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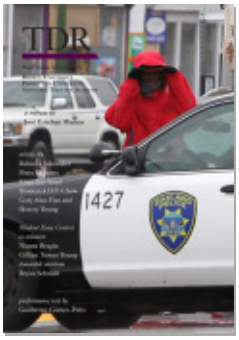

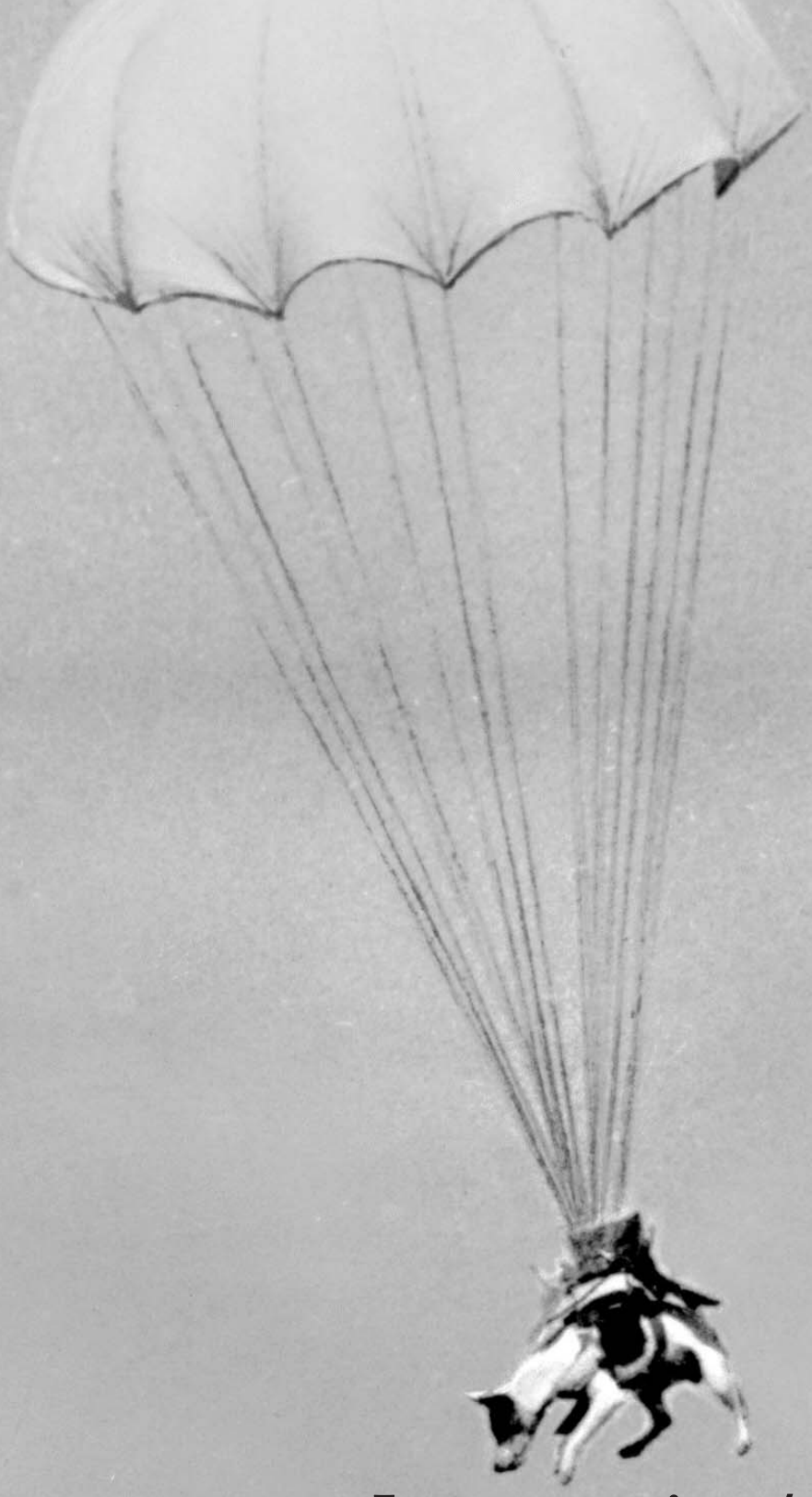

Inappropriate/d Others

or, The Difficulty of Being a Dog

David Williams

All knowledge, the totality of all questions and all answers, is contained in the dog.

—Franz Kafka ([1922] 1999:289-90)

It is a hard piece of Work, being a Dog.

—Kirsten Bakis (1997:147)

In the dog days of summer 2005, dog stories proliferate in the media and elsewhere. Television news brings us chirpily wagging Cocker Spaniels scampering through the streets of London, working sniffer dogs in the wake of the July bombings. In April, the first successful cloning of a dog in South Korea is reported: an Afghan puppy called Snuppy, the product of a fertilized egg implanted in a Labrador retriever. There are stories in papers and on TV of the astonishing capacities of a seizure-alert dog, trained to predict an epileptic fit before her human companion has any sense of what is coming. Meanwhile in rural Britain, there are protests and secret maneuvers in response to recent legislation banning the hunting of foxes by hound packs. The local thrift shops post lost-dog notices in their windows, usually handwritten beside a hangdog photo of the missing pooch. A woman in Yorkshire dies from rabies after a dog bite received on holiday in Goa, India.[1]

Dogs, it seems, are usually represented as either paragon or pariah:

> In symbolic terms, the domestic dog exists precariously in the no-man's land between the human and non-human worlds. It is an interstitial creature, neither person nor beast, forever oscillating uncomfortably between the roles of high-status animal and low-status person. As a consequence, the dog is rarely accepted and appreciated purely for what it is: a uniquely varied, carnivorous mammal adapted to a huge range of mutualistic associations with people. Instead, it has become a creature of metaphor, simultaneously embodying or representing a strange mixture of admirable and despicable traits. As a beast that voluntarily allies itself to humans, the dog often seems to lose its right to be regarded as a true animal […] Elsewhere, the dog's ambiguous or intermediate status has endowed it with supernatural powers, and the ability to travel as a spiritual messenger or psychopomp between this world and the next. (Serpell 1995:254)

Representations of dogs have often been used to figure cultural change and negotiate the borderlands in-between. As a species in large part defined by different modes of relationality, the dog is "an animal that emerges between others," and as such "presents special challenges to species-centered notions of history" (McHugh 2004:12). In myth, they are "markers of thresholds, especially those that lead to forbidden territories" (39), most notably the contested spaces between nature and culture, and the uncertain transition between life and death. For John Berger, dogs are the "natural frontier experts" of "the interstices between different sets of the visible":

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1. Elena Selina and Serge Khripun at XL Gallery Moscow, Ben Langlands and Nikki Bell, and Sam Scott at Forced Entertainment supplied or assisted with obtaining illustrations for this article. Invaluable research help was provided by Sue Palmer, Hannah Chiswell, and the late Stella Williams. This work was completed with the help of the Dartington College of Arts Research Fund.

Figure 1. (facing page) Salvo the Parapup, a canine paratrooper sailing through the sky during World War II. (Photo © Imperial War Museum, London)

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> Their eyes, whose message often confuses us for it is urgent and mute, are attuned both to the human order and to other visible orders. Perhaps this is why, on so many occasions and for different reasons, we train dogs as guides. (2001:5)

In search of a little more orientation at the outset, I look to the entry for "dog" in the *Oxford English Dictionary*:

> Previous history and origin unknown. 1. A quadruped of the genus *Canis*, numerous races or breeds, varying greatly in size shape and colour […] referred by zoologists to a species *C. familiaris*; but whether they have a common origin is a disputed question […] 3. Applied to a person; a. in reproach, abuse, or contempt: a worthless, despicable, surly, or cowardly fellow. b. Playfully (usually in humorous reproof, congratulation, or commiseration): a gay or jovial man, a gallant: a fellow, 'chap.' 4. *Astron*. a. The name of two constellations, the Great and Little Dog (*Canis Major* and *Minor*) situated near Orion; also applied to their principal stars Sirius and Procyon: see DOG-STAR. b. *The Hunting Dogs*, a northern constellation (*Canes Venatici*) near the Great Bear. 5. Applied, usually with distinctive prefix, to various animals allied to, or in some respect resembling, the dog: e.g. *burrowing-dog*, the COYOTE or prairie-wolf, *Canis latrans; pouched-dog*, a dasyurine marsupial of Tasmania, *Thylacinus cynophelas*, also called *zebra-wolf*; *prairie-dog*, a North American rodent […] 7. A name given to various mechanical devices, usually having or consisting of a tooth or claw, used for gripping or holding […] 9. An early kind of fire-arm. 10. Name given to various atmospheric appearances. a. A luminous appearance near the horizon; also *fog-dog*, *sea-dog*. b. Sun-dog, a luminous appearance near the sun, a parhelion. c. *Water-dog*, a small dark floating cloud, indicating rain.

Figure 2. The thylacineis now almost certainly extinct. This 1913 photograph records the last one to be held in captivity in the London Zoo. (Photo © Zoological Society of London)

In this context, etymological definition generates proliferation of signification. A word—and a species—of uncertain origin, sometimes applied to people in either derogatory or playful fashion. Astronomical constellations, formerly used in navigation. Other creatures with certain physiological similarities, one of those mentioned now extinct and another on the cusp of disappearance; *Thylacinus cynepholas*, also known as the Tasmanian tiger or wolf, was hunted to extinction in the 1930s, although there are still unconfirmed sightings to this day. Finally, mechanical grips/restraints, weaponry, and weather phenomena. Although the ancient *Chinese Book of Rites* lists only three categories of dog (hunting, guarding, and edible) (see McHugh 2004:201), it is evident that a significant degree of multiplicity moves within the singularity "dog." As Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari suggest in *A Thousand Plateaus*: "Every animal is fundamentally a band, a pack" (1987:239).

Donna Haraway, an inspirational trigger for this research in her revaluation of human relations with companion species, has proposed that dogs remain potent "sites of meaning-making and sites of inquiry […, and] good figures to think with" (2004:331). The account

that follows—a multiform, partial, and unfinished cartography of the canine—endeavors to assemble an anomalous pack of dogs, both real and make-believe, to unpack and *think with* in ways that are playfully purposeful. Each of them is involved in a performance practice, in an expansive sense of the term "performance": a dog stand-in for humans in scientific research; a coyote performer in a gallery-based installation; canine cinematographers; a convicted killer whose aberrant behavior earns him the appellation "dog"; and a number of human dog-impressionists, each endeavoring to "become-dog" in different ways and to different ends.[2] Many of the age-old associations of dogs and their cultural roles hover around this work: companionship and fidelity, submissiveness and humility, dependence, tractability, tenacity, behavioral abhorrence, symbiosis, mediation, and death. Sometimes the human dog-impressionists move with and through imitation to effect a becoming-other through intensive alliance, contagion, or aggregation, in Deleuze and Guattari's sense: affinity rather than identity, the circulation of affects in relations of movement and speed, zones of proximity and indiscernibility in the untimely processes of desire. In the end, perhaps, "Becoming produces nothing other than itself. We fall into a false alternative if we say you either imitate or you are" (Deleuze and Guattari 1988:238).

My primary interests in what follows relate to the multiple and ambiguous representations of the dog, this most prevalent and successfully integrated of our animal-others, and the economies of exchange enacted in the transforming identities of the following bestiary. What kinds of cultural and performative work do these dogs do for us, in addition to the metaphorical? What models of performance do they propose? Most importantly, what might their staging of interspecies relations tell us about the animal as the constitutive horizon or outside of human-being, and about the very categories "human" and "animal"? How might these interstitial creatures help us to figure difference critically and encourage the "situated emergence of more liveable worlds" (Haraway 2003:51)? And finally, what are the implications of bringing these "inappropriate/d others"[3] into textual conjunction with one another as an unruly, affect-laden pack? What kinds of "ontological choreographies" (8) might they make with each other?

> The task is to become coherent enough in an incoherent world to engage in a joint dance of being that breeds respect and response in the flesh, in the run, on the course. And then to remember how to live like that at every scale, with all the partners. (62)

Pack 1

[A]nyone who likes cats or dogs is a fool.

—Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1987:240)

Odysseus and Argus. Alexander the Great and Peritas. Sir Isaac Newton and Diamond. Descartes and Monsieur Grat. George Washington and Sweet Lips. George Armstrong Custer and Tuck (who also died at Little Big Horn). Napoleon Bonaparte and Fortuné, Josephine's pug (whom he hated). Richard Wagner and Pepsel, Fipsel, Russumuck, and Marke. Byron and Boatswain. Maurice Maeterlinck and Pelléas. Sigmund Freud and Wolf, Lun, Tattoun, and Jofi. Abraham Lincoln and Honey, Jip, and Fido. Herbert Hoover and King Tut. Emily Dickinson and Carlo. Thomas Mann and Bashan. Gertrude Stein and

2. For further details of the notion of "becoming animal," see Deleuze and Guattari (1987:232 ff).

3. "[T]his Inappropriate/d Other […] moves about with always at least two/four gestures: that of affirming 'I am like you' while pointing insistently to the difference; and that of reminding 'I am different' while unsettling every definition of otherness arrived at" (Trinh 1986:9). Trinh T. Minh-ha's figuration is recuperated by Donna Haraway to articulate a means of being "in critical, deconstructive relationality […] of making potent connection that exceeds domination […;] 'difference' as a 'critical difference within,' and not as special taxonomic marks grounding difference as apartheid" (2004:69–70).

Basket. Dorothy Parker and Cliché. Eugene O'Neill and Blemie. Baron Manfred Freiherr von Richthofen ("the Red Baron") and Moritz. Theodore Roosevelt and Skip and Pete. Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Fala. Adolf Hitler (codename "Wolf") and Blondi. Tintin and Milou. Dwight Eisenhower and Caacie. Calvin Coolidge and Peter Pan. Alfred Hitchcock and Sarah. John F. Kennedy and Charlie. Lyndon Baines Johnson and Him, Her, Blanco, and Yuki. Queen Elizabeth II and the corgis Buzz, Foxy, Heather, and Tiny. Helen Keller and Kenzan-Go. Richard M. Nixon and Checkers. Gerald Ford and Liberty. Ronald Regan and Lucky. George Bush Sr. and C. Fred and Millie. Bill Clinton and Buddie. William Wegman and Man Ray. Madonna and Chihuahua Chiquita. Nicole Brown Simpson and Akita.

Bow-wow. Woof-woof. Arf-arf (English/American). *Wau-wau* (German). *Wung-wung* (Chinese). *Jau-jau* (Spanish). *Ouah-ouah* (French). *Hav-hav* (Hebrew/Israeli).[4]

Dog-Star: Laika

The man-made satellite streaking soundlessly across the blackness of outer space. The dark lustrous eyes of the dog gazing out of the tiny window. In the infinite loneliness of space, what could Laika possibly be looking at?

—Haruki Murakami (2002:8)

In November 1957, when I was five months old, Laika became the first living creature to enter space, orbiting around the earth while I orbited my mother in extreme proximity. Found as a stray dog in the streets of Moscow and chosen for her small size and even temperament, Laika was about three years old when she became the first cosmonaut aboard Sputnik 2 and an unwitting instrument of cold war politics: an understudy for humankind in the complex ideologies and developing technologies of ballistic missiles, satellites, piloted space flight. In Russian, *laika* means "barker" and is the generic name for a range of Russian dog breeds. In a Soviet radio broadcast a week before the launch, Laika barked into the microphone on cue. The American press dubbed her "Muttnik."

Figure 3. Laika, the first cosmonaut, inside the capsule of Sputnik 2, 1957. (Photo © Pathe News/ITN)

Over a period of weeks, Laika was trained to endure launch and flight conditions. So, for example, to adapt to the cramped space of the cabin, she was kept in progressively smaller cages for periods of up to three weeks. She was placed in centrifuges that simulated the vibrations and extreme g-forces in the acceleration of a rocket launch, and in simulators that reproduced the volume of noise inside a spacecraft. Just before the launch, Laika was sponged in a diluted alcohol solution and carefully groomed. Iodine was painted on to shaved

4. These transcriptions of bark sounds in different languages are drawn from Garber (1996:99).

areas where sensors were attached to monitor her bodily functions: blood pressure, breath frequency, heartbeat. She was fitted with a metal chain harness to prevent her from turning around, and a rubber bag to collect bodily waste. There was a radio transmitter and a television camera that doesn't seem to have worked.

A few hours after the launch on 3 November, one of the heat shields fell off, leaving Laika exposed to high temperatures. The early telemetry from the electrodes on her body show she was highly agitated (her pulse rate was at three times the normal resting rate) and barking, but still eating some food. In the end, Laika seems to have died from trauma and overheating after about three to five hours; she was certainly dead by the completion of the fourth orbit. The dead dog circled the earth 2,570 times in her space-capsule coffin, at a height of about 2,000 miles and at a speed of about 18,000 miles per hour; after 162 days, the capsule finally burned up on reentry, five months after launch.

It's only recently that the real nature and timing of Laika's death have come to light. The cold war Soviet PR machine concealed the reality of her fate and constructed a fantasy version of Laika circling the earth, peering inquisitively out of the window at Earth for more than a week of carefree doggy flight. For 40 years, the official "history" was that Laika had lived to see the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution, before dying peacefully. It is now clear that in reality she is the only living space passenger to have been launched without any intention of retrieval. There was no life-support system for long-duration flight and no descent capsule. In fact, it was planned for Laika to be euthanized after 10 days with a poisoned serving of food. Meanwhile, in Soviet Russia, plaques were unveiled, statues erected, commemorative stamps printed. There were brands of chocolates and cigarettes named after her, and now she is referenced in novels, band names and songs, films, performances,[5] even website memorials with audio samples of Laika's telemetry signals picked up from satellites, including her heartbeat. Laika has entered modern mythology and cultural imaginations as an unwitting hero/victim of our technological age and its political tensions. Four years after Laika's flight, in April 1961, Yuri Gagarin became the first human in space aboard Vostok 1.[6]

Thirteen other Soviet dogs went into space. Five died in flight. Kruschev sent a puppy from one of Laika's successors to Kennedy, as a kind of cold war gift—or taunt. In this period, shortly before the first piloted space flight and then throughout the 1960s, countless other animals were also involved in U.S. and Soviet space missions: mice, rats, monkeys, cats, frogs, spiders, fish, crickets, snails, worms. Onboard the Space Shuttle Columbia's final flight in February 2003, in addition to the seven human astronauts, there were silkworms, spiders, carpenter bees, harvester ants, and Japanese killfish (as well as roses, moss, and other plant life). Nothing survived the explosion at reentry apart from hundreds of tiny worms known as *Caenorhabditis elegans*, found alive on the ground in Texas: the humble nematode.

How dogged we are, the humans, the deterritorialized animal. "More than repair everything is in need of mercy."[7]

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5. See, for example, Haruki Murakami's novel *Sputnik Sweetheart* (2002); Swedish director Lasse Hallström's film *My Life As a Dog* (1985); the Finnish band Laika and the Cosmonauts; the album *Absent Friends* (2004) by The Divine Comedy from England; the Canadian band Arcade Fire's song "Neighborhood #2 (Laika)" (2004); and Berlin-based performance company Gob Squad's *Calling Laika* (1998). For further details about the Gob Squad performance, see Gob Squad, Freiburg, and Quiñones (2005:63–70).

6. For sources of information on Laika, please see Anonymous (2003), Associated Press (1957), Grahn (2003), LePage (1997), Radford (2002), *Space Today Online* (2004), Stenger (2002), Whitehouse (2002), and Zak (1999).

7. From a poem by Peter Bukowski, used in an Australian public art project on Melbourne trams (2000).

Anima(l) Mundi: Joseph Beuys's Coyote: I Like America and America Likes Me

Dogs are not surrogates for theory; they are not here just to think with. They are here to live with. Partners in the crime of human evolution, they are in the garden from the get-go, wily as Coyote.

—Donna Haraway (2003:5)

In May 1974, in what has become one of the most iconic actions of performance art—or "perhaps the best-known piece of dog-theatre outside of the circus" (Phillips 2000:128), depending on one's perspective—the German artist Joseph Beuys spent three days with a coyote in an enclosed space in a New York gallery. This encounter remains one of the constitutive events comprising the elaborate Beuys "legend," "the greatest individual mythology since Marcel Duchamp" (Borer 1996:12). Like many performance artworks, the event was intended to be conveyed primarily through its documentation. There are many published statements by Beuys, dozens of commentaries, and literally hundreds of photographic traces, including an entire volume of images (Tisdall 1976). As Peggy Phelan (1993:146) and others have suggested, disappearance comprises a core component of performance's ontology, but rarely has the active vanishing of a work of performance art attracted such diverse, ambiguous, and at times contradictory critical engagements.

Although we can never be sure of what actually happened, the basic structure of Beuys's action is well known. Having flown into Kennedy airport in New York from Düsseldorf, Beuys was wrapped in felt, placed on a rolling hospital stretcher, loaded into an ambulance, and then driven to the René Block gallery in Manhattan—without ever touching American soil. The encounter with the coyote, named Little John, took place on an upper floor of the gallery building, accessed by elevator; the space itself was contained within a metal chain-link barrier, like a zoo cage. Beuys later suggested: "The manner of the meeting was important. I wanted to concentrate only on the coyote. I wanted to isolate myself, insulate myself, see nothing of America other than the coyote" (in Kuoni 1990:141). Various objects were placed in the space—materials rich in potential for sculptural transformation and for thought, as in all of Beuys's work: a length of grey felt blanket, a walking stick or crook, a torch, a pair of gloves, a musical triangle, some straw bedding, and 50 new copies of the *Wall Street Journal* delivered every day and placed in two piles at the front of the space.[8] After man and animal had interacted with each other and these materials for three days, Beuys was rewrapped in felt and taken back to the airport in an ambulance, then returned to Germany.

In diverse traditional Native American contexts, the coyote has represented an ambiguous and shadowy deity outsider, a playfully amoral transgressor and impersonator, often of other animals. An interstitial creature able to move freely between the worlds of the everyday and the sacred, it was "the spirit of disorder, the enemy of boundaries" (Kerenyi 1972:185). For Carl Jung, the coyote was an archetypal trickster figure, an *anima(l) mundi*, a "soul" creature

8. All of these objects come to us encrusted in a dense web of Beuys's own esoteric, associational significations; collectively they comprised an uncanny aggregate of energy transmitters. It is interesting to compare *Coyote* with Beuys's 1969 sculpture *Pack*, which brings together related materials to stage another kind of becoming-dog. A pack of 24 sleds are dramatically configured to suggest they are in the process of migrating out of the rear door of a Volkswagen van. Morphological connections with an animal body are established in the components of each of the sleds: torch as eye, felt as fur, toothed metal brake as claw, animal fat as corporeal energy cell. In addition, each of these low-tech units constitutes a survival kit, a locus of rescue, sustenance, or healing in an emergency situation—an avalanche, say, or an epidemic: it seems to imply that there are many "wounds" to be treated, but that hope exists in organized collective action. There is an energized becoming-molecular in the proliferative multiplicity of the escape trajectory, as these "animals" fall out of an abandoned object of state technology en route to a collective nomadism or line of flight.

requiring our attention. Under threat since the arrival of European settlers, the coyote had become the quintessential American scapegoat or underdog, hunted and destroyed as a pest, and yet it had more than survived. For Beuys, the coyote had its prehistoric origins as an Asiatic steppe wolf (see Kuoni 1990:213); he believed it had crossed from East to West on ice in the Bering Straits thousands of years ago, like the ancestors of Native Americans. So Beuys's coyote was originally Eurasian, and intimately linked to the Siberian wolf, another creature traditionally connected in Siberia and Northeast Asia with shamanic transformation. For him, the coyote's persecution and debasement in the American context symbolized the destructive relationship of colonizers to the sensitive ecologies of the continent and its indigenous cultures. The coyote also had other meanings for Beuys: he had been an outspoken critic of America's involvement in Vietnam and of the violence inherent in international capitalism, as well as an activist in a movement that was a precursor to the Green political party in Germany. In relation to this performance event, he made explicit connections between the coyote and the plight[9] of the Native Americans, locating this aspect of U.S. cultural history as its fault line, a deeply internalized and naturalized "coyote complex." In rather grandiose fashion, Beuys framed the action as part of an attempt at a shamanic healing of the traumatic dis-ease and psychic scars of America:

Figure 4. Little John, the animal companion in Joseph Beuys's iconic performance piece, Coyote: I Like America and America Likes Me. *René Block Gallery, New York, 1974. (Photo © DACS 2006)*

> I believe I made contact with the psychological trauma point of the United States' energy constellation: the whole American trauma with the Indian, the Red Man. You could say that a reckoning has to be made with the coyote, and only then can this trauma be lifted. (in Kuoni 1990:141)[10]

In the mythical narrative of loss and return that Beuys—the self-styled shaman-psychopomp-pedagogue—purported to enact here, the coyote was a stand-in for the "wound" of America and the repressed knowledge of its indigenous people. According to commentators close to the artist, such as Caroline Tisdall (1976, 1979, 1998), who witnessed the event, Beuys staged himself as a sick man separating himself from the world to seek and present a tentative, reconciliatory healing for himself and the coyote through their encounter: a mutual,

9. The ambiguous English word "plight" was the title of a felt installation made by Beuys in 1985. Highly sensitive to the etymological complexity of the word, Beuys defined "plight" as: a) danger, a critical predicament or situation, a difficulty or dilemma; and b) a binding promise, a vow or commitment "between human beings, between human beings and nature, human beings and animals, plants and earth" (in Hergott and Hohlfeldt 1994:236; my translation).

10. In an interview with Willoughby Sharp in 1969, Beuys even proclaimed himself leader ("chief") of a political party for animals since they could not speak for themselves (Sharp 1969:43).

creative co-evolution, a *conjunctio oppositorum* of the marginalized for collective contemplation.[11] Throughout her writings about Beuys, Tisdall's narrative of Rousseauist reconnection with nature and animality through ecological reparation of an ancient separation reiterates Beuysian doxa concerning the coproduction of "freedom" (see Beuys in Kuoni 1990:142). Inevitably, the artist's rhetoric of cultural therapy and liberation has been scathingly criticized by a number of writers, in particular Benjamin Buchloh (1980), Thomas Crow (1993) and Terry Atkinson (1995), who dismiss the *Coyote* action as an instance of deluded self-mythologizing and "an exercise in vainglorious metaphysical posturing" (Atkinson 1995:174).

More promisingly perhaps, historian of science and cultural theorist Donna Haraway's cooption of the coyote as a deconstructive critical figuration productively locates the animal as a creature of mediation, like her other recurrent figurations—the cyborg and the dog—intersecting and confusing received, binarized categories:

> Coyote is about the world as a place that is active in terms that are not particularly under human control, but it is not about the human, on the one side, and the natural on the other. There is a communication between what we would call "nature" and "culture", but in a world where "coyote" is a relevant category, "nature" and "culture" are not the relevant categories. Coyote disturbs nature/culture ontologies. […] It is not nature. It is not culture. It is truly about a serious historical effort to get elsewhere. (2004:328, 330)

Haraway's figuration, and its efforts to get "elsewhere," suggest the dynamic ambiguities and possibilities of relational spaces between cultural and ontological categories—spaces that could be axes of exchange and transformation. In this light, it is possible to conceive of Beuys's *Coyote* action as an embodied rehearsal of his notion of "social sculpture" (*Sozialplastik*), an enactment of creatively being and thinking otherwise and elsewhere in the face-to-face encounter with an "other." In Beuys's conception of social sculpture, an amalgam of aesthetics and activist social idealism, sculpture as praxis was expanded and extended beyond its conventional parameters, and the molding processes of art were taken as a metaphor for the refashioning of society and culture, which in themselves are organic entities. If one recognizes the creative plasticity at work in the formation of thought, social structures, and ethical relations, then ideational and social re-form can become a sculptural event to be staged: "SOCIAL SCULPTURE—how we mould and shape the world in which we live: *Sculpture as an evolutionary process; everyone an artist*" (Beuys in Tisdall 1979:6).

In the doublings that recur in his work (coyote/human, East/West, old world/new world, materialist/idealist, etc.), two elements are placed in relation. The third element in Beuys's "Theory of Sculpture," and the core dynamic in his worldview, is the agency of movement (*Bewegung*), the process of setting things in motion in between chaos and order, organic and crystalline, expansion and contraction (see Beuys in Tisdall 1979:44; and Rosenthal 2004:24–25). "Bewegung" represents an economy of interrelationality and an ecology of connectivity and unfinishable change, both materially and in terms of consciousness.[12]

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11. From Mark Rosenthal:

> Wounds are ubiquitous in Beuys's thinking, and are multivalent in meaning. For him, the term is a figure of speech referring to illnesses of all kinds, literal incursions in a body, openings into the ground, including trenches and graves, inner spaces that are empty of any incident, and, of course, emotional scars and suffering. […] Beuys saw his job as presenter of the wound, "extracting a tooth to show its state of decay." (2004:68)

12. Consider also Caroline Tisdall's claim:

> The key to Coyote is transformation: transformation of ideology to the idea of freedom, transformation of language to a deeper understanding of it as the most potent evolutionary power, transformation of verbal dialogue to energy dialogue. (1979:235)

Figure 5. Joseph Beuys and Little John in Coyote: I Like America and America Likes Me. *Animal and artist shared three days in an enclosed environment strewn with newspapers, felt, straw, and other objects. René Block Gallery, New York, 1974. (Photo © DACS 2006)*

All well and good as an eco-sophical proposition, but there are unresolved questions here. What kind of coyote was Little John? What was his provenance, and does it matter? His purported status as a "wild" animal only recently caught and the degree of his prior interaction with human beings are unverified; and there are all sorts of discrepancies in published accounts. The animal's untamed nature is often highlighted in these descriptions, and it serves to feed the mythological narrative of an interspecies encounter between these representatives of "nature" and "culture." In reality it seems the coyote had been brought to New York from a ranch in New Jersey by his "owner."[13] In one of Tisdall's descriptions of the event, she provides a rare account of what happened after Beuys departed the caged space, as she remembers it:

> The man who owned the coyote […] came in with a big iron bar because this was a very wild and dangerous animal. It was a wonder that the New York health and hygiene hadn't intervened before. He put the animal back into a cage and took it back to the ranch in New Jersey. And in the gap between Beuys leaving and his owner coming, the coyote had shown this terrible nervousness for the first time, pacing up and down in the empty cage leaving sweat marks with his paws. Quite amazing. (Tisdall 2005)

The contradictions here are indeed "amazing." First of all, it is surely no surprise that the coyote was unsettled by Beuys's disappearance after three days of cohabitation, but in what ways could an iron bar ever have been the answer to calming him for the transition to the

13. In one of her books about Beuys, Tisdall includes a photograph of the rancher who was Little John's handler in conversation over a beer with Beuys; in the image, the artist rather portentously holds in one hand a stuffed hare, another core transformational creature from his personal bestiary (Tisdall 1998:162). Beuys's extensive bestiary, as represented in his body of work, also included stag, horse, wolf, bear, bee, elk, and sea birds. For further discussion of bestiaries and the theoretical work they perform, see Williams (2004).

journey home? What kind of a "handler" does this suggest? At the very least, the presence of this clumsy instrument of apparent domination and potential violence as a coda to the encounter rather undoes the narratives of interspecies communication and cooperation. Secondly, Tisdall's memory of the animal's sweaty footprints is confusing, perhaps a reflection of her own anthropomorphizing projections (marked by the transition from the impersonal pronoun "it" to the more sympathetic third-person "his"); for in reality, like all members of the canid family, coyotes don't have sweat glands in their paws. One can only surmise that Little John had passed through spilt water or his own urine. Even without the alarming insertion into the narrative of the crowbar in Beuys's wake, in truth there were already fundamental inequities in the relations established between the artist and the coyote in the gallery space, as Andrea Phillips has remarked:

> As usual within Beuys's work, the dialectic is intellectual rather than palpable, and the ecology is theoretical rather than demonstrable; the dog has no power, and whilst Beuys only has his wits (and a big stick) during his time in the cage, he can easily escape. (2000:128)

Early in 2005, at the Tate Modern in London, I had the opportunity to watch a rarely screened documentary film of *Coyote* made by the René Block Gallery (Wietz 1974), and the information it contained seemed to offer a generative supplement to the other available accounts of the performance.

Although of course the film is a wholly mediated and selective construction of reality, this register of the traces of absent actions somewhat defamiliarized the existing narratives I had encountered and enabled a partial apprehension of (some of) what commentators have chosen to overlook or read according to particular perspectives. For example, Beuys's embodied acute awareness of territoriality and his attentiveness, generosity, and response-ability toward the coyote's predicament are disarmingly sensitive, as is his immersion in present process in relation to a somewhat unpredictable other; in themselves, perhaps these qualities mark the encounter as a fragile, micropolitical practice of hope. Above all, the playfulness of their interaction is genuinely surprising. At one point, for example, Beuys gives Little John one of his gloves to play with; metaphorically, he gives over his hand—that most human of signs—and Beuys knows full well that its smells and substance will be of great interest to a dog.[14] The coyote sniffs at the glove, then with his eyes on Beuys, picks it up and walks discreetly away to a safer zone in the space. A thorough exploration of the glove's olfactory information (including a comic moment when the coyote's nose is lodged inside it) gives way to an instinctive, tactile, animal choreography. The coyote elegantly slides his torso from chest to groin along the floor on top of the glove, before flipping over to roll on it, on his back: a dexterous animal game of surfing on a human attribute, to mark it as his own.

The film contains repeated sublimations of aggression in the game structures of an inquisitive, nervous, and partially socialized animal displaced from his familiar surroundings: the initial choreographies of mutual orientation and adaptation, the tug-of-war ripping of Beuys's felt blanket from which the coyote constructed his bed, the game with the glove, the circling in search of interaction, the subtle intersections of their gazes, the doglike jump-nip aimed toward Beuys's face under the felt, and Beuys's attempted embrace of the animal just before his departure. In addition, the coyote unwittingly performs a range of sculptural actions, impacting on the nature and placement of materials in the enclosure. As a collaborative agent of transformation in his negotiation of shared space, he moves things around and

14. See Turner (1992) for an intriguing analysis of the discursive centrality of the hand in classificatory systems differentiating the human and the animal in zoology, anthropology, sociology, and philosophy. With reference to George Simmel, Margaret Mead, Martin Heidegger, and others, Bryan S. Turner posits the possibility of "a foundationalist view of the significance of the human hand in the evolution of culture and society" (118).

changes them—for example, using the *Wall Street Journal* as his recurrent surface of choice for defecation: an unconsciously critical and comical intervention in relation to this register of capitalism's economies of exchange. Like British artists Olly and Suzi in their interactions with animals in the wild (see the Provocation section in this issue and Baker 2000:10–14), the resultant artwork assumes a complex status in terms of authorship: "everyone an artist."

Can(d)id Camera: Nobuhira Narumi's Dog-Cam *Projects*

For many dogs are come about me. (Psalms 22:16)

Since the mid-1990s, Japanese-born video artist Nobuhira Narumi, who divides his time between New York and Tokyo, has made and shown dog-related work in galleries and on television internationally. His *Dog-Cam* projects explore differing relations between humans and their canine companions, usually in urban environments. Narumi visits a city, makes connection with a dog "owner" (a category under interrogation here), then spends at least a week with them before going for a walk with the dog on its familiar routes and unpredictable paths of desire. Each dog is fitted with a compact video-surveillance camera built into a harness or a cap on its head, and sometimes a digital-stills camera triggered to take a photograph whenever the dog nods. Once the dog is accustomed to the camera bonnet and to Narumi, the walk is recorded.

The camera registers the animal's agency, its itinerary through the city, and its point of view: its interests, drives, encounters with other dogs, its loops and returns, its largely curbside knowledges of the city. In this way, the video materials offer eccentric, embodied mappings of urban spaces, an animal geography of *dérives* from a position close to the ground.[15] Images record canine desires outside a butcher shop, for example, the olfactory scrutiny of rubbish bags and discarded food cartons, or the complex aromatics of lampposts, invisible expressions of territoriality hinted at in the camera's movements. Human beings are seen from unfamiliar perspectives: at a distance, fragmented by the framing, rarely centralized as the object of focus. In these fleeting encounters with people, other signs come into active play: trouser legs, shoes, occasionally hands and fugitive faces. Often, the dog acts as an attractor or trigger for brief communicative exchanges between people, interrupting the hurried, instrumentalist time-spaces of urban movement, the dog becoming a relational medium generating new rhythms and unforeseen occasions for embodied interaction. Narumi has referred to the canine frame for these ephemeral face-to-face encounter-events and the provisional communities they foster in terms of a "dognet"—as compared to the disembodied illusions of proximity afforded by the internet (Narumi 1998). (When I saw the *Dog-Cam* projects at Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff, Wales, in 1999, local dog owners had been encouraged to bring their pets with them into the gallery space. The odd assortment of canine gallery-goers completely ignored the videos and generated their own interactive event at ground level, comically affirming the exhibition's claim that this was "a work made by dogs for dogs").[16]

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15. Andrea Phillips describes a related work made by Francis Alÿs in Mexico City, a kind of materialist analogue version of Narumi's canine mappings of urban spaces through digital video tape:

> Alÿs even made a magnetic dog that he led around the streets collecting all sorts of metal detritus—the mechanomorphic equivalent of a dog's olfactory knowledge of a certain route. The Situationists would have loved to have deciphered such clues after the fact, translating them into new *dérives*, so much more satisfying than straw polls and automatic writing: the act of human decision—that perturbing fact of choice—having been offset. (2000:125)

16. The curator's tag, "a work made by dogs for dogs," carries an unwitting echo of part of Deleuze's discussion with Claire Parnet of the relations between writing and the animal, and in particular of the meaning of the word "for" (*pour*) in Antonin Artaud's claim: "*J'écris pour les analphabètes, pour les idiots, pour les bêtes*" (I write for the illiterates, for the idiots, for the animals; my translation). Deleuze proposes a double meaning of "for" in this context: (a) writing *aimed at* the animal as reader, and (b) writing *in the place of* the animal, who can neither read nor write but has much to convey (Deleuze and Parnet 2004).

The films stage a quirky constitution of human identities made strange through their consideration as "otherwise" and as seen from "elsewhere." The canine perspectives are informative in relativizing an anthropocentric gaze and articulating certain overlooked aspects of human relations and naturalized social structures. As Narumi has pointed out, dogs have been watching human beings for a very long time, and they have gathered a lot of information about what it means to be in relation with them. Ultimately, he suggests: "My work is really about people, because the dog of today is an almost completely artificial animal" (in DiPietro 1998). As Haraway, James Serpell, and others have pointed out, after thousands of years of cohabitation with humans, a dog has become a complex interstitial creature imbricated in diverse human cultural formations and practices in ways that wholly unsettle any clear nature/culture binary. "Neither excluded nor included," as Rainer Maria Rilke puts it in his poem, "The Dog" (*Der Hund* 1908; in Grenier [1998] 2000:7).

The curator's press release from the London showings of the *Dog-Cam* projects at the Underwood Street Gallery in 1999 proposes a "becoming animal of the eye" (in Phillips 2000:129) in these films, in which the prosthetic human eye of the camera is displaced by unselfconscious dog operators acting as *flâneurs*, guides, scavengers, or intruders. One might also propose a "becoming nose" of the camera here, for the primacy of the olfactory in canine behavior deterritorializes privileged aesthetic framings of the urban in the visual field and generates rather different, haptic modalities of "seeing" in the complex assemblage of DOG and HUMAN and CITY.[17] The animal agency, sensorium, proximity, motion, and the relational axes of the camera operators are foregrounded in these real-time journeys into the gaps on maps. In some ways aesthetically similar to the work of American underground filmmakers in the 1960s and 1970s—in particular in terms of the cultivation of unusual perspectives on urban environments and the amplification of the materiality of objects—the *Dog-Cam* projects recuperate fragments of the ephemeral and overlooked, the marginal and repressed, the seepage and excess of anthropocentric proprieties in dominant human economies of orientation, location, and representation.

The various canine collaborators with whom Narumi has coauthored his work reveal diverse instances of human/animal symbiosis, as well as different temperaments and experiences of urban life. A number of the *Dog-Cam* films propose a wry political critique in their defamiliarizing perspectives on human economies of exchange, power relations, and the micropolitics of encounters in the everyday. Narumi's first dog was a perky Welsh terrier called Dylan Thomas, who had collaborated with a number of other artists, including the celebrated Japanese photographer Nobuyoshi Araki. *Fake Love* (1996), a television documentary made by Narumi for Channel 4 in England, and subsequently included in exhibitions, focuses on this dog, at one point tracking his walk through Shinjuku in Tokyo. With hilarious indifference, Dylan Thomas urinates on Roy Lichtenstein's *Wave* sculpture on Ome Kaido, then confronts the bewildering ranks of a street vendor's animated toy-dogs on the pavement, and encounters a group of delighted, friendly prostitutes in Kabukicho.

Other dogs in the *Dog-Cam* series include the mongrel companion of a homeless man in London—a mutually dependent complicity of the dispossessed—who explores sacks of

17. Sigmund Freud and others have written about smell and its intimate relation to one's proximity to the ground. A dog's enormously sophisticated sense of smell is connected to its four-legged low-level motion, enabling it to sustain a direct, close-up relationship to objects and their olfactory information—a capacity diminished in human beings' two-legged, ocularcentric perspective on their surroundings. The dog-lover Freud uses the dog's amplified sense of smell as part of his explanation for continuing associations of lowly canine status in interspecies hierarchies:

> It would be incomprehensible […] that man should use the name of his most faithful friend in the animal world—the dog—as a term of abuse if that creature had not incurred his contempt through two characteristics: that it is an animal whose dominant sense is that of smell and one which has no horror of excrement, and that it is not ashamed of its sexual function. ([1930] 1985:228–89)

rubbish on the pavements outside restaurants; and a highly trained working sheepdog in Christchurch, New Zealand. One dog in Hong Kong travels in a car with its "owner," apparently preferring not to walk; its shifting focus of attention is registered in a blurred and jerky traveling shot through the car window. Another film made in Hong Kong provides a dog's perspective on a state facility that impounds and slaughters hundreds of stray dogs abandoned by their owners, who left the former British colony before its return to Chinese administration. The terrier cross with whom Narumi visited the dog pound belonged to a restaurant owner preparing to leave the city and abandon his dog to its fate in the streets. Wandering through the pound, the camera records extreme close-up interactions with condemned dogs through the bars of their cages. These highly charged images reveal the fragility of lives at the mercy of human political systems and demographic changes, with the state as functionalist processor of "waste" left behind in the wake of politically and economically driven migration.

Pack 2

The approximately 200 million sense receptors in a dog's nasal folds. The British phenomenon of "black dog" apparitions, large shapeshifting creatures variously named in different regions the "Barguest," "Shuck," "Black Shag," "Trash," "Skriker," and "Padfoot." The Brown Dog Riots in London's Battersea in 1906. Pavlov's dogs. The real wolf (and eagle) the Fascists installed at the top of the Capitoline Hill in Rome in the early 1930s. Dogs used as suicide bombers by the Russians in World War II. "Parapups," British canine paratroopers in World War II. Churchill's "black dogs" of depression. Seeing-eye guide dogs. Seizure-alert dogs. Sniffer dogs. Dogs trained to detect the early stages of cancer cells in human urine. Draught and carting dogs. Sled dogs. Hunting dogs. Guard dogs. Performing dogs. Police dogs. Attack dogs. Dog baiting. Dogs as experimental laboratory research "subjects." Vivisection dogs. Ventriculochordectomy, an operation to remove the vocal chords of laboratory animals. The successful sequencing of the canine genome, using a poodle called Shadow. The dingo that killed Azaria Chamberlain at Uluru in Australia. Pet cemeteries. Labradoodles. Dog shit. Dog tired. The hair of the dog that bit you.

Philosopher-Dog: Oleg Kulik's Zoophrenia

A man is an animal first of all. And then he is a Social animal, Political animal and so on. I am an Art animal, that's why, spectator, I need your physical and psychological efforts to make sense.

—Oleg Kulik (in Watkins and Kermode 2001:75)

The Russian performance artist Oleg Kulik has played at being a dog in a particularly extreme and purposeful way. During the 1990s, he made a series of related performances collectively entitled *Zoophrenia*, in which he mimicked to excess a certain kind of aggressive canine behavior. At other times, he "became" a bull, an ape, and a bird—but the dog tracked him like a shadow. Following is a bare-bones listing of a selection of these interventions, borrowing some of Kulik's own reflections on his recurrent becoming-dog as a strategy to "renounce his identity as a reflective being in order to become a being with reflexes (a dog)" (in Watkins and Kermode 2001:76):

- 1994, *Mad Dog, or the Last Taboo Guarded by the Lone Cerberus*, the first performance by Kulik as a dog, "an emblem of the state of Russian art and the state of Russian society as a whole" (Kulik in Watkins and Kermode 2001:72). At the entrance to a Moscow gallery, Kulik, in what was to become his recurrent "dog" mode—naked, chained, and barking on all fours—attacked spectators and stopped traffic. He described the Kulik-dog as an "obstacle between the street and the museum—between reality and representation" (77). In retrospect, he characterized this initial act of "border conflict" (77) as "a gesture of despair" (Kulik 2004:56).

Figure 6. Oleg Kulik in Mad Dog, or the Last Taboo Guarded by the Lone Cerberus*, his debut performance as a dog. Moscow, 1994. (Photo © XL Gallery, Moscow)*

- 1995, *Reservoir Dog*. At the opening of an international exhibition at the Künsthaus in Zurich, the Kulik-dog was once again at the entrance, attacking spectators and scaring them away. This action was Kulik's "protest against the transformation of an artist's life into material value, against art as commodity" (in Watkins and Kermode 2001:73); he suggested he was protecting the world's art from "the castration of ethical and aesthetic content in the 'Swiss Bank of Arts'" (Kulik 2004:56). He was arrested and spent a night in prison.
- 1996, *Dog House*. Invited to Stockholm as a canine "ready-made" to participate in Interpol, an exhibition concerning communication, the Kulik-dog leashed himself to the wall in a large room containing a kennel. Kulik bit a visitor, a Mr. Lindquist, who had ignored the warnings not to enter Kulik's territory in an attempt to communicate with the "dangerous" man-dog; Kulik was promptly arrested by Swedish police. Subsequently he published an open letter, "Why I have Bitten a Man," explaining his actions (see Watkins and Kermode 2001:44–45).
- 1996, *I Love Europe, She Does Not Love Me Back*. In Berlin, the Kulik-dog was surrounded by aggressively barking real dogs on leashes. Having recognized that European identity required an other outside in order to constitute itself, Kulik proposed himself as representative of its reviled "symbolic enemy" (in Watkins and Kermode 2001:76).
- 1997, *I Bite America and America Bites Me*. Consciously referencing Joseph Beuys's *Coyote* action in the work's comic title and Kulik's claim to offer "a diagnosis of the state of contemporary American society" (in Watkins and Kermode 2001:77), the zoophrenic Kulik-dog spent two weeks living in a specially built container in a New York gallery. Visitors could either watch him through the windows of the boxlike structure, or go inside wearing protective clothing for an encounter with the animal-artist.

- 1998, *White Man*, *Black Dog*. In complete darkness in a Ljubljana gallery space, a naked Kulik tried to interact and establish an intimate exchange with a real black dog. Intermittent camera flashes from two photographers documenting the encounter supposedly burned ephemeral images into the short-term retinal memories of spectators. For Kulik, such an encounter and its fugitive visual traces constituted "the only true, 'absolutely real' art" (2003:23).

Kulik has suggested: "I wanted to turn into a sort of new Diogenes, a dog-philosopher" (2004:56); and, like Diogenes, the active force and vital optimism of his disruptive conduct is perhaps best understood as an uncompromising, transgressive hostility toward the inertia of conventional aesthetic and political gestures.[18] In the uneasy transition to a post-Soviet Russia, the interventions of Kulik as a "clown of the catastrophe" (Viktor Misiano in Watkins and Kermode 2001:63) engaged critically with dominant ideologies and alibis, and presented a range of political, philosophical, and ethical propositions through his bodily actions and accompanying statements. Some of the work explicitly denounced the corruption of the international art market and the commodificatory domestication of dissident aesthetics, as well as the Pavlovian conditioning of socialized gallery-goers. Other actions referenced specific political contexts, for example: the introduction of new capital punishment legislation in Russia during the 1990s, Russian elections (in which, like Beuys, Kulik put himself forward as the representative of the "Party of Animals"), the exclusions effected by the European Union, epidemics of animal disease, the fate of Montenegro in the breakup of former Yugoslavia, and so on. In particular, he returned repeatedly to relations between Eastern and Western Europe, and representations of contemporary Russia in the constitution of a new Europe as a deprived, unsophisticated, mongrel "other" that is charming as long as it remains passive, submissive, excluded, and doesn't bite back. Kulik's explicit critique of anthropocentrism seems to be a posthumanist extension of

Figure 7. Oleg Kulik in I Bite America and America Bites Me. *Performed at Deitch Projects, Grand Street, New York, 12–26 April 1997. (Photo © XL Gallery, Moscow)*

18. Nicknamed "the Dog," Diogenes of Sinope was a 4th-century BCE Greek philosopher-vagrant who became one of the most radical figures in the school of thought known as the Cynics (from the Greek word for dog, *kuon*). Proposing a model for human conduct in a dog's life, Diogenes advocated inviolable self-sufficiency—detachment and liberation from all external restriction. He was unerringly hostile to property, conventional values, and religion, and endeavored to lead a minimalist life in accordance with nature. He courted insult through his provocative behavior, including shameless acts of public impropriety, and endured extreme poverty; at one time he is reputed to have lived in a barrel or tub. He perceived social convention as worthless and contemptible, decrying hypocrisy, greed, coercive morality, and the corruption of the nation-state. He is said to have traveled around Greece with a lamp in daylight proclaiming he was in search of an "honest man." The dissident, iconoclastic humor of Diogenes' mordant satirical interventions has connections to certain Sufi mystics (who also referred to themselves as dogs), to Zen, and to the work of Friedrich Nietzsche.

his radical misgivings about Eurocentrism, and a logical development of his critical stance on democracy's blind spots and limitations. Kulik's utterances contain echoes of a "deep ecology" in their utilitarian critique of the human subject. There are all sorts of other knowledges outside of the center, he proposes, if only one could create a new "united culture of noosphere" (in Watkins and Kermode 2001:14), an inclusive *zoocentrist* culture of the senses and of embodied perception:[19]

> Anthropocentrism has exhausted itself. Can man forecast earthquakes, like a small aquarium fish? Can he smell like a dog, be lithe like a cat? Does he know the secret of harmonious social life, like that of an ant or a bee? No. Besides that, an animal cannot lie, pretend, deceive and cower. (74)

What kind of dog was being represented here? The Kulik-dog, "a rag of wolf's tongue red-panting from his jaws" (Joyce [1922] 1960:52), was ill-tempered, confrontational, combative; a wild, mad or fighting dog devoid of any of the other possibilities dogs actually possess. On some levels, it seems to have been little more than a rather reductive cartoonlike vicious dog, a "beware-of-the-dog" dog, territorial and irredeemably antagonistic, although arguably a great deal of courage must have been required to carry out this degree of pretence in many of the performance contexts Kulik chose. Becoming-dog here seems to have been a mimicry of selected attributes of canine behavior, an imitation game as spectacle directed at human beings (rather than, say, dogs). As Phillips has remarked in her critical appraisal of the Deleuzean trope of becoming animal: "Becoming is a fantasy that we do not really want to play out to its very end: to remain on the border—a human in a partial dog site, a dog with a human attitude—is about as far as we are willing to go" (2000:130). What remains remarkable, however, is the level of Kulik's investment, the monstrous, amoral, libidinal, and exhibitionist energetics of his performance as "dog," and the contextual, critical focus of his interventions.

Recently, Kulik has expressed certain reservations as to the effectiveness of his strategies in the *Zoophrenia* series (see for example Kulik 2004:56)—the reiteration of metaphor and stereotype in his representation of the animal as "non-anthropomorphous other," as it is described by his collaborator Mila Bredikhina (in Watkins and Kermode 2001:52); the tendency for him as performer to collapse through immersive mimicry into a state of incoherent affectivity—and his recent work has moved away from Kulik-dog interventions of this kind. Nonetheless, in the unrestrained excess of his mimesis of aberrant canine behavior, Kulik managed to produce an indeterminate creature within which elements of the "animal" lurk alongside those of the "human," rendering both terms and their constitutive difference unstable and in question: in Alan Read's words, a "divided self of species relations" (2004:244). As Adrian Heathfield argues in one of the most thoughtful responses to Kulik's work:

> What Kulik stages is a sensate opening to another way of being: abject, liminal, without identity. The awakening of the animal-human is inevitably a reminder of its proximity to erasure, of the precariousness of life. […S]uch aesthetic openings inaugurate questions of the bio-political, interrogating the designation and meaning of sacrifice, unpicking the logics by which certain bodies are placed by cultural authorities in conditions of exception to and exclusion from the human. (2004a:13)

19. The deep-ecology notion of a politically inclusive *zoocentrism* has been articulated by Oleg Kulik's collaborator Mila Bredikhina, who places it at the heart of their utopian "Forward-to-Nature" strategy: "[M]an is but a part, rather than the measure of our planet's biosphere" (in Watkins and Kermode 2001:51).

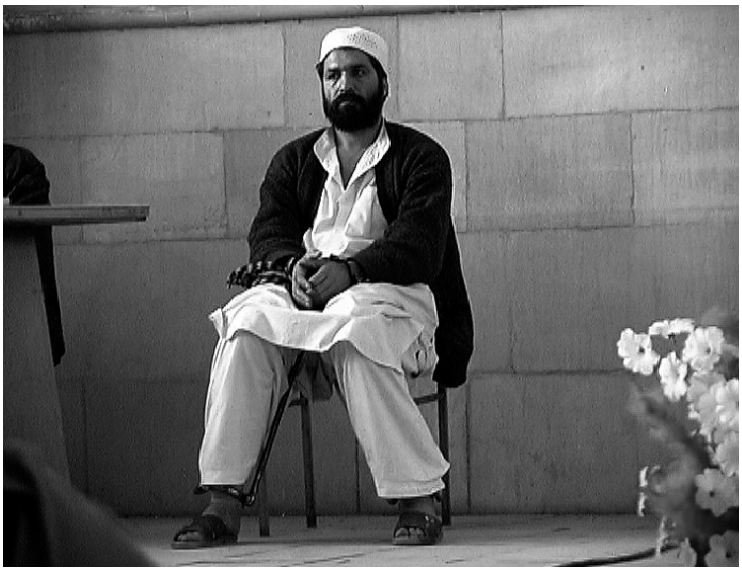
Dogs of War: Langlands and Bell's Zardad's Dog

"Cry 'Havoc!' and let slip the dogs of war.

—*William Shakespeare,* Julius Caesar *(III, i:270)*

Perhaps best known for their conceptual artwork concerning experiences of architectural spaces, in 2002 British artists Ben Langlands and Nikki Bell were commissioned to record the aftermath of the war in Afghanistan in the wake of 9/11. They traveled there for two weeks in October 2002 as the Imperial War Museum's official war artists, visiting a range of locations including the location of the giant Buddhas at Bamyan and the former home of Osama Bin Laden at Daruntah. On their return from this journey, Langlands and Bell created a number of works in 2003 at the Imperial War Museum in London, including an interactive installation, *The House of Osama bin Laden*, and *Zardad's Dog*, a short film about the murder trial of a "human dog."

Langlands and Bells's film had to be withdrawn from the prestigious Turner Prize exhibition at Tate Britain in 2004, as its inclusion coincided with the high-profile trial in London of an infamous former warlord from Afghanistan, Faryadi Sarwar Zardad, a *mujahideen* commander who had fought against the Russians and the Taliban before becoming a leading militia officer in the ultraconservative Hezb-i-Islami faction. Since 1998, when he fled the Taliban regime to come to England on a fake passport in search of political asylum, Zardad had been living in South London, running a pizza restaurant in Bexleyheath, before being arrested and charged. Legal advisers deemed the film to be potentially prejudicial to Zardad's trial, and it was removed from the Tate. Langlands and Bell were also required to black out all mention of Zardad's name in related publications. This was Zardad's first Old Bailey trial, in which



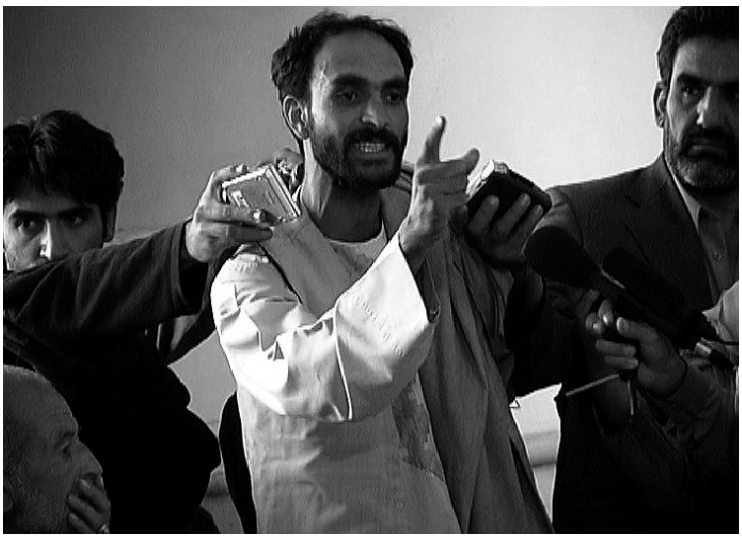


Figure 8 and 9. Abdullah Shah, aka "Zardad's Dog," during his trial for multiple murders, Supreme Court, Kabul, 15 October 2002 (top); and a witness at his trial. Stills from the video film Zardad's Dog *by Ben Langlands and Nikki Bell, 2003. (Photos © Langlands & Bell)*

jurors were unable to agree on a verdict. In his second trial in 2005, Zardad was again indicted for the robbery and murder of a number of travelers passing through the stronghold controlled by his unit at Sarobi, on the main road from Kabul to Jalalabad and the Khyber Pass. Finally in July 2005, Zardad was found guilty of a campaign of torture and hostage taking between 1991 and 1996 in which large numbers of people had been "robbed, beaten, stabbed, bitten and shot" (O'Neill 2005). It was the first time a foreign national has been convicted in a British court for crimes committed abroad, in breach of the United Nations Convention against Torture (1985).

Part of the evidence against Zardad in his Old Bailey trials related to his association with a notorious "human dog," a long-haired, heavily-built wild man reputedly kept in a pit into which passing civilians would be thrown by Zardad's henchmen. "Zardad's dog," as he was known, would then torture and savage them, sometimes even tearing off his victims' testicles with his teeth. This ferocious dog-man was Abdullah Shah, a former *mujahideen* soldier who had been sentenced in Afghanistan in 2002 to 20 years in prison for a series of 20 murders, including at least one of his wives and one of his children. Then, in October 2002, a special Afghan court (witnessed by Langlands and Bell) sentenced Shah to death, the first instance of capital punishment since the fall of the Taliban regime in late 2001; President Hamid Karzai, the new president of the post-Taliban transitional government, formally sanctioned the death sentence. Ultimately, in April 2004, at the age of 37, Shah was shot in the back of the head at Pul-i-Charki prison in the outskirts of Kabul. An international outcry at the death sentence was led by human rights groups, including Amnesty International, who claimed that Shah had been denied basic human rights: the trial was unfair; he had not been permitted to present a full defense; a confession had been obtained under torture; and his death represented the elimination of a key witness to other human rights abuses in Afghanistan.

So what is Langlands and Bells's disappeared film? *Zardad's Dog* documents Shah's October 2002 murder trial in Kabul's Supreme Court. The five-hour trial, recorded by Langlands and Bell with a single handheld video camera from their seats in the crowded courtroom, was edited to a 12-minute sequence of moving clips and stills—in particular, close-ups of the witnesses' and judges' faces. The film intercuts testimonies for the prosecution, the responses of Shah and his accomplice Mohhamed Arif, a pack of journalists recording utterances on dictaphones, and a group of edgy armed soldiers overseeing proceedings. There are no subtitles, although explanatory English-language texts on black screens provide minimal contextualizing. At one point, the trial is interrupted briefly and with disarming levity by the ring tone of a mobile phone; Shah laughs at this untimely pause in the momentum of the machinery of the law. Finally, when Shah is pronounced guilty, there are audible cries of "*Allah Hu Akbar!*" while he is led away.

In an interview in March 2003, Langlands described the trial as "a very strange and humbling event to witness. The whole atmosphere was a mixture of fear and hope" (in O'Hagan 2003): fear because Zardad was still at large at that time and Shah could still have been freed after an appeal, and hope for peaceful reparation in a country struggling to come to terms with the horrors of its recent past. It is also a very strange and humbling film to watch. The Arabic word *kalb* (dog) is still a powerfully pejorative term in Muslim contexts, and spectators now know that the fate of this "mad dog" would be to receive a single legally sanctioned bullet to the head. Inevitably it proves impossible to read the signs of "doglike psychotic killer" (whatever they are) in the figure of this tall bearded man in a white cap, despite his dismissive sneers at some of the witnesses—just as it remains impossible to accept the court's certainty, its utter lack of doubt both in relation to Shah's guilt and the gravity of the appropriate penalty. What we are invited to witness is a man legally and performatively named as pariah, transgressive outsider, anomalous "animal other" to be disappeared from human society, if not from our memories. Every dog will have his day.

Pack 3

Cerberus, the three-headed dragon-tailed dog of the Greek underworld Hades. Anubis, the jackal-headed Egyptian god. The monstrous cynocephalic Aztec god Xolótl, and Greek Orthodox representations of the dog-headed St. Christopher. The holy greyhound St. Guinefort. Kitmir in *The Koran*, the only animal allowed to enter paradise. Syrius and Procyon, the Dog-stars. Goya's painting *Perro enterrado en arena* (Dog Buried in Sand), only the dog's head visible, its eyes raised toward a desolate sky. J.M.W. Turner's *Dawn after the Wreck*, with its lone dog barking out to sea. In the Tarot pack, the animated dog at the feet of the Fool, as he steps off a cliff while staring at the sky. The HMV trademark fox terrier, the inquisitive Nipper listening to "his master's voice" from beyond the grave, on a gramophone. Scraps in Charlie Chaplin's *A Dog's Life*. Toto in *The Wizard of Oz*. *Lassie Come Home*. Greyfriar's Bobby. Pluto. Goofy. Rin Tin Tin. The dachsund in Jacques Tati's *Mon Oncle*. *Old Yeller*. Bodger the Bull Terrier in *The Incredible Journey*. Snoopy. *101 Dalmatians*. The bionic German shepherd Max in *The Bionic Woman*. Benji. Mike the Dog in *Down and Out in Beverly Hills*. The love-struck St. Bernard in the film *Beethoven*. Scooby-Doo. Karen Salmansohn's self-help book, *How to Make your Man Behave in 21 Days or Less*, *Using the Secrets of Professional Dog Trainers*. The greyhound Santa's Little Helper in *The Simpsons*. Wallace's companion Gromit. Talking farm dogs Fly and Rex in *Babe*. Mr. Bones in Paul Auster's *Timbuktu*. Oscar the Labrador who toured Britain as a hypnotist in 1995.

In the Ruins of the Dog Game: Forced Entertainment's Showtime

You play with what scares you, and you play with what you need […] Go too far. Go too far […] Not even a fucking game anymore.

—Tim Etchells (2000:66, 69)

In his book *The Postmodern Animal* (2000), Steve Baker writes about a wide range of contemporary art practices involving animals or animal representations, where "things appear to have *gone wrong* with the animal, as it were, but where it still *holds together*" (2000:56). He discusses strategies of imitation where the disguises are tawdry, compromised, incongruous conjunctions coming apart at the seams, active reminders of difference and perhaps of a certain shame. With reference to Deleuze and Guattari's word *rater* (to spoil, ruin), he coins the term "botched taxidermy" for such practices, giving examples under thematic headings that sound like a taxonomy of strategies employed by British performance company Forced Entertainment:

> Mixed materials […] "Stuffed" animals not as taxidermy but as toys […] Other uses of "wrong" materials […] Hybrid forms […] Messy confrontations […] Taxidermic form reworked […] Finally, tattiness […]. (Baker 2000:56–60)

As Baker points out, "botching" (and the related term "bodging") do not necessarily always mean utter ruination or abject failure, the "wrecking" of something:

> It can also mean sticking or cobbling something together in a makeshift way, an "ill-finished" or clumsy or unskillful way, with no attempt at perfection but equally with no implication of the thing falling apart. (63–64)

So it is related to assemblage and bricolage, and the knowingly open display of "faulty" technique: a creative procedure in the generation of the provisional, the informal, the recycled—instances of the inexpert that are "questioning entities," a phrase Baker borrows from Jacques Derrida (73).

In coopting Baker's notion of "botched taxidermy" in relation to Forced Entertainment, I am not just referring to all those dodgy animal disguises and uncertain animal/human hybrids in the company's performances: the panto horse that gulped whisky through an

Figure 10. Forced Entertainment's production of Showtime. *From left to right: Cathy Naden in dog costume, Claire Marshall and Terry O'Connor in the cardboard trees. ICA, London, 1996. (Photo © Forced Entertainment/Hugo Glendinning)*

eye socket and cans of lager through the seam between the two halves of the costume, then danced in its own lagery piss in *Pleasure* (1997); the recurrent gorilla suit with or without head, in *Bloody Mess* (2004), for example; or Cathy Naden in the dog costume in *Showtime* (1996), as described below. I am also thinking of the structures and tonalities that seem to characterize so many of these shows: irreverently playing with received, overly familiar, and overlooked representational forms, displacing them, defamiliarizing them, turning them inside out and on their heads, messing with their anatomies, abusing them, taking them apart, stitching them up (in both senses of the phrase), and reanimating them as comic or pathetic or psychotic or narcoleptic or drunk or incompetent or conspiratorial or inventive revenants in a different context. In Forced Entertainment's work, everything staggers on the cusp of falling apart, yet it somehow still holds together. It is a core ambiguity and complexity in this work, which one might call a fucked-up-and-yetness. This "and-yetness," which is political in its invitation to possibility and connectivity, takes many forms aesthetically and affectively, from the melancholic, the poignant, and the corrosively comic, to the emotional complexities of witnessing instances of human fragility, raggedness, and failure in games that are pushed way beyond play.

Showtime, for example, "a strange colliding of adult and child worlds" (Forced Entertainment 1996:3), is a performance that dances around a mismatch or tension between different forms, registers, different narrative worlds, with an incompetent pantomime dog at its center. The affect-laden surreality of a children's picture book springs to polymorphous life in inappropriate ways, in particular through a series of games pushed to the limit or not played at all: the too-much of excess, the too-little of withholding, a recurrent dynamic in this company's work. Performer Richard Lowdon—with a bare torso and a belt of fake, homemade dynamite sticks encircling his chest and an alarm clock ticking away—talks to the audience about dramaturgy, relaying comic received ideas about the rules and expectations of a conventionally "well-made" play. The entire performance (and Richard's proposed dramaturgical model) hover under the sign of annihilation, framed as they are by this hesitant,

apologetic suicide bomber. Robin Arthur spends much of the performance entirely naked but for a stocking mask over his head like a cartoon bank robber, and a balloon covering his genitals; he clutches at a "wound" on his stomach, the contents of a tin of spaghetti in tomato sauce pressed to his abdomen, enacting a slow, painful death as his life ebbs away through his make-believe guts. Cathy Naden, in an incomplete dog costume, imagines her own suicide in elaborate detail, while a pair of squabbling cardboard trees (Terry O'Connor and Claire Marshall) abuse the audience for its voyeuristic intrusions. So, an aggregation of many theatrical components in an unruly, chaotic, "dog's breakfast" of a performance that investigates the limitations, tyrannies, and possibilities of theatre and its economies of representation (it's showtime!), while offering a fragmented meditation on desire, time, loss, and mortality.

The "dog" in *Showtime* is derisory, a half-arsed revenant from some British pantomime or a bodged children's party costume: Cathy, with only the dog's head, in old battered overcoat, on all fours: tatty, amateurish, a funny/sad failure of cynocephalic transformation. As a representation, it is unfinished, provisional. Company writer and director Tim Etchells describes his first encounter with the dog's head:

> The dog, a lame mask of foam and fun-fur, black-paint-splodges for eyes, pathetic mouth more gum than teeth, was a slobbering, dozy, uncomfortable, puppy of a thing, more blankets than beast and exactly not what we wanted. But we loved it […] In many ways the dog was the star of the show. (2000: 55)

Half-dog, not-at-all-dog. As Hamm says in Beckett's *Endgame*, "Not even a real dog!" (Beckett 1958:44). A foolish joke, a thwarted ambition. An instance of the ridiculousness of pretence, the ludicrous desire-to-be-other(wise) of the game serves to amplify the performer's humanity and helplessness, as well as the dog-woman's anomalous, childlike status:

> Our menagerie is not at all to do with nature and everything to do with the "Bat," "Cat," "Dog" of picture books, the comedy bestiary of panto, the lame spectacle of zoos and the learning ground of pets, the psychic scaffolding of kids' tales from Farthing Wood to Noah's Ark. […] To the under-fives animals are the other of choice [...;] they are also entities, which, in their outsider status in respect of human culture, their subjection and lack of agency, are the perfect corollaries and stand-ins for children themselves. […] The beasts are witnesses, blank double-takers, straight guys to the comedy of human folly, achievement, life. (Etchells 2000:58–59)

Naden/the dog sabotages much of the performance by scrabbling around the space, barking at her fellow performers and at the audience, sniffing things (people's arses, Arthur's "wound," his abandoned pants), popping balloons, dancing to Japanese pop songs, performing dumb double-takes to the audience as she watches proceedings. She is an anarchic disruptive presence, a kind of fool or clown, a comic irritant further messing with the performance's already troubled narrative coherence and focus.

In the middle of the performance, Naden, with her dog head in place, is intercepted by Marshall, temporarily freed from one of the tree costumes. Microphone to dog mouth: Would you mind answering a few questions? Questions about her family quickly move to possible suicide and murder scenarios, until:

> Claire: "Cath, don't you think it's time you took that head off now?"
>
> Cathy takes the dog's head off, reveals her human face beneath for the first time in the performance, and the interview continues. (Forced Entertainment 1996:9)

At the moment she takes off her mask, Naden's sincerity is somehow magnified. Suddenly she *seems* vulnerable, exposed, at risk, intimately visible, apparently no longer "representing something but going through something […] and we are transformed—not audience to a spectacle, but witnesses to an event" (Etchells 1999:49).

> She's sweating and still a little out of breath I think but the only thing that's for certain is that, in the ruins of the dog game, she is more present than she ever could have been if she'd just walked onto the stage and sat down—Cathy is very here, and very now […] The game pauses and it's like you need to see her take the dog's head off in order to even begin to understand what it was, what it meant to pretend that dog for so long, like only now, when the head comes off, can you measure it, and as Cathy talks […] we measure the distance/difference between real and fictional, human and animal, real time and playtime […]. (Etchells 2000:57)

Figure 11. Cathy Naden (in the dog costume) interviewed by Claire Marshall, in Forced Entertainment's Showtime. *ICA, London, 1996. (Photo © Forced Entertainment/Hugo Glendinning)*

Naden (or is it "the dog"? It shadows her here, and the binary "playing a character"/ "being oneself" are at question here; these are blurred, fragile, uncertain identities) starts to describe the scenario of her possible suicide, a long and melancholic account of what she would do en route to her fictional "end" when she drops a glowing electric fire into her bubble bath. Fascinated by her own fantasy of "playing dead," not a game anymore but an intensely invested rehearsal, she speaks of it as a quiet enumeration of possible small pleasures: trying on clothes, listening to music, watching terrible telly in the bath, sticking her toes into the taps, leaving lists of her favorite people, places, and books. It is a muted and quasi-erotic "what-if" game of possible disappearance that temporarily draws the audience in, invites a lulling into the false security of some semblance of narrative cohesion, the "real" of a death imagined and articulated in a private-made-public confessional language of longing and loss, a real that exceeds representation. Then silence: "Dogskull, dogsniff, eyes on the ground, moves to one great goal. Ah, poor dogsbody. Here lies poor dogsbody's body" (Joyce [1922] 1960:52). At which point we are abruptly distanced by Terry O'Connor's outburst to the audience as a tree, a sudden and direct confrontation in this pull-push game of interruptions and excess, shouted through her absurd cardboard costume:

> What the fuck are you looking at? What the fuck is your problem? Fuck off! Voyeurs. There's a fucking fine line and you've just crossed it. Where's your human decency? Call yourselves human beings? (Forced Entertainment 1996:9)

Pathetically, Naden then returns to the dog's head, disappearing inside it despite its redundancy now, its defunct status as game. At the moment of narrated death, she reasserts the game by reimmersing herself in it, all visible emotion now withheld. This renewed investment and the tacky materiality of the head somehow serve to render the animal "abrasively visible" (Baker 2000:62), and it becomes disarmingly poignant now, an imperfect register of an imperfect life marked by both longing and loss.

Etchells has often tracked the predicament of his performers with their dogged imperative to "stay inside difficulty" (Heathfield 2004b:84), and the effect on spectators of their

moments of failure in these stagings of vulnerability and mortality. Ultimately, Etchells signals the possibilities of an ethical practice in the recognition and connectivity that a compassionate witnessing of failure can invite:

> Presence. The moment. The now.
>
> Thrown back on your own devices. I will not help you with this.
>
> You have to "deal." Which means cope with un-meaning. Or with the possibility of un-meaning. Or cope with me not coping. Or with me not meaning. The trembling of this moment.
>
> To put it simply, more simply. To put it very simply: You get up here (you come up here) and you fail. And in that failing is your heartbeat, and in that failing is you connected to everything and everyone. (in Goulish 2004:265)

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