, whereas he will die slowly from a bullet wound and perhaps exhaustion. The one significant time when Balthazar shares gazes with nonhumans is during a brief working stint in a circus, where the creatures are also in slavery: the monkey, the tiger, the elephant.

In both these films, the intervals or gaps between different types of living beings—the obstacles of irreducible difference—unfold in different ways. *Vacas* is a film of change, whereas *Balthazar* is more circular. The religious symbolism that underpins Balthazar's narrative reinforces this difference, in that his suffering sets him apart. He is baptized by children when first acquired, likened to a saint, and finally dies surrounded by a flock of sheep, carrying the same load as his biblical namesake, gold and perfume. He is seen by Marie's father, the modernizing tenant farmer, as an anachronism, whereas the cows in *Vacas* are more integral to the modernizing multiplication of image-objects. However, as the importance of the various themes of economy, lenses, social relations, and so on indicate, we cannot extract and fetishize the gap—Deleuze's gap interval be-

tween the two deaths—as an unbreachable or empty physical space between species traversed by the look, no matter how much texture it is given by cinema. In other words, to understand the interval in which we might locate the ground of livingness, it cannot be disentangled from the things that condition it. Livingness is not an essence one can separate out or outline as a pure state. Certainly, the gaps across which looks travel—especially in scenes such as when the cow looks down on the naked, bloodied form of Manuel at the beginning of *Vacas*, or Balthazar's shared look with the tiger—can be felt as something like a physical presence in their tension, or as image-objects in their own right. However, in the interval in which livingness is registered and is thus made actual is the time rather than the space of mutual attention. We are following Bergson here when we say that livingness does have a space though it is subordinate to time, and it is the length of time that so often gives looks their power.

Bill Viola's *I do not know what it is I am like* (1986) is one of the few films to explore the time of the animal's look, which he intensifies by utilizing various camera modes of speeding up and slowing down the image. For instance, there are the long meditative takes of birds in "The language of birds," the rapid staccato images of "Stunned by the drum," and the time-lapse photography of the decaying fish that closes the film. Among other things, the film depicts different living creatures actively attending to and watching a world that is, in effect, shared, and thus has to be somehow negotiated by mutually alienated beings. Humans, depicted in states of religious trance or in meditative silence in the dead of night, are equally opaque. One of the questions I take the film to be posing is how might we visualize a world shared, and how should we appreciate this world shared, with extremely limited possibilities of communication across species or mutual understanding. There is, however, no sentimentality in this vision of Viola's and no recourse to language, neither are there any traces of the framing narrative structures of natural-history films. The film makes visible forms of contact without contact, and suggests some thoughts about distancing in human–animal relations that are at present bedevilled by either too much proximity (exploitation) or too much distance (carelessness toward beings remote from our concerns). The implication is that some forms of distance need to be kept in place, that species differences need to be respected rather than have their boundaries blurred.

Viola's focus on animal eyes takes many forms: the split horizon in the eye of the buffalo; the strangeness of the eyes of birds; and the long, slow zoom onto the eye of the owl that finally frames the

reflection of the camera on the tripod on the owl's pupil. Viola's film has a thick, painterly texture that makes all the eyes stand out as particularly iridescent, especially in the wet purple blackness of their pupils. For Viola, we confront the gaze of the animal in the black of its eye "with fear, with curiosity, with familiarity, with mystery. We see ourselves in its eyes while sensing the irreconcilable otherness of an intelligence ordered round a world we can share in body but not in mind."[52]

This means also that the time of the look allows relations to form on the basis of an acknowledgment of the movement of surfaces: at the very least, decisions can be made whether to engage or disengage. It is a minimal knowledge that those coexisting species who rely on vision for their contact, to a greater or lesser extent, can have: some sense of the interaction of surfaces. And if we understand the gap that allows for the experience of an attention to livingness to be fundamentally temporal, then we can get a better sense of human–animal relations as an ongoing emergence rather than a mirroring.

There is a difficulty, however, as indicated in the quote at the beginning of this section: the cut that might either cut the separation or define it. There are no guarantees as to the effects of the interactions of lines of sight. The cut is, of course, a particular type of interval with strong bodily and filmic connotations. But Viola's remark could be understood to open up a paradox, which is that any new line of sight can integrate as it separates. It can multiply the lines of separation just as it shapes what it sees, effectively transforming separation into becoming. This fits in some ways both with Bergson's idea of evolution via dissociation and his universe of images, where the multiplicity of lines of sight—all the eyes in matter—keep permanently open the idea of a nonfinal cut.

Chris Marker's film *Sans soleil* (1982), which among other things has much to say about animals and the culture of death in Japan, notes that the great question of the twentieth century concerns the coexistence of different concepts of time. At one point, there is a sequence of stuffed animals in different sexual positions filmed in a museum of sex in Japan; some of the females have their sexual parts displayed as gaping red holes. The narrator discusses the challenge of the "beast" to the idea of the poignancy of things, and that time heals everything except wounds. Over the photographs of these animals it is narrated that with time, the hurt of separation loses its real limits; that with time, the desired body will disappear. What re-

52. Viola and Violette, eds., *Reasons for Knocking at an Empty House* (above, n. 47), p. 143.

mains, however, is the wound, disembodied. In states of livingness, though, including film, disembodiment is only possible as a mode of language, while the wound (the hole, the cut) itself clearly does not disappear or ever lack a body. The visual image of the sexualized, taxidermied animal reminds us that the livingness of image-objects in the world is always under threat and does not comprise relations that are necessarily easy, peaceful, or without risk. Film makes livingness apparent to us in some of its most important forms as a temporal, material state that is felt or perceived by the intervals among beings. Indeed, it is a form of livingness in its own right. To recognize this is a starting point for reconceiving and acting upon the implications of conceiving human–animal relations as structured in terms of life rather than death. Now, the importance of this is, as Derrida indicates in spite of himself, beyond question.

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