

Introduction

Animating Animacy

Recently, after reaching a threshold of “recovery” from a chronic illness—an illness that has affected me not only physically, but spatially, familiarly, economically, and socially, and set me on a long road of thinking about the marriage of bodies and chemicals—I found myself deeply suspicious of my own reassuring statements to my anxious friends that I was feeling more alive again. Surely I had been no *less* alive when I was *more* sick, except under the accountings of an intuitive and immediately problematic notion of “liveliness” and other kinds of “freedom” and “agency.” I felt unsettled not only for reasons of disability politics—for “lively wellness” colludes with a logic that troublingly naturalizes illness’s morbidity—but also because I realized that in the most containing and altered moments of illness, as often occurs with those who are severely ill, I came to know an incredible wakefulness, one that I was now paradoxically losing and could only try to commit to memory.¹

In light of this observation, I began to reconsider the precise conditions of the application of “life” and “death,” the working ontologies and hierarchicalized bodies of interest. If the continued rethinking of life and death’s proper boundaries yields surprising redefinitions, then there are consequences for the “stuff,” the “matter,” of contemporary biopolitics—including important and influential concepts such as Achille Mbembe’s necropolitics, the “living dead,” and Giorgio Agamben’s “bare life.”² This book puts pressure on such biopolitical factors,

organized around a multipoint engagement with a concept called *animacy*.

Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect draws upon recent debates about sexuality, race, environment, and affect to consider how matter that is considered insensate, immobile, deathly, or otherwise “wrong” animates cultural life in important ways. *Animacies* interrogates how the fragile division between animate and inanimate—that is, beyond human and animal—is relentlessly produced and policed and maps important political consequences of that distinction. The concept of animacy undergirds much that is pressing and indeed volatile in contemporary culture, from animal rights debates to biosecurity concerns, yet it has gone undertheorized. This book is the first to bring the concept of animacy together with queer of color scholarship, critical animal studies, and disability theory.

It is a generative asset that the word *animacy*, much like other critical terms, bears no single standard definition. Animacy—or we might rather say, the set of notions characterized by family resemblances—has been described variously as a quality of agency, awareness, mobility, and liveness.³ In the last few decades, *animacy* has become a widely debated term within linguistics, and it is in fact within linguistics that animacy has been most extensively developed and applied. A pathbreaking work written in 1976 by the linguistic anthropologist Michael Silverstein suggested that “animacy hierarchies” were an important area of intersection between meaning and grammar, on the basis of evidence that spanned many languages.⁴ Within linguistics today, animacy most generally refers to the grammatical effects of the sentience or liveness of nouns, but this ostensibly simple meaning opens into much wider conversations.

How does animacy work linguistically? To take one popular example involving relative clauses, consider the phrase “the hikers that rocks crush”: what does this mean?⁵ The difficulty frequently experienced by English speakers in processing this phrase has much to do with the inanimacy of the rock (which plays an agent role in relation to the verb *crush*) as compared to the animacy of the hikers, who in this scenario play an object role. “The hikers that rocks crush” thus violates a cross-linguistic preference among speakers. They tend to prefer animate head nouns to go with subject-extracted relative clauses (the hikers *who* __ crushed the rock), or inanimate head nouns to go with object-extracted relative clauses (the rock *that the hiker crushed* __). Add

to this that there is a smaller plausibility that rocks will agentively crush hikers than that hikers will agentively crush rocks: a conceptual order of things, an animate hierarchy of possible acts, begins to take shape. Yet more contentious examples belie the apparent obviousness of this hierarchy, and even in this case, it is within a specific cosmology that stones so obviously lack agency or could be the source of causality. What if nonhuman animals, or humans stereotyped as passive, such as people with cognitive or physical disabilities, enter the calculus of animacy: what happens then?

Using animacy as a central construct, rather than, say, “life” or “liveliness”—though these remain a critical part of the conversation in this book—helps us theorize current anxieties around the production of humanness in contemporary times, particularly with regard to humanity’s partners in definitional crime: animality (as its analogue or limit), nationality, race, security, environment, and sexuality. Animacy activates new theoretical formations that trouble and undo stubborn binary systems of difference, including dynamism/stasis, life/death, subject/object, speech/nonspeech, human/animal, natural body/cyborg. In its more sensitive figurations, animacy has the capacity to rewrite conditions of intimacy, engendering different communalisms and revising biopolitical spheres, or, at least, how we might theorize them.

Interestingly, in most English language dictionaries, including *Merriam-Webster’s* and the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, the word *animacy* does not appear, though the related adjective *animate* does. The related senses of *animate* (ppl., adj., n.) found in the *OED*—of which only the adjective remains contemporary—are denoted as having the following Latin etymology: “ad. L. *animātus* filled with life, also, disposed, inclined, f. *animāre* to breathe, to quicken; f. *anima* air, breath, life, soul, mind.” As an adjective, *animate* means “endowed with life, living, alive”; “lively, having the full activity of life”; “pertaining to what is endowed with life; connected to animals”; and “denoting living beings.” *Animus*, on the other hand, derives from the Latin, meaning “(1) soul, (2) mind, (3) mental impulse, disposition, passion,” and is defined as “actuating feeling, disposition in a particular direction, animating spirit or temper, usually of a hostile character; hence, animosity.” We might find in this lexical soup some tentative significations pertaining to materialization, negativity, passion, liveness, and a possible trace of quickened breath. Between these two, ani-

mate and *animus*, is a richly affective territory of mediation between life and death, positivity and negativity, impulse and substance; it might be where we could imagine the territory of animacy to reside. As I argue, animacy is much more than the state of being animate, and it is precisely the absence of a consensus around its meaning that leaves it open to both inquiry and resignification.

Construals of Life and Death

Concepts related to animacy have long shadowed Western philosophical discussions: Aristotle's *De Anima*, subtly presaging the present-day debates about the precise status of animals and things, proposed that "soul" could be an animating principle for humans, animals, and vegetables, but not "dead" matter such as stones (or hypothetical rocks that crush hikers).⁶ There are many implications in this work; not only did Aristotle provocatively include "animal" as a possessor of soul, he proposed the blending of two disciplines of thought, psychology and biology (to the extent they were then segregated). Though it is beyond the intent of this book to wholly revive Aristotle, it is compelling nonetheless to recall the outlines of his image of the "soul" as a suggestive invitation to think contemporarily of "soul" as an "animating principle" rather than the proverbial "spark of life" ignited by a set of strictly biological processes, such as DNA.

It is further compelling to understand that such an animating principle avowedly refused a priori divisions between mind and body, the philosophical legacy of Descartes which today remains cumbersome to scholars of material agency. Michael Frede has explained that "the notion of the soul attacked by Aristotle is the historical ancestor of Descartes's notion of the mind: a Platonist notion of the soul freed of the role to have to animate a body."⁷ We might therefore say, if we took Aristotle to one end point, that it is possible to conceive of something like the "affect" of a vegetable, wherein both the vegetable's receptivity to other affects and its ability to affect outside of itself, as well as its own animating principle, its capacity to animate itself, become viable considerations.

I note, too, that Aristotle's exclusion of stones itself rubs up against other long-standing beliefs according to which stones are animate or potentially animate; his ontological dismissal anticipates the affective economies of current Western ontologies that are dominant, in which

stones might as well be nothing. Carolyn Dean usefully observes that "Western tradition does not generally recognize a 'continuum of animacy.' . . . Denying the constant (though imperceptible) changeability of rocks, Western thought has most often identified stone as the binary opposite of, rather than a complement to, things recognized as animate."⁸ While in my own perusing of linguistic theory and philosophy of language I have certainly seen prolific examples of stones as "bad" verbal subjects, I will insist in this book that stones and other inanimates definitively occupy a *scalar* position (near zero) on the animacy hierarchy and that they are not excluded from it altogether and are not only treated as animacy's binary opposite.

New materialisms are bringing back the inanimate into the fold of Aristotle's animating principle, insisting that things generate multiplicities of meanings while they retain their "gritty materiality," to use Lorraine Daston's phrase.⁹ The history of objects is a combination of intuitive phenomenologically acquired abstractions and socially acquired histories of knowledge about what constitutes proper "thingness."¹⁰ Throughout the humanities and social sciences, scholars are working through posthumanist understandings of the significance of stuff, objects, commodities, and things, creating a fertile terrain of thought about object life; this work asserts that "foregrounding material factors and reconfiguring our very understanding of matter are prerequisites for any plausible account of coexistence and its conditions in the twenty-first century."¹¹ At the forefront of this field, Jane Bennett, in her book *Vibrant Matter*, extends affect to nonhuman bodies, organic or inorganic, averring that affect is part and parcel, not an additive component, of bodies' materiality.¹² This book builds on these insights by digging into animacy as a specific kind of affective and material construct that is not only nonneutral in relation to animals, humans, and living and dead things, but is shaped by race and sexuality, mapping various biopolitical realizations of animacy in the contemporary culture of the United States.

Recent critical theory has considered the believed-to-be-given material world as more than provisionally constituted, illusorily bounded, and falsely segregated to the realm of the subjective. Such work includes, for instance, Donna Haraway's feminist dismantling of the binary of nature and culture in terms of "naturecultures," Bruno Latour's "hybrids," Karen Barad's agential realism, and Deleuze and Guattari's "assemblages" of objects and affects.¹³ Thinking twice about

such givens means that we might further reconceive how matter might contribute to the ongoing discussions about the conceptual, cultural, and political economies of life and death. That is, what are the creditable bodies of import, those bodies whose lives or deaths are even in the field of discussion? If we should rethink such bodies—and I argue that we should—then how might we think differently if nonhuman animals (whom both Haraway and Latour point out have been ostensibly, but in fact not neatly, bracketed into “nature,” despite already being hybrids) and even inanimate objects were to inch into the biopolitical fold? Nicole Shukin’s *Animal Capital*, for instance, reads biopolitics as having been theorized only in relation to *human* life, arguing that, in fact, “discourses and technologies of biopower hinge on the species divide.”¹⁴

If contemporary biopolitics is already troubling the living with the dead, this book, in a way, continues to crash the party with protagonists which hail from animal studies (monkeys) and science studies (pollutant molecules), bringing humanism’s dirt back into today’s already messy biopolitical imbroglio. Nevertheless, there are important consequences within concepts of life and death for race and sexuality politics. Recently, Jasbir Puar has revisited questions of life and death while working along the lines of what she calls a “bio-necro” political analysis which “conceptually acknowledges [Foucauldian] biopower’s direct activity in death, while remaining bound to the optimization of life, and [Mbembe’s] necropolitics’ nonchalance toward death even as it seeks out killing as a primary aim.”¹⁵ In this, she provides potent revising of the place of new homonormativities in geopolitical negotiations of biopolitics. Indeed, the givens of death are already racialized, sexualized, and, as I will argue, animated in specific biopolitical formations.

Since biopower as described by Michel Foucault is thought in two ways—at the level of government, and at the level of individual (human) subjects—how inanimate objects and nonhuman animals participate in the regimes of life (making live) and coerced death (killing) are integral to the effort to understand how biopower works and what its materials are.¹⁶ I am drawn to the potent claims and articulations of biopolitics, given their extraordinary relevance to concerns with sexuality, illness, and racial “matters.” Because of a lingering Eurocentrism within what is thought of as biopolitics—its implicit restriction to national bodies, for instance, as well as its species-

centric bias that privileges discussions about human citizens—there are productive openings for transnational race, animal, and sexuality scholarship. This contested terrain also opens up new ways of thinking racially and sexually about biopolitics, particularly around governmentality, definitions of population, health regimes, and deathly life. What biopolitical story, for instance, could a discussion of enlivened toxins like transnational lead, their effectivity and affectivity in young white bodies, and their displacement of deathly black and contagious Asian bodies tell? At the least, a consideration of the animation of otherwise “dead” lead and its downstream effects and affects challenges and extends given notions of governmentality, health, and race beyond a national framework.

The anima, animus, animal, and animate are, I argue, not vagaries or templatic zones of undifferentiated matter, but in fact work as complexly racialized and indeed humanized notions. I also highlight what linguistic semantics has done with this concept and bring some of its productive peculiarities (such as the seemingly circular relation between life and death) into conversation with animacy’s contemporary theoretical questions. If language normally and habitually distinguishes human and inhuman, live and dead, but then in certain circumstances wholly fails to do so, what might this tell us about the porosity of biopolitical logics themselves?

Animate Currents

The stakes of revisiting animacy are real and immediate, particularly as the coherence of “the body” is continually contested. What, for instance, is the line between the fetus (often categorized as “not yet living”) and a rights-bearing infant-subject? How are those in persistent vegetative states deemed to be at, near, or beyond the threshold of death? Environmental toxicity and environmental degradation are figured as slow and dreadful threats to flesh, mind, home, and state. Myths of immunity are challenged, and sometimes dismantled, by transnationally figured communicable diseases, some of them apparently borne by nonhuman animals. Healthful or bodily recuperation looks to sophisticated prosthetic instruments, synthetic drugs, and nanotechnologies, yet such potent modifications potentially come with a mourning of the loss of purity and a concomitant expulsion of bodies marked as unworthy of such “repair.”

Theoretically, too, the body's former fictions of integrity, autonomy, heterosexual alignment and containment, and wellness give way to critiques from discourse studies, performance studies, affect theory, medical anthropology, and disability theory. In view of such relevant breadth of disciplinary engagement, this book is indebted to, and thinks variously in terms of, philosophical considerations of life, care, and molecularity; linguistics considerations of the sociocritical pulses that radiate out from specific kinds of speech; security studies questions about how threats are articulated and ontologized; and animal studies questions about the links between animals or animalized humans and the human questions they are summoned to figuratively answer.

Among linguists, animacy's definition is unfixed (and, in standard dictionaries, absent). The cognitive linguist Mutsumi Yamamoto describes it as follows:

The concept of "animacy" can be regarded as some kind of assumed cognitive scale extending from human through animal to inanimate. In addition to the life concept itself, concepts related to the life concept—such as locomotion, sentiency, etc.—can also be incorporated into the cognitive domain of "animacy." . . . A common reflection of "animacy" in a language is a distinction between animate and inanimate, and analogically between human and non-human in some measure. However, animacy is not simply a matter of the semantic feature [+alive], and its linguistic manifestation is somewhat complicated. Our cognition of animacy and the extent to which we invest a certain body (or body of entities) with humanness or animateness influence various levels of human language a great deal.¹⁷

By writing that animacy "invest[s] a certain body . . . with humanness or animateness," she implicitly rejects the idea that there is a fixed assignment of animate values to things-in-the-world that is consistently reflected in our language, taking instead the cognitivist approach that the world around us animates according to what we humans make of it.

But Yamamoto also remarks on the complicity of some linguists with the apparent anthropocentricity of a hierarchical ordering of types of entities that positions humans at the top. She makes an observation regarding John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, written in 1694: "Locke argued that the identity of one animal or plant

('vegetable' in his word) lies in maintaining one and the same life, whilst the identity of one person is maintained through one and the same (continuous) consciousness. . . . [H]owever, how can it be proved that [one animal or plant] does not possess one continuous consciousness throughout its life, as a human being does?"¹⁸ Here, Yamamoto clearly supports a broad definition of consciousness that seems quite in keeping with Aristotle's notion of animating principle, or "soul." In this book, I further the productive skepticism inherent in Yamamoto's more radical take on animacy, and move beyond the realm of linguistics to consider how animacy is implicated in political questions of power and the recognition of different subjects, as well as ostensible objects.

Animacy is conceptually slippery, even to its experts. In 2005, Radboud University in the Netherlands held an international linguistics workshop on animacy, noting that it both "surfaces in the grammar" and "plays a role in the background" and proposing that participants finally "pin down the importance of animacy in languages and grammar."¹⁹ In the concluding words to her book, Yamamoto shifts away from analyzing data to appeal to the language of mysticism: "it is of significant interest to linguists to capture the extra-linguistic framework of the animacy concept, because, as it were, this concept is a *spell which strongly influences our mind* in the process of language use and a keystone which draws together miscellaneous structural and pragmatic factors across a wide range of languages in the world."²⁰ Animacy seems almost to flutter away from the proper grasp of linguistics, refusing to be "pinned down."

Thus, the very animate quality of the term itself is useful, not least because it has the potential to move among disciplines. Taking the flux of these animacies into account as I theorize various connectivities (for instance, subjects and their environments, queers and their kin, couches and their occupants, lives and their biopolitical formations), *Animacies* uncovers implicit mediations of human and inhuman in the transnationally conceived United States, not least through cultural, environmental, and political exchanges within and between the United States and Asia. I pace animacy through several different domains, including language and subjectivity; selected twentieth- and twenty-first-century film, popular culture, and visual media regarding racialized and queer animality; and contemporary environmental illness. Through these case studies, the book develops the idea of ani-

macy as an often racialized and sexualized means of conceptual and affective mediation between human and inhuman, animate and inanimate, whether in language, rhetoric, or imagery.

I argue that animacy is especially current—and carries with it a kind of charge—given that environmental threats (even those that are apparently invisible) such as polluted air, poisoned food, and harmful materials are constantly being figured within contemporary culture in the United States. These purportedly unseen threats demand such figuration, yet also escape direct depiction and are usually represented associatively, in terms of animation, personification, nationalization, integrity, and immunity, as well as in relation to other threats. *Animacies* makes critical links between popular knowledges of environmental entities (which often gather around a few select objects of heightened concern) and the larger sociopolitical environments in which they are seated. This book builds on environmental justice work that tracks the subjects and objects of industrial capital and environmentalist movements that examine the implicit or explicit raced and classed components of toxic threats.²¹ Yet I also inquire into the imputations of toxicity as an animated, active, and peculiarly queer agent.

Furthermore, political interest stokes public alarm toward “toxins.” We must therefore understand the ways in which toxicity has been so enthusiastically taken up during times of economic instability and panic about transnational flow. *Animacies* demonstrates that interests in toxicity are particularly (if sometimes stealthily) raced and queered. Indeed, toxins participate vividly in the racial mattering of locations, human and nonhuman bodies, living and inert entities, and events such as disease threats. This book aims to offer ways of mapping and diagnosing the mutual imbrications of race, sexuality, ability, environment, and sovereign concern.

In addition, animal and science studies have offered tools through which we can rethink the significance of molecular, cellular, animal, vegetable, or nonhuman life.²² *Animacies* not only takes into account the broadening field of nonhuman life as a proper object, but even more sensitively, the animateness or inanimateness of entities that are considered either “live” or “dead.” Considering differential animacies becomes a particularly critical matter when “life” versus “death” binary oppositions fail to capture the affectively embodied ways that racializations of specific groups are differentially rendered. Sianne Ngai explores the affective meanings of the term *animatedness*, focus-

ing on its manifestation as a property of Asianness and of blackness: “the affective state of being ‘animated’ seems to imply the most basic or minimal of all affective conditions: that of being, in one way or another, ‘moved.’ But, as we press harder on the affective meanings of animatedness, we shall see how the seemingly neutral state of ‘being moved’ becomes twisted into the image of the overemotional racialized subject.”²³ Animacy has consequences for both able-bodiedness and ability, especially since a consideration of “inanimate life” imbues the discourses around environmental illness and toxicity. For instance, the constant interabsorption of animate and inanimate bodies in the case of airborne pollution must account for the physical nonintegrity of individual bodies and the merging of forms of “life” and “nonlife.” This book seeks to trouble this binary of life and nonlife as it offers a different way to conceive of relationality and intersubjective exchange.

I detail an animacy that is in indirect conversation with historical vitalisms as well as Bennett’s “vital materiality.”²⁴ Yet this book focuses critically on an interest in the animal that hides in animacy, particularly in the interest of its attachment to things like sex, race, class, and dirt. That is, my purpose is not to reinvest certain materialities with life, but to remap live and dead zones away from those very terms, leveraging animacy toward a consideration of affect in its queered and raced formations. Throughout the book, my core sense of “queer” refers, as might be expected, to exceptions to the conventional ordering of sex, reproduction, and intimacy, though it at times also refers to animacy’s veering-away from dominant ontologies and the normativities they promulgate. That is, I suggest that queering is immanent to animate transgressions, violating proper intimacies (including between humans and nonhuman things).

For the purposes of this book, I define affect without necessary restriction, that is, I include the notion that affect is something not necessarily corporeal and that it potentially engages many bodies at once, rather than (only) being contained as an emotion within a single body. Affect inheres in the capacity to affect and be affected. Yet I am also interested in the relatively subjective, individually held “emotion” or “feeling.” While I prioritize the former, I also attend to the latter (with cautions about its true possessibility) precisely because, in the case of environmental illness or multiple chemical sensitivity, the entry of an exterior object not only influences the further affectivity

of an intoxicated human body, but “emotions” that body: it lends it particular emotions or feelings as against others. I take my cue from Sara Ahmed’s notion of “affective economies,” in which specific emotions play roles in binding subjects and objects. She writes, “emotions involve subjects and objects, but without residing positively within them. Indeed, emotions may seem like a force of residence as an effect of a certain history, a history that may operate by concealing its own traces.”²⁵ The traces I examine in this book are those of animate hierarchies. If affect includes affectivity—how one body affects another—then affect, in this book, becomes a study of the governmentality of animate hierarchies, an examination of how acts seem to operate with, or against, the order of things (to appropriate Foucault’s phrasing for different purposes).²⁶

Queer theory, building upon feminism’s critique of gender difference, has been at the forefront of recalibrating many categories of difference, and it has further rewritten how we understand affect, especially with regard to trauma, death, mourning, shame, loss, impossibility, and intimacy (not least because of the impact of the HIV/AIDS crisis); key thinkers here include Ann Cvetkovich, Lauren Berlant, Heather Love, and Lee Edelman, among others.²⁷ As will be demonstrated, these are all terms that intersect in productive ways with animacy. Thus, this book fixes particular attention on queer theoretical questions of intimacy, sexuality, and connectivity; critical race work on the flexible zones of extension of race, the ways that raciality circulates transnationally, and the intersections of race and environment; the staging of animals to displace racial and sexual questions; disability studies questions about toxicity and recuperation; environmental justice connections between environmentally condemned marginalized communities and the toxins conferred upon them; and queer of color mappings of race and sexuality in “unlikely” places.

How the Chapters Move

The book is organized into three parts, with two chapters each: “Words,” “Animals,” and “Metals.” These three parts each examine and track a feature of animacy in detail, along the lines of a focus: in “Words,” language and figural dehumanization; in “Animals,” queer animals and animality; and in “Metals,” the toxic metal particles lead and mercury. Each pair attempts to investigate a question about kinds

of animacy, and each exhibits, or performs, the result of letting its object *animate*, that is—considering that its etymological history still survives somewhere in its linguistic present—letting it breathe, gender itself, or enact “animus” in its negativity. For instance, in the “Words” part, the animacy of the word *queer* is unleashed to find new linguistic loci; later, in “Animals,” the animal transubstantiates beyond the borders of our insistent human ontologies; and finally, toxic metals are let loose in the bloodstream of the text to queer its own affective regard.

In this sense, each chapter, while an animation in itself, is simultaneously an attempt to seek a transdisciplinary method forged through my background in cognitive linguistics and inflected by my commitments to queer of color, feminist, and disability scholarship. Thus, animacy is still identifiable, even if it leaves behind its epistemological pinnings. If these methodological efforts may seem eccentric, my hope is that they might, in their animate crossings and changing disciplinary intimacies, be plumbed for a certain kind of utility, particularly to the extent that each is engaged in some way with questions of race, sexuality, and disability.

Words

“Language and Mattering Humans,” the first chapter, is framed by a consideration of language as animated, as a means of embodied condensation of social, cultural, and political life. Here I consider in detail a particular political grammar, what linguists call an *animacy hierarchy*, which conceptually arranges human life, disabled life, animal life, plant life, and forms of nonliving material in orders of value and priority. Animacy hierarchies have broad ramifications for issues of ecology and environment, since objects, animals, substances, and spaces are assigned constrained zones of possibility and agency by extant grammars of animacy. The chapter examines a seemingly exceptional form of linguistic usage to think through gradations of animacy and objectification: the insult, a move of representational injury that implicates language as capable of incurring damage. Linguistic insults vividly demonstrate that language acts to contain and order many kinds of matter, including lifeless matter; they also show that language users are “animate theorists” insofar as they deploy and rework such orders of matter. Furthermore, insults that refer to humans as abjected matter or as less than human—for instance, Senator George Allen’s in-

famous “macaca” utterance from 2006—cannily assert human status as a requisite condition for securing nonhuman comparators, thereby rendering the idea of “dehumanization” paradoxical.

Chapter 2, “Queer Animation,” then asks: if language helps to coerce certain figures into nonbeing, or to demote on an animacy hierarchy, then what are the modes of revival, return, or rejoinder? One popular social strategy has been to “reclaim” distressed objects as a move toward political agency, sometimes literalized in a discredited social label. Both subtle and explicit de-animations, therefore, may be responded to with plays at re-animation through linguistic reclaiming acts, not least with the act of speech itself, and I investigate this possibility by giving special consideration to the scholarly and political uptake of an identity reference and theoretical entity called *queer*, a term that seems semantically predestined to launch its own animations. Analyzing *queer*’s multiple senses with cognitive linguistics, I show how two conceptual forms emerged with two lexicalized forms, verb and noun: a re-animated queer verb and a de-animated queer noun, which open it to some critiques that queer politics have made the “wrong” turn to essentialization and identity politics. I suggest that Foucault’s governmentality might be revisited in the linguistic notion of governance, especially concerning its sensitivity to the animacy hierarchy.

Animals

In chapter 3, “Queer Animality,” I consider animality as a condensation of racialized animacy, taking up inquiries relating to the paradoxical morbidities and vibrancies of the queer figure and its potentiality for nonnormative subject formations. I locate queerness, in this chapter, in both wrong marriage and improper intimacy. Using performativity as a point of departure for a theoretical kinship frequently found between queerness and animality, I examine a signal argument in the work of the language philosopher J. L. Austin. Austin set up the example of a failed pronouncement of marriage: in this case, nonauthorized official speech by evoking “a marriage with a monkey.” Here I read the “exemplary ridiculousness” of Austin’s example as indicating a wider anxiety about the legitimacy of exchange between properly animated figures, teasing apart the combined intimations of sexual oddity with racial nonwhiteness and figural blackness. Moving then

to a selection of visual media from the turn of the twentieth century, I assess the role that queerness, miscegenation, and comparative racisms play in rendering some bodies less animate, even when affective intensities surround them. Closely attending to this visual culture, I examine how controversies around citizenship in the United States at this time were displaced onto the figure of the “dumb” animal, which was both raced and sexed for rhetorical effect.

In chapter 4, “Animals, Sex, and Transsubstantiation,” I ask what happens when the matter of gender, race, and sexuality itself shifts, either in our diagnostic ontologies or in its own figural actuality. I begin with biopolitical questions of animal—and human—neutering, asking how gender and family are queered in both normative and exceptional ways; here, I use “queer” to indicate challenges to the normativity of sex (sexing) that are sometimes biopolitically authorized. I then turn to an odd yet pervasive omission in cultural animal representations—that of the missing morphology of the genitalia—suggesting that such a phenomenon could, instead of being seen as a trivial or expected circumstance, be thought in relation to the cultural production of animals. I ask what this missing morphology animates, whether due to notions of propriety; to the idea that skin and fur are treated as essentially sartorial, displacing but confirming an interior human; or to an attempt at symbolic neutering (since animals often serve as stand-ins for rampant sexuality) or transing. Questions of transgendering are put into conversation with this omission to ask after the valence of this kind of queer affectivity.

Metals

Turning to allegedly insensate—but nevertheless potent—particles, chapter 5, “Lead’s Racial Matters,” considers the Chinese lead toys panic in the United States in 2007 and its representation in mainstream media. Here, animacy becomes a property of lead, a highly mobile and poisonous substance that feeds anxieties about transgressors of permeable borders, whether of skin or country. The chapter traces the physical travels (animations) of lead as an industrial by-product, while simultaneously observing lead’s critical role in the representation of national security concerns, interests in sovereignty, and racial and bodily integrity in the United States. I argue that the lead painted onto children’s toys was animated and racialized as Chinese, whereas

its potential victims were depicted as largely white. In the context of the interests of the United States, the phrase *Chinese lead* is consistently rendered not as a banal industrial product, but as an exogenous toxin painted onto the toys of innocent American children, and as the backhanded threat of a previously innocent boon of transnational labor whose exploitive realities are beginning to dawn on the popular subconscious of the United States. This lead scare shifted both its mythic origins and its mythic targets, effectively replacing domestic concerns about black and impoverished children and their exposures to environmental lead.

Finally, chapter 6, "Following Mercurial Affect," shifts the book's perspective from a theoretical examination of animacy to the biopolitical impact of environmental toxins on human bodies in the context of present-day emergent illnesses. Here the term *animacy* takes mobile, molecular form, as particles that both intoxicate a body into environmental illness and as particles that constantly threaten that body's fragile state. The chapter considers the ways in which environmental illness restages expected forms of sociality, rendering them as queer, disordered proximities in the case of molecular intimacies and orientations. Such altered sociality also evinces in the case of the often-different geographies of affective ties to animate and inanimate objects exhibited in autism (which in some views symptomatically overlap with environmental factors, rather than being determined by them). Such forms of sociality have the potential to trouble the alternative socialities offered by queer theory, as well as the thematics of negativity that recent queer theory takes up as a political question.

I conclude with an afterword, "The Spill and the Sea." It opens by pairing the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in April 2010 and the "killing" language summoned to commemorate its technological resolution with an unlikely partner: the human-wannabe-fish protagonist of the animated Hayao Miyazaki film *Ponyo*, released in 2008. These two different phenomena come together as an indication of the questions that continue to be raised by the affective politics surrounding both animate and inanimate things. Miyazaki's cosmology is imbued, I argue, with unexpected affectivity, which is part of his animation's magic. I end with a plea to revisit the possibility of "care" across the realm of animacy, considering it as a means of unlikely cross-affiliation, a politics that wanders in and out of mainstreams.

Disciplinary Animation, Shifting Archive

Fundamentally interdisciplinary in nature, *Animacies* traverses a number of intersecting fields. First, it comes out of, but is by no means limited to, my training as a queer feminist linguist with a heightened sensitivity to the political and disciplinary mobility of terms. My argument tracks how the notion of animacy implicitly figures within and reorients a range of theoretical constructions, from disability studies with its focus on redefining given conditions of bodily and mental life; to queer theory's considerations of feeling, sex, and death; to biosecurity studies with its mapping of the character of national obsessions about terrorism, ingestion, transmission, and infection. I build on the feminist insight that "nature" is a feminized counterpoint to masculinized "culture," but also approach "nature" as a complexly differentiated site, gendered, racialized, and sexualized in ways that are not consistent or predictable.²⁸ And in view of the place that a heteronormatively textured sovereignty takes in the national anxieties of the United States about disability and illness, such as the lead toy panic, it is instructive to turn to both disability theory and queer theory in the consideration of environmental illness. Here I am indebted to queer-disability theorists such as Eli Clare and Robert McRuer.²⁹

I want to affirm, study, and reflect upon the monkey whose marriage to a human Austin dismissively refers to as a mockery in chapter 3, for this queer, potentially racialized, invalid marriage has much to say. That is, nonlife as life, and monkey as legitimate marrying subject, materialize, replenish, and trouble ideologies, sentiments, and ontologies of race, humanness, and security. I reside in this so-called negative zone, one of abjection, racial marking, toxic queerness, and illness, to think about the epistemic riches of possibility within. If this is not a recuperative project, it is nevertheless an affirmative one.

Thinking through the fluidities of either "life" or "death" that seem to run across borders of animate and inanimate, and through orders of state preference that (in large part due to the commodifying and virtualizing and abstracting processes of capitalism) disregard common understandings of "life" or "liveliness," I follow connectivities that animate before me, without a fore-given attachment to a "proper" or "consistent" object. The chapters of this book therefore interanimate, rather than organizing fully and completely with regard to one another.

Furthermore, *Animacies* steps out of and around disciplinary closure, particularly since my objects of concern seem to call for movement. Thus, I shift weight between interdisciplinary stresses of analysis, from linguistic to literary to phenomenological, alternately focusing on close readings of films, illustration, archival research, linguistic evidence, newspaper accounts, and popular media coverage. The concluding chapter, framed by personal narrative, performs a provocative and pointedly intimate invocation to rethink animacy in the reader's own terms.

Finally, a word about my shifting archive. This book uses several lenses to explore the rangy, somewhat unruly construct called animacy. In my view, a somewhat "feral" approach to disciplinarity naturally changes the identity of what might be the proper archives for one's scholarship. Nonetheless, my research is grounded in twentieth- and twenty-first-century cultural productions, ones that are often framed within transnational encounters between the United States and Asia, from Fu Manchu to the contemporary Chinese artist Xu Bing. As I shift from discussions of dehumanizing language (linguistics?) to animal genitivity (cultural studies?) to health discourse (science studies?) to (in)human and queer sociality (queer theory?), it is my intention and design that the archives themselves feralize, giving up any idealization about their domestication, refusing to answer whether they constitute proper or complete coverage. At the same time, I take care to contextualize (whether temporally or geopolitically) the "thing" under discussion, since I have no interest in running roughshod over historical particularity.

Thinking and moving ferally constitutes a risk, both to the borders of disciplinarity and to the author who is metonymically feralized along with the text. Yet it is arguably also a necessary condition of examining animacy within disability, postcolonial, and queer studies. I venture, as well, that as surely as intersectionality "matters" lives and nonlives, animacy might ask of queer of color analysis, and other modes of analysis that rely upon intersectionality, that the seeming givens thought to centrally inform race, sexuality, and gender might bear further examination—that is, that animacy tugs the categories of race and sexuality out of their own homes. I refer to Roderick Ferguson's useful discussion of queer of color critique's potential to counter the obliquely intersecting racialization, gendering, sexualization, and classing that exist within national spaces. Notably, Ferguson describes

queer of color critique itself as "a heterogeneous enterprise made up of women of color feminism, materialist analysis, poststructuralist theory, and queer critique."³⁰

I use the word *feral* in direct conversation with the disability scholars Sharon Snyder and David Mitchell, who ask about the location of disability theory within disciplinary formations: "Is it possible to keep the freshness—the insight-driven 'wildness'—of the field in the midst of seeking a home base in the academy? Can disability studies sustain its productive 'feral' nature without being reduced to a lesser form of academic evolutionism or thoroughly domesticated as an academic endeavor?"³¹

The notion of feral also brings up ambivalent identifications with antihomes, since it both rejects the domicile and reinvigorates a notion of public shelter. As a moving target, the sign of the feral also invokes diaspora and its potential to naturalize nationalisms and capitalist geopolitics. Gayatri Gopinath's work on queer South Asian public cultures is useful here; Gopinath, reflecting on diaspora's simplest definition as "the dispersal and movement of populations from one particular national or geographic location to other disparate sites," provokes us to closely examine valences of queer "home" that interrupt and trouble diaspora's "dependence on a genealogical, implicitly heteronormative reproductive logic."³² Indeed, the ambivalently homed feral figure also appears in my text as the sign of a biopolitical (nationalized) demand for population control.

I choose instead, here, to allow for the impression of a certain surfeit, and simultaneously to refuse to categorize humans, animals, objects as so very cleanly distinct from one another. To do this is to hope for a certain "wiliness" of the sort performed by the writer and queer critic Silviano Santiago, who in his essay "The Wily Homosexual" answers the implicit request posed by Western white queer conference-goers to provide "native" Brazilian knowledge by responding both vertically (as expected) and horizontally. That horizontality, which Santiago describes as a "supplement" rather than a clumsy inversion of the hierarchy of values implicit in the question, can be described as "elusive" only from an insistently typological drive to closure and hence leaves a certain trace of mystery and escape in the path of his text.³³ My hope is for that opening, insofar as it can be found in this book, to be inviting and productive. Animacy, after all, is an unstable terrain; this means that (and it is my belief that) its archives are not

“pinnable.” The various archives, which seem at first to be distinct, are surprisingly very much in conversation with each other and, beyond my attempts to “interarticulate” these connections, ring with one another’s strange vitality.

As many scholars of illness have remarked, “living through illness” seems, at least at first, to confound the narrativized, temporalized imaginary of “one’s human life,” for it can constitute an undesired stopping point that is sporadically animated by frenzied attempts (to the extent one’s energy permits) to resolve the abrupt transformations of illness that often feel in some way “against life.” Some transformations suggest a suspension of time (productivity time, social time), and some involve the wearing of a deathly pallor or other visible registers of morbidity.³⁴ But for those with the privileges of food, care, and physical support, this pause can also become a meditation (if forced) on the conditions that underlie both illness and wellness, that is, the biopoliticized animacies that foretell what may become of a changing body, human or not, living or nonliving. For this, I am grateful for the pause that, even if it took me “out of life,” gave me the matter that could animate this book.

PART I * WORDS

consanguinity than that alleged between the Chinese and rats, which rendered them similarly murky, fungible, interchangeable, and comfortably distant (from “us”).

The sewing of Travis’s tongue to Nash’s face threatens a symbolic violence to human integrity that is in spite of its extension of intimacy. On a human face, one finds a chimp tongue that symbolizes not the subjective promise of human language but something “almost the same, but not quite,” to cite Bhabha’s famous rendering of colonial mimicry, a tongue suitable merely to its “animal functions.” The image of Travis’s cannibalizing of Nash communicates an apparently horrific intimacy. Like Mary Shelley’s monster created by Dr. Frankenstein, the cannibal image is foretold by a haunting of whiteness, a troubling of boundaries that is not only racialized but also sexualized.⁷¹ Ultimately, that “an animal” attacked a human here seems but a sideshow. If the attack first appeared most surprising, the tale now seems one of a family gone terribly wrong.

The aftermath to the tale was that Nash was not only on the mend but on a search to acquire a better face and hand via transplant, even as the other protagonists had ceased to live. (Not only was Travis himself fatally shot on the day of the incident, but Sandra Herold soon after died of a ruptured aortic aneurysm; her attorney explained that she had died of repeated heartbreak.) But one hospital has already rejected Nash as a candidate because it could not perform a simultaneous hand and face transplant from the same donor. A representative from the hospital explained that Nash would need sight (which the face transplant would presumably restore) to retrain her new hand, so it was not as if she could easily choose one over the other. Only a near-complete functional replacement, a restoration of both signal sites for Nash’s sentient capacities, seemed to make any operation worthwhile. At that moment, somewhere in the world, a heated discussion about whether chimps could successfully donate hearts to humans was under way.

4

Animals, Sex, and Transsubstantiation

I suggested in the first chapter that in animacy’s instantiation in Western epistemologies, its coercivity consists of both mundane and exceptional reinforcements. Animacy spans enforcements and governmentalities: not only does it inform state policy, but it is also articulated overtly and implicitly as a “way of life.” Austin’s “monkey marriage” not only defines the proper field for marriageable subjects, but also defines fields of impropriety, including the claim or right of nonhuman animals to enjoy civil liberties. Speech is not necessary to this conception, and indeed, linguists have relinquished mastery over animacy even as they have attempted as best they could to track its materialization in language.

Animacy hierarchies in Western ontologies are about kind: they assert that *this group* is affiliated with *these properties* (for instance, the assertion that “animals lack language”). In such a hierarchy’s conceptual life, kinds are equated with propensities; but in the maintenance of kinds, the hierarchy simultaneously assigns kinds a *generativity*, mapping and marking reproductive and nonreproductive bodies. Reproductivity in its signal bodily and material sites thus plays a key role in contentious debates about the borders between kinds. When carefully managed cross-animate realms change, so must the biopolitical stakes around their realignment. Continuing the previous chapter’s concern with queer animality, I turn here to take up questions of materiality, animality, and transness, demarcating the “proper boundaries” around

both nonhuman animals and humans so that the drawn biopolitical relations among them can be made more palpable.

I further consider the epistemological and temporal lessons made possible by thinking about animality in terms of sex: in this case, its regulation, its contestation, and its purported desexualization. Indeed, in this chapter's take on "transness," I focus on how animal-human boundaries are articulated in terms of sex and gender by examining perhaps the most consistent missing morphology in cultural representations of animals: the genitalia.¹

If mattering turns irrevocably on gender—if, as Judith Butler writes, questions of gender are irretrievably interwoven with questions of materiality, and if human substantiation enduringly depends on the expulsion of animals—then it is imperative that we ask questions not only about how animals matter, but how they matter sexually.² To examine the transness of animal figures in cultural productions or philosophical discourses (beyond their biology, queerness, or pure animality, for instance) is to also interrogate how humans' analogic mapping to and from animals (within imagined, lived, or taxonomic intimacies) paradoxically survives the cancellation wrought by the operations of abjection, casting a trans light back on the human. By considering the simultaneous relevance of race, gender, sexuality, and geopolitics in animal studies, this chapter builds on recent work that treats animal spaces intersectionally.³ It makes use of the simultaneous mobility, stasis, and border violation shared among transgender spaces and other forms of trans-being: transnationality, transraciality, translation, transspecies. This is not to conflate these various, importantly distinct terms, but to instead try to think them together in new constellations.

Making the astute observation that "biology has always meant the thing itself and knowledge of what it is, and equally notoriously, these two biologies have not always been identical," Sarah Franklin dubs "transbiology" an intensified making of "new biologicals" via "the redesign of the biological in the context of contemporary bio-science, biomedicine and biotechnology."⁴ She identifies what might be thought of as a significant shift in the specific depth of imaginative technologies in crafting matter, a shift in the participants of what Charis Thompson has called "ontological choreography."⁵ Here, thinking less in terms of biotechnologies than attending to the role of visual representation and morphology in mattering, I turn directly to the "trans" in "transbiology," redirecting it toward transsubstantiation.

Changes in biology today are tweaking the delineation of kinds. Pharmaceuticals are composed of nonhuman biological material, cloning and stem cell technologies deploy blends of human-nonhuman animal material, and so on; this affects the "sex" of reproduction and fudges lines of lineal descent. Yet it is important to reiterate, for all the significance of today's biotechnological chimeras, that human-animal mixings have already existed in the realm of discourse. In an unstable realm of animacy, relational exchanges between animals and humans can be coded at the level of ontological mediation, or alchemical transformation, one that goes beyond a vitalism that infuses given boundaries with lifeliness. I read these productions as participating in the animacy hierarchy by exercising a kind of substitutional, horizontal logic of species displacement (altering kind), intervening with the slower, largely lineal pace of the sexual reproduction of species (replacing kind with kind). In certain cases, I suggest it is by interactions of substance with human countervalences—(*trans-*)*substantiation*—that animals may achieve their final form (for humans) or, more significantly, by interacting with animal countervalences that humans achieve their final form. This transsubstantiation has repercussions outside an intellected analogy. It extends beyond intimate coexistence in that it is not only substantive exchange, but exchange of substance, and thus cannot be understood in terms of pure ontological segregation. In some sense, the animate leakage within the strictest hierarchy is what paradoxically enables that hierarchy to become what it is imagined to be; biopolitical governance, conspiring with the "rehomeing" assertions of those who traffic wrongly, steps in over and again to contain these leaky bounds.

The terms "animal spaces" and "animal places" are used by Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert in an articulation of critical animal geographies: animal spaces signify the kinds of domains in which nonhuman animals appear and inside which they come into particular being (such as experimental animal labs); animal places signify the "proper location" of animals in a human typology.⁶ Myra Hird writes that "non-human animals have for some time been overburdened with the task of making sense of human social relations."⁷ In my view, race cannot be forgotten as an endlessly variable human social relation for which animals are, also variably, tasked to do constant symbolic work. Given that humans, as indefatigable denizens of the symbolic, inherit such responsibilities and project them onto nonhuman animals, the trick seems to be to objectify this symbolic responsibility given to non-

human animals, as well as our dependence upon their symbolic labor, and to contextualize it such that our ideas about animality are not automatically reliant affectively or structurally upon this dependence.

In the pages that follow, I begin with biopolitical concerns regarding the regulation of animal sexuality, and the interruptions to animal places wrought by the kinds of animal spaces discussed later. I then turn to the realm of cultural production, bringing into suggestive conversation several late-twentieth-century instances drawn from the realms of film, popular culture, contemporary art, and experimental video, each of which ostensibly juxtaposes nonhuman animals to humans in ways that crucially implicate sex and gender as well as kind. Two of these instances engage—or provoke considerations of—Asian cultural formations, one more transparently or legibly than the other: the film *Max, mon amour* by the Japanese director Nagisa Oshima, involving a human love affair with a chimpanzee, released in 1986; the other, a live installation by the Chinese artist Xu Bing, “Cultural Animal,” involving a live pig and a humanoid mannequin, released in 1994. Each instance that I examine—the rhetoric of animal neutering, a film about a love between a chimp and a woman, Michael Jackson’s video morphing into a panther, and a performance with a pig that copulates with a human form—plumbs animals’ symbolic force within particular imprints of racialization, sexualization, and globalization in an era of geopolitical contestation and coloniality. These cultural productions literalize a human-animal ontological mediation, demonstrating for us its animate currency.

Neutering into Modernity

It has recently become newsworthy in the West that China’s “pet ownership”—wherein nonhuman animals live within privatized homes—is on the rise. Pampered, cared for, and loved, Chinese pets are increasingly invoked and experienced as family members. This reemergence of pet ownership (whose closest antecedent is found among early Chinese royalty) has coincided with increased attention by municipalities and communities to the management of populations of nonhuman animal species within cities (rural animal ownership is another matter). Seeking to regulate the uncontrolled spread of these animals, municipalities are increasingly demanding that owners spay or neuter their new kin; and a growing industry of pet-related

products are finding an eager market, what has been called the “pet economic sector.”⁸

Cindy Patton employs the term *geophagia* to refer to the tendency of nation-states to promulgate and reproduce themselves elsewhere; she diagnoses the U.S. Constitution as itself geophagically imagined, as a template that actively sought to instantiate itself in the context of other nations. Such geophagia can be construed as a temporal parallelization to achieve political synchrony: Patton suggests that Taiwan’s repeal in 2002 of a ban on the conscription of gays into the military—a political decision about sex with decidedly national effects—is not only a reach for proper statehood, but an indicator of its reach for inclusion in modernity, alongside (or even ahead of) other powerful nation-states that serve imperially to define or exemplify the very meaning of modernity.⁹ One can find markers of geophagia in a *New York Times* article published in 2010, “Once Banned, Dogs Reflect China’s Rise,” which declares that a pet dog named Xiangzi serves as a “marker of how quickly this nation is hurtling through its transformation from impoverished peasant to first-world citizen.”¹⁰

The transformation Xiangzi indexes is toward China’s citizenship and prosperity, two signal markers of “development” discourses. The law professor Chang Jiwen, the Chinese sponsor of a dog-eating ban for submission to the National People’s Congress, is quoted as reasoning that the nation’s “development” should have consequences for the treatment of animals: “Other developed countries have animal protection laws. . . . With China developing so quickly, and more and more people keeping pets, more people should know how to treat animals properly.”¹¹ While the notion that China is a “developing nation” has become something of a global spectacle, that development may feel slightly more ironic from within China’s borders and around its territorial edges; in the midst of “development,” the increase in transient feminized labor, migrant work, senior care, and territorial instability is a steady counterpoint to the prospect of a rising middle class.¹²

Michael Wines, the author of the *New York Times* article, suggests that the one-child policy has created new needs for dogs in households, either to augment numbers (this seems to subvert the notion that the sizes of families mattered in part because more children meant more contributing economic producers), or to replace children who have grown up and left home. Wines’s speculation that one-child families in China experience a kind of social deprivation that they then act to

fill with pets only superficially aligns with the “critical pet studies” instigator Heidi Nast’s work tracking the rise of “pet-love” feelings and discourses in post-industrial sites, where new configurations of wealth and alienation foster new commodifications and emerging neoliberal affects that shift the status of both animals and human-animal relations.¹³ While Wines understands that extant kinship relations texture and condition pet ownership, one wonders whether his speculative association of one-child families in China with loneliness—compared to, say, the cultivation of smaller numbers associated with middle-class families in the United States—has anything to do with implicit assumptions that families in developing countries have an emotional attachment to large broods.

Nast writes that the growth of pet-animal affective bonds emerges from new economic configurations:

The libidinal economies of pet-animal DAL [dominance-affection-love] have expanded and deepened in certain post-industrial spaces, something I surmise is fueled by a dual process: the hypercommodification of pet-lives and love (especially dogs); and the many alienations attendant to post-industrial lives and places, whether these be related to the dissolution or downsizing of traditional family forms, the increasing footlooseness of individual and community life, or the aging of post-industrial populations. The dual process is in any event tied firmly to neoliberal processes of capital accumulation more generally and the attendant growing gap between rich and poor.¹⁴

Nast’s provocative analysis, coming out of critical geography, might additionally benefit from thinking more about the role of state authority in extant kinship relations and using less a notion of “post-industrial places” tout court, which suggests a teleological progression of capital development toward alienation. She gestures to the economic liberalization of some sites not in the United States, making glancing reference to China, but in my view China’s unique biopolitical history challenges us to lend important consideration to things beyond the political-economic strictly understood.

As dog ownership rises in Chinese urban areas, cities have instituted the rule that there can only be one dog per family. New one-dog policies, evidence of a different kind of governmental hand, both suggest that dogs are kin by their obvious patterning on the one-child kin-

ship law (as a kind of biopolitical expansion), and provoke friction at the invocation of kinship on the edges of its propriety. Neutering and spaying thus becomes central to the question of dog domestication in sites such as Beijing, which since 2006 has had a “one dog, one family” policy. “The birth of humans needs to be planned, but anyone can raise a dog?” asked one incredulous blog post in response to reported complaints about the limits on pet numbers. “The resources that you conserve from having less people, you give to dogs? This is a very serious problem. Are you saying that people are worth less than dogs?” wrote one Beijing commenter in a discussion debating the viability of dog ownership.¹⁵

The questions provoked by this commenter are central to the debates about the animacy hierarchy, in particular its rigors and failures. Where and when nonhuman animals serve as more or less proximate members of human families (or the human family), cultural mappings between nonhuman animals and humans cluster around questions of sex, regulation, substance, and biopolitics. Paradoxically, neutering or spaying animals is a preeminent queering device, since the idealized neutering or spaying halts sexual reproduction, prevents overlittering, and—in the case of pet ownership—redirects desires to the maintenance of pet owner kinship formations within the human household. Observe the following selected arguments from a typical spay and neuter website directed to cat owners:

Statistically speaking, even if a person finds good homes for a litter of kittens, some of the kittens will grow up and produce litters of kittens.

Even indoor-only house cats often find ways to get outdoors when the sexual urge hits them.

Whether they disappear for good (due to panic, accidents, or enemies) or they return home, kittens are the result.

Unaltered cats have urges that make them irritable and anxious.

They yowl or whine frequently, fight with other cats, and/or destroy objects in the house.

Neutering lowers his urge to roam and to fight, and thus lowers chances of disease transmission and woundings.¹⁶

I bring these points up not to glorify a restorable natural state, but to indicate the ways in which the interaction between animals and humans in the domain of pet ownership discourses is one of biopoliti-

cal management, a management of reproduction that has both racialized and sexualized overtones. From another direction, queer, lesbian, and gay folks, with their ostensibly compromised capacity for “biological” reproductive sexuality, might be likened to neutered.

It is not necessary, however, to take recourse to animals to think about neutered queers; in chapter 2, I thought about neutering in relation to suppressed or canceled affect in considering the willful suppression of queerness in anti-Proposition 8 ads authored by neoliberal homonormativities. In addition, as Cathy Cohen has made clear, a queer theoretical analysis must consider the queering by the state of many kinds of bodies as sexually nonnormative, including those located in class and race disprivilege who might otherwise be defined, or self-define, as “heterosexual.” “Welfare mothers” are simultaneously constructed as racialized wards of the state, misbehaving, nonproductive creatures who bear their own inordinately large litters and who are destructive to heteronormative family models because they are sexually rampant (and thus stray outside of proper sexual and domestic borders).¹⁷ Indeed, the recent history of the United States has witnessed state-administered sterilization of poor black, Native American, and Puerto Rican women; incarcerated women; and people with cognitive disabilities alike, in the name of eugenically “bettering” the population.¹⁸ Such animacies, I argue, are mapped and ontologically shared among animalized humans and anthropomorphized animals, and are maintained in mutually defining knowledge streams.

This is the stuff of human-animal biopolitics, which is at once linguistic, discursive, state-directed, and sometimes directed toward “health.” The literalized figures of such human-animal biopolitics, the “humanimals,” vary between the traditionally monstrous blends of human and animal features, posthuman and postmodern cyborg descendants running predictable scripts between organism and machine, and the benign blends of dogs and cats wrapped in human paraphernalia that can be found in rampant numbers on the unapologetically fetishistic website Cute Overload. But it becomes especially interesting to see how the borders between these genres cannot hold up so cleanly.

A recent case makes the “monstrous humanimal” and the terms of its construction ostentatiously clear. Nadya Suleman, the mother of eight children by assisted reproductive technology, otherwise known by the moniker “Octomom,” represents a humanimal tentatively racialized

as nonwhite (her father is Iraqi) whose contingent dignity turns precisely around her reproductivity. Suleman already had six children before giving birth to octuplets. It is not clear whether the scandalous “Octomom” myth is built around the idea that assisted reproductive technologies were used with the goal of exploiting welfare systems, or whether this “welfare mother’s” reproductive act itself was so extravagantly successful that it reached the level of caricature. When Suleman’s house was near foreclosure, PETA successfully lobbied her to place its promotional signs in her front yard and offered her a fee of \$8,000. The sign said: “Don’t let your cat or dog become an ‘octomom’—always spay or neuter.”

Another marketing competitor, the pornography company Vivid, first unsuccessfully invited her to act in its films (offering her \$1 million), and then tried asking her to serve in off-screen work functions for less money. She declined both. Suleman seemed to welcome a technology of media attention that sutured diverse advertising interests to her transmogrified appearance, that is, her own mediated, revised body (with her apparent cosmetic surgery interventions). At the same time, she rejected an alterative technology of vision and mediation whereby her involvement in or proximate to human sexual acts would be explicitly commodified. Both PETA and Vivid were somewhat unimaginative in their marketing decisions: the porn company clearly partook of an unsurprising frenzy of curiosity around her spectacularized body. Suleman-as-Octomom is an overdetermined variation on the racialized, sexually rampant welfare queen who herself nurses improperly on the ghostly public teat, a teat that, inasmuch as it exists, is shrinking and retracting under renewed neoliberal retrenchment in the United States under the sign of fiduciary urgency. Yet she ambivalently occupied the zone between welfare queen and entrepreneur, as she leveraged her own economy of spectacle to make capital decisions.

Transgenitalia

In extending biopolitical thinking to stretch around humans, animals, and human animality, what would it mean to invite a queer *and trans* critique in the instance of animal neutering and castration as they both literally and symbolically appear? The dance between *queer* and *trans* evokes debates that have been taken up in recent scholarship, particu-

larly about what degree one might excavate the *trans* in what has been taken and subsumed under the rubric of *queer*.¹⁹ Ultimately, the opposition of *trans* and *queer* suggests a false dichotomy: just as gender and sex are unavoidably linked, so too are *trans* and *queer*. They can be considered as independent factors that participate in animal spaces. I use Nikki Sullivan's provocative invocation of "transmogrification" to bring transsexuality into an expansive analytic.²⁰ Sullivan wishes to undo the segregated assignment of various phenomena involving bodily transformation to specific types of critics and thinkers: for instance, transsexuality to queer theorists, nonnormative body modification practices to countercultural theorists and criminologists, and cosmetic surgery to feminists. The apparent "voluntarism" or "false-consciousness" of one versus another of these practices she deems insufficient justification for their categorical segregation. Haunting these categories is still another, often construed as tendentious when applied to humans, but in my view having profound cultural relevance once we consider the significance of castration or the "cutting" of some kinds of transsexuality: "neutering" and "spaying," which is often considered by municipal policy makers and animal advocates.

Myra Hird invokes the feminist biologist Sharon Kinsman to argue for the idea that human understandings of sex respond not merely to humanity's own intraspecies evidences, but also to those of non-human animals as well, such as fish whose gonads shift from male to female.²¹ Concomitantly, Hird importantly does not think of "trans" as an exclusively human construct, and challenges readers to consider the implications of evidence of transness in nonhuman animals. Such analysis perhaps suggests a sense of *trans* that extends beyond sex alone; as Hird writes, "I want to extend feminist interest in *trans* as a specifically sexed enterprise (as in transitioning from one sex to another), but also in a broader sense of movement across, through and perhaps beyond traditional classifications."²²

Hence, *trans-* is not a linear space of mediation between two monolithic, autonomous poles, as, for example, "female" and "male" are, not least because the norms by which these poles are often defined too easily conceal, or forget, their interests and contingencies. Rather, it is conceived of as more emergent than determinate, intervening with other categories in a richly elaborated space. Much in the way that the idealized meaning of *queer* signifies an adjectival modification or modulation, rather than a substantive core such as a noun, I wish

to highlight a *prefixal trans-* not preliminarily limited to gender. As Susan Stryker, Paisley Currah, and Lisa Jean Moore write, the hyphen "marks the difference between the implied nominalism of 'trans' and the explicit relationality of 'trans-', which remains open-ended and resists premature foreclosure by attachment to any single suffix [including gender]."²³ Such a *prefixal trans-* is a way to explore that complexity of gender definition that lies between human gender systems and the gendering of animals. By mobilizing a different form of *trans-*, I do not mean to evacuate *trans* of its gendered possibilities. To the contrary, I reassert the complex, multifactored cultural contingency of transgendered actualizations and affirm that gender is omnipresent, though it is rarely monolithically masculine or feminine.

Of the body parts that might be labeled "organs," the genitals bear tremendous symbolic weight, particularly in the West and Global North; this may be an obvious point, given the significance of Freudian psychoanalysis (which attaches formative significance to the visible difference of sex parts) to Western social tropes. In such schemes, sexual organs simultaneously impute both gender and sexuality and, as so many race and sexuality theorists have demonstrated, race and class. To take but one example, Leo Bersani writes about narratives of sexual development that "heterosexual genitality is the hierarchical stabilization of sexuality's component instincts."²⁴ Therefore, the "genitals" are directly tied to social orders that are vastly more complex than systems of gender alone. Genitality is both directly and indirectly represented in multiple ways, vanishing here, reappearing there, sometimes prosthetized through other accoutrements (such as so-called penis cars). Genitalia are culturally overdetermined, and, as the seats of reproduction and fecundity, they are sites of biopolitical interest not only for humans but for nonhuman animals.

Animal Spaces: *Max, mon amour*

Shifting into the realm of cultural analysis, I wish to consider the bilingual French and English film *Max, mon amour*, directed by Nagisa Oshima and released in 1986, a film generally treated within cinema studies as a surrealist comedy of manners. When the film begins, Margaret (played by Charlotte Rampling), the wife of a British diplomat named Peter (Anthony Higgins), recounts to her husband that she has fallen in love with a chimpanzee named Max, purchased him, and



II. Max and Margaret on an intriguingly torn mattress. Film still from *Max, mon amour* (dir. Nagisa Oshima, 1986).

taken the animal home. The film is almost wholly set in the bourgeois household, with the exception of a forest where Max is searched for and an asylum where Peter goes to find Margaret. There is a general prevalence of ornament and artifice to match the civil conduct of the human characters (hairy, indecorous Max serves as the blatant exception). The narrative proceeds with the ambivalent games of Peter's coping with Max's entrance into the family, his moving into the family home, and his resistance to Peter's erratic mistreatment. Over the protestations of her husband, Margaret insists upon keeping her relationship with Max. A climactic scene ensues in which a rifle changes hands from Peter to Max and shots are fired, but ultimately the family (including Max) is happily reconstituted. Max and Margaret are depicted in a number of intimate embraces, including spooning tenderly on an unmade bed, its ripped mattress an indication of their love's rupture of the social fabric (figure 11). In this scene, Margaret's silken clothes, impeccably made-up face, and smooth-shaven, properly feminized legs contrast with the simian unruliness of the animal. Max and Margaret lie, gently spotlit, in the middle of the frame; their shadows are cast on the wall behind them within the semi-circular halo that illuminates them. Following some of the recognizable visual motifs of conventional film depictions of star-crossed lovers, Max and Mar-

garet express a purity of devotion that shines in contrast to the squalor around them.

In the structural climax of the film, Peter and Max, the competitive suitors vying for Margaret's attentions, seem to be in literal battle over and around a gun. It is useful to turn here to a consideration of cinematic fetishism, in which onscreen objects displace and entrain desire for both diegetic characters and viewers. For Freud, the fetish object—installed as a displacement of desire for woman, whose castration (in the mother) was an originary unviewable horror—both “remains a token of triumph over the threat of castration and a safeguard against it.”²⁵ Linda Williams's groundbreaking book *Hard Core* examines the role of the fetish in contemporary pornography genres. In a chapter called “Prehistory: The Frenzy of the Visible,” she attends to the establishment of the ensemble of social, psychic, and technological apparati in the prehistory of cinema, in which Eadweard Muybridge's “animal studies” of horses and other animals in motion, and later of men and women, take critical part.²⁶ Within Muybridge's images of women, Williams argues, one can detect a fairly resolute fetishization of women by the surfeit of seemingly necessary companion objects and by the lack of self-driven action, whereas the men in images have been inherently active and unadorned and seem to inscribe the proper gestural domain of possible action. From this perspective, the peculiar technological artifice within which precinematic animals were produced by Muybridge's locomotion studies—unadorned, mobile, and focal, yet firmly woven into the scientific discourses of visibility—gives them an uncertain position in relation to the fetish. In the climax of Oshima's film, Max has seized a rifle from Peter, who meant to use it either to keep order or to kill him; when Max runs from spot to spot in the house, firing randomly, it is not clear whether he intends to use the gun, or how, or against whom. If the moving, onscreen animal haunts modern cinema, if the gun is irretrievably phallic, and if the ape is an uncertain fetish, then what is the substitutional value of a penisless ape shooting a gun, and for whom?

In this comedy of manners, the rifle potentially competes with Max as the cinematic object representing perhaps the most blatant violation of proper and “civilized” action. Yet colonialism has enjoyed just this coincidence of the two objects, Max and the rifle: to preserve a peaceful, civil interior, barbarity and wildness on its outer edges must be extinguished and the barbarians brought under (militarized) con-

trol. Max is, and is not, an “animal” in the nonhuman sense, just as a colonized subject is, and is not, a “human” in theories about colonialism. Max’s fully characterized animalness and animality neatly, though perversely, fall within the lines of Homi Bhabha’s notion of colonial mimicry, in which colonial discourse produces an other that is “almost the same, but not quite”; the only thing that is perverse, here, is what the visuality of the film offers us: the prioritization of humanized *animal* figuration (and Max’s animal role) over animalized humanness. Within the logic of Oshima’s filmic representation, Max thus symbolizes both Peter’s lack of sexual control over his wife and his fecklessness as a diplomat in waning colonial times, wherein the insecurity of the colonialist is revealed by his anxiety over control. When, at film’s end, the gun is put away and Max is folded into the happy family at the dinner table, the resolution is precisely a colonial one; the sexuality that Peter promises, but that only Max can fulfill, is resolved as Max is absorbed into the family, but precisely as a castrated animal without the possibility of progeny and which might as well be the family pet (Bhabha’s “not quite”).

During the climactic scene, in the realm of filmic satisfaction, we might say that a penisless yet phallic Max supplants the penis of Williams’s famous “money shot” (which she uses to describe the suturing of filmic narrative as climax, fetish object, and phallicity).²⁷ Instead of the “money shot,” however, in Oshima’s film we get a “monkey shot”: an ape shoots a gun seemingly at random, and what should feel climactic (indeed, the moment is structurally climactic) feels like a misfire, a failure, a bad shot. This is similar to some critics’ overall assessment of Oshima’s film, which was that *Max, mon amour* was just not very good; it was something of a commercial flop outside of Japan and has been called an “anomaly” and a “misfire.”²⁸ According to Maureen Turim, who asserts that the film represented Oshima’s attempt to appeal to Western tastes, “*Max, mon amour* would not prove to be successful enough with critics or at the box office to elicit much demand for Oshima as a virtual expatriate.”²⁹ But at the level of the film, Oshima’s commercial goals need not be identified with his creative ones. In particular, one might alternatively read his interspecies project as an *achievement* of failure, an indicative misfire, a signal of the emasculated collapse of the colonial upper classes who can only end up living not dangerously, but ridiculously. It is difficult to miss, after all, the underside of the “comedy of manners” that Oshima will-

ingly produced using Max. As Bhabha writes, “The effect of mimicry on the authority of colonial discourse is profound and disturbing. For in ‘normalizing’ the colonial state or subject, the dream of post-Enlightenment civility alienates its own language of liberty and produces another knowledge of its norms.”³⁰

In a critically positive psychoanalytic reading of *Max, mon amour*, Barbara Creed frames the film as one example of the new “zoo-centric” cinema that reflects its interest in resolving questions that remain today of a Darwin-influenced blurring of the boundary between human and nonhuman animal. Creed notes that Margaret’s desire for Max foregrounds an even-more mysterious female jouissance that lies threateningly outside of the male symbolic order (and thus beyond the husband diplomat’s ken).³¹ But we might say too, thinking more closely about the consequential nature of Margaret’s lover, that Max’s sexing and gendering is itself unstable. First, the role of language in Max’s animation, I suggest, is minor. While Max’s *linguistic* gender is male throughout, the embodied creature is not terribly convincing as a chimpanzee. The nonintegrity of the creature is made evident by the fact that the eyes shift around inside the sockets of the chimpanzee hood as Max moves, recalling the role of the imperfect ape costume in the directorial efforts in *Planet of the Apes* (directed by Franklin Schaffner, released 1968) in effecting no more than a hybrid human-apeness. (Interestingly, the English word *creature* is derived from Middle English; its earliest evidenced referents include objects of creation, both human and animal.)

To a camp-loving (and perhaps forgiving) queer skeptic, the middling chimp costume’s lack of any visible genitalia begs further questions, poor 1980s special effects notwithstanding. To my knowledge, the visual culture of animal genitalia has not been significantly addressed outside of the domain of scientific illustration. The appearance of animal genitalia in visual cultures surely serves, in any case, as a reflection of invested human interest in animals. In *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*, Thomas Laqueur’s historical account of gender/sex ideology reminds us of the historical recency of the conception that male and female sexes are somehow opposing. Pausing to reflect on the visual representation of the sex organs of nonhuman animals, Laqueur comments that our species cares little that, say, the genitals of a female elephant are rendered to look like a penis in an 1881 scientific illustration, “because the sex of elephants

generally matters little to us."³² Yet animals considered to have analogous properties to humans (such as the great apes, or those which have been the subject of agricultural research), presumably bear more weight of interest in their sexual particularity.

While in *Max, mon amour* such an absence of obvious genital features, all else being equal, might possibly (but not necessarily, given the visibility of certain female displays!) provoke a tentative reading of the figure as female, it is also true that the default movie sex for costumed monkeys and apes can remain unspecified, genderless, in a literalization of the generic unsexed animal type. (This is true, of course, of the vast majority of representations of fictional humans, animals, and monsters alike, from Ken dolls to Donald Duck to cartoon abominable snowmen, in which the male genitalia are rendered as curved bumps. Female counterpoints like Barbie also lack genitalia but have fully developed, even exaggerated, secondary sex characteristics.) In addition, individual animal specificities such as sex cannot survive in a costume unless it is intended as "anatomically accurate," bucking costume traditions of neutering. In the somewhat ostentatious case of Max, such undeterminability of visual sex is an indication of the ambivalence with which cultural spaces confront animals as sexed creatures.

Conveniently perhaps for the design of the film *Max, mon amour*, no linguistic contradictions need be enacted: the French grammatical gender for chimpanzee (*le chimpanzee, lui, il*) is the same as the purported gender and sex of the chimpanzee Max, who is supposed to be a masculine, male chimp. Yet for all the profusion of linguistic gender, in *Max, mon amour*, the incursion of species difference also introduces the presumably threatening possibility of a *genderless* relation, produced by the genericity of the type but literalized in the costume itself. Margaret and the chimp's affections thus yield something that is *trans* in the sense of the undecidability, elusiveness, or reluctance toward the fixity of the chimp's sex, which in spite of its linguistic reinforcements surpasses its otherwise presumptive maleness; that is, to what extent can one trust that a male chimp is sexed or gendered "like" a human male?

What cannot be ignored in *Max, mon amour* is the virtual stampede of Africanized racial invocations; these are overdetermined by the diplomatic status of Margaret's British husband and the Parisian locus of the film as both a colonial metropolis and an ambivalent host

to racialized colonial subjects. Such racialized staging is further evident from moment to moment in the chimp's expressive limitations; marked "impoliteness" and unfamiliarity with "civilized" surroundings; and surfeit of embodiment, aggression, and emotional lability in the face of white upper-class cultural sophistication, formal "goodwill," and expressive minimalism. All of these factors are conditioned by seasoned colonial narrative and visual tropes.³³

The unstable national provenance of the film arguably enriches the film's racial possibility: On the one hand, it can be identified as part of Oshima's trajectory outward from Japanese cinema (which he often stated he despised) and toward, in part, Western cinema, including European avant-garde and animal tropes. On the other hand, against popular external understandings of the Japanese as racially "homogeneous," Japan's own history with race—including its interest in black history in the United States—extends far earlier than *Max, mon amour*.³⁴ The recognizable fakeness of the costume's face invites comparisons to blackface minstrelsy (which remained popular in Europe long after it faded in performance cultures in the United States), in which there lingers the possibility that a mask conceals a differently racialized human. This lingering possibility undermines the film's pointedly surrealist overtones with a historical legacy of European evolutionary racism tied to colonialism. While blackface practices have a relatively recent history within Japanese hip-hop subcultures and aesthetics, we can also consider the possibilities of citation and intertextuality with regard to animal tropes, racialization, and faciality within European, U.S., and Japanese film histories.³⁵

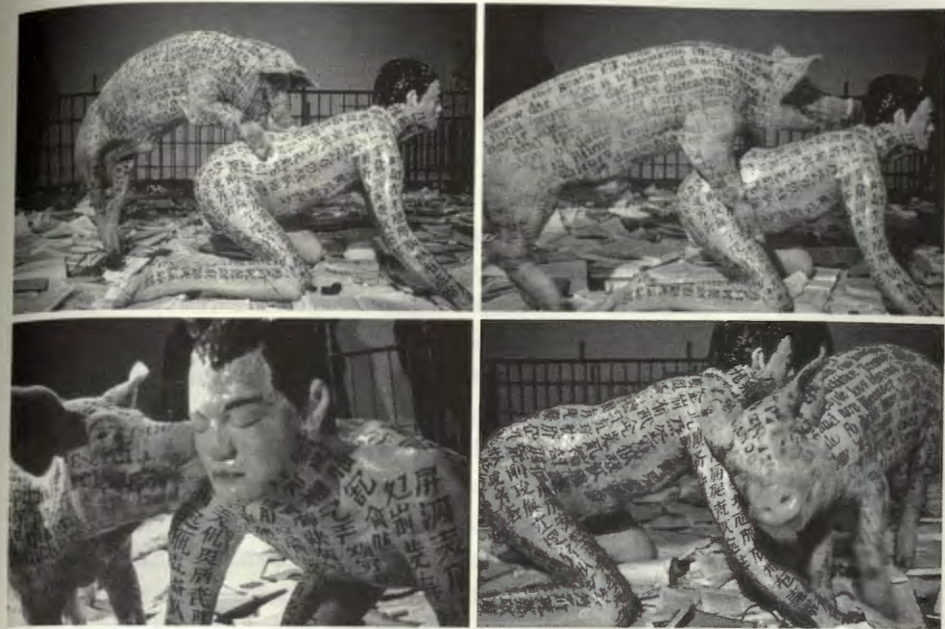
Akira Lippit writes that "the complex matrix that adheres to the name 'Oshima' . . . is in fact . . . an intertextual corpus that both does and does not belong to Oshima himself."³⁶ *Max, mon amour* is an unreliable barometer of Oshima's own unfixed authorship within a fluid transnational frame, one in which the complexities of Japanese race relations with regard to blackness are both suggested and deferred. Within film studies, where the film is often treated as a mere footnote in Oshima's canon, there remains confusion over precisely what the film's stylistic exceptionality indicates and a concomitant level of doubt about the degree of this movie's "Japaneseness" (not only because of its all-Western cast and its French setting).³⁷

Cultural Animal

The intertextuality characteristic of Oshima's *Max, mon amour* continues at a more obvious level in the Chinese conceptual artist Xu Bing's installation and performance work "Cultural Animal" (first shown in 1994), in which a live male pig, with "nonsense" words made up of letters from the Roman alphabet painted all over its body, was introduced to a static male mannequin posed on all fours with "nonsense" Chinese characters inscribed on its body (figures 12.1–12.4). In front of a curious audience at the Han Mo Art Center in Beijing, the pig eventually mounted the mannequin, in a sexually aggressive way, according to descriptions of the pig's approach. In personal accounts of this piece, Xu Bing explained that he had applied the scent of a female pig onto the mannequin, presumably to encourage this sexualized behavior.³⁸

Highly regarded in the globalized art world and the recipient of a MacArthur grant in 1999, the artist, who moved to the United States from China in 1990, is consistently interested in questions of translation, language, and communication beyond or outside human understanding, as this work demonstrates.³⁹ He is best known for his invented script of nonsensical calligraphy, or "false characters," that frustrates any process of reading (for the viewers who know Chinese) or translation (for the viewer not literate in Chinese). In "Cultural Animal," he literally embodies his false characters by placing them onto the surface of both an animal (the pig) and an animalized man (that is, a mannequin whose pose—open to be penetrated from behind—also potentially queers him). What are we to make of this spectacle of animal genitality and its connection to transnationalism and sexuality?

"Cultural Animal" was developed from a previous performance by Xu Bing called "A Case Study of Transference" (which, despite its title, he disavowed as a psychoanalytic project). This work involved two pigs, one a male boar who had been inscribed with nonsense Roman script, and one a female sow who had invented Chinese-looking characters printed on. This earlier iteration, which was also presented in front of a live audience at the Han Mo Arts Center in 1994, had a more explicitly reproductive subtext, one that conjured notions of East-West racial mixing or miscegenation: the stated intention of the piece was that the pigs should mate. As the video documentation of



12.1–4. One live pig, one paper-mache mannequin, ink, discarded books, cage, forty-square-meter enclosure. Xu Bing, "Cultural Animal," 1993–94.

the event shows, it was strangely difficult to get the pigs interested in each other.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, in this performance, the two illegible character systems, along with the two porcine bodies, moved alongside and against each other, and thereby interanimated.

With the substitution of a static human body for a pig in "Cultural Animal," Xu Bing thus solved a major logistical problem: he only had to get one pig to do his bidding rather than two. He also introduced an interspecies aspect to the piece, though he inverted industrialized society's normative animate control relations of (human) subject over (animal) object by rendering the human static and passive and the pig active and alive. Stills from the video documentation of the performance show the pig mounting the human figure from behind, as well as nuzzling the mannequin on the face and pressing its neck against the sculpture's front arm. The possibility of a sexual act involving a human with a nonhuman animal raises the human-perspective specter of bestiality. In this transspecies encounter, still other possibilities are raised because of the animal's uncertain gendering and because its

sexual status, while undetermined, bears a peculiar intensity: pornography, queerness, and cultural and race mixing. In the work's video and photodocumentation, the animal's penetrative capacities are central, while the mannequin's own genitals are not rendered easily visible.

What significance should be applied to the apparent reversal of active human and passive animal? In this representation and performance, "the animal" cannot be so easily filled in by the "dead," "fake" figure, despite that figure's quadrupedal stance: it is templatically "human." If the traditions of human-animal encounter in representation and performance privilege or enhance the liveness or subjectivity of the human against the counterexample of the animal, then "Cultural Animal" scrambles given codes of reading and reception. In this work, the pig's Roman-alphabet nonsense characters brushed up against and eventually mounted the prone body of the mannequin, itself inscribed with false Chinese characters, thereby setting up a potential power dynamic of submissive and receptive Asianness as defined against beastly Western dominance. The entire scene, which was staged on a floor littered with open books, could be read as one of linguistic and sexual aggression of the "West" toward the "East," but let us not forget that the pig also had its tender approaches. What is more, both the sign systems used here were unstable, illegible, and hence conjured only a phantasmatic version of both "East" and "West" as read against and through each other.

"Reading" is an equal participant in the spectatorship of this performance. Xu Bing's nonsense words are commonly interpreted as scrambling received semiotic relations between East and West. While such a lexically dependent strategy might in itself seem a rather obvious rendering of the impossibility of cultural translation, when juxtaposed with the actors of the performance and their emergent actions, this scrambling simultaneously generates a possible critique of the ready recourse of human-animal renderings into symbolic certainties (or the ready assignation of passive mannequin to the "East" and penetrating pig to the "West"). What the pointed and productive restaging of otherwise common priorities makes possible here is a Deleuzian "becoming-animal": without the fixity of animal-human difference in place, the audience is provoked into the multiplicity of possible encounters of self and other, perhaps even of the dissolution of borders between animal and human and self and other.

Does the imprinting of nonsensical text and the intervention of ani-

mality really complicate the dyad of East and West in "Cultural Animal," where each faces the other? Xu Bing's work seems to partake of some critique of transnational exchange, particularly of Western hegemonic modes of representation. At the same time, he has espoused somewhat controversially conservative viewpoints that seem to attenuate a fully deconstructive and dialectical reading of "East" versus "West," a reading favored by Xiaoping Lin's positive review;⁴¹ he has shown no interest in launching a more-pointed critique of either U.S. or Chinese politics. As he said in an interview in 2008, "The old concept about art and government being at odds has changed. Now artists and the government are basically the same. All the artists and the government are running with development."⁴² In other words, both art and government for Xu Bing are aligned with the space of commerce and the market—or "development," to circle back to the rhetoric of pet neutering—which potentially smoothes over political frictions. At the same time, "Cultural Animal" raises questions about the connection between various forms of trans-encounters, including transnational, transgender, and transspecies.

Ultimately, the introduction of species difference in Xu Bing's work yields a yawning gap around the unresolved question of gender and sexuality, precisely around questions of the generic and gender. If Oshima's Max, for instance, is a blend between actual (if materialized through costume only) and figural chimpanzee, should there not be another layer of gender confusion between human/animal and actual/figure? Carla Freccero suggests there is; she takes up Derrida's engagement with his cat in his essay "L'animal que donc je suis." Freccero notes a degree of creative play between the biological sex and grammatical gender of Derrida's female cat (a noun that is grammatically gendered masculine), as well as shifts in Derrida's vulnerability and gendered relating to her.⁴³ In a critical scene during which his cat observes him naked, Derrida's anxious concerns about gender, masculinity, and sexuality emerge. Freccero notes that Derrida meanders in address between the masculine, generic *le chat* and the feminine, specific *la chatte*. Derrida thus genders the cat in multiple, potentially contradictory ways and invites the presumption that the cat's and his own gender are forcedly affected by the relationality between them.

I return here to the last chapter's invocation of Austin's "marriage with a monkey." To this I add the notion that the genericity of "a monkey" has certain consequences: a creature without a gender threatens

the smooth running of heteronormative society that relies on a robust organization of gender; and its sexed uncertainty threatens to bring a queer sexuality into the institution of marriage. I suggest that though Austin insisted in some sense that the performative verbs themselves (like *wed* in “I thee wed”) were fixed in purpose and meaning and thus robust, his attribution of “mockery” to an animality linked to discourses of colonial and species threat reveals, perhaps, a fear that the institution of marriage (or conventions of language, or rigidities of gender and sex, or divisions of race and nation) might be maligned and indeed transformed by a performative’s misuse. The insecurity I attribute to Austin here is equivalent to a recognition of the importance of iterative renewal for the performative itself to retain its normativity.⁴⁴

Thus, while considering Max’s “bad” costume may seem an indulgence or just a “nonserious” joke, Austin’s monkey example suggests that any decision about including or excluding genitals on a figured nonhuman animal cannot help but be loaded: species difference itself is fraught with anxieties about race and reproduction. Thus, transanimality can refer to gender and species with sexuality, geopolitics, and race in full scope. Otherwise put, an analysis of transanimality is enriched by identifying the quiet imputations of race that are so often shuttled along with the animal.

Transmogrification

While much has been written of histories in which nonwhite racialized men are often, due to racism, subject to symbolic castration and representation as nonhuman animals, less has been suggested of the possibility that the castrated animal is not only a substitute for but coextensive and forming meanings equally with castrated racialized men.⁴⁵ Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks*, in analyzing the post-colonial psychic state of a racialized subject, theorizes relations among animality, castration, and black (sexual) threat, and in so doing offers a condensed image of the social possibility of simultaneous *castration* and *phallic presence*, even *hypermasculinity*.⁴⁶ Given the sacrosanct importance of the penis or phallus, we might extend the concurrence of castration and phallic presence to the possibility that nongenitality could *impute* genitality or the threat of genitality’s eventual presence. But if the absence or presence can sometimes be intensified as a threat that

consolidates maleness, the pairing can also be attenuated in such a way that transsexuality emerges as curiously legible.

Writing about Michael Jackson—more the phenomenon than the person—Cynthia Fuchs analyzes the ways that race, gender identity, and sexuality all intervene to produce a sporadically present phallus in Jackson. Fuchs comments, “the problem of his penis remains . . . continually cited by his own choreographed crotch-grabbing. A sign of autoerotic sexuality (read: perverse, unproductive, and homosexual), his unseen penis resists visibility, that prevailing emblem of Western cultural Truth.”⁴⁷ In describing Jackson, Fuchs deliberately and perhaps provocatively uses the term *transsexual*. She does so not as a thesis about his lived experience, but rather as a diagnosis for the emergent sexed interstitiality of Jackson, an interstitiality that evokes phallic presence as often as it absences it, and that is surrounded by other kinds of body modification and illusion, including appearances by Jackson that uncannily approximate the stylings of Diana Ross.

Similarly suspending judgment about Jackson’s transsexuality, I would like to leaven Fuchs’s account with a consideration of the animal-animality that sat next to Jackson for most of his life and ask what place this animal-animality might have in his (sexualized) realization. While it might be a simple matter to attribute his affection and concern for certain specific nonhuman animals to an innocent, “child-like nature,” as allies did in the hope that it would be effective both as a defensive explanation amid the discursive intensity that surrounded allegations of pedophilia both in and outside the juridical sphere, it is productive to consider his animal interests on their own terms.

Among the most recognized of Jackson’s animal signs was the morphing black panther in his video “Black or White,” released in 1991 (his frequently photographed companion chimp, Bubbles, was another). In the video, a black panther walks out of a room, then transmogrifies into Jackson, who in the original version of the video goes on to dance with no musical accompaniment and to enact physical violence on inanimate objects, breaking windows, smashing a car windshield, setting a building on fire. Was the animal form of the black panther a reference to the Black Panther Party? The Black Panthers and the larger Black Power movements of the 1960s and 1970s have continued to echo within national “multicultural” and “post-racial” presents in the United States as the most iconic images of black nationalism and militancy, and so are a potent end to a video whose

lyrics “it don’t matter if you’re black or white” optimistically declare that race does not “matter.” In an archived interview with MTV filmed in 1999, part of a special event celebrating its “100 Greatest Videos,” Jackson explained:

I wanted to do a dance number [and] I told my sister Janet, I said, “You remind me of a black panther.” I said, “Why don’t you do something where you transform into a black panther and you transform into yourself again?” She said, “I like it,” but she didn’t go with it. . . . The two of us, we always think alike. So I did it. And in the dance, I said, “I want to do a dance number where I can let out my frustration about injustice and prejudice and racism and bigotry,” and within the dance I became upset and let go. I think at the time people were concerned with the violent content of the piece, but it’s, like, easy to look at. It’s simple.⁴⁸

Jackson seems to explain away as serendipitous (rather than premeditated) the nature of his arrival upon the black panther; and indeed, his choice of the animal may well have been so. But in performing as a black panther, Jackson admits that he “let go” and acted out his feelings of racism and injustice. “Letting go” means relaxing into a tendency, a placement, an embodiment, and detaching from some alienable thing. “Being” a black panther (or a Black Panther) permitted (a moment of) the impermissible, both for Jackson as a political figure impassioned by justice and for Jackson as a man whose masculinity was undeniably queer. But Jackson’s “letting go” itself conflates two becomings. The first is a human delivery of frustrated, reactive violence. The second is a turning into an animal that itself symbolizes or sublimates that frustration. Thus the panther—in its chromatic blackness and hence humanoid racialization, its species competence for smart pursuit and capture, and its capacity for violence upon other animals—embodied, stood in for, rather than took on, Jackson’s violent affective stances.⁴⁹ This is a signal moment, I suggest, of transfiguration as transubstantiation—for the critical shift is not merely of form, but of affect itself.

Trans-Connections

Returning to Fuchs’s assessment of the meandering symbolics of Michael Jackson and his missing phallus, we can widen the argument to include both the invocation of animality and animals via a shared

affectivity and Jackson’s gender-defying “transsexuality.” Transubstantiation succeeds, in my view, unless it is modeled on voluntaristic transfungibilities that are *already* considered proper to certain other, racialized nonwhite bodies. In the case of Xu Bing’s work, sexuality as a form of racialized, and nationalized, communication by humans and animals alike is revealed as a fiction, and there remains an obdurate impasse between these transspecies crossings. And indeed, fungibility is not always fantastical or whimsical, but can take on punitive and disciplinary effects; fungibility is precisely what frames Saidiya Hartman’s critique of the racialization of black bodies in the antebellum and postbellum South.⁵⁰

In the case of Max, the fictive chimpanzee in an animal suit in a fictional film, his transspecies identity is incontestable. Narratively, Max is a chimpanzee with unruly passions who is deeply attached to Margaret; visually, “Max” is a chimpanzee costume with no known sex and a somewhat disembodied voice, barely concealing the actor inside, who is of unknown sex, gender, and age. The standards of opacity applied to this actor are much lower than those applied to Rampling in character as Margaret. The consequences of reading the not-so-chimp chimp are manifold. Another layer is opened up; the chimp figure, which is already itself a complex blend of species, race, gender, and sexuality, animates a body without organs, releasing our determinative hold on the events in the film as the sincere construction of truth, and allowing surrealist ironies to unfold. What is transanimality here is not that we sometimes see the chimp as alternatively chimp and unskilled human actor, so much as the fact that the presence of this “flimsy chimp” can serve as a key that enables us to move outside and away from the overdetermined racialized and other spaces Max occupies, and to critically read the confluences by which he has been constructed.

In two successive coauthored works, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari describe what they call a “body without organs.”⁵¹ The body without organs is that body that actively refuses its own subjectivity by engaging the dis-ordering of its “organs.” In the body without organs, no given organ has merely one functionality, and the organism itself cannot be represented as an ordered system. Instead, the body without organs makes impossible *any* coercive systematicity by affirming an infinite functionality and interrelation of the “parts” within, “parts”

that can only be individuated by one of an infinite number of permutations of a body into "parts."⁵²

Deleuze and Guattari's body without organs essentially describes a *condition* of animate transsubstantiation. We can return to Austin's restrictive colorable "capacity" as a condition of the successful performative: materialization for Austin succeeds only when a function is not only present but presumed operative. Austin's early view of the performative, while illuminating for a skeletal understanding of the most discernible instances of materialization, is haunted and ultimately undone by its own animate monkey, which *has* a color, and which has, dare we say, infinite capacities to pair, to marry, to cosubstantiate.

Quite unlike Deleuze's "body without organs," the "animal without genitals" would seem to be a body-with-organs-without-genitals, that is, a body with organs from which the genitals have been extracted or pointedly neglected. Nevertheless, the "animal without genitals" has an affective valence that warrants closer attention. Just as biological research on organism systematicity is headed toward a recognition of more multiplicity, the animal-without-genitals marks or symbolizes a kind of affective impulse toward a human hope. At the same time, there is a repulsion away from a boundaryless being, for it reiterates the porosity of the very human-animal border. Thus, the animal-without-genitals *affirms* the body without organs, while carrying dramatically variant affective registers. The ghostly logic of the racialized castrated human male-present phallus explored by Fanon and Fuchs is perhaps why, alternatively, the racialized figurative animal that is deployed for purposes of human signification is a body *with* organs *without* genitals, since the (reproductive) body with organs *needs* genitals. Furthermore, affectivities, while they may help leverage narratives to a satisfying conclusion, also yield a result that is ambivalent about the abjection of animality in the face of the weakly solidified human, because the analogies are so vibrant and indeed vital.

To move even further to a generative account of transanimality, what of the transsubstantiation that *other* animals make possible? Can we look to the kinds of interspecies redefinitions of biology wrought in contemporary "dolly mixtures," to cite Sarah Franklin?⁵³ What sharedness of transsexuality is possible, and what transitions? The trans critic Eva Hayward's article "More Lessons from a Starfish: Prefixial Flesh and Transspeciated Selves" takes an innovative approach to

its own textual materialities in considering the potentials of starfish flesh (as evoked by a song by Antony and the Johnsons, "Cripple and the Starfish," released in 2000) to interrupt normative narratives of castration, amputation, and regrowth. Thinking of "cut" and its rhetorical and onomatopoeic effects and the ontologizing prefixes of *re-* and *trans-*, Hayward's essay is written as a "critical enmeshment," less a personal account than an "entangling within the stitches of ongoing processes."⁵⁴ Hayward looks to starfish as a kind of species partner in the sense of sharing a "sensate ontology." In this conception, limbs, as not merely absented or "lost" parts but rather as partners in a transspeciation, become otherwise. It seems to me that both Hayward and the song itself might suggest that rather than a penis being fetishized as the primary appendage, its significance dissolves in its removal into that of just one limb among many. In this account, the voluntary removal of sex organs leads to a *possible* kind of rejuvenation in a sense of completed or completing selfhood: in Hayward's very moving words, it is an articulate refusal of the forbidding materiality implicated in the discourse of the "absenting" of "native parts" that is often leveled against transsexuals: "transsexing is an act of healing."⁵⁵

Still, Hayward's essay might benefit from a more engaged consideration of disability politics, particularly given the use of the word *cripple* in the Antony and the Johnsons song. Claiming transsexing as healing would be more effective were it more closely tied to disability theory, especially given the pathologization against the shared motivations for the negativity leveled against the believed "monstrosity" of both amputees and transwomen. Like Robert McRuer, Hayward successfully invokes disability theory's complication of the negativity of dis-as loss, absence, and failure.⁵⁶ Given this relationship, to celebrate the agential transformation of trans cutting comes into tension with disability study's accounts of amputation, most of which are understood to be nonvoluntary; hence, Hayward could more fully consider the affective provocations of the song's deployment of the word *cripple*. This juxtaposition gets right to the heart of current debates around transness, because transsexuals, much like gays and lesbians, often are compelled to own a story that tells that they were "born" this way, in a body that needs to be "fixed" to reach true selfhood (such stories may be required, for instance, to be eligible for sexual reassignment surgery). But if we take seriously Franklin's assessment that there are ways in which biology is *made*, *not born*, then we should be cautious

about naively romanticizing what Hayward calls the “generative enactment of . . . healing.” Perhaps instead, the language of transsubstantiation might provide an alternative way to understand how bodies of all sorts undergo regimes of regulation, and also how they resist those regimes.

I end this chapter by invoking a short film, “Range,” screened at the San Francisco International LGBT Film Festival in 2006 as part of a curated selection of short films titled “Transfrancisco,” which juxtaposed rural masculinities (and potentially even transmasculinity) to the castration of animals. Made by the transgender filmmaker Bill Basquin, “Range” poetically pairs visual representations of white rural masculinities in agricultural countryside.⁵⁷ The film is composed of muted colors and sweeping landscapes in which human bodies are unexceptional and seemingly minor participants. An extensive voiceover about stewardship refers to the speaker’s interest in “leaving the land better than when you first came to it,” leaving open the question of the status of livestock on that land.

The film is marked by an extended scene showing the repetitive “cuttings” of young lambs at the end of a conveyor belt: the ewes are getting “tail docked,” and the male sheep are being castrated. Basquin has written that his films present a kind of ambivalence or resistance to queer readings; he understands his works as being “from a queer point of view without being explicitly queer in subject matter.”⁵⁸ At the same time, the castration he depicts in “Range” potentially ironizes a “portrait of quiet reckoning about family relationships and farming” as well as the trans filmmaker’s relation to reproduction and to masculinities.⁵⁹ “Range” stages its scene of “neutering” in rural North America and is an invocation of thwarted environmental responsibility and care, of the fragile, sometimes broken ties between entities who inhabit a shared landscape both inanimate to animate and animal to human. This film is marked by its studied *differential* biopolitics regarding the (sexed) animate nature of the co-construction of animals and humans.

In the conceptions offered in this chapter, several senses of “trans-” have been mobilized and put into conversation: transgender (living outside normative gender definition or undergoing a shift in gender identity), transmogrification (the changing of shape or form to something fantastical), translation (across languages), and transspecies (across species). Each of these terms suggests a movement or dyna-

mism, from one site to another, as in the sense of “across.” I made the case for a trans- theorizing that recognizes the distinctness of queer, but at the same time embraces the collaborative possibilities of thinking trans- alongside and across queerness. In analyzing a number of cultural productions and their (often hostile) articulations or imputations of transness, with the exception of Eva Hayward’s essay, this chapter worked at some distance from *actively claimed* (whether human or not) transgender and transsexual lives and identities. It did not seek to impose an uncritical or obligatory relation to the reproductive politics of neutering and spaying, which at so many levels have very little to do with human trans lives; indeed, such a pat analogy could be quite offensive if taken at face value. Yet this chapter sought to analyze and diagnose the cross-discursive connections already available and drawn between animals and humans, racial castration and biopolitical neutering and spaying, under a rubric of transmogrification sensitive to the complex politics of sex, gender, and sexuality. The coercive conceptual workings of these cultural productions and their way of crafting forms of cultural exile are premised on already marginal loci in gender, race, species, and sexuality matrices. Simultaneously, there are zones of possibility that work around and against such coercions, such as the analogic survival of transness that can always be purported back to the human.

Deleuze and Guattari’s “body without organs” is both honored and merely suggested in the examples elaborated in this chapter. This concept’s simultaneous limitation and promise is precisely that the genitals (or nongenitals) matter, but are not necessarily constrained by normative gender and sexuality. Even the “animals with/out genitals” possess a transmateriality that is characterized by a radical uncertainty, a destabilization of animacy categorizations that mean to keep “kinds” together, and a generative affectivity; but as Hayward reminds us, we should not be limited to thinking with and through the simplest analogies. And so this chapter might be thought of as an invitation to consider queer-trans animality within a more porous understanding of animacy, even in its politically most closed of circumstances, and not as a tired and fatal venue for human self-making but as a site of unpredictable investment for untraceable animate futurities.