

Animism Volume I

Edited by Anselm Franke

SternbergPress 

- 11 Much Trouble in the Transportation of Souls,
or: The Sudden Disorganization of Boundaries
Anselm Franke
- 54 Theses on the Concept of the Digital Simulacrum
Florian Schneider
- 57 Biometry and Antibodies Modernizing
Animation/Animating Modernity
Edwin Carels
- 75 Execution of Czolgosz, with Panorama
of Auburn Prison (1901)
Avery F. Gordon
- 81 Chasing Shadows
Santu Mofokeng
- 86 Angels Without Wings.
A conversation between Bruno Latour and Anselm Franke
- 97 Machinic Animism
Angela Melitopoulos and Maurizio Lazzarato
- 111 On Wanting to be an Animal: Human-Animal
Metamorphoses in Nietzsche and Canetti
Gertrud Koch
- 113 Still More Changes
Henri Michaux
- 116 Disney as a Utopian Dreamer
Oksana Bulgakowa
- 118 Disney
Sergei Eisenstein
- 127 Animated Origins, Origins of Animation
Brigid Doherty
- 132 The Uprising of Things
Vivian Liska
- 134 The Dangers of Petrification, or “The Work of Art
and the Ages of Mineral Reproduction”
Richard William Hill
- 137 “Les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux pillard”:
Raymond Roussel’s Animism of Language
Irene Albers
- 146 Assembly (Animism)
Agency
- 155 Animism meets Spiritualism:
Edward Tylor’s “Spirit Attack,” London 1872.
Erhard Schüttpelz

171	To Navigate, in a Genuine Way, in the Unknown Necessitates an Attitude of Daring, but not one of Recklessness (Movements Generated from the Magical Passes of Carlos Castaneda) <i>Joachim Koester</i>
172	“Uncle Snookum’s Astral Odditorium & Psychic Haberdashery”: Sun Ra & The Occult <i>Darius James</i>
179	On Atmosphere and a capital A <i>Bart De Baere</i>
185	Anima’s Silent Repatriation: Reconsidering Animism in the Contemporary World <i>Masato Fukushima</i>
193	Vital Phantasy <i>Didier Demorcy</i>
199	Animism and the Philosophy of Everyday Life <i>Michael Taussig</i>
203	Absentminded Wandering through an Indeterminate Maze of Intentionality <i>Philippe Pirotte</i>
215	Passionate Choreographies Mediatized. On Camels, Lions and their Domestication among the ‘Isāwa in Morocco <i>Martin Zillinger</i>
227	Exchanging Perspectives The Transformation of Objects into Subjects in Amerindian Ontologies <i>Eduardo Viveiros de Castro</i>
244	Artist Biographies
250	Author Biographies
253	Acknowledgements

Preface

How does the conceptual distinction between “nature” and “culture,” so typical of modernity, inform the perception of limits in artistic practice and visual culture? *Animism* interrogates two key processes in aesthetics—animation and conservation, movement and stasis—against the backdrop of the anthropological term “animism” and its historical implications. For what is mere fiction in modern aesthetics, for so-called “animist practices” is actual relations. What is commonly referred to as the most “fictional” of imaginary productions—the animated universes of film, the effect of the “life-like” in artistic objects and images, the creation of fantastic worlds in which objects are alive and things can speak—then assumes a sudden “documentary” value, by way of which the question of “relationality,” which also played a significant role in recent art history, can assume a new qualitative dimension.

This project had begun to take shape in Antwerp in 2006. The ongoing discussions were extended to Bern, Vienna, and Berlin, places where subsequent versions of the exhibition will be hosted in the course of the next few years—one building upon the other. It is the result of a collaborative effort between artists, writers, curators, and institutions. It was shaped through other projects, exhibitions, and collaborations, and many have given us the opportunity to further discuss the issues at stake in artistic and academic contexts during the process of the development. We wish to thank all of those for the imprint they left on the project.

The present publication accompanies the exhibition in Antwerp and Bern. The publication does not document the exhibition, but rather translates it into the medium of a book. It seeks to lay a foundation from which further questions can be asked. It shifts between different registers and vocabularies, mainly, aesthetics and anthropology. The vast majority of the contributions have been conceived in response to the project, complemented by first-time translations of relevant texts.

We’d like to thank all artists, authors, organizers, and collaborators. We’d also like to thank Sternberg Press, the translators and copy editors, and the graphic design studio NODE Berlin Oslo.

–*The Curatorial Team*

Much Trouble in the Transportation of Souls, or The Sudden Disorganization of Boundaries

Anselm Franke

For most people who are still familiar with the term “animism” and hear it in the context of an exhibition, the word may bring to mind images of fetishes, totems, representations of a spirit-populated nature, tribal art, pre-modern rituals, and savagery. These images have forever left their imprint on the term. The expectations they trigger, however, are not what this project concerns. *Animism* doesn’t exhibit or discuss artifacts of cultural practices considered animist. Instead, it uses the term and its baggage as an optical device, a mirror in which the particular way modernity conceptualizes, implements, and transgresses boundaries can come into view.

The project interrogates the organization of these boundaries through images, attempting to fill the space of a particular imaginary and phantasy within the dominant aesthetic economy with a concurrent historical reality. It does so because an exhibition about animism that upholds a direct signifying relation to its subject is doubly impossible: Animism is a practice of relating to entities in the environment, and as such, these relations cannot be exhibited; they resist objectification. Putting artifacts in the place of the practice gives rise to a different problem: Whatever way an object may have been animated in its original context, it ceases to be so in the confines of a museum and exhibition framework by means of a dialectical reversal inscribed into these institutions, which de-animates animate entities and animates “dead” objects. Instead, this exhibition attempts to imagine what a quasi-anthropological museum of the modern boundary practices might look like. The exhibition sees animism as node, a knot that, when untied, will help unpack the “riddle of modernity” in new ways, helping us to understand modernity as a mode of classifying and mapping the world by means of partitions, by a series of “Great Divides.”

The cultural particularity of modernity derives from the naturalization of these divisions and separations; that is, from their appearance as distinctions a priori—as if natural and outside history—which pervade all levels of symbolic production, with far-reaching effects on aesthetics and language. The positivism of the modern description of the world relies on the imagination of a negative, which is the result of the same divisions, and becomes equally naturalized. It was through the idea of animism that modernity conceived a good part of this negative, condensing that imagination in one term. Of particular importance for our project is to see this imaginary not merely as a fiction, but also a fiction made real.

Animism is a term coined by nineteenth-century social scientists, particularly the anthropologist Edward Tylor, who aimed to articulate a theory on the origins of religion, and found it in what was to him the



Chris Marker and Alain Resnais
Les Statues meurent aussi, 1953
 Video (original: 16 mm), 30 min
 Courtesy Argos Films and Présence Africaine

primordial mistake of primitive people who attributed life and person-like qualities to objects in their environment.¹ Tylor's theory was built on the widespread assumption of the time that primitive people were incapable of assessing the real value and properties of material objects. Animism was explained by its incapacity to distinguish between object and subject, reality and fiction, the inside and outside, which led to the projection of human qualities onto objects. The concept was inscribed into an evolutionary scheme from the primitive to the civilized, in which a few civilizations had evolved, while the rest of the world's people, described by Tylor as "tribes very low in the scale of humanity," had remained animist, thus effectively constituting "relics" of an archaic past. This evolutionary scheme would soon be taken up by psychology in its own terms, asserting that every human passes through an animist stage in childhood, which is characterized by the projection of its own interior world onto the outside.

The colonialist connotations of the term have led some to suggest that we abandon it once and for all. This has been necessary for a related term, the "primitive." But in animism, there is more at stake than in the modern discourse on its primitive other, although they overlapped at crucial points. The challenge in using the concept today is to maintain a perspective that does justice both to non-modern practices that animism presumably characterized, and to premises of modernity from which it originated. For this reason, one needs to bear the many dimensions of the term in mind and allow them enter into a constellation akin to a montage.

The first dimension is the animism of the anthropologists of the nineteenth century, like Tylor; the "old" animism of modernity, a category in which Western imagination and phantasy, politics, economy, ideology, scientific assumptions, and subjectivities fuse. Between this

"When men die, they enter history. When statues die, they enter art. This botany of death is what we call culture." *Les Statues meurent aussi*, which was censored for more than a decade, was commissioned by the literary review and publishing house, Présence Africaine, which was set up in 1947 in Paris as a quarterly literary review for emerging and important African writers. Présence Africaine's publications signaled a new, post-colonial status for French and francophone thought, embracing the notion of *négritude*. *Les Statues meurent aussi* strives to connect the death of the statue with the rise in the commercialization of African art.

1 Edward Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 2 vols., (London: John Murray, 1871).

2 Notably the frequent indigenous uprisings in Ecuador since 1990, which evolve around struggles for the legalization of land holdings, and in which animism is posited as a social and political alternative to neoliberal economic reforms.

"old" animism and the cultural practices that it sought to describe and classify, we find a gap marked by colonial subjugation, appropriation, and misrecognition. The practices at stake are ones that need to be understood independently of their description by anthropologists, although the two have, of course, become historically entangled. There is also a "new animism," which proclaims to have come closer to the realities of the cultures in question, which seeks to take "animist" cultural practices seriously (and often struggles to come to terms with the enduring assumptions underlying the old), considering forms of relational knowledge, and, above all, *practices* different from those predominant in modernity. This distinction between "old" animism and "new" animism, between the animism Western anthropologists conceptualized and what they referred to, is mirrored in the relation of so-called indigenous societies to the term: While many resent the use of the term for its colonial connotations and accusations of savagery, it is also increasingly utilized in political struggles of indigenous groups within the political structures inherited from colonial modernity.²

And on yet another register, there is the animism *within* modernity's image culture, as an aesthetic economy, and a way of imagining, which gives expression to collective desires and articulates commonsensical schemes, determining the possibilities of recognizing other subjectivities, and how life processes can be conceptualized. On this plane, it is important to distinguish between an economy of images that is a symptomatic reaction to the effects of modernity, a compensatory displacement and transgression of the boundaries and fragmentation modernity inflicts, and the critical reflection of those very borders in art. As this distinction can never be absolute, it must remain in question and permanently renewed. Throughout the book and the exhibition it accompanies, these different dimensions are put under scrutiny.

For the moderns, animism is a focal point where all differences are conflated. This conflation makes for the negativity of animism, which therefore breeds powerful images and anxieties: the absorption of differ-

At the center of Harun Farocki's video *Transmission* is the touching of stone, as he makes portraits of monuments all over the world with which people interact in performative exchanges of sorts and with different purposes, from the Vietnam Memorial in Washington to the Devil's Footprint in the Frauenkirche in Frankfurt. In *Ein Tag im Leben des Endverbraucher*, Farocki constructs the twenty-four hours of a day of an average consumer through German advertising films from forty years ago.



Harun Farocki
Ein Tag im Leben der Endverbraucher, 1993
 Video, 44 min
 Courtesy the artist



Transmission, 2009
 Video, 43 min
 Courtesy the artist

ences is a womb-phantasy endowed with horrific as well as redemptive qualities, strong enough, however, to yield ever-new separations, ever new Great Divides. For the so-called animists, however, animism has nothing to do with the conflation of differences, but with their negotiation in ways that, more recently, have also become of increasing importance for the former moderns. For the moderns, the animation of things



Anonymous (geographical origin: Adis Abeba, Ethiopia)
Assembly of the animals, 1965–1975
 Oil on linen
 Courtesy the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam

destroyed the subject, and only by the destruction of animism, and of animated things, can the free subject of modernity be constituted.

What Makes Modernity Modern?

What does it mean to be modern? A categorical distinction between nature and society, social scientists generally assume. Only they differentiate between facts, the universal laws of nature and matter, and cultural symbolic meanings or social relations. The knowledge of the indisputable, universal truths of nature is acquired through objectification, by distinguishing what is inherent to the object from what

African Judaism and Christianity were enriched by writings not included in the Hebrew bible, such as *The Book of Jubilees*. *The Book of Jubilees*, also known as *The Little Genesis*, is thought of having been composed some time between 175 and 140 BCE, and it is preserved in the Ethiopian language Ge'ez, which is still the liturgical language of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. From *The Book of Jubilees* we learn that before the Fall, animals were able to communicate with each other in a “common tongue.” It was only on their expulsion from the Garden of Eden that the mouths of cattle and birds and of “everything that walks or moves, were shut.” The picture by an anonymous Ethiopian painter invokes a tradition of church-trained artists who follow and actualize century-old conventions to this date. The line that separates the communion of animals in the upper half of the picture from the lower half inevitably also calls forth speculations and associations about the mythical origins of the modern divide between culture and nature, between the communion mediated by social contracts and the “state of nature” in which every creature, in its struggle for survival, is ultimately at war with others.

Tom Nicholson's *Monument for the Flooding of Royal Park* is a work about colonial Australian history, telling the story of the expedition by the infamous explorers Burke and Wills who started in Melbourne in 1860 to cross the interior of the continent for the first time. Until today, the numerous monuments that were erected for these two men continue to physically impose themselves in public space. *Monument for the Flooding of Royal Park* is a proposal for an imaginary monument referring to a part of the history that is usually left untold—the death of the two explorers through their misuse of a particular plant, nardoo, a desert fern prepared as food by Aboriginals. Burke and Wills failed to add an essential step in the preparation of nardoo that would gradually lead to their death. The proposed monument consists of the temporary flooding, and subsequent growing of nardoo in Royal Park in the center of Melbourne creating a red field of nardoo plants.



Tom Nicholson
Monument for the flooding of Royal Park, 2009
 Inkjet prints
 Courtesy the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne

³ Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 99–100.

belongs to the knowing subject and has been projected onto the object. What is not objectified remains unreal and abstract. Only what can be objectified has a right to be called “real”; everything else enters the realm of “culture,” the subject's interior, or “mere” image, representation, passion, fiction, fancy, fantasy. It is this dissociation of the subjective from the realm of nature and things that simultaneously constitutes the self-possessing subject, liberated from the chains of superstition, phantasy, and ignorance. The very act of division, the gesture of separation, produces at once an objectified nature composed of absolute facts and a free, detached subject: the modern, Cartesian self. Modernity is modern insofar as the destruction of superstition and its embodiments (exemplary in the figure of the fetish) resulted in the establishment of a triumphal world of indisputable facts brought to light by the power of reason applied in the sciences. As long as objects were endowed and animated by social representations and subjective projections, they annihilate the subject; only the destruction of those ignorant ties emancipates the subject and raises it to the status of the “free” modern self.

In his several books that engage with the modern divide between nature and culture, Bruno Latour describes the historical scenarios that can serve as a backdrop scenography to our understanding of the role of animism in the constitution of modernity. The bifurcation of nature and culture, and the subsequent purification of each domain (by way of objectification), Latour asserts, make moderns “see double.” Every modern must take sides, and perceive the world either from the side of the object (where everything is fact), or of the subject (were everything is “made,” constructed), either from nature with its determinate, indisputable, and eternal laws (to which science provides access), or from the society of social agents who can construct their world freely (in politics and culture); but each perspective sees the two domains of nature and culture as absolutely separate, from mutually exclusive points of view that one can not occupy at the same time without falling “back” into animism and an archaic past. The modern idea of animism must appear then as a necessary result springing from the separation between nature and culture, as a category that allowed the moderns to name those who did not make the same distinction, those who assigned social roles to non-human things, and as a category that made them imagine the collapse of the boundaries they had installed.

*For Them, Nature and Society, signs and things, are virtually co-extensive. For Us they should never be. Even though we might still recognize in our own societies some fuzzy areas in madness, children, animals, popular culture and women's bodies (Donna Haraway), we believe our duty is to extirpate ourselves from those horrible mixtures.*³

It is this extirpation, the ongoing separation and “purification” of the two domains of subjects and objects, that characterizes the process and progress of modernization as such, which received its canonical formulation by the thinkers of the Enlightenment and the positivist, rationalist sciences. “[The] Enlightenment's program was the disenchantment of the world. It wanted to dispel myths, to overthrow phantasy with knowledge,” write Adorno and Horkheimer in *Dialectics of Enlight-*

enment. They continue: “The disenchantment of the world means the extirpation of animism.” The price paid by the moderns for cutting off their social ties to nature was that this nature, together with its social representations, lost its meaning; what they gained was the belief in the universality of their knowledge, and, above all, the freedom to manipulate and mobilize nature in ways unthinkable in pre-modern contexts.



Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven
Stranger than Life, 2009–2010
Video stills
Courtesy the artist and Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp



Anne-Mie van Kerckhoven has been working with the image-space situated right under the surface of the representations of women in mass media, structured by the relation between sex and technology. Her imagery explores layers of deep memory that bear the force to collectivize private interiority. She investigates the dynamic forces of language, and the politics in the aesthetics of ecstasy and the obscene.

The moderns, Latour tells us, are literally homeless as they live in a contradictory world composed of a “unifying but senseless nature,” while on the other, they experience a multiplicity of cultural representations “no longer entitled to rule objective reality.”

The world had been unified, and there remained only the task of convincing a few last recalcitrant people who resisted modernization—and if this failed, well, the leftovers could always be stored among those “values” to be respected, such as cultural diversity, tradition, inner religious feelings, madness, etc. In other words, the leftovers would be gathered in a museum or a reserve or a hospital and then be turned into more or less collective forms of subjectivity. Their conservation did not threaten the unity of nature since they would never be able to return to make a claim for their objectivity and request a place in the only real world under the only real sun.⁴

The Great Divides

The Great Divide is what separates modern and premodern societies, positing civilization on one side of the abyss, and the primitive and archaic on the other.

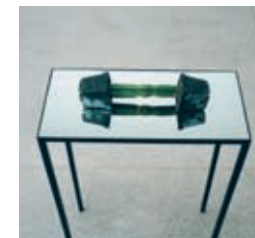
In order to understand the Great Divide between Us and Them we have to go back to that other Great Divide between humans and nonhumans [...]. In effect, the first is the exportation of the second.⁵

That the internal (nature / culture) and the external (modern/pre-modern) Great Divide were mirroring each other would also mean that they were upheld by largely the same techniques: The people who found themselves on the other side of the external Great Divide would be subject to the same protocols of objectification as a nature rendered objec-

⁴ Bruno Latour, *War of the Worlds: What about Peace?*, trans. Charlotte Bigg (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2002), 9.

⁵ Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 97.

Many of Klaus Weber’s works are reflections on the nodes between bodily perception (nature) and states of mind (culture), for which he frequently turns to the borders between human and vegetative and animal life. He explores bio-chemical aspects of social life and subverts normative perceptions as well as understandings of art by transferring them into the registers of other-than-human forms of life, and inscribes them into systems of intoxication. *Double Cactus* is a piece consisting of two San Pedro (*Trichocereus pachanoi*) plants, which contain mescaline, grafted together at the top end, thus reversing the very direction of grows. Mescaline was first synthesized in 1919, and is best known through the Peyote cactus, which was used in ancient Mexico and is a vital part of the ceremonies of today’s Native American Church.



Klaus Weber
Doppelkaktus, 2006
2 grafted San Pedro cactuses,
blued iron, mirror
Courtesy the artist

tive in the laboratory. The resulting quest for symmetry is what gave birth to modern anthropology, which had to qualify itself within the ruling milieu of the rationalist, positivistic sciences. Tylor’s conception of animism therefore was firmly based in an objectivist rationalism: Since the people and culture in question did not make the same categorical distinction between nature and culture, since they treated objects as if they possessed the capacity for perception, communication, and agency, Tylor could conceive of animism as a “belief,” as an epistemological error, and could locate his primitive “origin” of religion there. Nonetheless, there needed to be a supplement, since the cultures in question were still human, which meant they could not be objectified in similar ways to objects of nature. Since Western ontology itself and its dualism were far from being in question at this point, however, the cultures on the other side of the Great Divide had to be inscribed into an evolutionary scheme; they had to become “pre-modern.” Thus, Tylor located his animists among the “lower races,” and “savages.” But this evolutionary scheme was not his invention; the “backwardness” of non-modern cultures had been a common conception as early as the sixteenth century in the context of the emergence of Western modernity and mercantilist capitalism. All that Tylor did was clothe it in a scientific narrative. Animism was thus progressively inscribed in a set of imaginary oppositions that enforced and legitimized Western imperial modernity, constituting a spatial-geographic “outside,” and a primitive, evolutionary “past.”

Animism, much like the category of the “primitive,” was thus not so much a description of a social order of a past archaic or present primitive form of culture, but an expression of the need and desire to find them. The modern conception of animism says much less about those it presumably described objectively, than about modernity and the distinctions that upheld its cosmography. Animism and the primitive were much sought for mirrors, by means of which modernity could affirm itself in the image of alterity. In the heyday of European colonialism, the invention of a non-existent unity of the animist primitive along an imaginary historical arrow of progress constituted a key to legitimizing the actual subjugation of the colonized as much as it was necessary to provide the moderns with an image that could confirm their identity. It mattered little whether the denigration was reversed and instead idealized as a “paradisiac state of nature” (which can switch at any moment into the state of nature as the brutal struggle for survival beyond any social contracts), as compensation for the evils of modernity, or liberation from the constraints of civilization.

The Space of Death and the Theater of Negativity

As much as that image of animist primitives and their savagery unified the “rest” on the modern’s side of the Great Divide, it inflicted terror on those locked inside of it. Imaginary appropriation licensed real subjugation; the objectivist “tyranny of the signifier” that had enthroned enlightened reason would enact the savagery it had imputed to its Others. The flipside of the disenchanting, static, enlightened realm of objective facts is equally imaginary, that darkness as of yet untouched by the light of reason. The regime of positivist signification sees its opposite in

“wildness,” just as the bifurcation of nature and culture finds its negation in animism. The result, in both cases, is the creation of a space of negativity. “Wildness challenges the unity of the symbol, the transcendent totalization binding the image to that which it represents. Wildness pries open this unity and in its place creates slippage. [...] Wildness is the death space of signification,”⁶ writes anthropologist Michael Taussig:

This space of death has a long and rich culture. It is where the social imagination has populated its metamorphizing images of evil and the underworld: in the Western tradition Homer, Virgil, the Bible, Dante, Hieronymos Bosch, the Inquisition, Rimbaud, Conrad's heart of darkness; in northwest Amazonian tradition, zones of vision, communication between terrestrial and supernatural beings, putrification, death, rebirth, and genesis, perhaps in the rivers and land of maternal milk bathed eternally in the subtle green light of coca leaves. With European conquest and colonization, these spaces of death blend into a common pool of key signifiers binding the transforming culture of the conquerer with that of the conquered. But the signifiers are strategically out of joint with what they signify. “If confusion is the sign of the times,” wrote Artaud, “I see at the root of this confusion a rupture between things and words, between things and the ideas and signs that are their representation.”⁷

In his seminal study of the rubber boom in the Putuyamo region in Amazonas, Taussig describes how, through the arrival of the colonial regime and capitalist exploitation, this imaginary death space was systematically turned into a reality. It is this passage from the imaginary to reality, the process through which images turn into operational maps by means of which we understand, rule and ultimately, create a world that this project, in seeking to explore the imaginary and the historicity of animism, must focus on.

In the death space created at the modern colonial frontier, the imagery (the social representations and the connections they uphold with the world) of the destroyed society and its cosmography fuses with the imagery of the conquering world, creating restless hybrids through which, in discontinuity, continuity and memory are preserved.

The imagery brought to the colonial space of death by the Europeans has its own distinct European genealogy. The extirpation of animisms in the colonial world was preceded by the extirpation of animisms within the West: The imagination of the death space has been shaped by the struggle for Christianization, by images of martyrdom and the experiences of the witch hunt and the Inquisition, which produced a “theater of negativity”, in which the European imaginary of evil was born. This theater would find ceaseless continuation in the Enlightenment and secular modernity, in the progressive exorcisms of all states of mind that resisted the Christian, and later, the modern discontinuity between humans and nature.

Within Europe, the division of the modern cosmography into an imaginary black and white, night and light, was enacted as a progressive frontier. The boundary of the modern world generated an imagery at its internal margins correlative to the colonial death space, but yet articulated in more familiar morphologies of the “night of the world” –

6 Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1987), 219.

7 Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man*, 10.



These works on paper consist of pages from the Vatican daily *Osservatore Romano* featuring articles on modern life and morality overlaid with old images of the Apocalypse, the Last Judgment and the Expulsion from Eden as well as engravings of the Inquisition. The horrors of hell interpreted by the Old Masters become here the illustration of ecclesiastical news. Ferrari's collages refer to the historical role of Christian institutions in the colonizing of the Americas and the continuity of terror in later forms of suppression such as the military dictatorships.

8 Michel Foucault, *History of Madness* (London: Routledge, 2006), xxix.

what much later would become the “unconscious”. This space is populated by dismembered bodies, by fragmentation, scenarios of disintegration, and the like, providing a monstrous mirror to objectification, discipline, mechanistic fragmentation, and political terror. The unreal, delirious, diabolic night of darkness created by the empire of enlightened reason, however, was always also a space of transformation and transgressive fantasies, as Taussig describes in the work mentioned above; a space of heightened, even delirious animations and sensuous, mimetic ecstasies. Both aspects shaped the imaginary that would later find its conceptual expression in the concept of animism.

The Modern Boundary Replicated

The logic of the Great Divide would find another correlate in the exemplary institution of modernity, the asylum and psychiatry, and the fantasy of animism as the conflation of the modern distinctions would once again be a key accusation that sustained the power of the institutional machine. Michel Foucault wrote a history of this Great Divide, separating the normal from the pathological, reason from unreason in modernity. There are, in his exposé in the *History of Madness*, several clues to the working of the modern boundary regime. He attempts to write the history of madness starting from the point *not* of the later imaginary of indifference, but where madness and reason were still un-separated, where the experience of madness was not yet differentiated, not yet marked by a boundary that cut it off. He attempts to return to the gesture of partition, the caesura that creates the distance between reason and unreason in the first place, the original grip by which reason confined unreason in order to wrest its secrets, its truth, away from it.

*We could write a history of limits—of those obscure gestures, necessarily forgotten as soon as they are accomplished, through which a culture rejects something which for it will be the exterior; and throughout its history, this hollowed out void, this white space by means of which it isolates itself, identifies it as clearly as its values. For these values are received, and maintained in the continuity of history; but in the region of which we could speak, it makes its essential choices, operating the division which gives a culture the face of its positivity.*⁸

What is most relevant in Foucault's description for the present context is that there arises in it an explanation how the logic of partition creates the space of silence of an exchange being brought to a halt, that is being filled by the monological discourses and institutions congruent to the division; he asserts that these discourses and institutions are indeed the result of the primary partition, spanning and administering the very abyss that made them possible. The partition lines of the Great Divides, it seems, must be replicated on different scales without which their management and overall organization would not hold together: They must run through the interior of each subject, through the body, the family, the nation, through modern culture at large, and finally, through humankind. This replication on various scales helps us see more clearly that none of the scissions remain absolutely static; indeed, they must be

MENSAJE «URBI ET ORBI» DEL SANTO PADRE JUAN PABLO II EN LA SOLEMNIDAD DE LA NAVIDAD, 25 DE DICIEMBRE DE 2000

Cristo ha venido a traernos la paz



"El Infierno", postigo derecho del tríptico "El Jardín de las Delicias", detalle, El Bosco

Pío XII: el martirio del silencio

Sólo poniéndose en el plano de la fe se puede valorar correctamente su actuación

Emilia Paola PACELLI

«Tace aut loquere meliora attendo... «Calla o di algo que sea mejor que el silencio», reza una famosa consignación atribuida a las palabras más ricas, las más densas de sabiduría, más ajenas de Saboturia, con S mayúscula, que vienen inevitablemente a la mente cuando se reflexiona, con ánimo recto y juicio objetivo, sobre el llamado «silencio» —o, si se quiere, «silencios»— que algunos, como es sabido, imputan a Pío XII.

Y no por azar queremos referirnos aquí a la Saboturia: porque es imposible valorar correctamente y encuadrar en su justa perspectiva la actuación y el magisterio del Papa Pacelli sin tener en cuenta un dato imprescindible: esa soberana visión teológica de la Iglesia, de la historia y del mundo que, orientando desde dentro las directrices de su pontificado, constituye su estrado sólido, unitario, presentando al mismo tiempo la clave para una exacta lectura y comprensión. Visión teológica, como explica el cardenal Siri, «que es esencial para alcanzar de modo objetivo el máximo de verdad y, por tanto, de luz en el camino a seguir», «visión de fe, llevada a las últimas y justas consecuencias, [...] iluminada por la presencia de Dios» y que «conviene subrayar», precisamente por ser auténtica, no es absolutamente sinónimo de leja-



do en la acción más rigurosa para neutralizar la tentación de un «gesto clamoroso y teatral», que ciertamente daría satisfacción, pero de efectos catastróficos por sus costes humanos, para rechazar, es decir —como se expresó monseñor Valerian Magnifici—, «el camino del aplauso» y elegir «muy sabiamente... el camino del deber».

Pero, hay situaciones particulares en la historia de los hombres en las que las condenas públicas o las vehementes invectivas de los profetas, mucho más fáciles y gratificantes frente a sí mismos y frente al mundo, lejos de ser de alguna utilidad o ayuda, más bien resultan completamente perjudiciales, en cuanto causa potencial de indecibles sufrimientos para muchos seres humanos y, por tanto, inexcusables ante Dios.

«El Papa, de pie junto a mí, me escuchaba emocionado y conmovido; alzó las manos al cielo y me dijo: "Diga a todos, a todos los que pueda, que el Papa agoniza por ellos y con ellos. Dignos que muchas veces he pensado en fulminar con la excomunión el nazismo, en denunciar ante el mundo civil la bestialidad del exterminio de los judíos. Hemos escuchado amenazas gravísimas de represalias no contra nuestra persona, sino contra los pobres hijos que se encuentran bajo el dominio nazi. Por diversos trámites, nos han llegado encarecidas recomendaciones para que la Santa Sede no tome una actitud histórica. Después de muchas lágrimas y muchas oraciones, he llegado a la conclusión de que una protesta de mi parte no sólo no habría ayudado a nadie, sino que habría suscitado las iras más fa-



Svásticas nazis al sol, 1935, fotografía del archivo Halton Getty.

León Ferrari
L'Osservatore Romano, 2001-2007
Collages on paper
Courtesy the artist

negotiated and replicated permanently. Finally, their logic becomes implicit within the cognitive mapping of the world (“an obscure gesture,” which constitutes the positive and negative, the social implicit and the explicit), and in order to describe them without operating within their registers, one must return to the point before the scission, before the de-coupling of elements such as body and mind, subject and object, humans and nonhumans, reason and unreason in order to think their entanglement and unity. In this lies the potential significance of animism beyond its symptomatic, pathologized articulation as a transgressive phantasy where differences conflate. For there are, in the practices referred to as animist, indeed relations that constitute experiences of difference not marked by the proliferating Great Divides.

Foucault’s history of the separation that gave rise to the modern institution of psychiatry also entails an aspect relevant to the question of relationality and difference. The relation established by the modern discourses to the absolute differences they postulate is monological: psychiatry speaks *about* madness, not *with* madness. Madness is objectified; what the psychiatrist speaks is the language of objective facts, which can no longer account for subjective experiences. Indeed, key symptoms of modern pathologies are a response to such objectification, which is experienced as the threat of petrification and immobilization.

The boundaries of all Great Divides stir not only scientific interest, but are populated by anxieties in the form of images, figures, the threat of mimetic infections, in which the order of rationality is always put at risk, and defended by an extension of its rule. The modern subject, in its laboratory situations deprived of dialogic relatedness, becomes armored in defense of its unity, and this defense is symptomatically displaced into the border-imagery. The anxiety about the border itself is what defines the morphology and symbolic economy of its images—and these images become templates for the inscription of otherness. The threat of machinic dismemberment is displaced into the anxiety of the body given over to the fluid and fragmentary, and to emergent relational subjectivities, against which the subject builds up an “armor of anaesthetization” (Susan Buck-Morrs) that upholds its unity in a reiterated gesture of defense. These “Others” are the symptomatic articulation of the rationalist boundaries; they encompass in the interior the so-called unconscious, the sensuous, emotional, and sexual, and in the exterior, the racial other, the subaltern.

Whelped in the Great Divides, the principal Others to Man, including his “posts,” are well documented in ontological breeding registries in both past and present Western cultures: gods, machines, animals, monsters, creepy crawlies, women, servants and slaves, and noncitizens in general. Outside of the security checkpoint of bright reason, outside the apparatuses of reproduction of the sacred image of the same, these “others” have a remarkable capacity to induce panic in the centers of power and self-certainty. Terrors are regularly expressed in hyperphobias and hyperphobias, and examples of this are no richer than in the panics roused by the Great Divide between animals (lapdogs) and machines (laptops) in the early twenty-first century C.E. Technophilias and technophobias vie with organophilias and organophobias, and taking sides is not left to chance.⁹



León Ferrari
L'Osservatore Romano, 2001 – 2007
Collages on paper
Courtesy the artist

⁹ Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 10.

Jan Švankmajer is internationally known for his animation films, among the best-known are his version of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* from 1988. Švankmajer’s surreal, Kafkaesque, nightmarish and yet humorous journeys into the unconscious are populated by things and hybrid figures that lead uncanny lives of their own. In parallel to his filmmaking, Švankmajer has always produced artworks and objects, ranging from drawing and collage, to sculptures, ceramics and tactile objects, which equally inhabit the borderlines of familiar physiognomic worlds.



Jan Švankmajer
The Power of a Request, 1990
Mixed media
Courtesy Athanor – Film Production Company, LLC

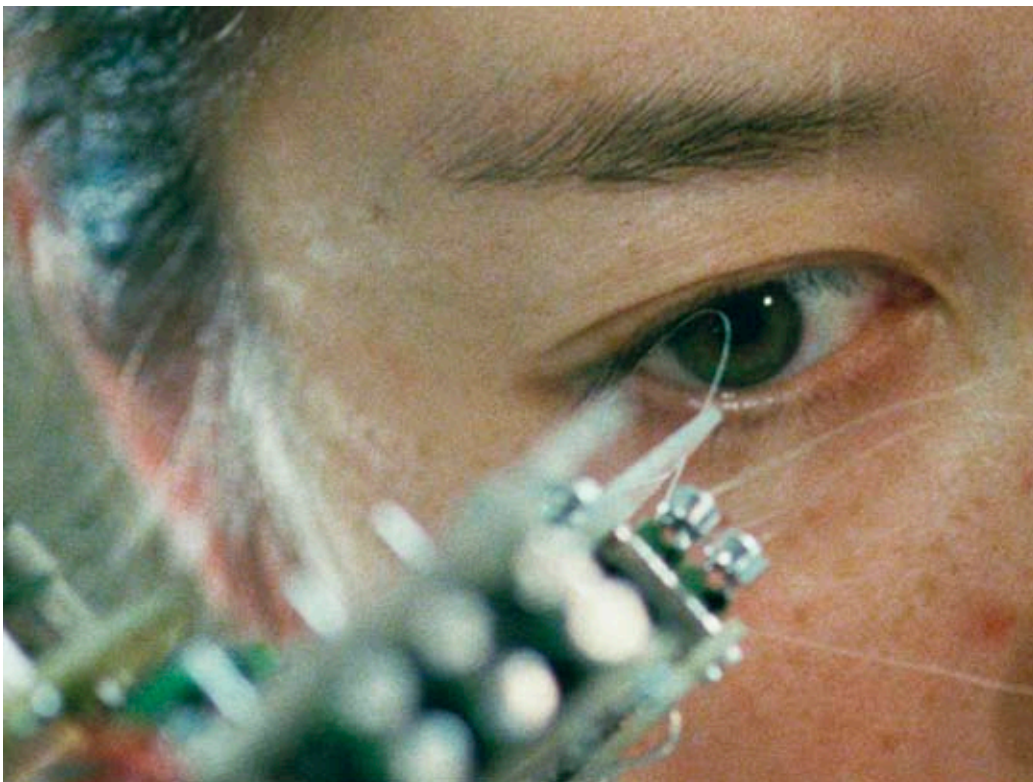
Life

The backdrop against which to understand the nineteenth-century conception of animism is ultimately the partition of life from non-life, and its many offsprings and differentiations. The distinction between life and non-life is perhaps the most fundamental one in modernity, explicitly as well as implicitly qualifying its notions of objectivity and the laws of nature, the divisions between subjects and objects, material and immaterial, human and non-human. It is, at the same time, the most unstable of divisions, having an instability that finds its expression in bioethical debates, technophobias, and the gothic imaginary and unique importance the experience of the “uncanny” holds in modern aesthetics as a borderline condition in which the inanimate turns out as animate and vice versa; and which, in Freud’s canonical interpretation, has consequently been explained as a “return” of animistic convictions.

For anyone undertaking a genealogical study of the concept of “life” in our culture, one of the first and most instructive observations to be made is that the concept never gets defined as such. And yet, this things that remains indeterminate gets articulated and divided time and again, through a series of caesurae and oppositions that invest it with a decisive strategic function in domains as apparently distant as philosophy, theology, politics, and –only later– medicine and biology. That is to say, everything happens as if, in our culture, life were what cannot be defined, yet, precisely for this reason, must be ceaselessly articulated and divided.¹⁰

In our culture, man has always been thought of as the articulation and conjunction of a body and a soul, of a living thing and a

¹⁰ Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 13.



Daria Martin
Soft Materials, 2004
 16 mm film, 10 min 30 sec
 Courtesy Maureen Paley, London

Soft Materials by Daria Martin shows an encounter between machines and humans. This video work was shot in the Artificial Intelligence Lab at the University of Zurich where scientists research “embodied artificial intelligence.” What looks like an extraordinary choreography is a laboratory process through which the robots acquire new functions by interacting with human bodies. The woman and the men in the laboratory are highly trained in movement and body awareness. These performers shed skins of soft fabric, bearing their joints like the frank structure of a machine, and then, naked, they perform a series of dances with the robots. Creating intimate relationships that are in turn tender, funny and eerie, they bend flexible human fantasy around tough materials. The film provokes speculative responses around the notorious question of “man and machine,” the animate and the inanimate, blurring traditional borders between technological and human media through seductive and unexpected sensual and mimetic interactions.

¹¹ Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, 16.

¹² William McDougall, *Body and Mind: A History and A Defense of Animism*, (M.B. Methuen, 1911), 3.

logos of a natural (or animal) element and a supernatural or social or divine element. We must learn instead to think of man as what results from the incongruity of these two elements, and investigate not the metaphysical mystery of conjunction, but rather the practical and political mystery of separation. What is man, if he is always the place -and, at the same time, the result - of ceaseless divisions and caesurae? It is more urgent to work on these divisions, to ask in what way - within man - has man been separated from non-man, and the animal from the human, than it is to take positions on the great issues, on so-called human rights and values.¹¹

The segmentations of life have a common background in what has dominated European Christian debates for centuries: the question over the character and composition of the soul (in Latin, *anima*, from which the word animism is derived), which was seen variously as an entity distinct from the body or as its animating principle, or both at the same time. Radically simplifying the quarrels over the nature of souls, what is tantamount to the milieu of rationalist positivism in the nineteenth century was its gradual disappearance from center stage in an evolving modernity. The soul could not be objectified since it had no apparent material reality that conformed to its latest metaphysical designs. When the anatomists during the Enlightenment opened up the body, there was no evidence of it. The soul could not be objectified, and thus it retracted into the realm of the subjective interior, and was secularized in the notion of the psyche and self. As a consequence, the very definition of “life” was put at stake—for the “hard” sciences, life had to be explained without making reference to an immaterial force (which the vitalists were still defending through concepts such as the *élan vital*), it had to be explained through mechanical, biochemical processes and their inherent laws alone. It is against this background of (often vulgar) materialism that one must understand the characterization of animist relations to matter and “objects” as a “belief” and an epistemological “mistake” that had no objective claim to reality, disregarding the experiential dimensions of those relations and the questions they may pose.

*But to describe the primitive ghost-soul as either matter or spirit is misleading; if these terms are to be applied to it, we must describe it as a material spirit. This is, of course, a contradiction in terms, which we can resolve by recognizing that the peoples who believe in the ghost-soul have not achieved the comparatively modern distinction between material and immaterial or spiritual existents.*¹²

Images, Media, and the Return of the Repressed

Nineteenth-century rationalist science frequently referred to the soul as an image:

It is a thin, unsubstantial human image, in its nature a sort of vapour, film or shadow; the cause of life and thought in the individual it animates; independently possessing the personal consciousness and volition of its corporeal owner, past or present;

capable of leaving the body far behind, to flash swiftly from place to place; mostly impalpable and invisible, yet also manifesting physical power, and especially appearing to men waking or asleep as a phantasm separate from the body of which it bears the likeness; continuing to exist and appear to men after the death of that body; able to enter into, possess and act in the bodies of other men, of animals, and even things.¹³

This is a description that, with minor alterations, would be applicable in almost all its features to the photographic and cinematographic image. Though substantial, the photographic image, too, moves through time and space, appears as a phantasma bearing likeness, continues to exist after death, and has a certain physical and mediumistic power to “possess” other bodies, as any observation of a crowd in a cinema suffices to show. Is there a relation, and if so, of what kind, between the Great Divides and modern technological media? Is there a relation between the “disenchantment” of the world, the retraction of the soul to subjective interiority, and the objectivist stance? The canonical accounts of the industrialized, rationalized modern world frequently come to that conclusion. Is there, however, a connection, or even a similar process happening to images, regarding their status in modernity, and their technologies?

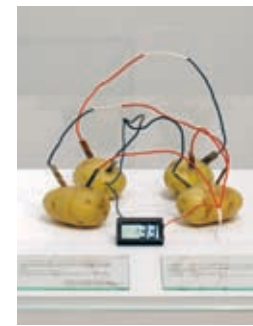
According to Bruno Latour, the division of nature and culture, and the subsequent purification of the two domains of subjects on the one side, and things on the other, is only possible by a repression of the middle ground, the mediation that connects subjects with objects in multiple forms. “Everything happens in the middle, everything passes between the two, everything happens by way of mediation, translation and networks, but this space does not exist, it has no place. It is unthinkable, the unconscious of the moderns.”¹⁴ Objectification, that is, the purification of the domains of subjects and things, of life and non-life, is made possible by suppressing mediation, symbolic meanings, and images: the moderns “had in common a hatred of intermediaries and a desire for an immediate world, emptied of its mediators.”¹⁵ Latour accounts for these mediators and their networks in his ethnography of science, tracing the tools, technologies, and chains of reference that create new associations between humans and things borne from modernity’s laboratories. Latour’s mediators are always *graphs*—modes of inscription that make things talk, and through which a reference can be mobilized.

There is another, more general aspect, however, to the realm of mediation and associations. Images—in all their aggregate conditions, as sign, work of art, inscription, or picture that acts as a mediation to access something else; as social representations, symbols, *schemes*; from their role in cognition, the sensuous body and mimetic exchange, to the image as an object that, as a mediator, acquires an agency of its own—are what any relation presupposes, since we have no direct access to the world. Images, whether merely mental or materialized, are, by definition, boundaries: conjunction and disjunction at the same time, creation of a difference, and creation of a relation. They organize, uphold, cross, transgress, affirm, or undermine boundaries. The particularity of the Great Divides, however, makes the image in modernity the subject of a particular economy, of a split, a schizophrenic regime. For the im-

13 Edward Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. 1, 429.

14 Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 37.

15 Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 143.



Victor Grippo
Tiempo, 1991
Potatoes, zinc and copper electrodes, electric wires, digital clock, painted wooden base, glass vitrine and text
Courtesy Alexander and Bonin, New York

Victor Grippo was a major figure in Argentinian art in the second half of the twentieth century, a period characterized by the military dictatorship and poverty. Grippo’s work instilled a political resonance in domestic items such as tables, and he maintained an alchemical interest in workaday materials and natural objects. Among the materials he frequently worked with were potatoes. “The potato-battery related to the generative energy of a native foodstuff that became the staple food of the poor the world over, in a certain sense the constitutive matter of the world.”

16 Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel, eds., *ICONOCLASH: Beyond the Image Wars in Science, Religion and Art* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT, 2002), 16.

17 Michael Taussig, *Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labor of the Negative* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 43.

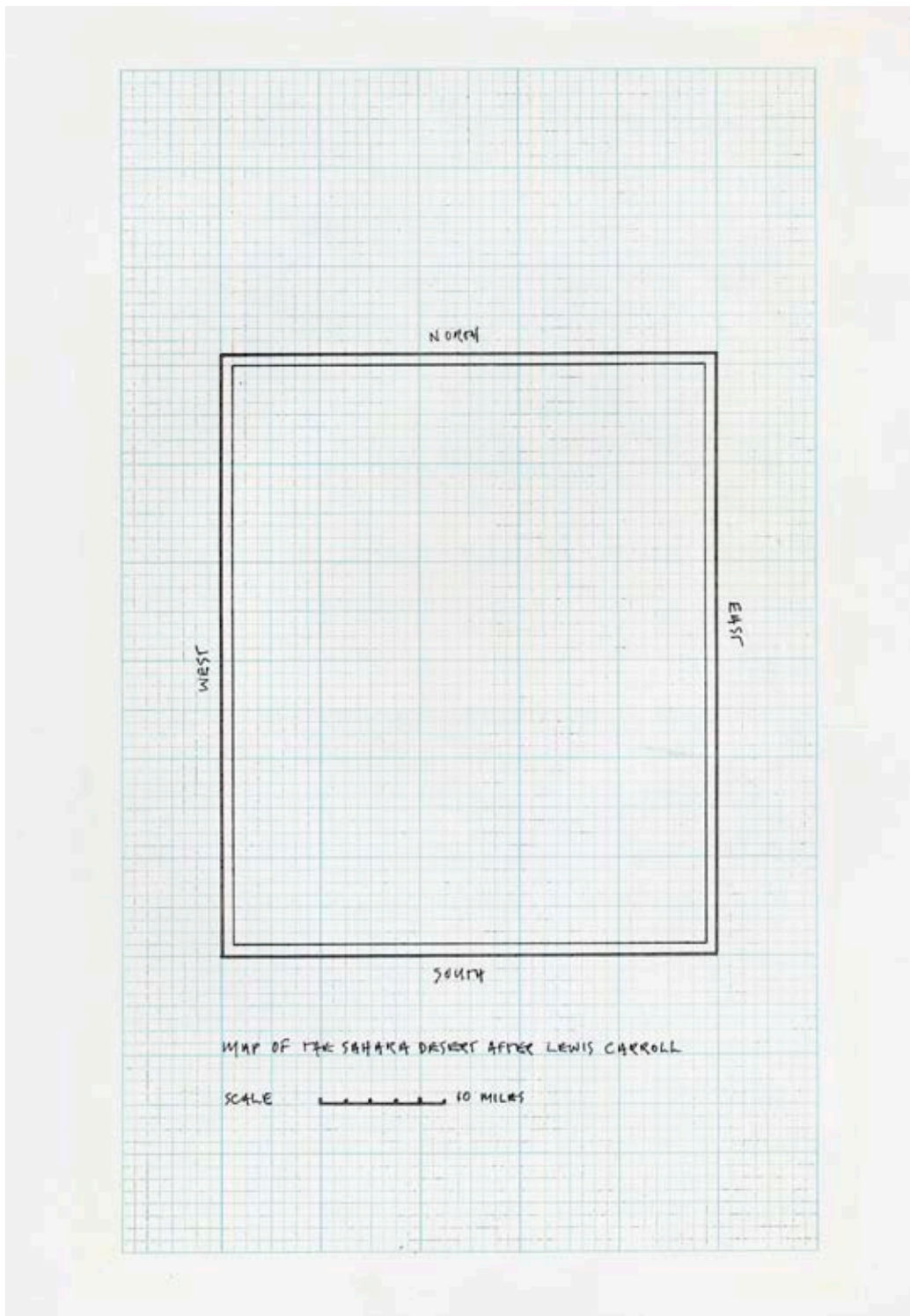
age in modernity is never allowed to embody the function of a mediator per se, organizing both processes of subjectification and objectification in ever-fragile constellations.

Images, too, must take sides: as neutral windows adequately representing the objective world (by way of divine or machinic inscription producing an uncontaminated mimetic accuracy that reduces the deceptive to a minimum), or as mere subjective representations, with no claim to an objective world; that is, in the last instance, as an animistic mirror of sorts, a projection of interiority onto the outer world, reduced to the picture plane. The status of photography provides perfect evidence of this ever-shifting status: Either the photograph is seen as a merely machinic product, over which consequently no right of authorship can be claimed (as was the case in the early days of photography), or it is seen as the expression of a subject (as made constitutive at a later stage). The machine in this instance either records the world neutrally, objectively, or it is the willful instrument of a subject’s intention, although surely such division can only be maintained conceptually, never in practice. In each case, the turning point, the infrastructure of a complex chain of mediations, is blended out.

*We are digging for the origin of an absolute—not a relative—distinction between truth and falsity, between a pure world, absolutely emptied of human-made intermediaries and a disgusting world composed of impure but fascinating human-made mediators.*¹⁶

The schizophrenia derived from the repression of mediation in its own right finds its ultimate articulation in iconoclasm and anti-fetishism, two distinctively modern stances to which Latour has also devoted significant work. It is in these figures that the link between the fate of the soul and the fate of the image under the rule of objectivism are linked: that is, when images are endowed with souls.

On the level of pictures, the fetish is the embodiment par excellence of a forbidden hybridity, of the “horrible mixture” outlined above. It represents what for modernity is an impossibility, at least conceptually: a fact that is also constructed, made. The fetish is the figure of an image-object subjectively made and falsely endowed with an objective reality, an agency, a subjectivity and life of its own. In order for it to be real, no human hand is allowed to have touched it. The desire for an unmediated, non-relational access to nature and truth calls for the destruction of false images. In the face of the fetishistic power of imagery, the moderns shift between an omnipotence and impotence that replicates their relation to nature: either “they make everything,” or “everything is made and they can do nothing” (Latour). The destruction of the accused images breeds only ever-new imagery; and worse, in the last instance, it is only in the act of destruction that the image gains the power of which it is being accused. The “very act of critique often adds to the power of the critiqued.”¹⁷ In modernity, there is always either too much or too little to an image. Either they are nothing or everything. Worse, in their strong belief in the power of the fetish, so much so that it demands destruction, the moderns turn into fetishists of a higher order: The fetishist knows well that fetishes are made-up, constructed, relational, and mediated. The urge of the enlightened



Art & Language
Map of the Sahara Desert after Lewis Carroll, 1967
 Ink on graph paper
 Courtesy the artist and Lisson Gallery, London
 Private Collection, Nantes

The work by Art & Language refers to Lewis Carroll's perhaps best-known poem, *The Hunting of the Snark*, which evolves around an empty map of an ocean. In *Map of the Sahara Desert after Lewis Carroll* (1967), Art & Language transform Carroll's map of the ocean into a map of a desert—a map, that is, with the exception of cardinal points and scale, empty, thus creating a short-circuit between the internal and external sign-relations. And as much as the systematizing demonstration of the coordination among sign-relations leaves us in permanent oscillation between its various registers, the iconoclastic emptiness of *Map of the Sahara Desert after Lewis Carroll* breeds new images, inevitably inviting the imagination to populate a blank territory.

¹⁸ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 5.

¹⁹ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 6.

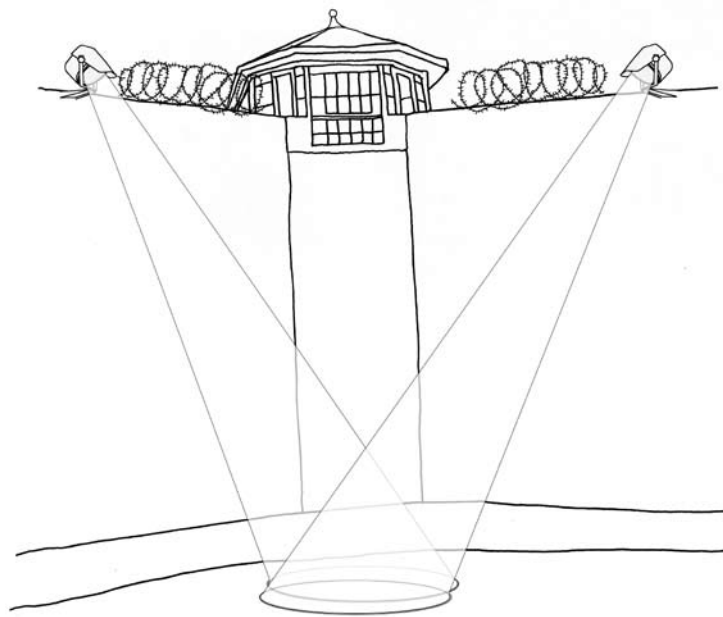
anti-fetishist to destroy the fetish re-institutes a paradoxical belief. The facticity and rationality that inhabits the world in which fetishism has been destroyed is replaced by a new fetish, ever more powerful than the previous one: objectivity, a form of knowing that is absolute and non-relational, bracketed off from history and social context. Inscribing these facts once again into the historicity of knowing and science, Latour brings the fetishistic “heart of darkness,” which Europeans had so successfully placed in their imaginary of the Other, back home again. “But the myths which fell victim to the Enlightenment were themselves its product.”¹⁸

In modern technologies of mimetic reproduction, the borderline condition of all modern imagery finds its ultimate technological expression. The destruction of images and the repression of mediators not only produces the paradoxical reversal where the power of images is proliferated in the act of their destruction, but also yields unprecedented desires for the production of new images, in which the experiential dimension of modernity is expressed, confirmed, and overcome. The technological media are themselves the product not merely of a technological advance, but of these desires that are the direct outcome of the logic of the divides. Modern imagery—as with any set of images—constitutes a meridian point of simultaneous association and dissociation in which objectification and subjectification blend, although this blending happens only in constellatory flashes, preparing a rescission, which re-inscribes them on either side of the divides. This meridian point is a political battlefield; it holds both dystopian and utopian potential. It is a site of constant dialectical reversals, of intense unrest, nervousness, and anxiety. The image becomes at once the very site of the “horrible mixture” and its decomposition.

The key to understanding the knot at the meridian point of modern imagery is the experiential dimension of modernity. Industrialization and rationalization produced a segmentation and fragmentation of the senses, mirroring the effect of the “disenchantment” that objectification and modern iconoclasm had on our perception of the world. The band that holds time and space together breaks, and with it, symbolic unity, resulting in a generalized condition of social disembeddedness. Alienation is the concept that describes the experience of the modern objectified world and the splitting of that experience into isolated categories such as agency, object and observer, self and non-self. Social alienation is the price of modernity, as well as being the precondition and symptom of modern power relations:

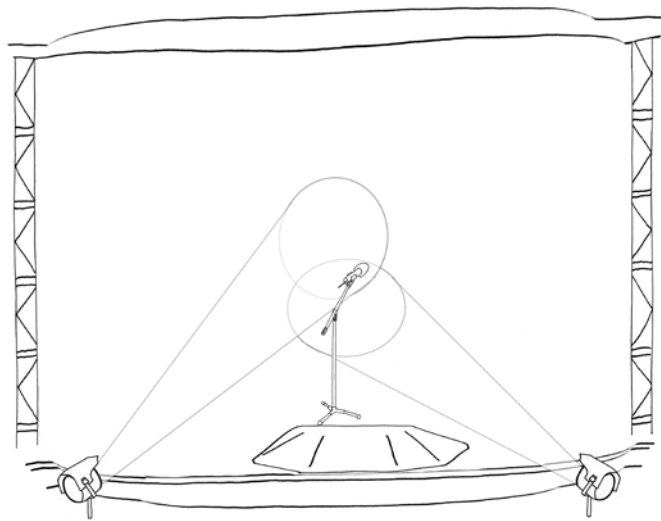
*Human beings purchase the increase in their power with the estrangement from that over which it is exerted. Enlightenment stands in the same relationship to things as the dictator to human beings. He knows them to the extent that he can manipulate them.*¹⁹

Not only is domination paid for with the estrangement of human beings from the dominated objects, but the relationships of human beings, including the relationship of humans to themselves, have themselves been bewitched by the objectification of the mind. Individuals shrink to the nodal points of conventional reactions and the modes of operations objectively expected of



What are the techniques of isolation? [...] a common denominator of those techniques was the visualisation of the object. [...] So any method of creating an image of someone or something [...] begins with pointing a spotlight at the object. It becomes brighter than its surroundings, more detailed, easier to observe. [...] you can exchange the spotlight in vice/virtue with a camera, or a microscope but the mechanism stays the same. [...] I found a photo of a prison yard. It was lying upside down. The spotlight was pointing at the sky and first I thought the image depicted a stage. Then I turned it 180 degrees and found it was a prison. [...] I used the photo as a blueprint for the drawing. For the animation I choose a centrifugal spin, as it's a common scientific method of isolating cells from each other. [...] the presentation involves a video beam with which the drawing is projected onto the paper. It utilizes the technique of the light-beam as is used in the prison yard and on stage. The artwork is part of the very same system that it's criticizing.

– Natascha Sadr Haghighian



Natascha Sadr Haghighian
vice/virtue, 2001
 Digital video projection, 1 min 5 sec
 Courtesy Johann König, Berlin

*them. Animism had endowed things with souls; industrialism makes souls into things.*²⁰

Unification through objectification takes the form of extinction coupled with conservation. Extinction because the conceptual denial of otherness inscribed real others into the continuum of objects, and if the destructive force thus unleashed did not result in direct or indirect genocides, it nevertheless destroyed the subjectivities (and cosmographies)

²⁰ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 21.

in question (if not once and for all). The simultaneous conservation in institutions of modern knowledge, such as museums, archives, and exhibitions, did not run counter to this destruction; it merely gave it an adequate expression, through which the power of inscription could become manifest.

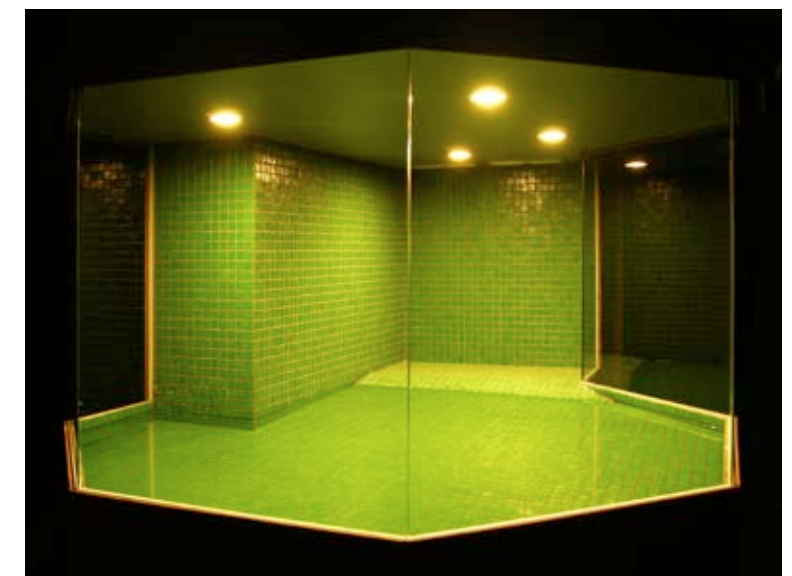
Life and Death on Display

This is where an exhibition about animism must begin. It must use the concept of animism as the mirror of modernity that it was from the outset, while at the same time disempower the relations that the powerful imaginary of the term upheld. The projection and exportation of animism onto the imagined Heart of Darkness out there, at the other side of the Great Divides, must be reversed, and similar to the concept of fetishism, animism must be “brought back home.” The economy of the imaginary of the Great Divides must become visible *in* the modern imaginary, so that the relations enforced by the foreclosing of relations can come to the fore. And insofar as the position of animism in the geography of the Great Divides links the question of life and non-life with that of the object and the subject, it must focus on the dialectics of objectification (mummification, petrification, reification, and so forth) and animation in modern imagery.

A powerful, if somewhat sentimental root-image situating the dispositifs of objectification within which such a dialectics unfolds is the butterfly—symbol of the psyche, of life undergoing metamorphosis. In order for the butterfly to become an object within a static taxonomy, and for it to enter the material base of such taxonomy; that is, the archive, exhibition, and so forth, it must be conserved. Its fixation requires mummification, and it is “installed” at its place within the grid of the taxonomy (the modern cosmography) by the needle that pins it to the display. The needle is a figure for the act of objectifying signification. If this requires actual killing, there are also various forms

Wesley Meuris' series of designed cages for animals are derived from the artist's engagement with zoological classifications, taxonomies and systems of knowledge. As architectural propositions, they turn these meditations on scientific classification into a question of relationality: What is the mode of knowing we have about the object on display, and what creates the spectatorial enjoyment of seeing animals in captivity? Since the cages are empty, however, the scene of such reflection is transferred to the imagination: We have to give shape to the animal in question in our minds, using the enclosed architectural habitat as an inversed script that gives shape to a life-form, thus engaging in a form of spectatorial empathy that displays like these normally foreclose.

Wesley Meuris
Cage for Pelodiscus sinensis, 2005
 wood, glass-tiles, glass, water, lighting and ventilation
 Public collection, Alcobendas, Madrid





Tom Nicholson
Drawings and correspondence, 2009
 Charcoal drawings and off-set printed artist's book, excerpt
 Courtesy the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne

of “social death,” which leave biological life intact while depriving the subject/object in question of the *Umwelt* (Jakob von Uexküll) that constitutes its life, of the web that constitutes its being in relationality. This is the objectification of life we find in the ethnographic displays during the era of the grand world fairs, and such are the enclosures of the zoo. They are displays of objectification because they enclose and isolate—yet another phenotype of the disciplinary institutions and enclosures described by Michel Foucault as the engines of modern power—and because they foreclose the possibility of dialogic relationships, and deliver the object on display to consumption and spectacle clothed in educational terms.

The entire discipline of anthropology, it has been claimed, is implicated in an objectification in which extinction (cultures doomed to

The piece *Drawings and Correspondence* by Tom Nicholson evolves around a particular drawing and its history. The drawing is found on photographs taken of an ethnographic display at the Melbourne Zoo in the 1880s, inside a mia mia. It is supposedly an “authentic” native work. The research into the micro-history of the drawing and its shifting symbolic meanings open a panorama of Australian colonial history and the dispositifs that uphold its continuity.

21 Edward Curtis, *The North American Indian*, Introduction, 1907

22 For further elaboration on the myth of the camera stealing the soul, see *The Museum of the Stealing of Souls*, <http://stealingsouls.org/>.

23 See Bruno Latour, Peter Weibel eds., *ICONOCLASH*.

24 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 13–14.

25 Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx, the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, (London: Routledge, 1994), 6.

disappear as civilization and modern progress inevitably progress) and conservation are merely the flipsides of one and the same coin, creating what Paul Ricoeur has envisioned as an “imaginary museum” of mankind. The intimacy of extinction and documentary inscription and conservation characterizes ethnographic film as well as photography—as famously illustrated by the case of photographer Edward Curtis and his pictures of North American native cultures, which he thought were at the brink of extinction, a “vanishing race.” “The information that is to be gathered [...] respecting the mode of life of one of the great races of mankind, must be collected at once or the opportunity will be lost.”²¹ The pictures themselves express the borderline, simultaneously reaching out and upholding it—the border between “us” and “them,” and between an imagined past, a present mastered by modernity, and a future that holds no more place for “them.” The pictures become, in an uncanny sense, the borders themselves.

Curtis’s pictures have frequently been invoked in debates over the myth of the camera stealing the soul.²² This myth, ascribed to natives world-wide, once again links image with soul, and is an expression of the modern belief in the continuity, as well as the rupture, between magic and technology—an instance, once more, of the modern “belief in belief,” a blindness to the world-producing power of relational practices, which already structures the “fetishism” discourse.²³



In *Mother Dao the Turtle-like*, the viewer sees how the colonial machinery was implanted in the Dutch West Indies between 1912 and about 1932. More than 260,000 meters of 35mm documentary nitrate film footage from the Dutch film archives served as Monnikendam’s source material. The documentary starts with a shortened version of the legend of the inhabitants of Nias, an isle to the West of Sumatra. It was told that the earth was created by Mother Dao, who “collected the dirt off her body and kneaded it on her knee into a ball. This was the world. Later, she became pregnant, without a man, and gave birth to a boy and a girl. They were the first people. They lived in a fertile world.” Much of the footage used

On another, general register, the connection between photography and death, the “uncanny” status of photography in that it transcends the boundaries of time and space, absence and presence, life and non-life, has been subject to intense debates that need no reiteration in detail here. Earlier, I noted that modern technological images are themselves a meridian point of sorts in regards to the separation of object and subject, a transgression or even dissolution of that very division; and that, nevertheless, this dissolution upholds, confirms, and re-does the scission, having to dissolve the tension in the direction of either pole. However, the technological image cannot be wholly “subjectified.” It is not, and cannot be, neutral with respect to the two poles of the subject and object, life and non-life, since it is itself the inscription of an objectification. Roland Barthes gives an account of this when he says:

*In terms of image-repertoire, the Photograph (the one I intend) represents that very subtle moment when, to tell the truth, I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object: I then experience a micro-version of death (of parenthesis): I am truly becoming a specter.*²⁴

Of specters, we know that they are halfway between life and death, disembodied souls roaming the sphere of the living, bound to return. They are alive only in relation to the deprivation of life, having been withdrawn from the status of a subject across various registers—a “thing,” as Derrida invoked with Hamlet,²⁵ but a thing that is real only in the Lacanian sense. Specters inhabit the space of death, the space of negativity, of the un-cohered, thus being denied entry into a circle that binds together a community of the living, and dissociates it from its outsides.

Museums and photography, as two examples of modern dispositifs of the conservation of “life,” are haunted, afflicted by the specters

of objectification, by the return of animism, which here takes the form of the “uncanny” return of a repressed life turned into a spectacle. This “hauntedness” is a key to the ways in which media and institutions built the modern social imaginary—in circumscribed confines, giving way to the desires to overcome alienation, the desires for the re-animation of a de-animated, de-mobilized world, thus re-populating the deadened, disenchanting, objectified world with its monstrous images of hybrids and phantasies of returns and speed-deliriums. And in so doing, ever-actualizing the imaginary of animism as the Heart of Darkness, ripe with anxieties and fears of regression, which demand evermore re-assuring objectifications and enclosures: No photographic image without its spectral quality, and no museum in which one is not invited to contemplate the skeleton of a dinosaur coming back to life.

The node in which objectification—the fixation, conservation, and mummification of life—meets the transgressive desires for re-animation, re-creation, mobilization, and transformation, however, finds its ultimate technological expression in film, and what André Bazin has famously referred to as its “mummy complex.” The “mummy complex,” it is often assumed, refers to a universal of art: the desire to provide a defense against the passing of time, and, ultimately, death. The symbolic victory over death is supposedly a “basic psychological need in man.”²⁶ However, we should not be too quick to agree, and instead, should return to the question of psychology and art at a later point.

It is cinema, however, that gives ultimate expression to “the great Frankensteinian dream of the nineteenth century: the recreation of life, the symbolic triumph over death.”²⁷ In the cinematic synthesization of movement creating an illusion of life, the negative returns animated, redeemed in phantasmagoric and symptomatic form: images, souls, states of mediality. Having lost the right for a claim to reality, they assume the form of hybrids between life and non-life, fiction and reality. Cinema, from its outset, is populated by zombies, Frankensteins and man-machine hybrids, and mummies deserting their graves. Every coming-alive of the dead—or, in other terms, every re-subjectification of a “dead” object—however, is a confirmation of the “proper” boundary that keeps them firmly apart: The Frankensteinian dream does not undo the subject-object dichotomy; rather, it qualifies it. It is the symptom of a bourgeois hegemonic perspective that has internalized the logic of the divide and turns the tension, the antagonism between *rigor mortis* and phantasmagoric animation into an aesthetic economy endlessly reiterated. The Frankensteinian dream is congruous to the structure of the commodity, and rather than overcoming its paradigms, it channels the anxieties it produces by providing a phantasmagoric displacement of relations that have previously been displaced.

Art occupies a special position within the modern geography marked by the Great Divides. It shares many of the characteristics of the status of images described above, but midway between subject and object, it is dissolved into the direction of the fictional, imaginary, and subjective, where it fuels hopes for re-instituting the sovereignty of experience. The modern institution of art acquires its relative autonomy thus; for the price of being rendered politically inconsequential, its effects must remain in the realm of interiority and the imagination. Much of the history of modern art can be aligned with a contestation of that very boundary drawn around its legitimate place—the over-

to be shown in the Netherlands as an illustration of the beneficial effect of the Dutch presence in the East Indies. Monnikendam lifts the original travelogue and colonial documentary out of its original context, showing the extent of the capitalist exploitation of the native’s bodies, and reversing the relations inscribed in these images.



Vincent Monnikendam
Mother Dao, The Turtlike, 1995
Film transferred to video,
87 min 36 sec
Courtesy the artist

²⁶ André Bazin, *What is Cinema?* vol. 1, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1967), 9.

²⁷ Noël Burch, *Life to Those Shadows* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1990), 12.

Louise Lawler’s *All Those Eyes* shows the brightly lit Jeff Koons sculpture of Michael Jackson with his chimp Bubbles, and the Pink Panther in the foreground. From another photograph of the same scene but taken from a different angle, we realize the setting is not a museum hall, but a private storage room. If the viewer assumes a subject, it is that of the collector, whose relation and proximity to objects contends with the “value” invoked by the authorship of the work. Lawler leads us into a mirror cabinet not merely of gazes, but also of what Karl Marx has famously referred to as the phantasmatic “fetish” character of the commodity, the capitalist animation of things.



Louise Lawler
All Those Eyes, 1989
Gelatin silver print,
Courtesy of the artist and Metro Pictures

coming of the stigma of the fictional (leading to yet another genealogy in line with the Frankensteinian dream, the dream of total representation and a “cosmic, fourth dimension,” represented by the quest for the Gesamtkunstwerk, the synaesthetic total work of art), and the crossing of the boundary between art and life. This is the point of origin from which the numerous contestations of modern dichotomies in the modernist project stem, and to date, always return.

There is a magic circle being drawn around the institution of art that renders it exceptional while inscribing it into the logic of separation. Objects of art always magically confirm their status as art. It can thus be explained how Sigmund Freud arrived at the conclusion that in art, modernity preserved a place for animism, for in art, we have retained an animistic relation to pictures and objects alike. The regression to “earlier states” (historically and subjectively) and the conflation of differences between fiction and reality, the self and the world; all this becomes possible as long as it is institutionally framed and cannot make claims to objective reality, in which case it would likely be rendered pathological, but at least cease to be “art” in the modern sense of the word—the form of art that, according to Adorno, was made possible by the secularization of the Enlightenment. What would elsewhere appear as outright regression can serve cultural advancement within these institutional confines, under the condition that it is bracketed off from everything else.

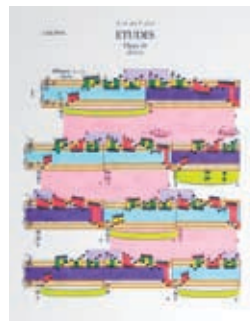
Insofar as aesthetic resistance to social rationalization (cultural modernity versus social modernity) takes the form of a dialectics, its attack on the latter remains bound to its own myths. This can be confirmed by a most schematic survey of the role animism plays in the modernist imaginary: a reconciliatory and transformative force in the face of alienation, a phantasmic horizon for a better, utopian, animated modernity. From the Romantics to the Russian Avant-Garde, from Primitivist Modernism via the Surrealists to Psychedelia, animism frequently appears on a (troubled) quasi-mystical horizon in which it was

inscribed by the modernist myths, variously as a displaced key or a transgressive phantasy, an engine that fuels the imaginary of a liberation, of an “outside” to modern enclosures and identities. But the animism in question remains the phantasy of otherness, a romantic antidote; and if one border is transgressed or even undone in a stroke, others are erected or fortified in the very same act.

Insofar as aesthetic resistance in the modernist predicament was modeled on an opposition to the objectifying, partitioning stance of modernity, it remained difficult for the adversaries to act outside the modernist myths. When the Surrealists staged their anti-colonial exhibition “La Verité sur les colonies” in 1931, to show that Europeans had fetishes too, they succeeded less in bringing the Heart of Darkness home, than in continuing to enhance the myth of “childish,” regressive “relics,” working towards a conflation of the Other by way of an alleged “unconscious.” The institutions capable of exhibiting the fetish of the moderns have yet to be invented. Symmetry between modernity and its Others is never possible so long as one stays within the former’s dialectical confines. The resolutely anti-modern, as Latour asserts, only confirm the modern’s own myths dialectically: They indeed believe that the moderns have rationalized and disenchanted the world, that it is, in fact, populated by soulless zombies.



Paul Chan
Untitled (after St. Caravaggio), 2003–2006
 Digital video projection, 2 min 58 sec
 Courtesy Greene Naftali, New York



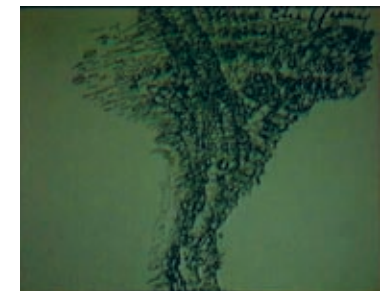
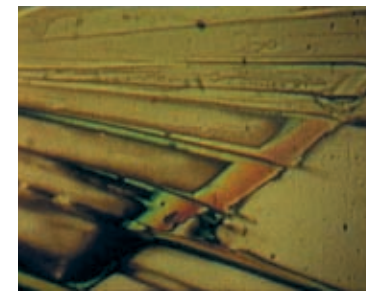
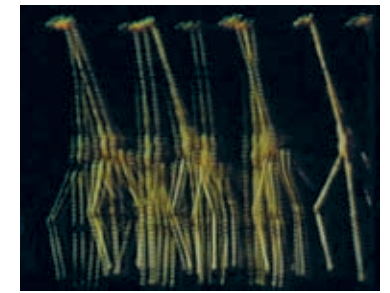
Paul Sharits
Transcription, 1990
 Felt pen on paper
 Courtesy private collection and
 M HKA, Antwerp

In 1981 Paul Sharits sent to Josef Robakowski the sheet of a film score, suggesting him to use it to shoot a film. Eventually, the film was made in 2004, in memory of the American structuralist with whom Robakowski collaborated at the end of the 1970s. Sharits based its structure upon close synchronicity between musical and visual layers. During the screening subsequent tones of Frederic Chopin’s *Mazurka op. 68 nr. 4* are accompanied on the screen by eight corresponding colors.

In his video work *Untitled (After St. Caravaggio)*, Paul Chan’s refers to the genre of the still life, denying the *nature morte* of stillness and immobility by exploding the composition as the figs and their leaves, the grapes, and, finally, the basket itself levitate into air.

Poet and painter Henri Michaux experimented with drawing under the influence of various psychoactive substances, above all mescaline. He asserted that the effect of the drug was “so wholly visual that they are vehicles of the purely mental, of the abstract,” further explaining that “mescaline diminishes the imagination. It castrates, desensualizes the image. It makes images that are 100 percent pure. Laboratory experiments.”

Although Michaux asserted that the experience of mescaline “eludes form,” that “it cannot be seen,” he agreed to collaborate on a film commissioned in 1963 by the Swiss pharmaceutical company Sandoz (best known for synthesizing LSD in 1938) in order to demonstrate the hallucinogenic effects of mescaline. It is the only venture in film by Michaux. In charge of the filmic translation of Michaux’s prescriptions was director Eric Duvivier whose other films include an adaptation of Max Ernst’s collage novel *La femme 100 têtes*.



Henri Michaux and Eric Duvivier
Images du monde visionnaire, 1963
 Video, 38 min
 Courtesy the artists and Novartis AG



Joachim Koester
Bialowieza Forest, 2001
 Laminated photographs
 Courtesy Musée des Arts Contemporains de la
 Communauté française de Belgique, Grand-Hornu

*They take on the courageous task of saving what can be saved: souls, minds, emotions, interpersonal relations, the symbolic dimension, human warmth, local specificities, hermeneutics, that margins and the peripheries.*²⁸

The photographs from Bialowieza Forest depict a location that through history has been greatly infused with myths and metaphors. The forest dates back to 8000 BCE and is the only remaining example of the original lowland forest that once covered much of Europe. Situated in Eastern Poland it contains a great diversity of plants, animals and insects, as well as thousands of species of fungi and vascular plants, many of these elsewhere extinct. Over the years the forest has been described in literature and travel accounts as a sylvan Arcadia, an asylum, a pristine Eden, a sacred grove and a dark and alien impenetrable wilderness. This work can be seen as a continuation of Joachim Koester's practice in which an imaginary site is paradoxically investigated through its material reality.

²⁸ Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 123.



Tony Conrad
Egypt 2000, 1986
 Digital video projection, 13 min
 Courtesy Galerie Daniel
 Buchholz, Cologne

The First Intermediate Period, around 2000 BC, was the occasion for a remarkable constellation of innovations in Egyptian thought and civil order. For the first time both men and women won rights of private ownership, of marriage, and of entry to the afterlife (with a proper burial). Remarkably, individuals began reflecting in writing on the world around them, and the first introspective literature appeared. Egypt 2000 invokes this mixed space of gender, identity, and death, from which it literalizes the visual seduction of the viewer.
 – Tony Conrad

²⁹ Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, trans. James Strachey (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950), 64.

Art and Psychology

All social representations, insofar as they bear a mythical structure, are to be explained by psychology. In canonical art history, the question of animism and the boundary between life and non-life is therefore discussed under the parameters of psychological universals. Art, it is understood, derives from the need to resist time and triumph over death. The desire to bring time to a standstill, to conserve and fix, is as much at the root of art, as is the desire to animate, to re-create life, to gain access to the forces of creation. These psychological universals are inextricably linked to motion and stasis, and their negotiation and dynamics in works of art. This scenography is populated by mythical figures, captured, for instance, in the animating gaze of sculptors Pygmalion and Daedalus, on the one hand, and the chthonic monster Medusa, whose gaze petrified life, on the other. Anthropomorphic projection and visualization, objects that appear to “return one’s gaze,” works of art that assume a subjectivity of sorts, or instances of “the uncanny” in which something inanimate seems to “come back” to life, are all perfectly familiar cases that do not present a real challenge to the discipline of art history as long as the primary boundary between reality and fiction is upheld. The question of “life” poses itself as “mere” symbolic production, always in terms of the “life-like,” and has consequences not for the “real” world, but for the reality of the subjectivity of perception and its “primitive roots,” for which Freud gave the canonical description in relation to animism when he asserted:

The projection outwards of internal perceptions is a primitive mechanism, to which, for instance, our sense perceptions are subject and which therefore normally plays a very large part in determining the form taken by our external world. Under conditions whose nature has not been sufficiently established, internal perceptions of emotional and intellectual processes can be projected outwards in the same way as sense projections; they are thus employed for building up the external world, through they should by rights remain part of the internal world. [...]O]wing to the projection outwards of internal perceptions, primitive men arrived at a picture of the external world which we, with our intensified conscious perception, have now to translate back into psychology.²⁹

Any journey into the animist universe of the unconscious must therefore remain a confirmation of this split between the real and the unreal, as long as the unconscious remains unconscious, as long as its existence is assumed as a fact, rather than as a production resulting from a particular boundary-regime. The anti-psychological stance within modernist art history has struggled with this logic as long and insofar as it remained tied to gestures of transgression. The paradigm of psychology as laid out by Freud led to another symptomatic genealogy—that of ecstasy. Once again, it is inextricably linked to the imaginary of animism (in this book, the question of ecstasy, animism, and aesthetics is discussed in an exemplary way through Sergei Eisenstein’s analysis of the art of Walt Disney). In states of ecstasy and intoxication, the very boundary that separates the self from the world is undone, and interiority is exteriorized. The trip is a figure of transgression in which

re-mobilization, re-animation, re-enchantment and metamorphosis are brought about by an unleashing of the boundaries that confine the subjectivity of perception, providing an immediate experience of the world-making power of images, transforming a mute world into dialogic excess. This “dialogue” temporarily unleashes experiences of mediality, in which subject and object appear as mutually constitutive and keep changing sites. The ecstatic undoing of the boundaries of the subject through intoxication, extreme physical states, eroticism, or spiritual ecstasies represents a major resource for modernist art.

There is, however, a different trajectory, perhaps more fruitful for a re-evaluation of animism; one that is less caught up in the logic of the symptomatic and compensatory transgression, and the dialectical confirmation of the modern’s own myths. This different trajectory makes clear that the modernist cultural response to the objectifying stance derives from a similar set of configurations. An influential part of the modernist iconography is directly derived from the rationalization of the movements of the living body, and the objectifying “inscription of life.” This link is discussed in the frame of situating modern animation in the present book by the exhibition’s co-curator Edwin Carels. The physiological motion studies of Étienne Jules-Marey and Eadweard Muybridge gave expression to the experiential dimension of the modern fragmentation of time and space. Such “expression,” however, was not their primary aim; instead, their target was a rationalization of the economy of the working body to achieve increased efficiency in production—these “inscriptions of life” served as the blueprint for Taylorism, the theory of management that analyzes and synthesizes workflows. Not merely the decomposition of the visual field characteristic of modernist iconography, cinema also passed through this applied science that would have the most profound impact on the body and the human sensorium.

Technology at the Meridian Point

It was Walter Benjamin who conceived of these two registers of modernity together, for Taylorism and the related emergence of a variety of physiological and psychological tests placed technology at a meridian point in which subject and object were no longer separated, but subjected to management, giving rise to new forms of subjectivities. Benjamin maintained a perspective that saw more than merely a dystopian dimension in these configurations that linked subjectivity and technology. He proclaimed the necessity of inverting the Taylor-system, and changing it from a system of optimizing subordination to the machine into one of creative invention: If a subject was tested for its specific aptitudes that found no application within the given system, these applications and professions would have to be invented. His thinking of technology in relation to the subject bears the characteristics of a profane form of ecstasy; it rejects the psychological essentialism attached to the critique of modern technology from the outset. And, indeed, the physiological and psychological tests were a blueprint for thinking the animation of subjects through their actualization by means of technological inscriptions. Nor has the question of their creative use, in times where the paradigm of the test has been univer-

Felix-Louis Regnault was a physician who applied chronophotography to study culture specific human locomotion and produced what is widely recognized as the first “ethnographic footage” at the Paris Exposition Ethnographique de l’Afrique Occidentale in 1895. He attempted to create a scientific index of race, suggesting in 1900 that all museums collect “moving artifacts” of human behavior to study and exhibit. *All savage people make recourse to gesture to express themselves; their language is so poor that it does not suffice to make them understood [...]. With primitive man, gesture precedes speech [...]. The gestures the savages make are in general the same everywhere, because these movements are natural reflexes rather than conventions like language.*



Félix-Louis Regnault
Hommes nègres, marche, undated, Duplicate on flexible transparent film
Courtesy Cinémaèque Française, Paris

Poet and painter Brion Gysin, the inventor of the Cut-up technique and a major source of inspiration for the Beat generation, was a life-long promoter of the Sufi trance master musicians, to whom he was introduced by Moroccan painter Mohamed Hamri. Gysin and Hamrin opened the restaurant *The 1001 Nights* in Tangier (which closed 1958), where the musicians would regularly perform.



Brion Gysin
Untitled (Man in the desert), undated
Chinese ink, felt pen and watercolor on paper
Courtesy Galerie de France, Paris

salized in the form of digitized profiling, lost any of its actuality since. This is a form of technologically aided animation through subjectification, which presents a different paradigm from the compensatory, symptomatic one of the Frankensteinian dream and aesthetic economy of animation it gave rise to.

“In the cinema, people whom nothing moves or touches any longer learn to cry again.” In his work on technology and the cinema, Walter Benjamin conceived of a possible emancipatory potential of the mass media, envisioning a process inverse to the inscriptions of Marey: from image/technology to physiological motion and experience. Benjamin insisted that technology has to be transformed from a means of mastering nature into a medium for “mastering the interplay between human beings and nature.” “The expropriation of the human senses that culminates in imperialist warfare, fascism can be countered only on the terrain of technology itself, by means of perceptual technologies that allow for a figurative, mimetic engagement with technology at large, as a productive force and social reality.” Yet rather than redeeming experience at the price of “rationality,” he made the registers of human embodied experience the measure of technology and media, with a view on new forms of collectivity and transformed relations between nature and humanity. The very impulse to theorize technology is part of Benjamin’s techno-utopian politics, through which he seeks to re-imagine the aesthetic in response to the technically changed sensorium.³⁰

Benjamin conceived of the body as a medium in the service of imagining new forms of subjectivity. Negotiating the historical confrontation between the human sensorium and technology as an alien, and alienating regime requires learning from forms of bodily innervation. Innervation is understood as the conversion of affective energy into somatic, motoric form; such as the transformation of the experience of

³⁰ See: Miriam Bratu Hansen, “Benjamin and Cinema: Not a One-Way Street,” in *Critical Inquiry* 25, (University of California Press, 1999): 306–345; and Miriam Bratu Hansen: “Of Mice and Ducks: Benjamin and Adorno on Disney,” *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 92 (1993): 27–61.



an image into physiological motion and emotion; where bodily sensation and technologically-produced images constitute not irreconcilable counterparts, but an integral “body-” and “image-space.” Benjamin invested cinema with the power of innervation, by means of which the technological apparatus can be brought to social, public consciousness as the “physis” of a transformed collectivity, which has its “organs” in technology. Experimenting with psychotropic substances, such as hashish, was for Benjamin one way of subjecting the experience of innervation to auto-experiments and self-regulation. Unlike several of his contemporaries and successors who experimented with drugs, Benjamin treated the effects of intoxication as symptoms and effects rather than metaphysical truths. The experience of intoxication destabilizes the boundaries of the self, and transforms the parameters of time-space perception as well as the relation between people and things, exhibiting a structural affinity with the synaesthetic effects of the cinematic experience at the intersection of the physiological and psychological.

“Innervation,” in Benjamin’s terms, was ultimately linked to his notion of a collective sphere of imagery, in which, by means of constellatory flashes—the dialectics of seeing, profane illumination—he conceived of a sphere of “absolute neutrality” with respect to the notions of subject and object. What Benjamin conceived of, in other words, is a politics of the meridian point, the dissolution of modernity’s notorious “seeing double” by means of a “stereoscopic vision” that brings the two domains of subjects and objects into the dialectical constellation in which they came to be historically productive, and by means of which they gave birth to the modern world. In this attempt, he preceded Bruno Latour, who proclaimed the need for a “symmetric” anthropology of modernity. He refers explicitly to anthropology for it is the only discipline that is used to thinking together the most diverse boundary practices in one great whole (the cosmographies of the “others,” for whom nature and culture and so forth are not distinct), a virtue that no other discipline, by way of their implication in the modern logic of division, is capable.

Ken Jacobs
Capitalism: Slavery, 2006
 Digital video projection, 3 min
 Courtesy the artist

Ken Jacobs is a filmmaker who works as a quasi-archeologist of the effect media and technology had on the human sensorium. He equally takes into consideration the modes of production and forms of power congruent with technological media and their history. *Capitalism: Slavery* pictures a stereograph image of a cotton plantation, whose animation by means of digital technology endows these images with a spectral presence – brought back to life, but still mute.

We Have Never Been Modern

An anthropology of the modern world; that is, a comprehensive, synthetic view of the organization of its boundary-practices, becomes possible only once we have come to realize that “we have never been modern.”

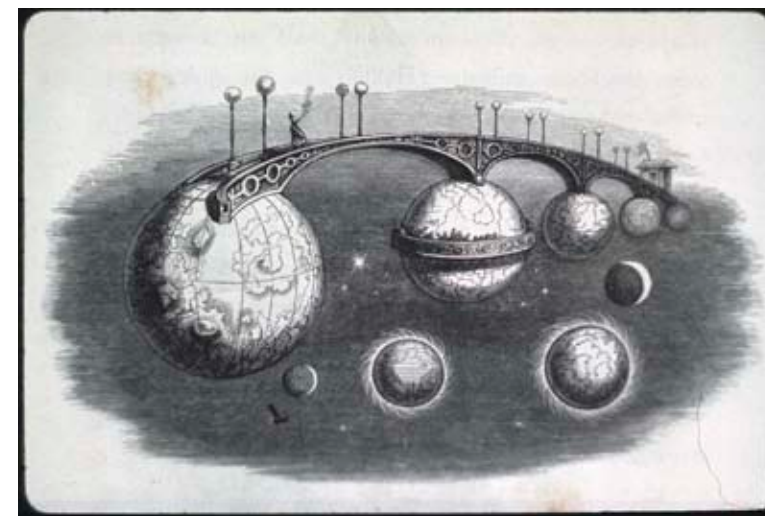
*Century after century, colonial empire after colonial empire, the poor premodern collectives were accused of making a horrible mishmash of things and humans, of objects and signs, while their accusers finally separated them totally—to remix them at once on a scale unknown until now.*³¹

31 Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 39.

The practice of modernity, Latour asserts, is diametrically opposed to its conceptualization and self-description. While accusing other collectives of the mishmash they make between categories whose distinction for us holds sacred values, they set up a practice that intertwined culture and nature on a previous unknown scale. The “official” version of modernity is but a mode of classification that allows one to do the opposite of what one says. Modernity also made an absolute split between theory and practice, between de facto practices and their juridical, conceptual framework. The conceptual register of modernity keeps on erecting borders, purifies fields of knowledge, insists on disciplines, and so forth; while in their practices, they work on creating assemblages, “hybrids,” or “collectives” that conceptual machines can not simply account for. This allowed the moderns to mobilize nature without due democratic discussion on the impact of this mobilization, without mediation and representation of “things,” thus producing an unprecedented amount of new “hybrids,” of “quasi-objects,” of chains of associations in which subjects and objects are mutually constitutive, which contain both subjective and objective aspects, and span the divide between culture and nature in multiple ways. It is only with the proliferation of these “hybrids,” overwhelming us in the form of the ecological crisis, that protocols of strict division, of “purification,” gradually lose ground and cease to be opera-

“The Romanticism of the nineteenth century already contains this fantasy that we now confuse with scientific reality.” The work of French caricaturist J. J. Grandville, who satirized the ambitions and pretensions of modern man in his illustrations of the 1830s and 40s by way of personified animals and plants was a favored source for Marcel Broodthaers. He appropriated Grandville’s satirical images in two slide projections of 1966 and 1968. The 1968 projection *Caricatures-Grandville* juxtaposed slides of satirical drawings by Grandville and Daumier, among others, with photographs of the 1968 student demonstrations.

Marcel Broodthaers
Grandville, 1967
 Slideshow, 80 slides
 Courtesy Estate Marcel Broodthaers, Brussels



tional, thus enforcing a re-evaluation of modernity, and an inscription of all that it bracketed off—the unified nature of non-relational facts—back into history.

*The essential point of this modern Constitution is that it renders the work of mediation that assembles hybrids invisible, unthinkable, unrepresentable. Does this lack of representation limit the work of mediation in any way? No, for the modern world would immediately cease to function. Like all other collectives it lives on that blending. On the contrary (and here comes the beauty of the mechanism to light), the modern Constitution allows the expanded proliferation of the hybrids whose existence, whose very possibility, it denies.*³²

According to Latour, science, by way of its construction of “indisputable” facts, holds democratic politics in an iron grip, limiting the collective concerns that can be negotiated to human affairs alone, while bracketing off all other agencies that participate, and indeed hold together, the “common world.” To bring the sciences back into politics, Latour calls for a “parliament of things,” in which the work of the sciences is not the presentation of objective facts that supposedly “speak for themselves” and end all other debate by suppressing the necessary mediation that makes them “speak” in the first place, but rather the “socialization of nonhumans,” their enrollment and subsequent mediation in a social realm extended to “things.”

Is Bruno Latour suggesting yet another “return” to animism, a form of political order that is based on a dubious animation of things? Is the “parliament of things” not a regressive fiction reminiscent of the animated universes of Walt Disney, where everything comes to life and things act like people, or to one of the techno-utopian fantasies of a Charles Fourier?

*Before my readers begin to get a disquieting impression that they are being pulled into a fable where animals, viruses, stars, and magic are going to start chattering away like magpies or princesses, let me emphasize that we are in no way dealing with a novelty that would be shocking to common sense. [...] I am proposing, very reasonably, to make this mythic contradiction [between mute fact things and speaking facts] comprehensible by restoring all the difficulties that a human encounters in speaking to humans about nonhumans with their participation. [...] I do not claim that things speak “on their own,” since no beings, not even humans, speak on their own, but always through something or someone else. I have not required human subjects to share the right of speech of which they are so justly proud with galaxies, neurons, cells, viruses, plants and glaciers.*³³

Latour calls for a parliamentary model—composed of “spokespeople,” mediators, and mediums—that accounts for the enrolment of nonhumans in the constitution of the common world. For the modern imagination, this is nothing short of a horror scenario. Not only does Latour ascribe things agency, but with their agency, he lets them get so close to subjects that the subject becomes virtually unimaginable other than in

Jean-Ignace-Isidore Gérard (1803–1847), better known by the name of his comedian grandfather, Grandville, is synonymous today with the twin methods of the personified animal and the “besetialized” human in modern illustration. In his satirical caricatures of the 1820s and early 1830s, but also in his later book illustrations such as those of the La Fontaine fables, J.J. Grandville addressed the question of social groups and types. In this, he was strongly influenced by physiognomist theories of the day, including the writings of Lavater and Gall. While the “animal metaphor” already held some currency in French social satire during his life-time (see Louis Huart’s “Museum Parisien” of 1841), Grandville stands out for his thorough exploitation of the theme of organic metamorphoses from man to animal, man to plant and vice-versa. Along with the exploits of Honoré Daumier and Gustave Doré, Grandville’s daring use of anthropomorphism in illustration had an influence on generations of illustrators and animators to come, from the Frenchman Ernest Griset, the Englishmen John Tenniel and Edward Lear, the Pole Ladislaw Staerwicz and finally the American Walt Disney.

³² Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 34.

³³ Bruno Latour, *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 39.



Marcel Broodthaers
Grandville, 1967
Slideshow, 80 slides
Courtesy Estate Marcel
Broodthaers, Brussels

a communion with things, taking us right back into the realm of those “horrible mixtures.” And nevertheless, this is not a “return” to animism, not to the “old”; that is, the modern version of animism, to be sure. For what we confront here has nothing to do with the conflation of differences, but with their increase, and with the demand to equally increase the tools for political representation that are capable of accounting for, and recognizing, what were previously mere mute objects, as social agents that have a significant share in the making of the common world. Taking into account things as co-authors of the social means to ask the question of social constructivism, of our making of the world, of the production of relations anew, always maintaining the stereoscopic view that keeps the mutual constitution of humans and nonhumans in sight. This does not require a “return” to historically surmounted ways of relating to the world, but taking into account the submerging of relational modes of knowledge through modern boundary-practices. What Latour does not account for, in this respect, focusing as he does on the chains of references and steps of mediation undertaken through the inscriptions of scientists in their laboratory, is the realm of sensuous correspondences, the importance of non-linguistic embodied communication, which were so central to Benjamin’s investment with both technology and the “language of things.”

For Benjamin, the language of things refers to the manner in which we are addressed by an object, the way in which an entire structure for the living world finds expression in the world of things. Being affected by the language of things has its roots in the “mimetic faculty.” For there is no dialogic form of relationality if there is no account of the very dependence of human language on the address we receive from things, deriving from a non-linguistic form of knowing in which the relationship between subjects (active) and objects (passive) is reversed;



Hans Richter
Ghosts before breakfast, 1928
 Video (original: 35 mm film), 7 min

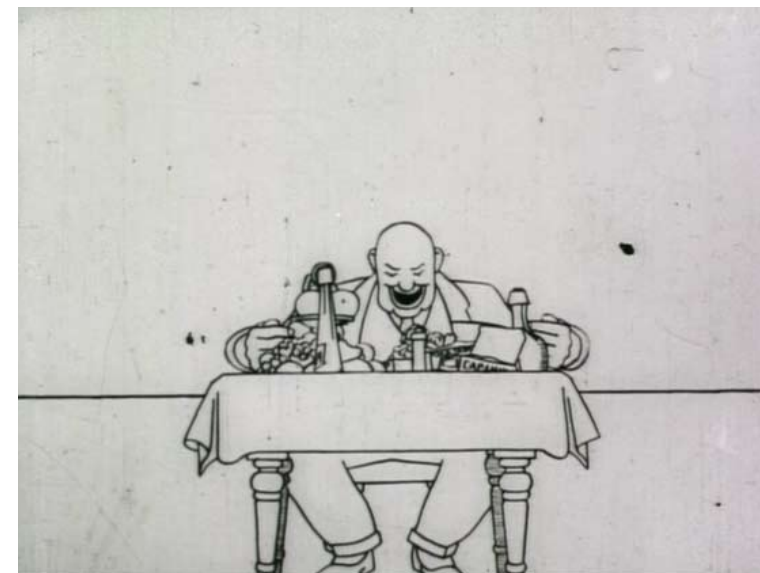
Our things in our hands must be equals, comrades
 —Alexander Rodchenko,
 1924

For Hungarian film theorist Béla Balázs, film gives visual shape to a physiognomic quality in both the animate and inanimate: “[In film,] all things make a physiognomic impression on us, whether we are conscious of it or not.” This physiognomic quality, however, was, for Balázs, an anthropomorphic projection, in line with expressionist theories that saw an “animated mirror” (Georg Simmel) in all modern art. For French film theorist and filmmaker Jean Epstein, they are not merely mirrors, but also assume the status of characters in the (human) drama: “Through the cinema, a revolver in a drawer, a broken bottle on the ground, an eye isolated by an iris, are elevated to the status of characters in the drama. [] To things and beings in their most frigid semblance, the cinema thus grants the greatest gift: life. And it confers this life in its highest guise: personality.”

In *Ghosts Before Breakfast* (*Vormittagsspuk*, 1928), Hans Richter stages a revolt of things, showing everyday objects turning against their users in a cinematic ghost hour of sorts. Teacups and saucers drop on the floor and break, beards appear and disappear, positive film changes into negative. Clothes desert their wearers, and strip them of the all-important markers of their bourgeois identity and dignity: the absence of hats releases a state of anarchy and “unreason.” But before noon strikes, reason, order, and serenity are restored: “In the end the old hierarchy of person-master over the object-slave re-established itself. But for a short time, the public entertained a niggling of doubt about the general validity of the usual subject-object order.”

Vertov’s *Soviet Toys* (1924) is generally assumed to be the first Soviet animated film. It is a propaganda film in which Vertov reacts to the introduction of limited forms of capitalist enterprises by Lenin’s New Economic Policy, and is both an iconoclastic and a literalist illustration of the animated fetish-character of commodities described by Marx.

The theory of animism as one of the animation of “dead” matter was developed in the midst of the consolidation of commodity capitalism in Europe and North America. The commodity, as Karl Marx provocatively proposed, was not dead matter because it was animated by a “fetishism of commodities.” There is a structural parallel between the commodity fetish and the cinematic image. Marx’s commodity fetish derives its uncanny animation by displacing a social relation (of labor) into an inert object: “A definite social relation assumes [...] the fantastic form of a relationship between things.” Hiding its means of production equally grants the cinematic image the animated quality it has for the viewer.



Dziga Vertov
Soviet Toys, 1924
 Video (original: 35 mm film), 10 min 40 sec



Reto Pulfer
Dichtr mit Fugulit und Hydrgraph, 2007. (Detail).
 Raku-ceramics, b/w analog photo fiber paper, silk, organic materials, black velvet, wooden board.
 Courtesy the artist and Balice Hertling, Paris

who, in everyday custom, translate their texture into human language, into faculties. There is no such thing as ecstasy: We are always already outside our selves with things, because they structure our habits, experiences, and, finally, our language, which, according to Benjamin, contains an archive of sensuous correspondences. For Benjamin, there is thus a continuum, not a rupture, between sensuous correspondences, the body as a medium, and the medium of language.

In ascribing language only to humans, in submerging mediality across the registers of experience, in denigrating sensuous knowledge to mere “relics,” we submerge our capacity for “relatedness,” and we gain a freedom of a paradoxical nature, the freedom to modernize. For it is in this domain of the a-semiotic that the question of relationality will always also pose itself if one doesn’t want to run into the danger of a new form of politically hazardous positivism that accepts as speech only what can be positivised by means of a writing device. This is, of course, also the field in which the questions discussed above become relevant to the field of aesthetics, understood as encompassing the whole spectrum of possible relationality between the registers of the sensuous, affective, and cognitive. This domain, in its political implications, concerns the entire realm of habitual behavior, of the internalization of modes of relation and emotional dispositions, the very schemes by which we make sense of the world. It is in this realm that the boundary between the implicit and explicit is being drawn by way of the entire spectrum of everyday gestures and practices. This boundary defines the margin of political negotiation in any parliamentary setting—for what is implicit, what “goes without saying,” what is taken for granted as

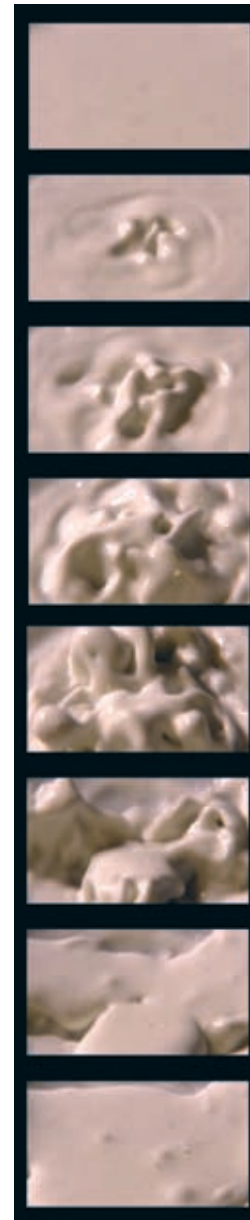
In Reto Pulfer’s works, things press close onto consciousness, and states of consciousness dynamize things. No interior, but passages between states of mind, words, materiality, things. In these passages, there are multiple forces at work, elementary as well as symbolic, that produce a drifting and shifting of signs and sensations, uncohering and re-cohering meaning, experience and memories. Those drifts can be intensified through further short-circuits between signs and things, between sounds and textures, structured by systems of notations that become templates for a space that calls various presences forth.

Without Persons consists of two computer generated male and female voices discussing the concepts of “being-in-the-city” and “being-with-others.” Two monitors show a liquid—reminiscent of milk—whose shape is generated in response to the voices. The plasmatic liquid assumes ever-new forms, seemingly organic and animated by the mechanical voices, while the text contrasts the yet undifferentiated experience of the world of the early infant with the vision of a world devoid of persons. A dissonance is created between the content of the spoken word—a discussion about “being” and relating to others—and the “disembodied,” clearly synthetic voices. This disaccord is further enhanced by the semblance of an organic link between the images and the sound, which refers to living beings, and the obvious machine support of the installation.

34 Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 27.

35 Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 137.

36 Rane Willerslev, *Soul Hunters: Hunting, Animism, and Personhood among the Siberian Yukaghirs* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 187.



Luis Jacob
Without Persons, 1999–2008
 two-channel video installation
 Video, 22 min 45 sec
 Courtesy Birch Libralato, Toronto

background condition, that which organizes perceptions, skills, and actions before mobilizing “positive,” declarative knowledge defines what can be recognized, responded to, and negotiated. According to Donna Haraway, the language of bodies produces its own truth, particularly in the realm of relationality between different species:

The truth or honesty of nonlinguistic embodied communication depends on looking back and greeting significant others, again and again. This sort of truth or honesty is not some trope-free, fantastic kind of natural authenticity that only animals can have while humans are defined by the happy fault of lying denotatively and knowing it. Rather, this truth telling is about co-constitutive natural cultural dancing, holding in esteem, and regarding open those who look back reciprocally. Always tripping, this kind of truth has a multispecies future.³⁴

Beyond Mirror Worlds

Once animism is released from the modern cage that defines it as either “erroneous thinking” with the respect to the reality of objects or as a question of projecting subjectivity, the concept opens up a very different set of problems, at the core of which lies not subjectivity of perception (leading to ever-new mirror-games), but perception of the subjectivity of the so-called object. These subjectivities are not to be conceived in anthropomorphic forms, but rather in relation to the available and possible forms and *dispositifs* of recognition. Trying to give an answer to the question of defining “human,” Latour answers:

The expression “anthropomorphic” considerably underestimates our humanity. We should be talking about morphism. Morphism is the place where technomorphisms, zoomorphisms, phusimorphisms, ideomorphisms, theomorphisms, sociomorphisms, psychomorphisms, all come together. A weaver of morphisms— isn’t that enough of a definition?³⁵

Besides the concept’s potential to act as a stereoscopic mirror for the understanding of modern boundary-practices, anthropology has revived the concept of animism, understood as “relational epistemology.” There is, as anthropologist Rane Willerslev asserts, a danger in these accounts of replicating the projection of a romantic sentiment paired with assertions of scientific universality escaping cultural relativism that still denies the very claim of the ontologies in question that the relations they uphold to non-human subjects are real, and not merely a transference of social metaphors onto the world, by means of which the difference between self and Other is absorbed.

We can only have an experience of a world if we are conscious subjects of experience who can distinguish between ourselves as subjects and an external world that transcends our subjective experience of it. Otherwise, the experiencing subject and the object of experience would conflate, would become one, thereby making any experience of the world impossible.³⁶

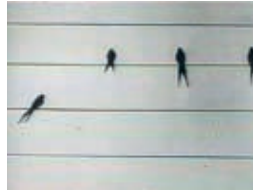
To be sure, all cultures draw boundaries, and organize and negotiate differences. All cultures objectify, and draw a line between what is real and what is imaginary in ways that constitute these realms mutually. However, they differ in the way these differences are organized, and only the moderns are known for having operated through the bifurcation of nature and culture, and the derived system of equally categorical Great Divides, monologic in their structure and form of relationality. That the societies described as animist do not ascribe to such forms of difference a priori does in no way mean that these differences do not exist; rather, they have to be created constantly through everyday practices. These practices are basically mimetic, if mimesis is understood as a faculty and sensuous-cognitive process:

Mimesis is essentially relational in that the imitator has no independent existence outside or separate from the object or person imitated; and yet the imitator is constantly being thrown back on himself reflexively, without ever achieving unity. Thus mimesis offers assimilation with otherness while also drawing boundaries and distinguishing oneself. Animism demands both, and without mimesis the very basis of animistic relatedness is therefore likely to break down. This is not to say that mimesis is identical with animism. We can and do imitate things without being animists for that reason. Rather, what I am arguing is that mimesis is and must be a prerequisite for animistic symbolic world making. [...] Mimesis, therefore, is the practical side of animism, its world-making mechanism par excellence.³⁷

Control Society

Since the 1970s, the question of relationality has taken on new forms within the realm of what previously was characterized as industrialized modernity. With the decline of industrialism, the rise of post-Fordist modes of production and immaterial labor, and the end of the “disciplinary regime,” the very site occupied by animism previously as a romantic counterpart to the objectified, disenchanting world has experienced a significant shift. From being the negative of modernity, the focal point of its imaginary opposites, animism has become a resource for the expansion of capitalist modes of production into the realm of relationality governed by affects and subjectifications. It is now most common again to talk about souls and communicative, collaborative practices; government papers speak of the embodied mind and the unity between body and soul. Mimetic and passionate engagement has become a quotidian request, through which conformity is being produced. In the passage from the “disciplinary society” to the “society of control,” the relation between inside and outside has partially been reversed—it is only that the self, the subject, remained at its place, and now finds itself in a position of negativity, in constant need to positivize itself by means of inclusion into the existing web of productive social relations.

What had been achieved by feminist theoreticians and practitioners, among those whose attacks on the notorious modern dualisms have shown significant effects, became increasingly incorporated standards



Grigory Alexandrov
Jolly Fellows, 1934
Video (original: 35 mm film),
96 min

Certain tropes govern animated worlds. One of the laws can be described as exaggeration of cause and effect. A second rule emphasizes the animation itself: everything turns out to be more alive than you think. A third and most fundamental principle of animation is that the whole “animated” world is joined together, bound not merely by the ropes of “cause and effect” but by the “carcass” upon which it is all constructed, the phonogram. The animated universe sings, with its many voices, a single, very catching, tune. When Grigory Alexandrov (the assistant to Sergei M. Eisenstein for more than a decade) made his first film in 1931, he translated the laws of animation derived from the study of the art of Walt Disney, among others, to the real-life universe of the Soviet Utopia, creating a genre of musical comedies that has been referred to as “Stalinist animation”.³⁸

³⁷ Rane Willerslev, *Soul Hunters*, 191.



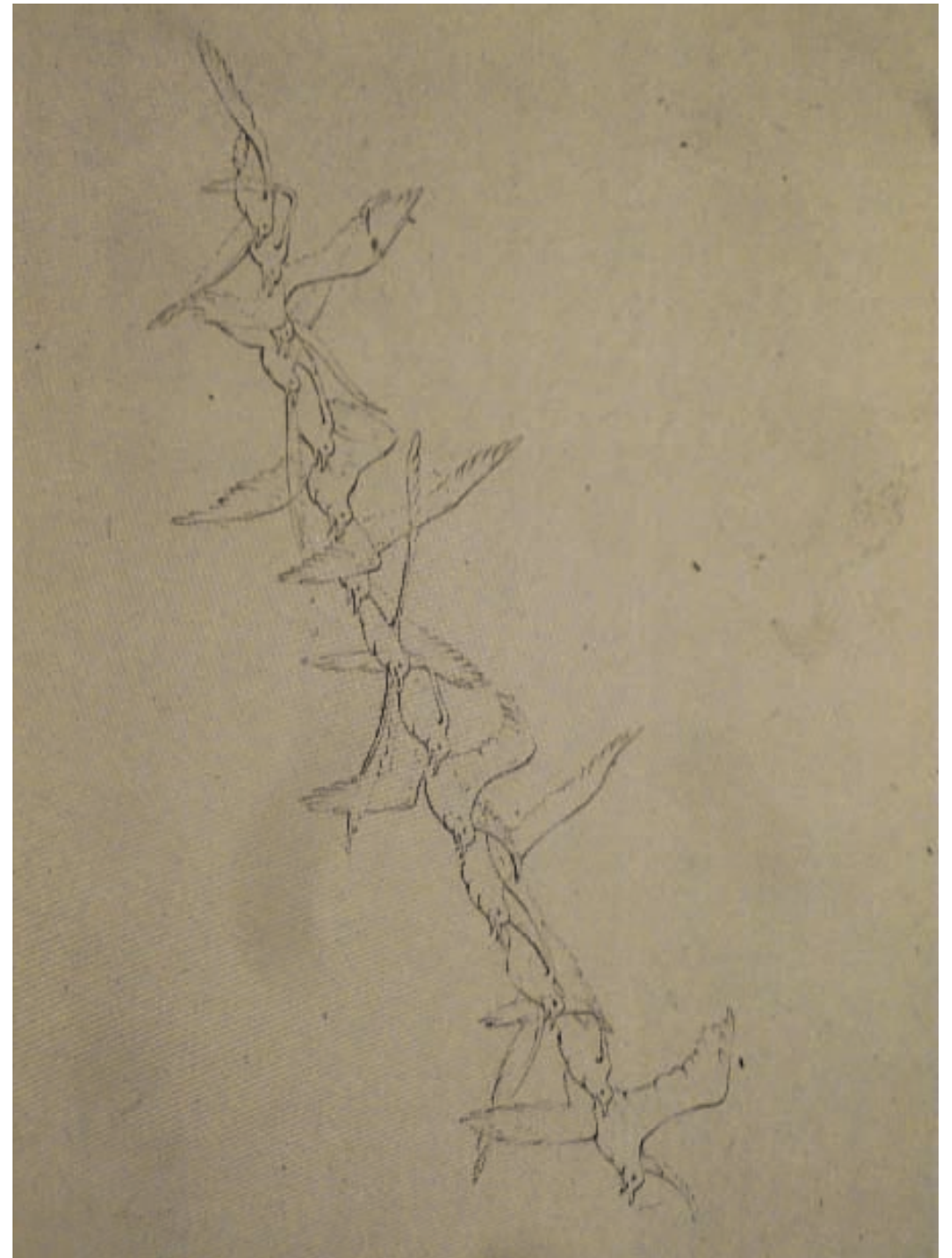
Lili Dujourie
Initialen der Stille 5, 2008
MDF, metal and clay
Courtesy the artist and Galerie
Nelson-Freeman, Paris

Initialen der Stille consists of a gray functional table upon which a heap of objects is laid out. They are earthen in color and resemble scraps of clay peeled off a rolling pin—curved little flakes of earth, the edges of which are gently ripped. From afar, the table looks like an operating table or a doctor’s instrument tray, and the jumble of earth-like, curled skin or broken body parts. The haphazard placement of the curved flakes means that some appear convex, some concave. A dynamic is created; the individual elements appear to be in movement like the limbs of one body. Both in mythology and in the scriptures, clay was the material with which divinity made man. There is, in Dujourie’s use of clay, the idea of a return to the very beginnings. Under the work’s title, *Initialen der Stille* (Initials of silence), we may read the scraps of clay as testimony to the gods’ and God’s shaping of man and woman, to the essence of the body, which, through the ages, has been objectified and silenced.

³⁸ Based upon extracts from Anne Nesbet, *Savage Junctions: Sergei Eisenstein and the Shape of Thinking* (London: I.B. Taurus and Co Ltd., 2007).

in the mantras of a capitalist mode of immaterial production, now centering on the production of social relationality. This has given rise to new forms of “clinical animisms,” in which the paradigm or relatedness has become a modality of social production, which no longer has an articulable dimension of negativity, of imaginary outsides. In the society of control, it is negativity that is interiorized as the conditioning through the disciplinary enclosures is replaced by increasingly implicit forms of self-management. Power now operates by the fear of falling outside, no longer by enclosing an inside. It operates by means of implication and innervation, providing the frames in which the productive relations are to take place, while the very frames remain out of the reach of being negotiable. Yet these frames are flexible and can adapt if a critical mass applies force. Critique, already hurt by the waning power of its iconoclastic gestures, must remain local and responsive. The relational paradigm has long entered the officially accepted doctrines of culture in which few of the old oppositions can be upheld.

The field of social production has turned increasingly into an animist mirror-world of sorts, with the subject being the animating frame of its own world. Looking into the world as the mirror of the self has become the modality of interiorization. The rise of the green economy as the next capitalist frontier will do its part in creating new quasi-animist forms of governmentality. All this can be explained as a mimetic, morphological adaptation of power, spinning the wheel of dialectics between resistance and form of power further, now in the process of appropriating the transformative forces of relationality and the mimetic. The outlines of the new regime, as in the old, can once again be traced negatively, by means of its congruent pathologies. The neurotic boundary-syndrome is replaced by the mode of depression, which Jennifer Church has described in terms of being able to see a reflection of the romantic, transgressive role animism had once played: as “false oneness with the world.” It is false, because it is a oneness in which the subject is ultimately deprived of agency, of the possibility to act and relate, a subject being locked into an immobilized time-space by means of subjectification, rather different from the immobilization experienced by objectification that gives rise to neurosis and paranoia, yet which is strictly correlative. One battlefield of the future will be the boundaries of the self in search for the tools to resist the interiorization of the structures of power implicated in the flows of relationality. And yet one must not forget that these developments remain rather local phenomena, and that outside the “postmodern” mobilization of “clinical” animism induced in new forms of subjectification, what awaits us everywhere is history. Despite the postmodern amnesia of a capitalism turned green, the conflicts of modernity are far from pacified. History’s battlefields need new modes of recognition, and understandings of production and transformation of relational cosmographies under the modern traditions and conditions of war. It is against this backdrop that animism, as a grand narrative of sorts, may become a necessary epic for the society of control, a tool for the tackling of the qualitative, political aspects of relationality.



Étienne-Jules Marey,
Goéland volant obliquement dans la direction de l'appareil, 1887
Original ink drawing on Bristol board
left: *Empoisonnement d'un animal (espèce non précisée)*, undated
Original photograph on lampblack
Courtesy Cinémathèque Française, Paris