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BITS AND PIECES

Screening Animal Life and Death

Sarah O'Brien

Bits and Pieces: Screening Animal Life and Death gathers pivotal and more mundane moments, dispersed across a predominantly Western history of moving images, in which animals materialize in movies and TV shows, from iconic scenes of cattle slaughter in early Soviet montage to quandaries over hunting trophies in recent home-renovation reality TV series, to animals in Black horror films. Sarah O'Brien carefully views these fragments in dialogue with germinal texts at the intersection of animal studies, film and television studies, and cultural studies. She explores the capacity of moving images to unsettle the ways in which audiences have become habituated to viewing animal life and death on screens, and, more importantly, to understanding these images as more and less connected to the "production for consumption" of animals that is specific to modern industrialization. By looking back at films and TV series in which the places and practices of killing or keeping animals enter, occupy, or slip from the foreground, *Bits and Pieces* takes seriously the idea that cinema and television have the capacity not only to catch but to challenge and change viewers' regard for animals.

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Sarah O'Brien is an academic editor. She lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

"O'Brien's wonderful study offers rich readings of the mediation of animal lives and deaths by cinema and television, its connections to slaughter and taxidermy, and related questions of race and commodification. O'Brien traces the historical and material contours of these entanglements in highly astute and accessible terms, prompting us to look anew at animal and animalized presences on-screen, from slaughter cinema to 'TV trophies'."

—Laura McMahon, University of Cambridge

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