[ Introduction ]

New Life Forms and Functions of Animal Fetishism

Animal Nation

In 2002, *Maclean’s* magazine, one of Canada’s oldest national newswEEKlies, ran an advertisement configuring the nation as a beaver spread out across the page like a dissection specimen.¹ The beaver’s internal organization is bared to encyclopedic view, with lines spoking out from its interior to labels biologically identifying blood organs and body parts (see Figure 1). The ad caption consists of a few pithy words tacked beneath the splayed sign of the animal: “*Maclean’s*. Canada. In depth.”

The equivalent standing of the two proper names in the caption, “*Maclean’s*” and “Canada,” positions the media and the nation as virtually synonymous powers; the sober black print of “Canada” is, if anything, overshadowed by the larger, bolder “*Maclean’s,*” whose blood-red typography chromatically resonates with the red tissues and organs of the beaver. A third proper name and trademark appear in more discrete red type at the top right-hand corner of the advertisement: “Rogers,” short for Rogers Communications Inc. The Rogers conglomerate owns *Maclean’s* as well as numerous other print, television, and telecommunications media. The placement of its name in the ad is suggestive of the
Figure 1. “Maclean’s. Canada. In depth.” The visceral figure of the nation in a 2002 advertisement for Maclean’s, Canada’s only national weekly current affairs magazine.
superordinate power of capital over both the press and the nation in our current era.

Taxonomically tacking a powerful network of proper names onto an animal anatomy is generative of fetishistic effects that Marx first theorized in relation to the commodity form, in this case effecting a reification of the nation form by associating “Maclean’s,” “Canada,” and “Rogers” with the raw facticity of the specimen. Yet it is not just any specimen to which the trinity of powers has been attached. The beaver is already an iconic symbol, a fetishized sign of the nation whose familiarity and recognition are presupposed by the ad’s “inside” joke. If the beaver has furnished one species of animal capital for the nation as colonial pelt, it has furnished another as postcolonial brand. Instated as Canada’s official emblem in 1975, the sign of the beaver was deployed as a tool of affective governance to involve Canadians in a project of national identity building and unity. The move consolidated the economic and symbolic capital accumulated in the sign of the beaver over three centuries of Euro-Canadian traffic in North America, presenting it as a natural, self-evident sign of the nation.²

Yet, as this book sets out to show, animal signs are anything but self-evident. Confronting their fetishistic functions in cultural discourses of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries begins with a determination to excavate for the material histories of economic and symbolic power that are cunningly reified in them. Animal signs function fetishistically in both Marxian and psychoanalytic senses; that is, they endow the historical products of social labor to which they are articulated with an appearance of innate, spontaneous being, and they serve as powerful substitutes or “partial objects” filling in for a lost object of desire or originary wholeness that never did or can exist, save phantasmatically. The beaver is Canada’s fetish insofar as it configures the nation as a life form that is born rather than made (obscuring recognition of the ongoing cultural and material history of its construction) and insofar as it stands in for an organic national unity that in actuality does not exist.

Contrary to its fetishistic effects, then, there is nothing natural about the beaver sign institutionally minted in the 1970s as a means of affectively interpellating citizens into an ideal of national unity through the “innocent” appeal of the animal and of construing the nation as an
indigenous organism. Nor is the normative chain of associations triggered by the symbol of the Canadian beaver—moth-eaten stereotypes of the fur trade nostalgically evoking a bygone era of colonial contact and commerce, an era of imagined authenticity and fullness of nature prior to the ostensible “vanishing” of aboriginal and animal populations\(^3\)—natural. In the 1970s, the institutionalization of the sign of the beaver mustered this nostalgic web of associations into the political service of a dominantly white, Euro-Canadian discourse of national culture, one pivoting on an assertion of its own indigeneity. Through the animal capital of the national symbol, a postcolonial project of national culture deeply structured by the logics of capital and “White normativity” has become the privileged content of a discursive struggle for “native space,” displacing the ongoing machinations of internal colonialism and white supremacy, as well as infranational struggles for First Nations’ self-determination.\(^4\)

The Canadian beaver constitutes a powerful nodal point within a national narrative that nostalgically remembers the material history of the fur trade as a primal scene in which Native trappers, French coureurs de bois, and English traders collaboratively trafficked in animal capital, at the same time as it advantageously forgets, through the symbolic violence of occupying the semiotic slot of indigeneity, the cultural and ecological genocides of the settler-colonial nation form mediating capital’s expansion. Ostensibly free of any (human) linguistic, ethnic, racial, class, or gender traits, the indigenous species is put into symbolic circulation as a neutral signifier incapable, it would seem, of communicating political bias against any individual or constituency in Canada. Yet as feminist, critical race, poststructuralist, and postcolonial theorists have labored to show, the “privileged empty point of universality” slyly enciphers the dominant subject position in a social order, enabling that subject position to pass as the unmarked social standard.\(^5\) That “testicle” and “penis” are pointed to in Maclean’s somatic diagram of the beaver (alongside “spleen” and “stomach”) inadvertently reveals the default, or universal, gender of the national ontology. Enciphering white masculine English embodiment as a national and natural standard, the Canadian symbol also tacitly racializes the difference of ethnic and diasporic citizenship. Under the universal alibi of species life, prover-
bially innocent of political designs, the Canadian beaver subtly counter-indicates the relinquishment of white English cultural and economic privilege pronounced by official state multiculturalism.

Heavily burdened with a historical complex of economic and libidinal investments, the sign of the beaver rematerialized in a national magazine in 2002 to reify a new nexus of knowledge, nation, and capital at the dawn of the twenty-first century: *Maclean’s*, Canada, Rogers.\(^6\)

The wit and ostensible difference of the *Maclean’s* discourse lies in its literal cross-sectioning of the nation’s animal fetish. The magazine’s deliberately literal treatment holds the defamiliarizing potential of opening the organic ideology of the nation to an ironic gaze and of bringing a “wry” self-reflexivity to bear on the stock image of the nation.\(^7\)

Yet the biological schema of the nation’s organic constitution serves to repress rather than open those “recesses of the national culture from which alternative constituencies of peoples and oppositional analytic capacities may emerge.”\(^8\)

Granting less an ironic analysis of the nation-fetish and more a medicalized scopophilia arousing fascination cum revulsion around its mock vivisection, the ad paradoxically manages to *revive* a tired cliché at risk of ending up on the scrap heap of history as global capitalism threatens to render the distinct “life” of the nation passé.

What makes animal signs unusually potent discursive alibis of power is not only that particularist political ideologies, by ventriloquizing them, appear to speak from the universal and disinterested place of nature. It is also that “the animal,” arguably more than any other signifier by virtue of its singular mimetic capaciousness (a notion that will be further elaborated over the course of this book), functions as a hinge allowing powerful discourses to flip or vacillate between literal and figurative economies of sense. Even in its rendering as a vivisection—or perhaps, especially in *Maclean’s* raw rendering—the national fetish hinges on the double sense of animals’ material and metaphorical currency. Here the tools of colonial discourse analysis can be brought to bear on animal capital inasmuch as the animal sign, not unlike the racial stereotype theorized by Homi Bhabha, is a site of “productive ambivalence” enabling vacillations between economic and symbolic logics of power.\(^9\) For Bhabha, ambivalence constitutes the discursive structure of fetishism. “Within discourse,” he writes, “the fetish represents the
simultaneous play between metaphor as substitution (masking absence and difference) and metonymy (which contiguously registers the perceived lack).”

As William Pietz suggests, however, couching the problem of fetishism rhetorically, as Bhabha does, risks textualizing it and detaching it from a material field of relationships that are not reducible to linguistic-discursive structures. By the end of this book it should be clear that animal capital resists both culturalist tendencies to reduce capitalism to an economy and fetishism of signs and materialist tendencies to reduce capitalism to an economy and fetishism of substances.

Much more could be done to comparatively evaluate the productive ambivalence of the colonial stereotype and that of the animal sign. For now, suffice it to say that it is the capacity of animal life to be taken both literally and figuratively, as a material and symbolic resource of the nation, that constitutes its fetishistic potency. As will be elaborated over the course of this book, the ambivalence of animal signs is for this reason a pivotal means of depoliticizing volatile contradictions between species and speculative currencies of capital and between capitalism’s material and symbolic modes of production. In the particular case of the Maclean’s ad, the productive ambivalence of the beaver mediates a national discourse that vacillates between a traumatic remembering and a willful forgetting of Canada’s forced birth. While the image of a dead specimen potentially yields a grisly reminder of the material exercise of power upon which the birth of the nation is historically contingent, it actually works to render the material violence of the nation merely metaphorical for our times.

Animal Capital

The Maclean’s text helps to introduce a book intent on theorizing a biopolitical terrain and time of animal capital that includes, but invariably exceeds, the cultural discourses of the specific nation from which I write. The juxtaposition of two terms rarely theorized in conjunction—“animal” and “capital”—signals a double-edged intervention into two subjects whose dangerously universal appeal necessarily situates this study within the broader field of transnational cultural studies. On the one hand, Animal Capital constitutes a resolutely materialist engage-
ment with the emergent “question of the animal,” in Cary Wolfe’s words, challenging its predominantly idealist treatments in critical theory and animal studies by theorizing the ways that animal life gets culturally and carnally rendered as capital at specific historical junctures. On the other hand, by developing a series of unorthodox genealogies of animal capital across Fordist and post-Fordist eras, the book seeks to rectify a critical blind spot in Marxist and post-Marxist theory around the nodal role of animals, ideologically and materially, in the reproduction of capital’s hegemony. While theorists of biopower have interrogated the increasingly total subsumption of the social and biological life of the *anthropos* to market logics, little attention has been given to what I am calling animal capital. This book’s double-edged intervention suggests a critical need within the field of cultural studies for work that explores how questions of “the animal” and of capital impinge on one another within abysmal histories of contingency.

Against a mythopoetic invocation of animal signs as a universal lingua franca transcending time and space, then, I seek to historicize the specific cultural logics and material logistics that have produced animals as “forms of capital” (in the words of Pierre Bourdieu) across the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. “Animal capital” simultaneously notates the semiotic currency of animal signs and the carnal traffic in animal substances across this period. More accurately, it signals a tangle of biopolitical relations within which the economic and symbolic capital of animal life can no longer be sorted into binary distinction. This book argues that animal memes and animal matter are mutually overdetermined as forms of capital, and its aim is to track what Bourdieu terms the “interconvertibility” of symbolic and economic forms of capital via the fetishistic currency of animal life.

A conjugated inquiry into the historical entanglements of “animal” and “capital” not only is long overdue within the variegated field of transnational cultural studies but arguably is pivotal to an analysis of biopower, or what Michel Foucault describes as a “technology of power centered on life.” At stake in biopower is nothing less than an ontological contest over what Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri refer to as the “production and reproduction of life itself.” Foucault was the first to remark on how the sign of the animal emerged at the “threshold of
biological modernity,” marking a shift to “untamed ontology” or “life itself” as the new object of power.\textsuperscript{16} The fascination in the Maclean’s ad with the internal organs of the beaver—rather than with bodily extremities such as teeth, fur, tail, and feet—would seem to dramatize Foucault’s claim that when life becomes the “sovereign vanishing-point” in relation to which power is oriented, it is the “hidden structures” of the animal, its “buried organs” and “invisible functions,” that emerge as its biological cipher.\textsuperscript{17}

The role of biopower in the globalization of market life has compelled a growing body of theory devoted to illuminating its diverse means and effects. Many recent theories of biopower have migrated away from Foucault’s focus on the discourses and technologies of the state to scan instead networks and technologies of global capitalism. Hardt and Negri draw on Foucault to theorize “the biopolitical nature of the new paradigm of power” in the context of a transnational empire of capital that, they claim, has superseded the sovereignty of the nation-state.\textsuperscript{18} Empire, they argue, operates as a “society of control,” a diffuse network of power in which “mechanisms of command become ever more ‘democratic,’ ever more immanent to the social field, distributed throughout the brains and bodies of the citizens” (23). In this paradigm of power, hegemonic consent and participation in market life is solicited by means of semiotic and affective technologies increasingly inseparable from the economic and material conditions of capital’s reproduction. As Hardt and Negri describe it, “Biopower is a form of power that regulates social life from its interior, following it, interpreting it, absorbing it, and rearticulating it. Power can achieve an effective command over the entire life of the population only when it becomes an integral, vital function that every individual embraces and reactivates of his or her own accord. As Foucault says, ‘Life has now become . . . an object of power’” (23–24).

Hardt and Negri reiterate another seminal remark of Foucault’s: “The control of society over individuals is not conducted only through consciousness or ideology, but also in the body and with the body. For capitalist society biopolitics is what is most important, the biological, the somatic, the corporeal.”\textsuperscript{19} However, their analysis immediately gravitates away from the body and toward the figure of a “social bios” in
which “immaterial” modes of intellectual-symbolic labor, they argue, now predominate. Hardt and Negri do carefully qualify that to claim that immaterial production is now dominant is not to say that material labor has disappeared as a condition of capital. Nevertheless, by theoretically privileging the intellectual-linguistic conditions of capital in their own analysis, they risk reinforcing empire’s ether effects, which is to say the effacement of the material-ecological platforms supporting capitalism’s symbolic, informational, and financial networks. In privileging bios over zoë in their analysis—two Greek terms for life that, according to Giorgio Agamben, respectively signify “the form or way of living proper to an individual or group” and “the simple fact of living common to all living beings (animals, men, or gods)” —Hardt and Negri suggest that somehow human social life (as the subject of biopolitics) can be abstracted from the lives of nonhuman others (the domain of zoopolitics). Zoopolitics, instead, suggests an inescapable contiguity or bleed between bios and zoë, between a politics of human social life and a politics of animality that extends to other species. However, what Hardt and Negri term “the ontology of production”—namely, the immanent power of the multitude to constitute the substance of its life world—takes on an unexpectedly metaphysical quality in its association with forms of “immaterial [social] labour” that no longer appear contingent on animal bodies. Indeed, the “social flesh” of the multitude is conceived in Deleuzian fashion as “pure potential” or virtuality. Despite Hardt and Negri’s attempt to move beyond the “horizon of language and communication” that contours the concept of immaterial labor in the work of contemporary Italian Marxists (something they do by theorizing affect as the missing biopolitical link to the animal body), there are few signs that the social flesh eats, in other words, few signs that the social bios is materially contingent upon and continuous with the lives of nonhuman others.

This book initiates a different trajectory of biopolitical—or, we might say, zoopolitical—critique, one beginning with a challenge to the assumption that the social flesh and “species body” at stake in the logic of biopower is predominantly human. Actual animals have already been subtly displaced from the category of “species” in Foucault’s early remarks on biopower, as well as in the work of subsequent theorists of
biopower, for whom animality functions predominantly as a metaphor for that corporeal part of “man” that becomes subject to biopolitical calculation. In Agamben’s influential theorization of “bare life,” for instance, animals’ relation to capitalist biopower is occluded by his species-specific conflation of zoe with a socially stripped-down figure of Homo sacer that he traces back to antiquity.\(^{28}\) However, the theorization of bare life as “that [which] may be killed and yet not sacrificed”\(^ {29} \)—a state of exception whose paradigmatic scenario in modernity is, for Agamben, the concentration camp—finds its zoopolitical supplement in Derrida’s theorization of the “non-criminal putting to death” of animals, a related state of exception whose paradigmatic scenario is arguably the modern industrial slaughterhouse.\(^ {30}\) Indeed, the power to reduce humans to the bare life of their species body arguably presupposes the prior power to suspend other species in a state of exception within which they can be noncriminally put to death. As Cary Wolfe writes, “as long as it is institutionally taken for granted that it is all right to systematically exploit and kill nonhuman animals simply because of their species, then the humanist discourse of species will always be available for use by some humans against other humans as well, to countenance violence against the social other of whatever species—or gender, or race, or class, or sexual difference.”\(^ {31}\) Trophy photos of U.S. military personnel terrorizing Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib prison in 2004 showed, among other things, a naked Iraqi man on all fours, with a leash around his neck, and prisoners cowering before German shepherd dogs. Cruelly, the dog is made to function as a racist prosthetic of the U.S. military’s power to animalize “the other,” a power that applies in the first instance to the animal itself.\(^ {32} \)

The biopolitical production of the bare life of the animal other subtends, then, the biopolitical production of the bare life of the racialized other. Returning to Foucault’s ruminations on biopower, it becomes apparent that within “the biological continuum addressed by biopower” there is a line drawn within the living prior to the one inscribed by racism, a species line occluded and at the same time inadvertently revealed by Foucault’s use of the term “subspecies” to describe the effects of racialization:
What in fact is racism? It is primarily a way of introducing a break into the domain of life that is under power’s control: the break between what must live and what must die. The appearance within the biological continuum of the human race of races, the distinction among races, the hierarchy of races, the fact that certain races are described as good and that others, in contrast, are described as inferior: all this is a way of fragmenting the field of the biological that power controls. . . . This will allow power . . . to subdivide the species it controls, into the *subspecies* known, precisely, as races.\textsuperscript{33}

The pivotal insight enabled by Foucault—that biopower augurs “nothing less than the entry of life into history, that is, the entry of phenomena peculiar to the life of the human species into the order of knowledge and power”\textsuperscript{34}—bumps up against its own internal limit at the species line. The biopolitical analyses he has inspired, in turn, are constrained by their reluctance to pursue power’s effects beyond the production of human social and/or species life and into the zoopolitics of animal capital.\textsuperscript{35}

The crux of this book’s argument is that discourses and technologies of biopower hinge on the species divide. That is, they hinge on the zoo-ontological production of species difference as a strategically ambivalent rather than absolute line, allowing for the contradictory power to both dissolve and reinscribe borders between humans and animals. The phrase *animal capital* points, among other things, to the paradox of an anthropocentric order of capitalism whose means and effects can be all too posthuman, that is, one that ideologically grants and materially invests in a world in which species boundaries can be radically crossed (as well as reinscribed) in the genetic and aesthetic pursuit of new markets.

The “question of the animal” exerts pressure on theorists of biopower and capital to engage not only with the ideological and affective functions of animal signs but with material institutions and technologies of speciesism. The material dimensions of the question are once again raised by Derrida, who writes in unmistakably Foucauldian terms:

It is all too evident that in the course of the last two centuries these traditional forms of treatment of the animal have been turned upside
down by the joint developments of zoological, ethological, biological, and genetic forms of knowledge and the always inseparable techniques of intervention with respect to their object, the transformation of the actual object, its milieu, its world, namely, the living animal. This has occurred by means of farming and regimentalization at a demographic level unknown in the past, by means of genetic experimentation, the industrialization of what can be called the production for consumption of animal meat, artificial insemination on a massive scale, more and more audacious manipulations of the genome, the reduction of the animal not only to production and over-active production (hormones, genetic crossbreeding, cloning, and so on) of meat for consumption but also of all sorts of other end products, and all of that in the service of a certain being and the so-called human well-being of man.36

Derrida’s words intimate that it is not enough to theorize biopower in relation to human life alone and that the reproductive lives and labors of other species (sexually differentiated labors, let us not forget) also become a matter of biopolitical calculation. Yet the reproductive value of animals is by no means only biological, as the preceding passage might suggest; animal signs and metaphors are also key symbolic resources of capital’s reproduction. Given the soaring speculation in animal signs as a semiotic currency of market culture at the same time that animals are reproductively managed as protein and gene breeders under chilling conditions of control, an interrogation of animal capital in this double sense—as simultaneously sign and substance of market life—emerges as a pressing task of cultural studies.

If biopolitical critique has largely bracketed the question of the animal, critical theory and the emergent field of animal studies have, apart from a few significant exceptions, tended to sidestep materialist critique in favor of philosophical, psychoanalytical, and aesthetic formulations of animal alterity. Ironically, in contradiction to the passage cited earlier in which Derrida links the “over-active production” of animal life to the machinery of capitalism, the importance of the figure of the animal to deconstruction, which becomes explicit in Derrida’s later work, is a key force to be contended with in countering the idealism surrounding the question of the animal. The Derridean text that will serve throughout this book as a foil against which I elaborate
a politics of animal capital is Akira Mizuta Lippit’s *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife* (2000). If I obsessively return to it throughout, it is because Lippit’s aesthetic theory of animal affect and cinematic transference is at once riveting and profoundly idealizing, inasmuch as it allows capital to largely go missing as motive force and mediating material history. I will return to the work of Derrida and Lippit in a later section of this Introduction.

Glancing briefly back at the *Maclean’s* ad, I want to tease out one last implication of the injunction it makes against the naïveté of taking the animal sign literally. Does not this injunction enable a kind of temporal transcoding whereby the naïveté of reading literally—and the economic violence of literally trapping an animal specimen—gets mapped onto the past, while the ironic stance of taking the animal figuratively effectively establishes the current era’s distance and difference from that past? In the magazine’s positioning of its readers in a relation of postmodern ironic distance from a past colonial traffic in beaver pelts, there is a hint of an underlying narrative of historical progress from economic to symbolic forms of animal capital (linked to larger narratives of progress from colonial violence to postcolonial reconciliation and from industrial to postindustrial modes of production). There is a suggestion, in other words, that through the progress of history Canadians have left behind not only a colonial past (metonymized by the violence of taking animals literally) but the messy necessity of any “real,” material exploitation of nature altogether. Pheng Cheah argues that “the canonical understanding of culture in philosophical modernity” consists in the idealism of imagining that culture can transcend its “condition of miredness” in the political-economic field, which in the context of his argument is that of the nation-state. 37 While Cheah discerns a “closet idealism” in postcolonial discourses of migration and hybridity that valorize transnational mobility over national bondage, the hegemonic expression of the idea that culture can achieve “physical freedom from being tied to the earth” is, as Cheah is aware, that of neoliberal globalization. 38 It is this liberal fantasy of culturally transcending the materiality of nature that can be glimpsed, finally, in the mock biology of the *Maclean’s* ad.
In his theorization of intangible or symbolic forms of capital accruing to signs of social status such as good taste and education, Pierre Bourdieu contends that “the fact that symbolic capital is less easily measured and counted than livestock” only makes its violence harder to discern.\(^{39}\) For Bourdieu, symbolic capital is ultimately “a disguised form of physical, ‘economic’ capital.”\(^ {40}\) The distribution of forms of animal capital according to a narrative of historical progress—encouraging the sense that economic and symbolic orders of capital are successive rather than coeval—is a temporizing maneuver that works against recognition of their simultaneity, “disguising” the interconvertibility or supplementarity of their violence. Although a study of animal capital would seem to reinforce Hardt and Negri’s claim that immaterial forms of intellectual and symbolic production have achieved historical hegemony over material modes of production—a shift traceable, among other places, in the etymology of “branding,” which no longer predominantly signifies the literal act of searing signs of ownership onto biological property but rather signifies the symbolic production of affective trademarks—this book continuously strives to locate the economic or material exercise of power with which symbolic capital is coeval. While the postindustrial idioms of “branding” and “stock” have successfully dissociated capital from its material conditions and effects (\textit{stock}, like \textit{branding}, increasingly signifies a field of virtual speculation freed from capitalism’s roots in biological property), one of the aims of this book is to restore a sense of capital’s terrestrial costs.

**The Ring of Tautology**

To this end, this book struggles, unfortunately with no guarantee of success, against the abstract and universal appeal of \textit{animal} and \textit{capital}, both of which fetishistically repel recognition as shifting signifiers whose meaning and matter are historically contingent. Against his contemporaries, Marx argued that rather than having intrinsic properties, capital was the reified expression of historically specific relationships of labor and exchange. He dared to pose a simple question—What is a commodity?—and to unravel from this seemingly “obvious, trivial thing” the social relations between “men” that are occulted in the
apparent autonomy of the products of their labor.\textsuperscript{41} “The animal,” likewise, has circulated in cultural discourses of Western modernity as a generic universal—a “general singular”\textsuperscript{42}—whose meaning is ostensibly self-evident. Yet asking the simple question “What is an animal?” (as Tim Ingold does in an edited volume of that title) can similarly reveal that the meaning of the animal fluctuates with the vicissitudes of culture and history and, more particularly, with the vicissitudes of a species line that can be made either more porous or impregnable to suit the means and ends of power. That the animal has regularly been distended in the West to encompass racialized members of Homo sapiens, as the recent example of Abu Ghraib demonstrates, belies the essentialist tenet that the animal has fixed or universal referents.

David Harvey rues the “tendency in discursive debates to homogenize the category ‘nature’ . . . when it should be regarded as intensely internally variegated—an unparalleled field of difference.”\textsuperscript{43} This book attempts to intervene into the homogenized category of nature by way of the more specific but equally generic category of “the animal.” Derrida has eloquently declaimed the asininity of corralling “a heterogeneous multiplicity of the living” into “the strict enclosure of this definite article.”\textsuperscript{44} My hope is that if animal and capital are read in genealogical relation to one another they will break down as monolithic essences and reveal their historical contingencies.

Yet even as the chapters in this book pit genealogical specificity against the generic force of their intertwined subjects, in the ring of animal capital can be heard a real threat of totality posed by the global hegemony of capital. There is meant to be a tautological ring to animal capital; the two words are supposed to sound almost, but not quite, the same. Indeed, much of this book is devoted to analyzing market discourses that seek to effect a perfect mimicry of animal and capital, including advertising campaigns depicting mobile phones and cars morphing into the instinctive species-life of monkeys or rabbits. A recent example of this mimicry appeared in “Nissan Animals,” an ad campaign promoting the automaker’s 4 x 4 vehicles. One fifty-second television ad in the campaign, aired in North America during the premier time slot of the 2007 Super Bowl, showed a series of Nissan 4 x 4s changing into and out of species shapes (a computer-generated puma,
spider, crocodile, and snake) as they traversed rugged off-road terrain. As the ad’s tagline spelled out, Nissan animals are “naturally capable” of navigating a landscape that requires them to “shift capabilities.”

The tautological ring of animal capital purposefully conjures Bhabha’s theory of colonial mimicry as “the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite.” Similar examples of market mimicry engaged in detail in later chapters will be seen to be as productively ambivalent in their rendering of species sameness-difference as Bhabha argues colonial discourses are in their rendering of race (race and species often function as substitutes, moreover, in the discursive repertoires of biopower). Yet the partial rather than perfect symmetry of animal and capital is meant to suggest something else, as well: the final inability of capitalist biopower to fully realize a perfect tautology of nature and capital. The near-sameness of the two sounded by the title will take on greater theoretical substance as I historicize the powerful mimicry of animal capital in relation to Antonio Negri’s formulation of “tautological time,” a time of real subsumption that corresponds, for Negri, to the penetration of biopower into the entire fabric of social life in capitalist postmodernity. The ring in this book’s title intimates, with simultaneously ominous and hopeful repercussions, that animal and capital are increasingly produced as a semiotic and material closed loop, such that the meaning and matter of the one feeds seamlessly back into the meaning and matter of the other. In the nauseating recursivity of this logic, capital becomes animal, and animals become capital. While the balance of power seems, ominously, to be all on the side of capital, it is crucial to also recognize the amplified vulnerability of capitalism in tautological times. Indeed, novel diseases erupting out of the closed loop of animal capital—mad cow disease, avian influenza—are one material sign of how the immanent terrain of market life becomes susceptible, paradoxically, to the pandemic potential of “nature” that early modern discourses of biopower originally sought to circumscribe (see chapter 4 and the book’s postscript).

Unlike Negri, however, I do not equate tautological time with postmodernity alone, and I will trace different biopolitical times of animal capital across Fordist and post-Fordist economies of power. As Fredric
Jameson notes in *The Seeds of Time*, the analysis of capitalism requires “the realization (strongly insisted on by Althusser and his disciples) that each system—better still, each ‘mode of production’—produces a temporality that is specific to it.” For Jameson, “mode of production” is here broadly conceived in relation to late capitalism, a period whose accelerated logic of “perpetual change” paradoxically produces an effect of profound stasis within which actual change (i.e., alternatives to capitalism) appears increasingly impossible. The temporal effect of capitalist postmodernity is, in other words, that of the “end of History.”

The more specific temporal effect linked to the production of animal capital, I am suggesting, is that of tautological time. The time of animal capital recurs across Fordist and post-Fordist eras, exceeding historical containment within either one or the other and troubling many of their periodizing criteria. Yet this is not to say that animal capital is not rearticulated in relation to the shifting modes of production and technologies earmarked by the neologisms of Fordism and post-Fordism or that it remains a historical constant. It is precisely the trajectory of its proliferation from a partial to a more totalizing time that I am exploring here.

What appears in the tautological time of real subsumption, according to Negri, is a profound *indifference* between the time of capital’s production and the surplus time of social life itself, or that life time left over after the so-called working day. In an era of real as opposed to formal subsumption, contends Negri, there is no longer any life time extrinsic to the time of capitalist production (an argument taken up in more detail in chapter 1). The tautological ring of this book’s title seeks to make audible a related time of real subsumption effected by material and metaphorical technologies pursuing the ontological indifference of capital and animal life. The ecological Marxist James O’Connor holds that, in our current era, the reproduction of capital’s conditions of production and the very biophysical conditions of “*life itself*” have become one and the same thing. The use of the sign of “the animal” is increasingly expedient in promoting a social fantasy of “natural capitalism.” Concurrently, the *substance* of animal life materially mediates actual incarnations of this fantasy, as “more and more audacious manipulations of the genome” and as agri-, bio-, and genetic technologies
of farming, cloning, and “pharming” implant the logic of capital into the reproductive germ plasm and micromatter of life itself.\textsuperscript{55} Whereas Negri initiates an “ontological turn” to joyously affirm the constituent power and collective substance of a counterhegemonic multitude, in what follows “the ontological” more pessimistically connotes the hegemonic effects of capital seeking to realize itself through animal figures and flesh.

If on the one hand \textit{Animal Capital} presents the task of developing alternative genealogies not accounted for in the history of capitalism, then it also supplies a trope for a time of subsumption threatening a total mimicry of capital and nature, one well underway in a Fordist era of capitalism if not yet endemic in its effects. I am conscious, however, that the heuristic value of supplying a metaphor for capital as a biopolitical hegemon is potentially counteracted by the danger that it could reinforce the fetishistic effect of a coordinated global body of capitalism that in actuality does not exist. A perfect tautology of market and species life is never seamlessly or fully secured but is continuously pursued through multiple, often competing, and deeply contradictory exercises of representational and economic power. In actuality, the mimicry of animal capital is a “messy,” contested, and unstable assemblage of uncoordinated wills to power, as well as immanent resistances to that power.\textsuperscript{56} David Harvey argues that the triumphalist effect of end-of-history global capitalism and oppositional discourses that inadvertently reify a capitalist totality are equally agents of the thinking that positions culture and nature in binary opposition and imagines that the former could possibly exercise a sovereign power of death over the latter.\textsuperscript{57} It is therefore crucial that “animal capital” remain tensed between its alternate gestures, at once a \textit{metaphor} that strategically amplifies the totalizing repercussions of capital’s mimicry of nature in tautological times and a \textit{material history} that tracks the contradictory discourses and technologies that can never perfectly render capital animal.

“In his mature thought,” writes William Pietz, “Marx understood ‘capital’ to be a species of fetish.”\textsuperscript{58} In the tautological time of animal capital, finally, a redoubled species of fetishism, or a metafetishistic species of capital, is at stake. The analogy of commodity fetishism
becomes powerfully literal, and in this sense metafetishistic, when commodities are explicitly produced or worshiped as animal. This becomes clearer when one recalls, as William Pietz does, the Enlightenment discourse of primitive religion informing Marx’s concept of commodity fetishism. “Fetishism was defined as the worship of ‘inanimate’ things even though its paradigmatic historical exemplifications were cults of animate beings, such as snakes,” notes Pietz. “The special fascination that Egyptian zoolatry and African fetishism exerted on eighteenth-century intellectuals,” he adds, “derived not just from the moral scandal of humans kneeling in abject worship before animals lower down on the ‘great chain of being,’ but from the inconceivable mystery (within Enlightenment categories) of any direct sensuous perception of animateness in material beings.”

Marx’s great insight, expressed in the analogy of commodity fetishism, is that the commodity is similarly charismatic in its lifelike effects, because in it “the social characteristics of men’s own labour” appears “as objective characteristics of the products of labour themselves.”

Yet Marx’s concept of commodity fetishism “bears an eighteenth-century pedigree” inasmuch as it also endorses the enlightenment teleology embedded in a Eurocentric discourse of fetishism. Indeed, Marx’s genius in bringing European political economy and “primitive” religion together in the phrase commodity fetishism—a phrase calculated to break the irrational spell of both capitalism and religion and to jolt Europeans to their rational senses—has risked reinforcing a master narrative of European reason. The point I want to make here, however, is that what was for Marx an analogy is literalized in the mimicry of animal capital. Recall the “Nissan Animals” advertisement I referred to earlier in which 4 x 4 vehicles are depicted digitally morphing into animal signs (a snake, a spider, etc.) on their off-road trek. The suggestion is that the inner essence of the automobile becomes, for an instant, visible on the outside, revealing the machine’s animating force to be, well, animal. In the currency of animal life, capital becomes most potently literal and self-conscious in its fetishistic effects.

Yet it is because animal capital constitutes such a literal or tautological species of fetish that it is at the same time unusually visible and
vulnerable in its discursive operations. For this reason, it suggests a privi-
leged site from which to critically grapple with the naturalizing forces of capitalism.

The Double Entendre of Rendering

The tautological ring of animal capital finds echo in the double entendre of another word in this book’s title: rendering. Rendering signifies both the mimetic act of making a copy, that is, reproducing or interpreting an object in linguistic, painterly, musical, filmic, or other media (new technologies of 3-D digital animation are, for instance, called “renderers”) and the industrial boiling down and recycling of animal remains. The double sense of rendering—the seemingly incommensurable (yet arguably supplementary) practices that the word evokes—provides a peculiarly apt rubric for beginning to more concretely historicize animal capital’s modes of production.

The double entendre of rendering is deeply suggestive of the complicity of “the arts” and “industry” in the conditions of possibility of capitalism. It suggests a rubric for critically tracking the production of animal capital, more specifically, across the spaces of culture and economy and for illuminating the supplementarity of discourses and technologies normally held to be unrelated. Such an interimplication of representational and economic logics is pivotal to biopolitical critique, since biopower never operates solely through the power to reproduce life literally, via the biological capital of the specimen or species, nor does it operate solely through the power to reproduce it figuratively via the symbolic capital of the animal sign, but instead operates through the power to hegemonize both the meaning and matter of life.

The rubric of rendering makes it possible, moreover, to begin elaborating a biopolitical, as opposed to simply an aesthetic, theory of mimesis. In contrast to the literary-aesthetic approach modeled, for instance, by Erich Auerbach’s seminal Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature (1968), a biopolitical approach to mimesis suggests that textual logics of reproduction can no longer be treated in isolation from economic logics of (capitalist) reproduction.⁶⁵ In the double en-
tendre of *rendering*, there is a provocation to analyze the discomfiting complicity of symbolic and carnal technologies of reproduction. *Rendering* thus also redefines mimesis beyond its semiotic association with textual or visual “reality effect[s],” as Roland Barthes puts it, by compelling examination of the economic concurrencies of signifying effects.

Although *rendering* expands the sense of mimesis beyond its canonical associations with *realist* rendition, market cultures’ hot pursuit of the representational goal of realism via new technological fidelities will remain vital to its logic. So will other representational objectives and histories of mimesis, such as those accruing to biological tropes of “aping” and “parroting” mobilized by the racializing discourses of European imperialism and colonialism. Yet enlarging mimesis to include multiple representational objectives and histories is not in itself sufficient to counter its overdetermination by aesthetic ideologies invested in distinguishing culture and economy. Even Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer’s concept of “the culture industry,” which radically pronounces culture’s imbrication in economy, is qualified by Adorno’s remark that “the expression ‘industry’ is not to be taken too literally.”

A biopolitical theory of mimesis, by contrast, encompasses the economic modes of production evoked by the “literal” scene of rendering. The double sense of *rendering* implicates mimesis in the *ontological politics* of literally as well as figuratively reproducing capitalism’s “social flesh” (in the words of Hardt and Negri). As I show in later chapters, the rendering of animal figures and animal flesh can result in profoundly contradictory semiotic and material currencies. Yet, rather than undercutting the hegemony of market life, the contradictions of animal rendering are productive so long as they are discursively managed under the separate domains of culture and economy. That said, the productive contradiction of animal capital’s metaphorical and material currencies is constantly at risk of igniting into “real” social antagonism should their separate logics brush too closely up against one another. This is the volatile potential latent in the rubric of rendering.

Again, *rendering* indexes both economies of representation (the “rendering” of an object on page, canvas, screen, etc.) and resource economies trafficking in animal remains (the business of recycling animal
trimmings, bones, offal, and blood back into market metabolisms). Later chapters elaborate the double sense of rendering in the more affective terms of “sympathetic” and “pathological” economies of power. This terminology is indebted to Michael Taussig’s formulation of “the magic of mimesis,” the mysterious power of a reproduction to materially affect the thing it copies.68 Taussig recalls James George Frazer’s anthropological study of sympathetic magic in *The Golden Bough: A Study of Magic and Religion* (1911), where Frazer describes, among other things, how sorcerers of Jervis Island in the South Pacific Ocean manipulate effigies in order to affect the subjects they resemble. As Taussig relates, “If the sorcerer pulled an arm or a leg off the image, the human victim felt pain in the corresponding limb, but if the sorcerer restored the severed arm or leg to the effigy, the human victim recovered” (49). Building on the two types of sympathetic magic distinguished by Frazer, “the magic of contact, and that of imitation,” Taussig emphasizes “the two-layered notion of mimesis that is involved—a copying or imitation and a palpable, sensuous, connection between the very body of the perceiver and the perceived” (21–22). Rendering an object’s likeness, in other words, is not sufficient to gain power over it; the power to affect the other also requires stealing a tangible piece of its body in order to establish a pathological line of communication between “original” and “copy.” As Taussig suggests, mimetic power in this sense involves the magic of “the visual likeness” and the “magic of substances” (50).

In a similar vein, the rubric of rendering brings mimesis into sight as a “two-layered” logic of reproduction involving “sympathetic” technologies of representation and “pathological” technologies of material control. Taussig’s notion of a two-layered economy of mimesis helps to counter aesthetic theories that reserve mimesis for representational practices tacitly held at a distance from the material exploits of a capitalist economy. However, there is also cause to be wary both of the ethnographic language of sympathetic magic that Taussig resuscitates and of his stated desire to reawaken appreciation for the “mimetic mysteries” in order to break the “suffocating hold of ‘constructionism’” in the academy (xix). Such a desire suggests that exoticizations of the Other that the discipline of anthropology sought to purge, under the
pressure of poststructuralist and postcolonial theory, have the potential to reappear in sublimated form as a fascination with the alterity of mimesis itself. In contrast to the language of magic favored by Taussig, the language of “rendering” makes it harder to re-enchant mimesis.

A glance at the dictionary reveals that rendering encompasses a multiplicity of additional meanings and ranges in reference from the building arts (applying plaster onto brick or stone) to interpretive performance (rendering a musical score) to surrendering or paying one’s earthly dues (“render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s”). The rubric of rendering encompasses a cacophony of logics that exceed the “double entendre” this book explores. Consider, for instance, the case of “extraordinary rendition,” otherwise known as “extreme rendering.” Taking the 2001 attacks on New York’s Twin Towers as license to use state-of-emergency measures in its war against terrorism, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency justifies its extrajudicial transfers of suspected terrorists to third-party states known to inflict torture on detainees. The racialized terrorist suspect is subject to a relay of power, facilitated by the rhetoric of rendering or rendition, in which hints of animal rendering insidiously blend with other political economies of sense. The physical work of pulverizing an animal body bleeds into the sense of rendering as a delivery of retributive justice, couched as the “return” of purported terrorists to torture cells in the lawless states from whence they supposedly sprang. Both of these connotations further bleed into the sense of “rendition” as an interpretive work of art to ultimately link the turning over of detainees with the production of culture, exciting an aesthetics of torture. Here rendering appears to signify the creative license of the powerful to interpret the law in (permanently) exceptional times. At the same time, extreme rendering circulates as code, in the techno-speak of 3-D computer animation, for the cutting edge of high-speed image processing. Biopower arguably hails from the cacophony of incommensurable carnal and cultural sense that rendition accommodates.

If every act of writing, every critique, produces a remainder, it is the excessive sense of rendition that is the remainder of this book’s necessarily partial theorization of the double entendre of rendering. I inevitably boil down the politics of rendering itself by theorizing its doubleness,
given that it comprises much more than the logics of representation and recycling that I have singled out. However, these two logics are peculiarly apt, as I have noted, to the cultural and material politics of animal capital. Unlike critical race, feminist, postcolonial, and globalization theories, which variously engage with technologies of animalization in relation to racialized human subjects but rarely with reductions of animals themselves, the double entendre of *rendering* I evoke is designed to make “the question of the animal” focal. Again, Cary Wolfe makes a helpful distinction between the *discourse* of speciesism—a “constellation of signifiers [used] to structure how we address others of whatever sort (not just nonhuman animals)”—and the *institution* of speciesism.70 “Even though the *discourse* of animality and species difference may theoretically be applied to an other of whatever type,” writes Wolfe, “the consequences of that discourse, in *institutional* terms, fall overwhelmingly on nonhuman animals.”71 Similarly, while the practice of extraordinary rendition illustrates that the politics of rendering is not reducible to that of animal capital, like the “asymmetrical material effects” of speciesist discourse, the material violence of rendering arguably falls most heavily on animal life.72

**Rendering As Critical Practice: Discourse Analysis, Distortion, Articulation**

Biological and genetic “stock” rendered from animals materially and speculatively circulates as capital even as animals appreciate in value as metaphors and brands mediating new technologies, commodities, and markets. Yet the market’s double stock in animal life has persistently eluded politicization, possibly because so much is at stake. For the biopolitical interpenetrations with substances and signs of animal life that help to secure capitalism’s economic and cultural hegemony also betray its profound contingency on nonhuman nature. If animal life is violently subject to capital, capital is inescapably contingent on animal life, such that disruptions in animal capital have the potential to percurse through the biopolitical chains of market life. One task of the critic of animal capital, then, is to *make their contingency visible*. This involves pressuring the supplementary economies of rendering into incommensurability and antagonizing animal capital’s productive contradictions.
INTRODUCTION

Whereas the previous section introduced rendering as hegemonic logic, this section examines how rendering might also serve as a generative trope for counterhegemonic forms of critical practice that strive to illuminate the contingency of animal capital to political effect.

Given that I have sketched rendering as a logic of biopower or discursive power, its counterhegemonic deployment can be most broadly identified with critical discourse analysis and immanent critique, albeit with some qualifications. Postcolonial theorists such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha and post-Marxist theorists such as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe have been influential in expanding Foucault’s insights to an analysis of the discursive conditions of imperialism and colonialism and the constitutively discursive character of the social field, respectively. Like the many efforts of discourse analysis inspired by them, rendering draws attention to the role that symbolic power plays in the reproduction of market life, resisting the Marxian tendency to privilege economic relations of production as the empirical “truth” underlying the cultural superstructure. Post-Marxist discourse analysis emerged, after all, in resistance to the perceived economic essentialism of Marxist critique and to the conception of ideology as false consciousness accompanying it. Foucault’s remark that the “control of society over individuals is not conducted only through consciousness or ideology, but also in the body and with the body” challenges a Marxist paradigm of critique by locating ideology not in the so-called cultural superstructure of ideas but in the body, that is, in a biological substrate of desires and life drives previously held to be “beneath” ideology, or pre-ideological. The rethinking of ideology as constitutive of social-bodily existence is crucial to the study of animal capital, particularly in light of the conflation of “the animal” with the ostensibly pre-ideological realm of the body, instinctual drives, and affect in cultural discourses of the West (something I will return to shortly).

However, rendering also suggests a critical practice alert to the risk of “semiological reduction” run by overly culturalist strains of discourse analysis. It provides a trope for a cultural-materialist analysis that navigates a fine line between reductively materialist and reductively culturalist approaches to the field of capital. Rendering’s evocation of a literal scene of industrial capitalism is constantly at risk of implying recourse
to an economic reality underlying the ideological smokescreen of animal signs; that is, it is at risk of sliding back into an essentialist Marxist materialism. Yet it is a risk that I hazard in order to avoid the alternate pitfall of overcompensating for the economic essentialism of Marxist criticism by describing all of social space in terms of a linguistic model of discourse. Following from Saussure’s claim that “language is a form and not a substance,” semiological approaches that read capitalism strictly as an economy of signifiers conflate an economic logic of exchange value with a logic of linguistic value conceived as empty and formal, one in which the contingent “substance” of the sign is reduced to irrelevance.75

For this reason, argues Régis Debray, the semiotic turn instigated by Saussure frees thought from the “referential illusion” only to itself fall prey to a fantasy of pure code.76 Debray contends that a “mediology” is needed to remedy the “semiotic illusion, in order to again find a strong reference to the world, its materials, its vectors and its procedures.”77 In his biopolitical approach to naturalist discourses in turn-of-the-century North America, Mark Seltzer likewise cautions against the “sheer culturalism” of “proceed[ing] as if the deconstruction of the traditional dichotomy of the natural and the cultural indicated merely the elimination of the first term and the inflation of the second.”78 “Rather than mapping how the relays between what counts as natural and what counts as cultural are differentially articulated, invested, and regulated,” notes Seltzer, “the tendency has been to discover again and again that what seemed to be natural is in fact cultural.”79 Rendering resists both the “sheer culturalism” of reading animals as empty signifiers and the converse essentialism of reifying them as natural signs, following Seltzer’s insight that biopower cannot be grasped by approaches that reduce the natural to the cultural, or vice versa.

If there is still critical mileage to be coaxed out of the audio effects I have been sounding in this Introduction, I would like to propose “distortion” as the form that a dialectical practice inspired by the double entendre of rendering might take once it recasts itself in the mode of immanent critique, relinquishing the possibility of a clear oppositional vantage point. Distortion, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, involves “a change in the form of (an electrical signal) during transmis-
sion, amplification, etc.” Distortion disrupts what Debray calls a telecom model of “painless transmission” by routing the semiotic vector of an animal sign through a material site of rendering, for example, diverting film’s time-motion mimicry of animal physiology through the carnal space of the abattoir (see chapter 2), or the animal signs in a Canadian telecommunications ad campaign through neocolonial bushmeat and war economies (see chapter 3). Like Mary Louise Pratt’s notion of “code-switching,” distortion connotes a strategic switching back and forth between rhetorical and carnal modes of production of animal capital with the aim of interimplicating and crossing their signals.

As a model of immanent critique, distortion resists privileging either literal or rhetorical sites of rendering as truer vantage points from which to reckon with animal capital, emphasizing instead that both are effects of power. Like straws in water, there is no point from inside an immanent field of power at which the transmission or reception of animal signs can ever be transparent, or “straight.” Literality is only an effect of transparency, or, as Laclau and Mouffe put it, “Literality is, in actual fact, the first of metaphors.” Conversely, while rhetorical power can efface its material conditions, it can never actually transcend them. By continuously interimplicating the double senses of rendering, ostensibly literal currencies of animal life, such as meat, can be shown to be veined through and through with symbolic sense, while the mimetic effects of filmic or digital animations, for example, can be pressured to reveal their carnal contingencies.

This leads to a final term crucial to conceptualizing rendering as a counterhegemonic critical practice: articulation. Laclau and Mouffe’s theorization of articulation remains one of the most compelling contemporary efforts to think contingency. Write Laclau and Mouffe, “We will call articulation any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice.” In contrast to identity politics, which spawn the sense that subjects are pre-given to representation, “politico-hegemonic articulations” acknowledge that they “retroactively create the interests they claim to represent” (xi). Laclau and Mouffe begin from the antiessentialist premise that social identities do not preexist their social articulations.
The problem with dialectical thinking, in their view, is that it has historically sought to reduce social life to one essential, underlying logic (for Hegel, the historical unfolding of Spirit, for Marx, class consciousness as the motor of material history) and to reconcile antagonistic social elements within the telos of a unified social whole. By contrast, in the radical “logic of the social” that they theorize, “there is no single underlying principle fixing—and hence constituting—the whole field of differences” (3, 111). The social field is constituted, rather, by competing articulations vying for hegemony and is irreducibly antagonistic, or “pierced by contingency” (110).

All that distinguishes rendering as hegemonic discourse from rendering as critical practice, ultimately, is its self-recognition as a politically motivated articulatory practice. Without this self-reflexivity, the act of bringing disparate, unlikely things together under its rubric risks becoming a metaphorical exercise in suggesting that they share an underlying, unifying likeness rather than an effort to make their contingent character visible. As Seltzer writes, the “generalized capacity of ‘combining together’ dissimilar powers and objects, drawing into relation and into equivalence ‘distant’ orders of things such as bodies, capital, and artifacts: this logic of equivalence is the ‘classic’ logic of the market and of market culture.”85 Against the metaphorical temptation to reduce difference to sameness and against, too, the temptation to empirically justify the connections rendering makes, the critical practice of rendering needs to self-critically foreground that it also rhetorically renders relationships. Rendering as critical practice, no less than rendering as hegemonic logic, is a discursive mode of production, with the difference that it seeks to produce counterhegemonic rather than hegemonic relationships and effects. Lest its own motivated labor of making connections between symbolic and carnal economies of capital be fetishistically erased by the appearance that they are simply revealed, the critical practice of rendering needs to vigilantly foreground its own articulatory power.

This is not to say that there is no historical basis for the linkages rendered in later chapters between cinematic culture and animal gelatin or between animal ads and resource politics in the Eastern Congo; the actual metaphorical glue that binds them within a shared logic is the “concrete universal” of capital.86
INTRODUCTION

Animals in Theory

Two rich veins of poststructuralist thought have played a particularly influential role in the proliferation of theoretical engagements with “the animal” in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The first vein is Derridean, the second Deleuzian. In both, animals appear as focal figures of immanent life (in contrast to metaphysical Being), and thus to a large extent tracking the figure of the animal through each vein of thought amounts to tracking two intellectual genealogies of the idea of immanence.

In the first vein, we encounter Derrida’s concept of “animot” as the animal trace of the text; in the second we encounter Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s concept of “becoming-animal” as a figure of deterritorialization and multiplicity. Rather than attempting a thorough comparative review of the role that these and other animal figures play in Derridean and Deleuzian critique, I want to briefly examine some of the critical ramifications—in relation to this book’s concerns with animal capital—of articulating animal life to the concept of “hauntology” (Derrida) and to the idea of “becoming” as pure potential or virtuality (Deleuze and Guattari). The concepts of hauntology and becoming purportedly unsettle the ontological premises and power structures of Western culture. Yet articulating the alternative ontologies they name to and through animal signs has profound implications for their effectiveness in this regard. For starters, the figures of animal immanence posed by each are politically unsettling only to the extent that the dominant means and ends of power indeed correspond to a “metaphysics of presence” (Derrida) and to “molar” states of Being (Deleuze and Guattari). As Slavoj Žižek contends, however, the contemporary terrain of capitalism throws these assumptions into question inasmuch as it resembles what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as a deterritorializing “plane of immanence” and traffics in spectral currencies that in effect “deconstruct” distinctions between the living and the dead. Is not “the impersonal circulation of affects,” asks Žižek, “the very logic of publicity, of video clips, and so forth in which what matters is not the message about the product but the intensity of the transmitted affects and perceptions?” Žižek goes so far as to argue that there are “features that justify calling Deleuze the ideologist of late capitalism.” Whether the same
dare be said of Derrida depends, in the context of this discussion, on the *différance* (or lack thereof) that a logic of spectrality poses to animal capital.

Let me backtrack to the philosophical discourse of immanence announced in the West by Nietzsche’s radical proclamation of the death of God, one carrying a note of joyous affirmation that peals through the Deleuzian lineage (from the pre-Nietzschean writings of Spinoza to the work of Hardt and Negri). Nietzsche sought the earthly repatriation of powers of creation that had been ceded to a metaphysical Being, not only the Being of God but also that of his earthly representative, Man. Zarathustra is able to converse with animals, whose immanent existence is iconic in the work of Nietzsche, because he represents the overcoming of the transcendental authority of both God and Man, that is, he represents the Overman. In the work of Foucault, the refusal of the metaphysical foundations of Truth, History, and Subjectivity and the proclamation of the death of Man by virtue of his recognition as a historically contingent “invention of recent date” rearticulate a Nietzschean discourse of immanence. It is in the writings of Deleuze and Guattari, however, that resistance to metaphysical paradigms of Being is formulated as an involuntary force of becoming-animal.

For Deleuze and Guattari, becomings constitute states of pure potentiality occurring in between those fixed, identifiable states of Being they call “molar.” Becoming-animal is not to be confused with actual animals, then, and certainly not with those “Oedipal pets” that represent for Deleuze and Guattari the most contemptible breed of molar, domesticated animal. Nor can becoming-animal be understood without understanding the role that affect plays in the work of Deleuze and Guattari. Affects are the prime movers on the “plane of immanence,” the “pure intensities” that, like free radicals, are never permanently attached to molar organisms but are rather the virtual attractors of their potential becomings: becoming-woman, becoming-animal, becoming-molecular. Unlike emotion, affect “is not a personal feeling, nor is it a characteristic; it is the effectuation of a power of the pack that throws the self into upheaval and makes it reel” (240). Affect, for Deleuze and Guattari, is contagious; it congregates into multiplicities
that travel in “packs” (swarms of bees, rat packs, bands of werewolves), and it crosses species boundaries that are normally ontologically policed. The state, the family, and other “apparati of capture” seek to domesticate the disorganizing power of impersonal affect by reducing it to personal emotion working in the service of normative social relations and identities (444).

For Deleuze and Guattari, affect is especially, quixotically, configured as an “animal rhizome”—a brush of fur, a scent, or spoor triggering the “nonvoluntary transmutation” of being into becoming and opening a “line of flight” out of fixed ontologies (47, 269, 277). Far from being politically motivated, the micropolitical force of affect described by Deleuze and Guattari—who in their writings are as fascinated with its feral carriers as they are contemptuous of the domesticated “house dogs” that guard against it (244)—is cast as a “nonvoluntary” force springing from the irrepressible multiplicity of heterogeneous nature. In other words, the concept of becoming-animal arguably fetishizes affect as an animal alterity that eludes rather than enters into the calculations of power. More problematically, because becomings signify for Deleuze and Guattari a virtual state of pure potential as opposed to a state of historical actuality, the figure of animality to which affect is attached is rendered profoundly abstract.93 Brian Massumi reminds us that, for Deleuze, the virtual and the abstract are “real” and not to be confused with popular notions of virtual reality.94 Yet Massumi’s own rearticulation of the “incorporeal materialism” of the body in a virtual state of becoming similarly hinges on a distinction between the body as a form of energy (affect) and the body as matter.95

In the context of animal capital, there is a great deal at stake in romanticizing affect as a rogue portion of pure energy linked to animality as a state of virtual rather than actual embodiment. This is not because one could argue that affects and becomings have been successfully captured and reduced “to relations of totemic or symbolic correspondence” in the service of capitalism, since such an argument assumes, along with Deleuze and Guattari, that the primary aim of power is to “break” becomings.96 Rather, it is because the field of power can no longer be clearly identified with a restriction on becomings. In other
words, forces of capital—especially those transnational forces delinked from the mediating form of the nation-state—no longer achieve hegemony solely by means of breaking the “unnatural participations” and “unholy alliances” across heterogeneous series that Deleuze and Guattari cherish as transgressive but also by inducing them (241–42).

At the very least, affect as an authentic animal alterity is impossible to distinguish from the intensities unleashed by capitalism. On what grounds, after all, does one definitively distinguish “real” becomings from the pseudo- or simulated becomings spawned through the sorcery of market culture? As Žižek asks:

And what about the so-called Transformer or Animorph toys, a car or a plane that can be transformed into a humanoid robot, an animal that can be morphed into a human or robot—is this not Deleuzian? There are no “metaphorics” here: the point is not that the machinic or animal form is revealed as a mask containing a human shape but, rather, as the “becoming-machine” or “becoming-animal” of the human.97

Equating cultural and economic hegemony with the repression of becomings thus risks, as Hardt and Negri suggest, missing “the contemporary object of critique”: capitalism as an empire that also achieves hegemony through rhizomatic means.98 The ineffectiveness of which Hardt and Negri accuse postmodernist theory in this sense also extends to the “radicle-system” of becomings theorized by Deleuze and Guattari,99 which may not be as undermining of power as it appears to be: “Postmodernists are still waging battle against the shadows of old enemies: the Enlightenment, or really modern forms of sovereignty and its binary reductions of difference and multiplicity to a single alternative between Same and Other....In fact, Empire too is bent on doing away with those modern forms of sovereignty and on setting differences to play across boundaries.”100

On this note, let me turn to the other, Derridean, lineage that has also exerted tremendous influence upon late twentieth and early twenty-first-century engagements with “the animal.” While there are any number of potential entry points into the discourse of immanence it poses, I will begin with Martin Heidegger’s thesis that “the animal is poor in world” and with Derrida’s confrontation of that thesis.101 Heidegger’s
own critique, or “destruction,” of an ontotheological idea of Being through his formulation of human *Dasein* (“being-there”) as an indwelling in the house of language is a crucial forerunner of deconstruction and seminal to efforts to think immanence in the West.\(^{102}\) Nevertheless, Derrida takes Heidegger to task for still seeking to demarcate “an absolute limit between the living creature and the human *Dasein*” based on the animal’s lack of language.\(^{103}\) The “poverty” in world of the animal is, for Heidegger, that of a being-in-the-world incapable of objectively apprehending world as world, one strictly differentiated from the *Dasein* of the human, who, as a language-being, is “world-forming.”\(^{104}\) According to Michael Haar, for Heidegger “the leap from the animal that lives to man that speaks is as great, if not greater, than that from the lifeless stone to the living being.”\(^{105}\) The idea of animal immanence as an unreflective or unconscious rather than conscious being-in-the-world is echoed in Georges Bataille’s statement that animals are “in the world like water in water.”\(^{106}\)

Derrida’s resistance to the philosophical doxa that language constitutes an absolute boundary between animal and human involves identifying animals with the immanent otherness of logos, something he achieves by suggesting that tropological sites of language, specifically metaphor, are animal. In an essay written over a decade after *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question* (1987), Derrida devises the neologism “animot” to capture the identity of animality and metaphoricity.\(^{107}\) Derrida is not alone in his fascination with the (ostensible) animal alterity of metaphor, that is, with seeing in figurative language an affective trace of animality that undermines Western logocentrisms. John Berger, in his famous essay “Why Look at Animals,” critiques the marginalization of animals in capitalist modernity by invoking a precapitalist relation of human and animal mediated in the first instance by metaphor. Writes Berger: “The first subject matter for painting was animal. Probably the first paint was animal blood. Prior to that, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the first metaphor was animal.”\(^{108}\) By tracing an ancient bloodline between metaphor and animal life, however, Berger risks obscuring how the rendering of animals, both metaphorically and materially, constitutes a politically and historically contingent, rather than
a primal or universal, relationship. Perhaps it is apt, then, to borrow from Berger to suggest that the animal figures in Derrida’s corpus also come dangerously close to functioning as “first metaphors” for the ineluctable traits of deconstruction, primalizing the tracings, spacings, and supplements deigned to estrange every claim of presence.  

Consider the covert figure of animality lurking in what had been Derrida’s long-awaited reading of Marx, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (1994). There, slippage between signs of spectrality and animality risks annulling Derrida’s efforts in a later text—“The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)” (2002)—to deconstruct the reductive category of “the animal” in favor of “an irreducible living multiplicity of mortals.” Contrary to his invocation of the “unprecedented” and “monstrous” conditions facing animals in the zoos, feedlots, abattoirs, holding pens, corrals, and laboratories of Western culture, Derrida’s deconstruction of commodity fetishism in *Specters of Marx* risks putting a materialist critique of life in biopolitical times under suspension by virtue of formulating the “bodiless body” of the specter and animal life under the same logic.  

In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida contends that the fetishism of commodities is not a false effect that can be exorcised by uncovering the underlying “truth” of capital, as Marx suggested, but is rather an effect haunting every presence, every use value, and every mode of production. There is no production, Derrida contends, that is not riddled with a fetish or “spectrality effect.” “As soon as there is production,” he writes, “there is fetishism” (166). If there is an end to spectral special effects, declares Derrida, it is “only beyond value itself” (166). It is against a “Marxist ontology” that has sought to conjure away the spectral illusions of capital “in the name of living presence as material actuality” that Derrida proposes the notion of an always-already haunted ontology, or hauntology (105). One of the potential dangers of Derrida’s deconstruction of fetishism as a spectrality effect specific to market culture, however, is a dilution of the historical contingency of capitalism within an a priori, transhistorical order of inevitably haunted production. Troubling, too, is how Derrida covertly articulates now universal and inevitable spectrality effects to the figure of a compulsive animality.
Signs of animality steep Derrida’s close engagement with the famous passage in the first volume of *Capital*, in which Marx describes the transformation of use values into exchange values (a transformation that in many translations is likened to a table-turning séance). The fabulous table appears in the section titled “The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof,” where Marx writes: “As soon as it [the table] emerges as a commodity, it changes into a thing which transcends sensuousness. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than if it were to begin dancing of its own free will.”114 Purportedly paraphrasing “as literally as possible” the scene in which the commodity assumes life, Derrida writes that the table “seems to loom up of *itself* and to stand all at once on its paws.”115 Paws? The table “has become a kind of headstrong, pigheaded, obstinate animal that, standing, faces other commodities,” writes Derrida (152). Again, “Become like a living being, the table resembles a prophetic dog that gets up on its four paws” (153).116 In arguing against fetishism as a historically particular effect of capitalist production, Derrida insinuates tropes of animal life to raise spectrality as a primal *différance* immanent to all earthly existence. Derrida particularly favors the figure of a “headstrong dog,” possibly because *dog*, a semordnilap for *god*, helps him to configure an immanent versus transcendent ontology (155).

Derrida thus insinuates the image of a compulsive becoming-animal into Marx’s passage under the guise of a “literal” paraphrase. Yet it is widely held that Marx inscribed the fetishizing movement as an impersonation, or anthropomorphization, of the commodity. The sensuous use value that at first stands on all fours (the quadruped posture of the table in Marx’s passage is at least, if not more, suggestive of animal life than the imposture of exchange that Derrida metaphorizes as animal) is overruled by the “grotesque” hegemony of abstract exchange.117 Inverting the usual sense of the passage, however, Derrida *animalizes* the spectral ontology of the commodity. He identifies animal life not with the four-legged figure of use value that is hamstrung and drained by an abstract logic of exchange but with the “pigheaded” apparition, with exchangeability as a pugnacious potentiality immanent to value
itself. It is by configuring exchange as an animal alterity that precedes and exceeds the historical hegemony of capital that Derrida deconstructs the specific critique of commodity fetishism and develops a global logic of spectrality in its place.

The draining of historical materiality out of the sign of animal life risked by Derrida’s conflation of animality and spectrality also threatens the animal autobiography he initiates in “The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow).” Although Derrida starts this essay with a striking encounter between himself as he emerges from the shower and his cat—“a real cat,” he insists, not “the figure of a cat”—she quickly dissipates into spiritualistic terms deeply resonant with those Derrida deploys to describe both the becoming-animal of the commodity and the visitation of the ghost of Hamlet’s father in Shakespeare’s play. *Specters of Marx* opens, after all, with a meditation on the ghost of Hamlet’s father, in which Derrida describes him in commodity terms as a sensuous non-sensuous “Thing that is not a thing.”

The ghost of Hamlet’s father is able to appear on the phenomenal stage, claims Derrida, only by donning a body “armor” or “costume,” a “kind of technical prosthesis” that constitutes “a body foreign to the spectral body that it dresses” (8). Focal to the prosthetic appearance of the specter, moreover, is what Derrida terms its “visor effect,” its unsettling gaze through slitted head armor (7). Pivotal to the spectral visitation, in other words, is the visual sense that “this spectral someone other looks at us, [and] we feel ourselves being looked at by it, outside of any synchrony, even before and beyond any look on our part, according to an absolute anteriority” (7).

Similarly, Derrida’s cat is staged within the scene of an “animal-séance,” a charged locking of gazes in which the human, in this case Derrida himself, is “caught naked, in silence, by the gaze of an animal, for example the eyes of a cat... the gaze of a seer, visionary, or extra-lucid blind person.” His cat is introduced, that is, within the same logic as the specter. As with the ghost of Hamlet’s father, the scene turns on a visor effect, on the startling anteriority of a spectral gaze that, as Derrida puts it in this instance, spawns the abyssal situation of “seeing oneself seen naked under a gaze that is vacant to the extent of
being bottomless” (381). The spectral animal visually channels the disquieting half-presence of a “life” never cosubstantial with terrestrial Time, History, and Being. By framing his encounter with his cat in the same terms he uses to frame the ghostly visitation of Hamlet’s father, Derrida risks collapsing the material difference between the body of an actual animal and the prosthetic armor of a fictional specter, conflating the body of his cat with the “paradoxical corporeality” of the prosthetic dress that the spirit of Hamlet’s father dons in order to make an appearance on the historical stage.

Meeting the “bottomless gaze” of a spectral animal is, for Derrida, a deeply ethical encounter capable of dislocating the composure and presumed priority of the human subject. “As with every bottomless gaze, as with the eyes of the other, the gaze called animal offers to my sight the abyssal limit of the human,” he writes (381). Yet this ethical encounter with animal alterity is, as Rey Chow says of critical theory’s fascination with human alterity, deeply idealistic. The “real cat” that Derrida takes pains to distinguish from a simply tropological function is transubstantiated, despite his protestations, into one figure in a line of suspenseful figures emptied of historical substance and summoned to deconstruct ontotheological “sign[s] of presence.” Is a materialist critique of life in biopolitical times—a politics of what Derrida himself raises as “the industrial, mechanical, chemical, hormonal, and genetic violence to which man has been submitting life for the past two centuries”—possible when animals are summoned as specters with at best “an appearance of flesh” on their “bodiless body,” when they are assigned to a limbo economy of life and death and thus positioned as never fully subject to histories of violence and exploitation? Does not thinking of the animal as specter risk depoliticizing the argument that Derrida simultaneously makes in “The Animal That Therefore I Am” for animals as mortal creatures vulnerable to the capitalizing machinery of the past two centuries? If on the one hand Derrida initiates a politics of animal sacrifice specific to “carno-phallogocentric” cultures of the West, on the other hand he remains transfixed with animals as first metaphors for différance as an uncanny force undermining ontological discourses in the West, including Marxist ontology. Derrida’s
cat—herself partly an engineered product of material institutions of pet ownership that Derrida occludes by declaring her “absolute alterity”\textsuperscript{129}—is ultimately suspended as a historical subject and rendered an arch-figure of deconstruction.

I do not take issue with Derrida’s efforts, alongside those of theorists such as Paul de Man and Hayden White, to undermine metaphysical truth claims by insisting that they are ineradicably haunted with traces of the tropological. What is at stake, rather, is how the tropological trace, supplement, or specter may itself be surreptitiously reified through its articulation to talismanic signs of animality. For the metaphors of the “pigheaded” animal and the “prophetic dog” that lace Derrida’s deconstruction of the Marxian discourse of fetishism, and that animate the notion of hauntology he offers in its stead, are far from transparent. That the animal specter may itself covertly function as a fetish within deconstruction (a site where the transcendent foundations that deconstruction challenges are reconstituted in the immanent form of animal-gods) is matter for concern, given that articulations of animality and spectrality can, on the one hand, lend figures of deconstruction a character of compulsive inevitability and, on the other, drain animals of their historical specificity and substance.

Allow me to pinpoint, before moving on, how Derrida’s conflation of spectrality and animality indeed puts him at risk, as Žižek says in relation to Deleuze, of being an “ideologist of late capitalism.” The Animorph toys cited by Žižek to back his claim that Deleuzian “becomings” ideologically resonate with actual capitalism could also be cited in relation to Derrida’s concept of “animot” and his meditations on spectral bodies. According to the logic within which Derrida invokes animal life, specters simply are (or rather appear, given that the ontologically self-evident is precisely what an apparition perturbs). To suggest that specters perturb hegemonic structures of power assumes that they appear out of some ghostly volition from within immanent fissures in architectures of presence. The rubric of rendering suggests, by contrast, that capitalism is biopolitically invested in producing animal life as a spectral body. Whether it be as semiotic or as biological stock, whether on reserve as mediatized sign or as mere material, ani-
mals and other signs of nature are kept in a state of suspension that Derrida himself characterizes as a state of “interminable survival.” It is difficult to dissociate the logic of the specter from a biopolitical logic of capitalization bent on producing, administering, and circulating life as an undying currency. Capital, in other words, is arguably less invested in the metaphysics of presence that Derrida confronts than in the spectral logic of a “paradoxical corporeality” that infernally survives.

Derrida himself draws attention to a biopolitical violence constituted by the power to keep animal life in a limbo economy of interminable survival, one equal to if not greater than the violence of liquidating animal life and extinguishing species. Nor is he unconcerned with the rising hegemony of “techno-tele-discursivity” and spectralizing media. Whenever Derrida historically engages with the field of capitalism, that is, he acknowledges that a spectral materiality is often the very currency of exchange rather than a source of disturbance.

Taking recourse once again to the argument that Hardt and Negri leverage in *Empire*, the logic of the specter offers little resistance to market cultures geared toward biopolitical production. Globalizing market cultures advance biopolitically, argue Hardt and Negri, by exploiting and producing the aporias, ambiguities, and in-between states that postmodernist and hybridity theorists have deemed resistant. “The affirmation of hybridities and the free play of differences across boundaries,” they write, “is liberatory only in a context where power poses hierarchy exclusively through essential identities, binary divisions, and stable oppositions.” The logic of the specter, likewise, is perturbing only within a field of power invested in binaries of life and death, presence and absence, specie and speculative value—binaries that capital, in its “necromancy,” has arguably always exceeded. It is therefore crucial to consider that Derrida’s *animalséance* may ideologically reinforce rather than trouble “the spectral reign of globalized capitalism.” That said, resisting the spectralization of animal life does not mean reverting to an equally perilous empiricism that would fixate on animals as carnal proof of presence. As the double sense of *rendering* suggests, the logic of the specter and the logic of the specimen (conceived as the reduction of animals to the ostensibly transparent literality of their bodies)
are flip sides of animal capital and signal the double bind with which capital achieves a biopolitical lock on “life.” If draining the historical substance out of virtualized animals represents one valence of rendering, recycling animals as mere material represents the other.

I have attended at some length to Derrida’s work, given that it constitutes one of the most sustained ethical engagements with “the question of the animal.” However, the spectral animal invoked by Derrida makes a significant reappearance in Akira Mizuta Lippit’s *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife* (2000), a book that, as I have noted, serves as something of a recurring foil for this book’s theorization of animal capital. Like Derrida, who is fascinated with an animal specter that looks at Man from a paranormal time and space in which it is neither dead nor alive, Lippit theorizes animals as undying spirits that survive their mass historical “vanishing” within modernity to be reincarnated in the technological media. Building on a Derridean notion of supplementarity, Lippit seeks to locate “traces of animality” in language and in the technological media, where a carnophallogocentric symbolic order is infiltrated by animal affect (26). Metaphor, suggests Lippit, is one such site. Like Berger and Derrida, Lippit encourages the sense that there is a primal link between “the animal and the metaphor.” He fuses them in the notion of “animetaphor”: “One finds a fantastic transversality at work between the animal and the metaphor—the animal is already a metaphor, the metaphor an animal. Together they transport to language, breathe into language, the vitality of another life, another expression: animal and metaphor, a metaphor made flesh, a living metaphor that is by definition not a metaphor, antimetaphor—‘animetaphor’” (165). As animals “vanish” from historical modernity, continues Lippit, a spirit or trace of animality—ultimately an indestructible code—is salvaged by the technological media. He contends that cinema, even more consummately than linguistic metaphor, “mourns” vanishing animal life, that is, preserves or encrypts animality in its affective structure of communication (196). Cinema bypasses linguistic registers, Lippit argues, to communicate via rapid surges of nonverbal affect long associated in Western culture with an animal’s electrifying gaze and sympathetic powers of communicability.
(196). Cinema communicates, in other words, by means of affective transference in the form of the spell-binding gaze between animal and human that Derrida describes as an *animal séance*.

In proposing that an essence or structure of animal communication survives the historical disappearance of animals to transmigrate into the cinematic apparatus, Lippit takes to its logical conclusion the margin allowed in Derrida’s text for reducing the body of the animal to a kind of stage armor or “technical prosthesis.” Only by ideistically speculating in the animal as a rhetorical currency transcending its material body can Lippit propose such “a transfer of animals from nature to technology.” Thus while *Electric Animal* provides a brilliant recapitulation of discourses of the “undying” animal in Western philosophical, psychoanalytic, and technological discourses, Lippit ends up *buying* the idea of the undead animal that he surveys and rearticulating it to an aesthetic theory of cinema.

Like Deleuze and Guattari, Lippit idealizes affect as a discharge of “pure energy.” To idealize affect as animal is, almost by definition, to naturalize it, deflecting recognition of affect as a *preideological* means and effect of power. As Jennifer Harding and E. Deidre Pribram argue, it is not only possible but imperative that “the critical component of power” be added to the theorization of affect. Their comparative analysis of Raymond Williams’s “structure of feeling” and Larry Grossberg’s “economy of affect” offers two examples of cultural materialists who resist the idealization of affect as an “anarchic excess threatening to disrupt the structures of power” and instead bring affect into view “as a technology of power.” Like Deleuze and Guattari, Grossberg differentiates between emotion and affect. Emotion, for Grossberg, is “the product of the articulation of two planes: signification . . . and affect.” Affect, on the other hand, is dislodged “from the circuit of meaning relations” and occurs “prior to or outside of meaning.” Yet to say that affect operates outside of meaning structures is not to say that it escapes relations of power, as Deleuze and Guattari (and Lippit) intimate. On the contrary, Grossberg contends that power is not coterminous with ideology or systems of signification alone but encompasses the production and circulation of asignifying energies. Rather
than idealizing the alterity of animal affect, as Deleuze, Derrida, and Lippit are variously prone to do, one of the questions this book poses is How does animal affect function as a technology of capital?

The Deleuzian and Derridean figures of animality I have traced unravel the presumption that *Homo sapiens* is an all-powerful presence and self-same subject. Yet in liberating animality from the metaphysical strictures of Western thought and reenvisioning animals as pure intensities and undying specters, these poststructuralist discourses may inadvertently resonate with market forces likewise intent on freeing animal life into a multiplicity of potential exchange values.

**Automobility, Telemobility, Biomobility**

Not only automotive corporations but telecommunication corporations as well appear to favor animal signs as affective technologies. In 2005, Bell Mobility (a division of Bell Canada, the nation’s largest telecommunications company) revived the tired symbology and sedimented sentiment accumulated in Canada’s national animal with an ad campaign featuring two digitally rendered beavers, Frank and Gordon. The Bell “spokesbeavers,” in company with the popular “spokecritters” of Telus Mobility ad campaigns (see chapter 3) and the faithful canines featuring in Fido wireless phone ads, bring into view a burgeoning bestiary of animal signs in telecommunications culture. They also draw attention to a guiding contention of the following chapters, namely, that the (neo)liberal market discourses that have most successfully hegemonized the sign of animal life in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are those seeking to naturalize mobility as cultural ideology and material artifact. The frequency and effect of rendering technological mobility under the sign of the *moving* animal (in both the physiological and the affective senses of the word) will thus be a consistent concern as I track animal signs through market cultures.

In the ad campaign, Frank and Gordon parody white, heteronormative Canadianness. Although the campaign constitutes a “wry” take on the codes of white normativity structuring the project of national identification and intimates that in their ironic animal wrappings they are rendered harmless, it effectively rearticulates them as natural and uni-
versal traits of the postnational citizen of capital. Unlike the Nissan Animals ad campaign, the discourse of mobility that Frank and Gordon represent does not pivot on animals as tropes of physical prowess. The digital beavers are notorious “couch potatoes” who instead trope mobility as a purely virtual exercise in teletechnological roving. Even the average Joe, according to the animal appeal of Frank and Gordon, can have the world at his feet when he connects through the wireless technologies and services of Bell.

One print ad in the campaign renders a particularly imperial discourse of telemobility (see Figure 2). Only a single beaver appears in this ad (let us assume that it is Frank), and he is shown listening to music on headphones plugged into a Bell mobile phone. Frank wears, ironically, a luxuriant fur coat over his own simulated pelt as he lounges on a massive wingback chair of red “imperial leather,” to borrow from Anne McClintock. Like the Maclean’s spread, this ad turns upon the double entendre of animal rendering, as the beaver historically trapped for its pelt in colonial North America (nearly to the point of extinction) is resurrected as a computer-rendered virtual animal, indeed one with a mock penchant for the material trappings of empire his species once yielded. It plays, that is, on the double value of the animal as specimen and specter. Again, as in the Maclean’s image, the ironic layering of fake fur on fake fur in the Bell ad has an effect of displacing the reality of material violence—and literal traffics in animal nature—onto a past empire of capital, reducing nature’s mastery to a harmless source of simulacral enjoyment in an era of postindustrial capitalism.

Alongside the discourse of virtual mobility the ad poses, it insinuates a discourse of class mobility. With his possession of a wireless mobile phone, the lowly, working-class beaver shoots up the social ladder to become a member of the ruling establishment. The ad suggests that the material exploitation of labor, as well as of nature, is a thing of the past and that a neoliberal marketplace equalizes low and high within a single global leisure class. In the fantasy of wealth without work that marks the current era of “millennial capitalism,” as Jean and John Comaroff analyze it, “capital strives to become autonomous of labor,” not to mention nature. The beaver that symbolically served to naturalize nation-building and belonging now simultaneously serves to naturalize the
Figure 2. The new fur-clad class of subjects who enjoy virtual mobility. Bell Mobility, a division of Bell Canada, featured one of its famous duo of spokesbeavers on a 2005 flyer.
neoliberal image of capital as a terrain of consumption transcending production (7).

An eclectic array of cultural discourses and material practices come under analysis in the chapters that follow. Each chapter, with the exception of the first, renders a counterhegemonic genealogy of animal capital in relation to technologies and discourses of mobility under the headings of “automobility,” “telemobility,” and “biomobility.” By contrast, chapter 1, “Rendering’s Modern Logics,” is devoted to laying some historical groundwork for the odd couple that uncomfortably shares the modern lexicon of rendering: the business of animal recycling and the faculty of mimesis. It leverages their lexical connection into an argument for cohistoricizing the business of animal recycling and the economy of mimesis within a “tautological time” and logic of capitalist biopower (in the terms of Negri).

Chapter 2, “Automobility: The Animal Capital of Cars, Films, and Abattoirs,” resists a stock image of Fordism by reckoning with the historically repressed (and unfinished) business of animal rendering. Automobility names a network of ideological and material exchanges entangling three Fordist moving lines in the politics of animal capital: the animal disassembly line, the auto assembly line, and the cinematic reel. The consumption of animal disassembly as affective spectacle through tours of the vertical abattoir, the material rendering of animal gelatin for film stock, and the mimicry of seamless animal motion integral to cinema’s and automobiles’ symbolic economies are interimplicated in this chapter. To resist consigning automobility to a distinct historical period of Fordist capitalism that has been ostensibly closed with the arrival of post-Fordist economies, the latter half of the chapter engages two contemporary advertisements for the Saturn Vue sports utility vehicle and examines the ways that automobility is rearticulated in the present.

As becomes clear in chapter 3, “Telemobility: Telecommunication’s Animal Currencies,” wherever affect is mobilized as a technology of capital there stands, it seems, an animal sign. This is the case with the discourses I analyze under the heading of “telemobility,” discourses mimicking the communicability and ostensible immediacy of animal affect. Rather than equating telemobility discourse solely with the present, this chapter begins with Luigi Galvani’s early experiments in animal
electricity in the 1780s. Animal electricity is not just the name Galvani gave to the lifelike spasms he induced in dead frog legs but a trope for the wireless long-distance communication with “animal spirits” he claimed to conduct through an invisible nervous fluid in animal bodies. From Galvani the chapter leaps to the pathological experiment posed by Thomas Edison’s 1903 filmed electrocution of Topsy the elephant, a demonstration of electricity’s ostensibly instantaneous communication of affect doubling as a public execution of a murderous animal. Chapter 3 takes up telemobility discourse as it is recalibrated in late capitalism, finally, by studying the advertising archive—stocked with signs of species biodiversity—of Telus Mobility Inc., Canada’s second largest telecommunications corporation. Through the monkey metaphors that feature prominently in Telus’s ads, the company’s fetishistic discourse of telecommunication can be pressured to divulge the neocolonial relations of race, nature, and labor supporting it.

Chapter 4, “Biomobility: Calculating Kinship in an Era of Pandemic Speculation,” engages with predictions by the World Health Organization and other agencies of a coming pandemic. A fixation in pandemic discourse on zoonotic diseases—diseases capable of leaping from animal to human bodies via microbial agents such as the H5N1 avian flu virus—is symptomatic of how formerly distinct barriers separating humans and other species are imaginatively, and physically, disintegrating under current conditions of globalization. This chapter examines how human-animal contact is constituted as a matter of global biosecurity in pandemic discourse as well as how zoonotic origin stories function to racially pathologize a specter of entangled ethnic-animal flesh. Yet if human-animal intimacy is pathologized in the cultural discourse of pandemic, it is contradictorily fetishized as an object of desire in concurrent cultural discourses. I examine the affective flip side of pandemic speculation in this chapter by looking at Gregory Colbert’s popular photographic exhibit of human-animal intimacy, Ashes and Snow. Touring the globe in what Colbert calls his “nomadic museum,” Ashes and Snow disseminates a vision of posthuman kinship composed of orientalizing images of entwined ethnic-animal flesh. The affects of fear and desire accruing to the permeability of the species line in the current era of globalization are tremendously productive of forms of
animal capital, as this chapter attempts to show, in large part because they serve as visceral means and effects of power.

Finally, the book’s postscript, “Animal Cannibalism in the Capitalist Globe-Mobile,” glances at the carnal tautology of animal cannibalism (the feeding of rendered remains of ruminants back to livestock), a practice that erupted into crisis in North America in 2003 with the discovery of several Canadian cattle with bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or mad cow disease. The closing of the U.S. border to Canadian beef and livestock, and the resurrection of discourses of national purity as both countries strove to exonerate themselves of the pathological excesses of animal capital, provide a parting glimpse into the complex material and cultural politics of rendering. As disease incubators threatening to expose capitalism’s harrowing protein recycles, animals return in excess of the anticipated returns of rendering. If mad cow disease constitutes something of a privileged material symptom of rendering’s logic, the cannibalism of representational economies in late capitalism that Jean Baudrillard terms *simulacra* is arguably its double. This book works from within the double binds posed by the supplementary economies of rendering and their harrowing symptoms while at the same time taking stock of possible openings for protest.