



# LUND UNIVERSITY

## Reimagining Species Relations

### A Decade of Studying and Teaching Critical Animal Studies at Lund University

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# Reimagining Species Relations

A DECADE OF STUDYING AND TEACHING  
CRITICAL ANIMAL STUDIES AT LUND UNIVERSITY



The year 2022 marked the 10th anniversary of the course *Critical Animal Studies: Animals in Society, Culture and the Media* at the Department of Communication and Media at Lund University. As the first initiative of its kind in Sweden, the course explores the shifting roles and positions of non-human animals in today's complex societies. It aims to equip students with analytical tools to critically assess norms and structures that organise human-animal relations, along with their ethical, cultural, and social consequences.

What started as a one-course offering driven by an idea has evolved into a decade-long project of education and emancipation for non-human animals. This anthology stands as a testament to the course's impact, aiming to extend the rich discussions, debates, and insights cultivated beyond the classroom walls.

This celebratory collection assembles writings from former students, instructors, and guest lecturers, delving into themes ranging from critical media analysis over activist strategies to pedagogical reflections. The anthology's scope not only reflects the diverse facets of the course but also unveils the myriad, often subtle intersections between human-centered society and the lives of non-human animals.

## REIMAGINING SPECIES RELATIONS



# Reimagining Species Relations

A Decade of Studying and Teaching Critical  
Animal Studies at Lund University

MARÍA R. CARRERAS, MARIE LETH-ESPENSEN,  
LENA LINDSTRÖM, TOBIAS LINNÉ, GINA SONG LOPEZ,  
NAJA YNDAL-OLSEN (EDS.)



**LUND**  
UNIVERSITY

THE LUND CRITICAL ANIMAL STUDIES COLLECTION 1

## The Lund Critical Animal Studies Collection

Critical animal studies (CAS) is a new and growing research field that since 2011 has been expanding in both research and education at Lund University. In February 2016 the Lund University Critical Animal Studies Network (LUCASN) was formed with the aim of supporting initiatives centering on education and research in CAS. The network runs the course Critical Animal Studies: Animals in Society, Culture and the Media, host a seminar series, research conferences, and are active in building networks of national and international scholars. This book series aims to further consolidating these initiatives and to act as a platform for future work in the field of CAS at Lund University.

Editors for the series: Tobias Linné, Jana Canavan, María R. Carreras,  
Marie Leth-Espensen, Lena Lindström, Gina Song Lopez, Naja Yndal-Olsen

The Lund Critical Animal Studies Collection can be found at: [www.ht.lu.se/serie/lcasc/](http://www.ht.lu.se/serie/lcasc/)  
e-post: [skriftserier@ht.lu.se](mailto:skriftserier@ht.lu.se)



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# Introduction



## The Critical in Critical Animal Studies

*María R. Carreras, Marie Leth-Espensen, Lena Lindström,  
Tobias Linné, Gina Song Lopez, Naja Yndal-Olsen*

At a meeting in late November 2011, the faculty board for the Faculty for Humanities and Theology at Lund University convened to consider establishing a new course at the Department of Communication and Media. The course was aimed at providing a multidisciplinary introduction to the field of critical animal studies that, according to the learning outcomes of the syllabus, would allow students to “analyse and critically review norms and structures organising human-animal relations in contemporary Western society” and “critically assess the ethical, cultural and social consequences of human-animal relations.”

At the meeting, the board members reviewed the administrative details of the syllabus and scrutinised the course description, learning outcomes, and the literature list. Establishing courses like this one, which challenges the status-quo in society as well as in university education is often a lengthy and arduous process. It typically involves rewriting course descriptions and learning outcomes to make them less “radical” in the critique of existing conditions. In the case with the course in critical animal studies, the board raised objections as well. Surprisingly, however, these did not concern the course’s ambitions to review how human perceptions of other animals as lesser beings impact them or the assessment of the often mortal consequences of human treatment of animals. Neither did it concern the literature list, with titles such as “Defending Agitation and the ALF” and “The War Against Animals.” Instead, the Faculty board’s objection was with the word “critical,” an objection that in the feedback was phrased as a question: “All university education is supposed to be critical and let students engage in critical thinking, so why is the course called critical animal studies and not just ‘animal studies?’” The

suggestion from the faculty board was to remove the “critical” and just let the course be called “Animals in Society, Culture and the Media,” or as one of the board members put it in a conversation, ”something with animals and media.”

The critical in critical animal studies is, however, key. It is what has made the course into a space where animal rights activists can participate and critically discuss their experiences of challenging social and cultural norms and getting involved in activism such as direct action for their animal advocacy. It is what has turned the students’ assignments into useful sources of knowledge for animal rights organisations. It is what has made the course into more than just a course, but a network and a platform for action for animals. The critical in critical animal studies is what makes it into what it is, and in the end, the board’s objection to the use of the word “critical” in the title was not a decisive one. With a few administrative edits to the syllabus, the course passed the faculty board and was established. And the critical was kept in the course title and in the course.

In the spring of 2012, a few months after the events described above, the course Critical Animal Studies; Animals in Society, Culture and the Media was launched at the Department of Communication and Media at Lund University. Since then, the course blossomed as the first initiative of its kind in Sweden, introducing the field of critical animal studies (CAS) to the country as well as pioneering the scholarly and critical discussion of our relationship with animals in the Nordic region. Throughout its over ten years in offering, the module has reached a wide audience of local and international students, inspiring further engagement with animal issues beyond the boundaries of country and classroom. In addition, offered as a free-standing course for undergraduates, it is accessible with only basic eligibility for higher education studies (i.e., completed upper secondary education), and it can also be included as part of a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree.

Within the Swedish education system, as is the prevalent case around the world, animal-related issues in the social sciences and humanities have often been addressed in a broader, non-critical way. With this academic context in mind, the inception of this course rested on a dual critical basis: Firstly, it laid an explicit critical theory foundation, where entrenched norms in society (such as meat consumption) are interrogated, and work for social change is viewed as an integral part of the theory, rather than “outside” theory. Secondly, the course included an intent to take an “animal standpoint” perspective when analysing societal issues. It encouraged students to engage in dialogue, critique, and actively work towards

altering the situation and experiences of non-human animals in human societies. While taking the standpoint of human or non-human “others” might not even be possible in practical reality, the notion of the animal standpoint can form a pedagogical starting point. It prompts students to reflect on the impact that various human actions and social arrangements may actually have on the animals affected by them. Consequently, transforming the classroom into a key intervention point in the project towards realising animal liberation.

As a first foray into the field of critical animal studies, the course explores the shifting roles and positions of non-human animals in today’s complex societies. Its goal is to provide students with analytical tools to critically assess norms and structures organising human-animal relations while also delving into the ethical, cultural, and social consequences of these. The course builds on the multidisciplinary of CAS with lectures and seminars centred on five themes to foreground the different aspects and dimensions that inform human-animal relations in contemporary society. The first theme introduces the field of CAS, highlighting its distinctive approach that pays critical attention to the multiple and complex ways in which humans relate to other animals. The following theme, called Social constructions, positions, and representations of animals, deepens the focus on animals as social constructions in modern society and the paradoxes these social constructions contain, as well as the power of different stereotypes that influence the way humans think of and act towards animals. It also examines how animal exploitation is situated in broader power structures, analysing as well how language can perpetuate different oppressions. The third theme, Intersectional oppression, language, and power, introduces concepts to analyse the interlocking manifestations of power over non-human animals and humans lacking privileges of whiteness and masculinity. In the fourth theme Agency, anthropocentrism, and the suffering of others, theoretical perspectives on non-human agency are introduced, as well as a focus on different areas of animal use and abuse and on the institutionalised violence toward animals in the food and science industries, education, zoos, hunting, and pet-keeping. The fifth and final theme, Animals and social change: communication and action, focuses on different methods of working for animal liberation. The role of compassion in animal politics is a key issue here, as is the importance of sensitivity to the suffering of others.

The course’s thematic organisation was crafted with a dual purpose: to create conditions for knowledge development and to gradually introduce the potential

of CAS theory to a diverse range of students. This approach begins by laying a solid foundation of key concepts and perspectives in the field of CAS. From there, it guides students toward the exploration of more complex and potentially controversial topics, such as the food industry and animal slaughter. The intention is to aid the transition between course themes. For instance, after discussing how social constructions of animals are produced in society, it becomes possible for students to widen their analytic repertoire when looking at institutions such as animal agribusiness or animal biotechnology. The concluding theme is intended to instil hope that change is possible and inspire students into action and activism for animals both inside and outside of an academic context.

As mentioned previously, due to the few admission requirements Critical Animal Studies; Animals in Society, Culture and the Media is amongst the most accessible university courses in Sweden. This was an important aspect in the design of the course since we wanted to make it possible for students with diverse backgrounds, from students with little to no academic experience to those who are formally pursuing a university degree, to be able to join and engage with the course. Thus, also drawing a pool of activists and non-activists to the classroom. In this way, even when there may still be gaps in accessibility for all, we wished to create a dynamic learning environment where a variety of different experiences could meet and inspire class discussions and group work. To accommodate disciplinary and cultural diversity in student backgrounds, we also work with a range of different teaching methods based on students active participation in learning, to supplement the traditional teacher-focused lecture style. For example, the students are invited to keep a reflexive journal that they fill out during the ten weeks of the course to encourage them to focus on their own learning process and, in preparation for their final written assignments (the course paper), the students provide constructive feedback on each others' work-in-progress. The lectures and seminars also include different learning activities such as analyses of media content, group presentations and small preparatory assignments that activates students' previous knowledge that may affect their relationship with other animals. This has allowed us to collectively address the present state of affairs with new and unexpected elements, thereby opening up a space in which the project of animal liberation is not only a matter of discussion, but also within the realm of possibility.

Since 2012, the course has been successfully completed by hundreds of students, with both activists and researchers involved in the roles of either lecturers or stu-

dents. As a result, the course eventually grew into a platform for further exchanges within the university which in February 2016 formally became known as the Lund University Critical Animal Studies Network. The forming of the network has been pivotal for increasing the visibility of the research area in a Swedish context and beyond. Over the past years, the network has hosted visiting scholars and graduate students from across the world and been involved in organising research seminars and an international conference. In addition, with the involvement of more scholars, the open-access journal *Politics and Animals* was launched in 2015.

The year 2022 marked the 10-year anniversary of the course. This milestone brought forth a dialogue and reflection over the course's history, as well as of its future prospects. We feel fortunate that what started as a one-course offering driven by an idea could turn into a decade-long project of education and emancipation for animals. A realisation quickly took place upon this occasion: although the classroom constitutes a key space for CAS intervention, its discussion and debates do not need to be confined to it.

With this in mind, the teachers involved in the course now wish to showcase the types of discussions we have seen taking shape throughout a decade and acknowledge the great intellectual work of our students, teachers, and supporters. After all, the course was launched with the idea of spreading CAS to a broader public, and this book is yet another part of that endeavour. This is, at the same time, aligned with an overall goal in CAS of tending bridges between academia and activism. The present volume is a compilation of texts from current and previous teachers, invited lecturers, and students who have agreed to share their course papers. We aim for the anthology to showcase the diversity of the course and the CAS field more generally and to communicate complex matters in an accessible way.

The content spans many areas, but some recurring themes can be discerned, according to which the chapters have been organised. Acknowledging the course's placement at the Department of Communication and Media, the first group of texts are critical analyses of media content. In the opening contribution, María R. Carreras and Laura Fernández offer an overview of central concepts in CAS and media analysis and discuss hegemonic media representations of nonhuman animals. The following two chapters dive into specific cases of media representations of animals. Based on a critical discourse analysis of the media coverage of the killing of a police dog, Diesel, during the November 2015 attacks in Paris, Frank



Schreier and Lu Zheng demonstrate how prevailing discourses concerning terrorism and service dogs come to legitimise violence and the use of dogs for the purpose of law enforcement. Gina Song Lopez (Chih-Lan Song) employs the case of the Japanese manga/anime series *One Piece* to analyse how fictional depictions of gender, animality, and meat eating ultimately are underlined by real-world structures. Her chapter foregrounds how popular media might further influence matters of consumption, perceptions, and behaviours which have implications for animal lives.

The following set of texts deals with activism for animals. Eva Haifa Giraud shares her experience of teaching as a guest lecturer on the course, reflecting on the potentials of adopting critical pedagogical methods focused on learning from activism based on a study of anti-McDonalds activism in the UK. J. Kovanen presents an anarchist critique of civil disobedience as a tactic or method to achieve animal liberation since it is based on a problematic “logic of submission” that runs counter to the movement’s liberating goals. Naja Yndal-Olsen gives nuances to the classical welfarism-abolitionism divide in animal rights activism through a case study of a campaign against the production of a fast-growing chicken breed. She investigates how activists make sense of and navigate strategic tensions in practice. Closing off this section, Lena Lindström offers a personal account based on experiences from animal shelters and sanctuaries for previously exploited animals, reflecting on the pitfalls of idealising sanctuaries.

In the third section centering on art, we are proud to include critical discussions on art and original art contributions. The first is a compilation of poetry, paintings, and photos by Linnea Ryshke, stemming from weekly visits to a nearby zoo. In the form of a personal reflection and ‘imagined’ conversation with a cow, documentarist Kristina Meiton engages the reader, and potential audience, in her effort to challenge species hierarchies and her own human gaze with the purpose of representing cows as individuals. Eva-Marie Lindahl writes about the professed “love” for animals of artist Rosa Bonheur, taking on forms that seem far removed from actual love. Finally, Julia Lindemalm presents photos from organic and conventional pig farms along with a process diary describing the emotionally taxing process of acquiring them.

Finally, we present a section dealing with specific areas of animal use, from farmed animals, to vivisection and pet keeping. Daniel Burgos-Nyström examines the case of fish involved in aquaculture and their increased reframing as ‘blue

foods' under a sustainability agenda. His contribution provides a timely cautionary note to avoid perpetuating the invisibilisation of animal others in global climate efforts. Astrid Totté traces anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism in her family's interactions with the dog Luke and discusses how anthropomorphic practices can serve functions of both love and domination. Charlotte Lim discusses the intersection of gender-based and speciesist violence in the egg industry. Lim further adopts a critical intersectional and feminist analysis to interrogate how bringing down harmful power structures require acknowledging the interconnectedness of feminist and vegan commitments. In the final piece of the compilation, Núria Almiron gives an overview of the vivisection industrial complex and its lobbying power. Her chapter sheds light on the capacity of the vivisection industrial complex to shape public narratives, opinions and policies that promote and justify animal experimentation.

Reimagining Species Relations, featuring Linnéa Ryshke's captivating artwork on the cover, hints at the emergence of something yet to be fully realised. It aims to inspire to unsettle current norms and actively shape a multispecies future founded on mutual respect for all sentient beings. We extend our sincere gratitude to all the contributors to this anthology and to the course at large. May this publication serve as a seed for a more compassionate world for each and every sentient being, nurturing empathy across species boundaries.



# Animals and Media



# Critical Animal Media Studies: Challenging the Hegemonic Representations of Oppressed Groups through Communication Research

*María R. Carreras and Laura Fernández<sup>1</sup>*

## Critical Animal Studies: From oppression to total liberation

### What is oppression?

As bell hooks stated, “being oppressed means the absence of choices” (1984, p. 5). Melanie Joy defines oppression as “the unjust allocation and use of power” (2019, p. 13) and adds that it is “arguably the single greatest cause of human and nonhuman suffering and of some of the most perilous environmental problems our planet has ever known” (2019, p. 13), besides the significant suffering inherent in nature, that also exists.

Oppression is manifested in any behaviour or system that mirrors and supports the exercising of unjust power and control over another or others (Joy, 2019). Manifestations of oppression range from those that can seem benign to others that are catastrophic, and they go from a micro level (how we treat individuals) to a macro level (how we operate as a collective). While a sexist comment towards an individual may seem like a more benign manifestation of oppression, such manifestation is found on a continuum with discrimination and labor inequality, for

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<sup>1</sup> Both authors have equally contributed to the chapter.

example, which act at the macro level and substantially conditions the life of that individual person (in this case, by their gender or their gender and class).

### Intersectionality: Oppressions are not isolated

Oppressions are not isolated. In 1984, in her *Feminist theory: from margin to center*, writer and activist bell hooks criticized the approach of white feminists who elaborated a critique of male oppression but left out of their analysis the black women from underprivileged classes. Five years later, law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the concept of “intersectionality” to describe how different social categories, such as race, class and gender, interlock with one another and overlap, having an effect on the experience of life.

Crenshaw first publicly laid out her theory of intersectionality when she published a paper in the University of Chicago Legal Forum titled “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex” (1989). Crenshaw chose the word “intersection” as a metaphor. When one is standing at the centre of the intersection of A Street and B Street, it is not possible to say which of those two roads one is on—one is on both of them at the same time. When Crenshaw analysed her cases concerning job discrimination against women of colour, she saw that it was often impossible to say whether the discrimination was due to either racial bias or gender bias—it was both at once, in alloys not predictable by simple admixture. The interactions between racism and sexism turn out to be multiplicative rather than additive, and as Crenshaw views it, the functions of those interactions cannot be disaggregated. This means that racial stereotypes are gendered, and at the same time, violence against women is enabled by racism.

As Crenshaw explained in an interview for Columbia Law School, intersectionality describes the phenomenon in which an individual suffers oppression or holds privilege based on their membership in multiple social categories. Intersectionality is a tool:

A lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It's not simply that there's a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LGBTQ problem there. Many times that [single issue] framework erases what happens to people who are subject to all of these things (Columbia Law School, 2017).

The concept also refers to the complex way in which inequality is organised on a social level, such that some social groups have relative power over others, even though they may be harmed in one way and privileged in another.

Drawing on the lessons previously taught by women such as Sojourner Truth or Simone de Beauvoir, Crenshaw showed that considering white women of the upper-middle class or heterosexual black men as representatives, respectively, of the categories “woman” or “black person” makes everything that exists only in the intersection invisible. Intersectionality, then, allows us to see elements that we ignore at first sight, and also shows that if someone is immersed in a large number of oppressed identities, the oppressions will also be multiple. Oppressive behaviours, as well as the attitudes that accompany them, are historically self-reinforcing: oppression begets oppression in a feedback loop.

Therefore, ending oppression means intercepting and transforming the deeply ingrained patterns of thinking and behaving that form the foundation of global suffering and destruction. For Melanie Joy (2019), it is arguably the single most important undertaking of our time.

## What is total liberation?

Oppressions exist next to each other, instead of above or below one another. By rejecting the idea that oppressions are independent from one another, and embracing the concept that systems of oppression are connected, we avoid establishing hierarchies of oppressions that could misguide us towards the false belief that one oppression is greater than other oppressions.

The total liberation frame emerged during the 1990s among radical environmental and animal liberation activists who were influenced by the politics of social justice that permeated many other social movements, social change organisations and academic disciplines on university campuses. Ideas such as intersectionality and social privilege took hold in many of these spaces.

In a presentation at the 2010 International Meeting for Environmental Ethics, professor and activist Steven Best introduced the term “total liberation” to describe the concept embodied in his use of the term “revolutionary environmentalism.” This idea came about thanks to the previous work done in the feminist and black liberation movements, as well as that of ecofeminists such as Greta Gaard, Noël



Sturgeon, Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan, who had extended the idea to include nonhuman species and ecosystems embracing a total liberation framework.

According to the idea of collective or total liberation, all social struggles are interconnected with one another. These struggles need to work collectively to finally achieve the liberation of everyone. Liberations are bound up with each other. Within this reasoning there are multiple roads towards the goal of liberation. And while all activists are not on the same roads, they can build bridges between movements when they realise that all of the oppressions have common roots.

From the idea of total liberation, different oppressions are analysed as interconnected events. The history of colonialism, for example, is connected to the subjugation of human and nonhuman animals and the earth alike. The extermination of the North American Indians is expressed as a phenomenon based on an interest in expanding the international trade in fur, wool and leather. The so-called “American intervention in Mexico” is clarified as being a war motivated by the benefits that acquiring land to feed animals would entail, the same goal that the Spanish conquistadors pursued in South America when they turned colonised lands into pasture for the animals they had brought from Europe (Nibert, 2002).

According to the concept of total liberation, the different hierarchies interact with each other in a profound way, facilitating the domination of one group by means of dominating all other groups. In *The Politics of Total Liberation*, Steve Best summarises the issue: “it is imperative that we no longer speak of human liberation, animal liberation, or earth liberation as if they were independent struggles, but rather that we talk instead of total liberation” (2014, p. 81). Critical Animal Studies scholars such as Best convincingly demonstrate that we need to increase the density of links between the different liberation movements if we want to achieve this total liberation.

## Intersectionality and total liberation in CAS

Three of the ten principles of Critical Animal Studies, developed in 2007 by Steven Best, Anthony Nocella, Richard Kahn, Carol Gigliotti and Lisa Kemmerer, are related in some way to intersectionality.

For example, the 4th principle is about the interlocking of oppressions. It states that CAS “advances a holistic understanding of the commonality of oppressions, such that speciesism, sexism, racism, ableism, statism, classism, militarism and

other hierarchical ideologies and institutions are viewed as parts of a larger, interlocking, global system of domination” (Nocella II et al., 2014, p. xxvii). The 6th principle promotes alliance politics and solidarity among struggles of oppression and the 7th principle underlines “the inseparability of human, nonhuman animal and Earth liberation” (Nocella II et al., 2014, p. xxviii) as part of one struggle.

CAS scholars reveal an axis of inequality that had remained obscured in the majority of analyses: the one constructed with humans as agential subjects creating culture, and nonhuman animals as passive parts of “nature.” This dichotomist view (culture being “better” than nature) perpetuates the belief that humans are unique, different and superior to nonhuman animals; it also views women, queer people and non-privileged masculinities as inferior via othering processes. So, if intersectionality reminded us that we cannot understand one form of oppression without understanding others and that various forms of inequality interrelate and work together to produce advantages and disadvantages for individuals and groups, in CAS, the category of “humanness” is introduced as an additional form of privilege.

## Representation as cultural violence

Representation is understood here as an image or idea of reality. We refer particularly to media representations and are particularly interested in thinking about how media shape and construct social and cultural ideas around various oppressed groups in our societies.

Media representations work as a type of cultural violence that helps sustain the unequal social order and perpetuates the oppression of minoritised groups<sup>2</sup> such as women, females, queers, blacks, indigenous people, racialised people, migrants, impoverished, the disabled, the ageing, children, and nonhuman animals, among others. We live in a violent and oppressive world, and we learn this violence through culture, which includes the media. In this way, violence is concealed, normalised and perpetuated.

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<sup>2</sup> Minoritised groups are used here in a political sense in which members of these discriminated groups are stripped of power and influence in social structures. This term is used throughout the chapter as a synonym for “oppressed groups” and seeks to emphasize the fact that there are power structures that “minoritize” or “otherize” certain people because of their gender, social class, race, species, body size, abilities, age, etc. We don’t mean here that women, queer, impoverished, indigenous or black people, among many others, are quantitatively few in society as a whole.

More specifically, sociologist and peace researcher Johan Galtung defined cultural violence as “those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence – exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics) – that can be used to justify or legitimise direct or structural violence” (1990, p. 291). Galtung presented the violence triangle theory to explain how direct violence, the most visible one manifested in violent behaviours, is supported by two other types of violence: structural violence, which refers to the structural conditions that strongly limit the satisfaction of basic needs, and cultural violence, which is manifested in attitudes. Both structural and cultural violence are invisible, but it is the latter that legitimises direct and structural violence by creating a cultural framework for it to exist. For Galtung, cultural violence works as “a substratum from which the other two can derive their nutrients” (1990, p. 294).

### Hegemonic representations of oppressed groups: the case of nonhuman animals

Hegemonic representations refer to the dominant ways in which oppressed groups are presented in the media. These hegemonic representations are permeated by harmful ideologies such as cis-hetero-sexism, classism, racism, colonialism, ableism, ageism, speciesism and environmental domination. Ideologies are understood here as a set of beliefs that legitimise an existing or desired social order (Nibert 2003, p. 8).

In the first place, nonhuman animal media representation is characterised by silencing, meaning insufficient coverage of nonhuman animal realities on various media platforms. In order to promote an ethical representation of sentient individuals, their stories deserve to be routinely made visible, not only in exceptional cases (Freeman & Merskin, 2016; Almiron, Cole & Freeman, 2018). But even then this representation is mostly characterised by a speciesist ideology based on human supremacy, the instrumentalization and othering of nonhuman animals, the reproduction of the human/animal binary and the distorted representation of other animals and their relations with human animals (Nibert, 2002; Khazaal & Almiron, 2016).

An analysis of nonhuman animal media representation clearly demonstrates the interconnectedness of several systems of oppression and domination. For example,

the previously mentioned binary thinking inform our notions of nonhuman animals by creating a mindset that privileges a rationalist, colonial and cis-hetero-patriarchal understanding of them. This binary thinking influences the social construction of nonhuman animals as irrational, instinctive, untamed, deviant and uncontrollable beings. Therefore, the bodies, attitudes, geographies and theories embodied by the cis-hetero white able-bodied human male are understood as universal and thus bias the representations of nonhuman animals and affect social perceptions of them. This binary thinking is harmful to nonhuman animals as well as to other oppressed groups, especially those who are animalised or devalued by being compared to nonhuman animals: blacks, the racialised, and migrants (Ko & Ko, 2017; Khazaal & Almiron, 2021), women and queers (Jones, 2014), the disabled (Taylor, 2017) or fat people (Fernández & Parada, 2021), among others.

Arnold Arluke and Clinton R. Sanders (1996) analysed the sociological differential perceptions of other animals through the concept of the “sociozoologic scale.” These authors argue that the sociozoologic scale reflects our binary moral categories. The scale shows the inconsistent treatment of diverse nonhuman animals (e.g. those we consider companions, in contrast with those we consider food or those we consider pests) through the construction of some of them as “good” and others as “bad.” This categorisation is also related to the inconsistent treatment of human animals (Arluke & Sanders, 1996, p.170).

Empirical research on press representation of introduced species of nonhuman animals (considered “invasive” or “pests”) supports this claim. For example, press news covering possums in Australia (McCrow-Young, Linné & Potts, 2015), the Asian carp in the US (Mando & Stack, 2018), or the monk parakeets in Spain (Fernández et al., 2022) reproduced xenophobic metaphors and othering discourses that contributed to criminalise and stigmatise individual animals and certain species. Therefore, helping to justify their killing and eradication. In the case of farmed animals, Freeman’s analysis (2009) of their representation in US news coverage concluded that it typically reinforced the agribusiness view of them as bodies not beings, objectifying them discursively through commodification, neglecting their emotional perspectives, and failing to describe them as inherently valuable individuals. Another analysis showed that the press news of different countries and cultural contexts portrayed farmed animals through crude speciesism (Spain) or camouflaged speciesism (US) (Khazaal & Almiron, 2014). While speciesism’s manifestation may change on the surface, the substrate of it as cultur-

al violence remains. The lowest common denominator in media depictions of other animals – including those we live with, those we share space with, and those we exploit – is the absence of a framing that encourages discussions of whether it is right for human animals to breed, use, kill, control and/or consume them. Even if the news includes discussions of animal welfare, the status quo of speciesism is reproduced, creating a cultural violence frame (Galtung, 1990) that legitimises direct and structural speciesist violence.

## Challenging cultural violence through communication research

As we have shown in the case of speciesism, media representations participate in the reproduction of cultural violence. We therefore consider communication research from a critical animal studies perspective to be a powerful tool that can enable us to more deeply understand, question and counteract these harmful representations. Since media greatly influence social behaviour, critical media analyses may empower media practitioners, consumers, researchers and educators to challenge hegemonic frameworks and question the cultural violence implicit in the representations of minoritised groups. To this end, below we present a range of methodologies and perspectives of analysis in communication and some empirical examples of the nonhuman animal case that can be used as a guide for future research. These examples reflect how a critical animal and media studies approach can contribute to broadening our understanding and challenging the hegemonic representations of oppressed groups.

### Ethics of representation and frame analysis

One of the analyses that can be carried out in the communication field has to do with the ethics of representation. This analysis consists of examining the ways in which nonhuman animals are represented in various media from an ethical point of view. As Freeman and Merskin observe: “To be represented in mass media, particularly in the digital age, is to be validated. Absence is erasure.” (2016, p. 208). Media representation profoundly impacts the lives of other animals and human perceptions and attitudes towards them by shaping human imagery of other animals and human–nonhuman animal relations. Therefore, an analysis of representa-

tion from a critical point of view can help us to detect the continuity of coverage of nonhuman animals in the media, to check if their perspectives, interests and voices are being considered (Freeman, Bekoff & Bexell, 2011). It can also allow us to see the ways in which the language and media frames encourage or enable the questioning of anthropocentrism and speciesism in journalism, advertising and public relations and the entertainment media industry (Freeman & Merskin, 2016). The ethics of representation of nonhuman animals could include the representation of animal liberation/rights activists by considering how stereotypes, ridiculization, mockery and criminalization of animal advocates indirectly damages the legitimacy given to animal ethics, anti-speciesism and veganism (e.g. Best & Nocella II, 2004; Cole & Morgan, 2011).

Along with considering existing ethical guidelines in terms of their respectful representation of nonhuman animals (Freeman & Merskin, 2016), framing analysis is another interesting way of examining representation. Snow and Benford defined a frame as “an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the ‘world out there’ by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one’s present or past environment” (Snow & Benford, 1992, p. 137). Framing, then, is an operation that ideologically delimits a certain sphere of appearance, emphasising certain values and ideas. Framing analysis has been a key methodology within critical animal and media studies, especially for press representation (e.g. McCrow, Linné & Potts 2015, Moreno & Almiron 2021; Fernández et al. 2021) and also for media directed to children (e.g. Cole & Steward, 2014) and the discourses of social movements (e.g. Freeman, 2014).

### Critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) can be defined as “discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (Van Dijk, 2015, p. 466). This critical perspective aims to highlight issues of power asymmetries, manipulation, exploitation and structural inequities. As a perspective, it is interested in the use of linguistics, metaphors and rhetoric and it gives attention to the societal context, the audience and the producer of the message with the mission of revealing the ideological message behind what may seem

to be a neutral discourse. Critical discourse analysis research concerning nonhuman animal exploitation has mainly been conducted using Dunayer's (2001) and Stibbe's (2012) sociolinguistic approaches to speciesist language and discourse around nonhuman animals. Regarding empirical research, some insightful examples we want to underline are Glenn's CDA of the factory farm discourse in advertising (2004), Carreras's CDA on the European dairy lobby (2021b, 2024) and the UPF-CAE project "Media Observatory of Speciesism" (UPF-CAE, 2022), which employs this critical perspective to analyse Spanish and Catalan news discourse on nonhuman animals.

### (Audio)visual analysis

Visual and audiovisual research involves analysing static, moving images, and visual semiotics. Its main aim is to decode and understand the meanings of visuals and what they are intended to represent, as well as how the audience interprets them. According to Gillian Rose (2001), all the different levels of meaning made in an image should be examined, including the sites of the image (the image by itself), the sites of its production (where it was made), the sites of its circulation (where it was spread) and its audiencing (the interaction with the audience). There are several visual methodologies that can be adapted to different research aims (e.g. Rose, 2001).

Critical Animal and Media Studies have shown great interest in visual narratives and their power to convey and challenge human perceptions of other animals. Some examples are Claire Parkinson (Molloy)'s pioneer research on popular culture and animals (2011), Malamud's research on animal and visual culture (2012), Almiron, Cole and Freeman's volume on Critical Animal and Media Studies (2016) or the well-known work of Carol J. Adams on the sexual politics of meat that is abundant in the visual advertising of animal exploitation industries (Adams, 2016). At first, nature documentaries and human intimacy desires with nonhumans were at the centre of visual studies, but increasingly other aspects of visual communication have been examined, such as animal advocacy documentaries (e.g. Freeman & Tulloch, 2013), activist visual strategies (e.g. Fernández, 2021a), TV series (e.g. Elrød Madsen & Leth-Espensen, 2019), social media (e.g. Linné, 2016) and press photography (e.g. Fernández, 2021b).

## Political economy of communication

Finally, the political economy of communication (PEC) has proven to be a valuable research perspective in critical animal studies given its capacity to understand the economic relations that underlie the exploitation of other animals and the discourses that justify it (Almiron, 2016a). The PEC pays attention to the network of economic interests, such as lobbies, think-tanks and discourse coalitions, that determine the functioning of the media. It then examines how the media builds economically-driven and ideology-based speech and values that perpetuate the oppression of nonhuman animals and other minoritized groups.

The corporate power networks that benefit from the exploitation of nonhuman animals are a route we can follow to understand the driving force of speciesism as an ideology (Nibert, 2002). PEC empirical analysis of the vivisection industrial complex (Almiron & Khazaal, 2016), aquaprisons and the entertainment industry (Almiron, 2017) and the agri-food/dairy industry (Almiron, 2016b; Carreras, 2021a, 2024) shed light on how these industries manufacture media consent to the exploitation of other animals and favoured limiting human compassion and responsibility towards them.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, we have highlighted the opportunities that scientific research in communication from a Critical Animal Studies perspective can bring to better understanding and challenging the interconnected systems of oppression visible through its cultural and media representations. The methodologies presented are just some examples that can be used as inspiration and broadened by future communication and social sciences researchers interested in nonhuman animals and human-nonhuman animal relations. The goal remains promoting total liberation, and we believe the critical media studies lens can definitely contribute to this.



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# Interdiscursive Elements in the #JeSuisChien Campaign. A Critical Discourse Analysis

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## Introduction

The November 2015 attacks in Paris, France, were a series of coordinated terrorist attacks, including mass shootings and suicide bombings, that killed 130 people and left another 413 injured. Then-president François Hollande deemed these attacks an “Act of War” and declared a three-month state of emergency (put in place by the French parliament) during which public protest was forbidden and police could search homes without a warrant, place individuals under house arrest without trial, and any website deemed problematic could be blocked.

Not included in the death toll, however, is the police dog “Diesel,” who died after being used by the police to seize a suspected perpetrator. Following his death, the Twitter hashtag trend “#JeSuisChien/#JeSuisDiesel” began, generating over 15,000 tweets during the week and indexing 100 on Google Trends the day after his death. This Twitter trend was clearly echoing the hashtag #JeSuisCharlie (I am Charlie) which became immensely popular after a previous terrorist attack at the headquarters of the popular French political satire magazine *Charlie Hebdo*. By drawing on the same linguistic structure of this earlier campaign, we are given a hint at how this discursive environment was evolving and how Diesel – and his death – became part of it.

The following is a critical discourse analysis on the BBC News web article headlined: *Thousands declare ‘Je Suis Chien’ and ‘Je Suis Diesel’ after dog killed in Paris raid*, which overviews and ultimately contributes to the discourse in question as it demon-

strates how the text can be seen as a link in an intertextual chain, or “a series of texts in which each text incorporates elements from another text or other texts” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). The tradition of Critical Discourse Analysis drawn on here is that of Norman Fairclough and Lilie Chouliaraki, which will be reviewed below.

## Critical Discourse Analysis as a method

A primary concept of Fairclough and Chouliaraki’s Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is that discourse is a form of social practice that both constitutes the social world and is constituted by other social practices (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). It is “critical” in the sense that it aims to reveal the role of discursive practice in the maintenance of the social world, including those social relations that involve unequal relations of power (Fairclough, 1999). As this text aims to conduct a critical social analysis that contributes to the rectification of injustice and inequality in human-animal relationship, CDA is employed as a theory and a method to investigate the discursive reproduction of the identity of police dogs in relation to other texts and in a wider social context (Fairclough, 2002).

This discourse analysis is based on Fairclough and Chouliaraki’s three-dimensional model, in which they claim that every instance of language use is a communicative event consisting of three dimensions: text, discursive practice, and social practice (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Thus, our analysis will include and focus on the following levels: 1. The linguistic features of the BBC article and the #JeSuisChien campaign as it appears within it, 2. The interdiscursive mix that reshapes how we understand Diesel and other police dogs for various purposes, and 3. The dialectical relationship that the discursive practice had with other social practices -- how the communicative event shapes and is shaped by the wider social practice through its relationship to the order of discourse.

## Analysis: Fairclough’s three dimensional model

Fairclough lays out a model through which one can begin to analyze several levels of discourse. The model is comprised of three levels specifically: the text itself, the discursive practice (both production and consumption of text), and social practice as the context in which a communicative event takes place (Jørgensen & Phillipps, 2002). The following analysis examines the article in question through this model.

## First level: Text

On a textual level, the article reads like a standard news story. It does this by giving a standard overview of the facts as they are known: lists of numbers of deaths/casualties and an overview of the events that unfolded. This contributes to an assumed sense of ‘credibility’ and accuracy on behalf of the reader. Further, among the most notable features for analysis are the following:

**Textual Structure:** An important connection made in the article is between the hashtags “Je suis Chien” and “Je suis Charlie.” The latter was made famous as a solidarity hashtag for the victims of the attack on the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in 2015, and arguably also as an expression of national unity and Western or liberal values, particularly in the face of Islamic terrorism and not just as the article claims, “sharing messages of grief.” To claim “je suis” (in French: I am) is a way of expressing strong empathy and solidarity, not only showing sympathy, but actually claiming that I am you, I feel your pain/loss/sorrow, and we are one. Using this hashtag in this way therefore not only appeals to sympathy for the police dog but for the Western state in the face of terrorism more broadly.

**Vocabulary:** The species differences between humans and dogs are simultaneously erased and reinforced throughout the article due to different phrasings and choice of words. For example, while the narrative of the story as a whole attempts to demonstrate how dogs and humans stand united, both as victims of terrorism and in protecting the French nation, the words used in the article also point to how dogs differ from humans. Using words such as “creatures” when talking about the dogs in the hashtag and quoting how the hashtag’s creator started it with the aim of being “a little bit funny” are examples of words that would never be used about humans in a similar context.

**Modality:** the news article makes clear through an active voice that responsibility for Diesel’s death is on the hands of the terrorists and not the police. Wording such as: “police dog Diesel, a 7-year-old Belgian Shepherd, was killed by terrorists,” establish an agent responsible for his death. This, as we will see next, works to shift the blame for his death. At the same time, the article demonstrates grammatically how this campaign was grassroots and not managed by any organization. There is a recurring passive modality, as seen in quotes such as: “A “Je Suis Diesel” Facebook page **has also been set up**”, and “Later a new slogan, “Je Suis Diesel,” **was adopted.**” It uses the passive voice to show that these phenomena are happening but we

are not sure who is responsible for them, but implies a broad support of Diesel as the police dog, a reflection the embedded normality of the state using dogs as weapons. Broad appeal through the passive voice may contribute to the reader a feeling of comradery or sense of support for Diesel, which could make the reader feel sympathy for police violence more generally.

Semiotics: In looking at the images, particularly the first, it is interesting to see how they reinforce notions of both subordination and of pledging allegiance to the nation-state, in this case, France. These notions of subordination and being a faithful servant to the republic are multifaceted. A dog holding the French flag in his mouth is shown in a subordinate posture, his ears folded backward and holding up his paws and front legs, expressing symbolism similar to the young soldier. But this being a dog pictured, the symbolism also connotes the role of dogs as a subordinate species to humans, at the service of humans and human nation-states.

## Second level: Discursive practice

### *i. Text production*

*Building solidarity with the victims - first Charlie Hebdo, then Diesel the [police] dog*

The article in question displays an interdiscursive mix (Fairclough, 1999), providing insight into how the police dog identity is being subtly reconstructed. Here we understand interdiscursivity as a process occurring “when different discourses and genres are articulated together in a communicative event” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). As mentioned in the textual analysis, the most notable discourse in this communicative event is #JeSuisCharlie. This discourse promotes solidarity with the victim: Je suis \_\_\_\_ = I am \_\_\_\_\_. As those identifying with this discourse would be feeling symbolically a sense of victimhood with Diesel the dog and against the perpetrators of the terrorism (the terrorists), the natural next step would be to feel a sense of solidarity with the protector professing to fight the terrorists; in this case, those are one and the same. This shift from solidarity with the civilian victims (those killed at Charlie Hebdo) to solidarity with the state as the victim (Diesel the police dog) contributes to reinforcing the legitimacy of measures the state may take in return, like the state of emergency mentioned in the introduction, or others. Taking these actions in the name of “national security”

is a key element of the discussion, and it is aided in part by constituting those who die fighting as national heroes.

### *Establishing Diesel as a national hero*

The next discourse being drawn on in this instance is the notion of Diesel as a national hero who fought and died for the freedom of the people. A tweet reading: “True hero! He died today for your freedom tomorrow! #wewillneverforget #hero #JeSuisChien #jesuismin #diesel” with the text of an accompanying meme stating: RIP DIESEL, THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE, is one example of adding this national hero/freedom-fighting discourse into this discursive mix. As such, it pays tribute to Diesel and his death and essentially shifts blame from the National Police, who forced him into the situation, to the terrorists who committed the killing. By extension, as the frame shows that Diesel is fighting for our freedom, the people are then implicated in the blame of his death. Furthermore, this positions Diesel and other police dogs as part of the state law enforcement agency with which many might now be feeling a more profound solidarity because they “fight the terror.” This is a primary way in which we see this subtle reconstruction of the police dog identity as reinforcing the legitimacy the use of dogs as weapons AND of state-sanctioned violence more generally, since it draws on these discourses as the solution to the ambiguous and imminent threat of terror in real time (here, directly after an instance of terrorism).

This articulation of the police dog identity is an example of interdiscursive elements changing boundaries of it into something new. Yet, it simultaneously works in a very conventional way by reinforcing the dominant social order: namely, that of the French Republic’s use of violence to maintain order. Ultimately, we claim that the discourse “hero” or “freedom fighter” – i.e., those who fight and die for our ‘freedom,’ are the powerful frames utilized to support this.

### *Text consumption: Opposing uses of #JeSuisChien*

As the article suggests, there seemed to be some disagreement about the seriousness of the campaign on the part of individuals. On the one hand, there were thousands who used the hashtag to pay tribute to Diesel, of which many were uploading photos of their own dogs and using the hashtag. On the other hand, however, the article spends a little less than half of its time discussing those who used the hash-



tag ironically, including the creator of the hashtag himself, who is quoted in the article saying he started it: “to be a little bit funny.” Among the memes that were created and spread was one mentioned in the BBC article, mimicking threats that the hacker group Anonymous made toward the Islamic State, but with the face of a dog photoshopped over the mask of the member of Anonymous making the announcement.

These opposing uses of the hashtag – and of each individual’s understanding of the campaign – shed light on the instability of the meaning in this case. Furthermore, it leads us into our discussion on social practice by exemplifying what Fairclough calls the “dialectical relationship” between discourse and other social dimensions.

### Third level: Social practice

There are a number of social practices at play within this article. It concerns a grassroots Twitter trend, and we therefore look first to the social practice of tweeting since the campaign would not have existed (or at least in a very different context) without Twitter as a platform. #JeSuisChien and #JeSuisCharlie both grew exponentially through the use of Twitter and in turn spread to other platforms. The BBC article demonstrates that spread in two ways; first, by actually bringing the discussion off Twitter and onto their proprietary website (then distributed by their social media accounts), as well as linking to a Facebook page created in honor of Diesel called “Je Suis Chien.” We characterize this campaign as a communicative event within the larger social practice of tweeting and, by extension, social media use.

We understand social media use as the major social practice at play because the ways in which the platform was used varied. As shown above, a large part of the individuals using social media to participate in this communicative event was using it to show support and solidarity for either Diesel, the police, or both. As the BBC article points out, however, a portion was also using the hashtag ironically. In this way, we see exemplified the dialectical relationship between discourse and other social dimensions: “Discourse is a form of social practice which both constitutes the social world and is constituted by other social practices” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). The article does not mention, nor hint at, what the irony seeks

to trivialize. Is it downplaying Diesel's death? Or is it attempting to express sarcasm toward this type of social media campaign (i.e. #JeSuisCharlie, #JeSuisChien)?

## Conclusion

In sum, we can see a number of different ways that the #JeSuisChien campaign as overviewed in this article, subtly – yet ultimately – contributes to reifying both the state's use of dogs as property/weapons as well as legitimizing their use of violence and/or seizing rights of the people. First, we see the various ways that this story is built on a textual level, giving the tools to participate in the discussion. Next, while Diesel was forced to work for the police – a situation which ultimately cost his life – the #JeSuisChien campaign paying tribute to his death works to shift the blame of his death from the French National Police to the terrorists as if forgiving that the police forced him into that situation in the first place. Lastly, we see how this can fit into the wider social practice of social media use, using hashtags to bring their posts into different communicative events, whether their intention aligns with the campaign or is ironic.

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# “I Want Meat!”: Gendered Eating and Anthropocentric Fighting in *One Piece*

*Gina Song Lopez*

## [OP]<sup>1</sup>: Pla(c/t)e setting with a multispecies cast

When Monkey D. Luffy is hungry, he yells for meat. This is a key trait of the main character of the *manga* turned *anime*<sup>2</sup> series known as *One Piece* (Oda, 1997)<sup>3</sup>. The series title refers to a legendary treasure that will make whoever finds it the future King of Pirates in an oceanic world filled with outlaws and marines. The story centres around ‘Straw Hat’ Luffy and his crew as they undergo adventures, trials, and tribulations in search for the titular treasure. The captain’s appetite for the flesh of animal-others appears as a comic relief in instances such as fight scenes and in the brief snippets of everyday life on the ship. However, it also implies that his great strength and ability to recover quickly after battles is somehow connected to his copious meat consumption. Although this character feature does contribute to humorous breaks, it also provides an opening to examine broader themes contained in this globally popular title from a Critical Animal Studies (CAS) perspective. *One Piece* is an epic fantasy story that is known for its character diversity, its exploration of concepts such as justice and freedom, and for highlighting issues of power and corruption. It also features a multispecies cast, involving humans as

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1 The abbreviation ‘OP’ refers to an anime series’ opening credits and theme song. It serves to introduce the characters, providing plot hints, and setting the tone for the story.

2 Manga refers to Japanese comics or graphic novels, anime refers to Japanese animation.

3 There is now also a highly popular Netflix live-action adaptation, released on August 31, 2023.

well as anthropomorphic animals, humanoid-animal hybrid characters, and animal shapeshifters throughout the series. As such, the depictions of animals in *One Piece* are fluid, yet subject to the limitations of a highly gendered and anthropocentric medium. This is best illustrated by zooming into the story's depictions of gender and multispecies relations through food and fighting.

This chapter will begin by outlining the geo-political project behind the global popularity of manga and anime, and then bring in a CAS perspective into the discussion surrounding these media. It will then proceed to briefly introduce the main characters involved in the storyline to bring attention to its more-than-human cast, followed by a brief commentary on *One Piece's* mixed record with gender and nonhuman animal depictions. After this, the issue of gendered eating in the series will be put in focus in order to proceed to foreground the animal as food, as a training tool, and as a source of 'fighting power'. This chapter will conclude by highlighting a few examples of the aspects of multispecies entanglements involved in cultural consumption. Last, and important to disclaim: spoilers ahead.

## Globalising coolness

*One Piece* is a Japanese manga series created by Eiichiro Oda (1997). Its chapters were first published in *Shōnen Jump*, a weekly anthology magazine that has hosted other internationally popular titles such as *Naruto* and *Dragon Ball*. The globalisation of Japanese media such as manga and anime owe its success to various forces. Among such, the early international diffusion of manga and anime has been greatly facilitated by fan-produced unofficial translations known as 'fansubbing' that began in the mid-1970s and continues to this day (Lee, 2011; Leonard, 2005). On the other hand, titles like *One Piece* are also among the franchises that have come to enjoy official global reach in the past decades under the Japanese Government's *Cool Japan Initiative* (Cabinet Office, 2020). This initiative is a nation branding project that has resulted in one of the most successful cultural diplomacy efforts of our time, and where manga and anime have played a leading role in policy considerations (Tamaki, 2019, p. 115). Not only in terms of these media products' appeal as cultural exports, but also in successfully influencing inflows such as in the case of 'anime pilgrimages' (Okamoto, 2015) which bring fans from all over the world to Japan (Liu et al., 2022).

The global reach of *One Piece* is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics athletes such as shot putter Payton Otterdahl from the United States and Greek long jump gold medallist Miltiadis Tentoglou made references to the series by imitating famous ‘poses’ from two of its characters (Morrissy, 2021). In another instance, the 2022 US National Football League (NFL) schedule release video by the Los Angeles Chargers went viral by featuring as an anime series opening credit sequence referencing titles such as *One Piece*, *Demon Slayer*, and *Naruto* (Clarke, 2022).

Along these lines, a significant link between events where physical prowess is at the centre stage and anime can be noted. This is particularly the case for the titles listed above which belong in the *Shōnen* genre. That is, manga and anime that primarily caters to teenage males, as opposed to the *Shōjo* genre that is aimed at teenage female readers (Unser-Schutz, 2015, pp. 135–136). *Shōnen* genre tropes tend to highlight values such as friendship and cooperation while also advancing specific conceptions of masculinity (Dahlberg-Dodd, 2018; Sigley, 2022, pp. 79–80). Although in practice this constructed binary is not rigid as both genres enjoy a wide readership, it does determine the direction of the plot, character features, and choice of publication platforms (Unser-Schutz, 2015, pp. 135–136). Nevertheless, in following its genre tropes, *One Piece* embodies a ‘man’s romanticism’ as set by the very first storyline known as the ‘Romance Dawn’ arc (Oda, 1997). It is a specifically gendered story. One that despite its sometimes-progressive tones such as the inclusion of strong female pirates, queer<sup>4</sup> characters, species diversity, and subversive messages against institutions, it is ultimately meant to appeal to young boys’ and men’s fantasies. As such media now permeates popular culture and its reach is global, it has in turn deeper implications in the further diffusion of values and imaginaries that ultimately involve humans and nonhuman entanglements in various ways.

## Manga, anime, and nonhuman animals

Critical Animal Studies (CAS) is a highly interdisciplinary advocate-scholarship project that seeks to critically challenge anthropocentrism and systems of nonhuman animal exploitation without neglecting the interrelated issues of gender, race, and class that continue to permeate our socio-political paradigms (See; Nocella et al.,

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4 The series’ portrayal of queerness is also mixed and subject to considerable debate online.

2014, p. xxxi). Media and cultural industries play a key role in the production and reproduction of such paradigms, and as such constitute an area of special interest in CAS. This focus is sometimes conceptualised as a distinct sub-field known as Critical Animal and Media Studies (CAMS) (Almiron & Cole, 2015). A relevant section of scholarship at the intersection between CAS and Media Studies involves a closer scrutiny of nonhuman representations in pop culture such as the case of comics and superheroes (Schatz & Parson, 2018). Yet, an important caveat is that despite growing engagement with novel and popular media, most analyses have so far largely focused on the Western context (Almiron & Cole, 2015, p. 4). There is a significant case for a closer CAS engagement outside the Western and anglophone world. In line with the discussion of nonhuman representation of superheroes, Asian popular culture products can provide an ideal point to begin such exploration. Here, Knighton's (2018, pp. 140–142) discussion of the influence of the Japanese tradition of 'insect literature' and the role of insects and gender in the multispecies storytelling of Osamu Tezuka is particularly relevant. In a nutshell, as the 'Father of Manga', Tezuka's incorporation of his young self's fascination with insects, his scientific and medical training, and upbringing watching local all-female musical theatre that featured gender-bending roles had long lasting thematic legacy in the hybridity of characters that continue to be featured in manga and anime today (Knighton, 2018, pp. 140–141). Indeed, the rise of modern manga and anime presented new aesthetics, technologies, and storytelling. Yet it also remained riddled with value-laden human and nonhuman animal representations. Here, Lamarre's (2008, 2010, 2011) extensive three part discussion of the interweaved history of speciesism, war, and empire in Japanese animation is illustrative. As he succinctly states: "manga and manga films do not simply represent actual people in animal form in order to sugarcoat the exploitation of the weak by the strong. They transform a field of social and political relations into biopolitical theatre" (Lamarre, 2011, p. 118).

Contemporary manga and anime works are certainly being produced in a different socio-political setting from wartime and post-war Japan. However, animals and animalized characters have consistently remained among character repertoires, almost always in subaltern positions. An obvious case that may come to mind here is the global multi-billion franchise *Pokémon* (Tajiri, 1996). In the *Pokémon* world, human 'trainers' seek to catch all species of 'animal-like' beings and use them to battle each other to become a 'master trainer'. Such depictions of Pikachu, Bulbasaur, or Charmander involved in human-sanctioned fights has certainly not gone

unnoticed. As Quijano (2013) has noted, critics have pointed out the clear issue of nonhuman animal abuse, while supporters have highlighted the series' themes of interspecies cooperation and friendship. Yet, what is more significant from these debates is the fact that they confirm that series like Pokémon do have a persuasive potential in terms of ethical and moral messaging that we should remain aware of from a CAS standpoint (Quijano, 2013). From here, it is the purpose of this chapter to further encourage the discussion on nonhuman animal representations in contemporary and mainstream manga and anime, starting with *One Piece*.

## Meet the 'Straw Hats'

The story of *One Piece* is filled with a wide cast of characters involving diverse humans and nonhumans. In part, because it has an interesting plot device. In this universe those who have consumed a 'Devil Fruit' will gain fantastic abilities which in some cases involve shapeshifting into animals and mythical beings. As such, many of its characters also defy boundaries between human/nonhuman animal, as well as animal-human/machine, and physical/non-physical in a Harawayian sense (1985). Yet despite a character count reaching over one thousand (Leung, 2021), the story is primarily centred on ten crew members at the time of writing. The 'Straw Hat' crew can be divided into three groups: human males, human females, and human/nonhuman hybrid characters.

There are four human males which include the Captain 'Straw Hat' Luffy, a boy that ate the mysterious 'Devil Fruit' that gave him the powers to become a rubber man. He sets on to adventuring the sea to fulfil his dream of becoming the King of Pirates. Luffy is a classic shōnen lead character who is strong, earnest, and seeking to fulfil a seemingly impossible dream (Drummond-Mathews, 2010, p. 65; Sigley, 2022, p. 79). The ship's first mate is 'Pirate Hunter' Roronoa Zoro. A swordsman who aims to be the strongest in his trade and who embodies the epitome of stoic masculinity. 'Black Foot' Vinsmoke Sanji is the crew's cook. He is an incurable womaniser who wants to find the 'All Blue', a mythical ocean that contains all the fish from across the seas. Luffy, Zoro, and Sanji constitute the so-called 'Monster Trio', the strongest fighters in the crew as well as its de-facto leadership. Lastly, 'God' Usopp is the ship's sniper. Although he is a cowardly man, he always overcomes his fears and finds his strength to save his friends. As such, each male character embodies a different ideal of masculinity and physical prowess that is



central to the shōnen genre (Dahlberg-Dodd, 2018). The crew also features two human females. ‘Cat Burglar’ Nami, the ship’s cartographer and navigator who wants to chart the first complete map of the world. She is joined by ‘Devil Child’ Nico Robin who is an archaeologist trying to uncover the censored history of the world. She ate the Flower-Flower fruit which allows her to clone herself and parts of her body. Although both Nami and Robin are active crew members with distinct personalities and goals, their character development has been limited by gender politics further discussed below.

To complete this roll call, there are four human/nonhuman hybrid crew members. The first one of these to be introduced is ‘Candy Eater’ Tony Tony Chopper who joins as the ship’s doctor. Chopper is an anthropomorphic reindeer who gained ‘human-like’ sentience due to consuming the Human-Human fruit. Next is ‘Cyborg’ Franky, a half-machine man who builds the Straw Hats Pirates’ second ship and becomes their shipwright. Soon after this, ‘Soul King’ Brook is introduced to be the ship’s musician and second swordsman. He is a skeleton-man due to eating the Revive-Revive fruit. The last member to officially join the crew is former pirate captain ‘Knight of the Sea’ Jimbe, now the helmsman. He is a whale shark Fish-Man, one of the two marine races that inhabit the deep ocean.

Based on this ship’s manifest, the series inclusion of not exactly human nor exactly animal characters follows the legacy of hybrid and multispecies storytelling in manga and anime (Knighton, 2018). There are human/nonhuman animals in the cases of Chopper and Jimbe, animal-human/machine such as Franky, and physical/non-physical as embodied by Brooks. What is more, following *One Piece’s* imaginary of social and institutional freedom struggles, the characters could very much embody Haraway’s (1985) all boundary-defying cyborgs. However, rather than realising the potential that abolishing such structures could bring, the story of *One Piece* always remains loyal to the premise contained in a ‘man’s romanticism’ as discussed next.

## Challenging (only some) institutions

The story of *One Piece* is deeply infused with the concept of challenging institutions and realising freedom. This is clearly marked by the pirate theme and the Straw Hat’s battles against the despotic World Government. However, for all its subversive messages, the series also has a mixed record in other areas such as its gender depictions. For example, Nami has a tragic backstory of growing up under

the rule of ruthless pirates which highlights her resilience and resourcefulness. In the case of Robin, as the sole survivor of a group of scholars capable of uncovering the censored history of the world she has been persecuted her entire life. The story of both women is marked by survival, not victimhood, and was initially very well received by fans. However, the later development of their characters has also been greatly affected and sometimes even reversed by Oda's 'vindictiveness' against any criticism from female fans who want better representation as Lillian King (2022) from 'Anime Feminist' has noted. In a nutshell, the inclusion of strong female characters in *One Piece* is eclipsed by their hyper-sexualization and constant reminders of gendered limitations (King, 2022).

The diversity and fluidity of nonhuman animal characters in *One Piece* follow a similar pattern. On the one hand, the more human-like anthropomorphic and humanoid-animal hybrid characters play the most active roles in the story. Yet, their otherness is often a salient point. As a reindeer-human, Chopper's backstory is illustrative here. Gaining human-like 'sentience' turns him into an outcast from both reindeer and human society. He lives in isolation until he joins the Straw Hats as a pirate equal. However, his nonhuman status is constantly asserted by the World Government which considers him a 'pet' and sets the lowest bounty of all for him. The lesser status of humanoid-animal groups is even more pronounced with the Fish-Men and the Minks, a race of humanoid mammals. Both groups are subject to fear, persecution, and enslavement in this oceanic world. The story arcs involving Fish-Men and Minks clearly serve to highlight issues of discrimination, prejudice, and authoritarianism, while their alliances with the Straw Hats indicate the first steps towards multispecies resistance and justice. On the other hand, the treatment of these more human-like anthropomorphic and humanoid-animals is also markedly different from that of the fully nonhuman animal characters. Although nonhuman animals are not explicitly depicted in mass exploitative situations such as factory farming or commercial fishing, their presence in the storyline often lead to their ultimate fate as food, or else they are shown as mere beasts, and foes to be tamed or slain.

## To (m)eat or be (b)eaten

From the very beginning in the story of *One Piece* it is established that life at sea is a matter of survival of the strongest. The acts of eating and fighting are central

elements in the series both in terms of world-building and as plot devices. They are also presented in highly gendered and *speciesist* terms. A ‘sexual politics of meat’ (Adams, 2010) is often evident in the brief snippets of the everyday life of the ship. The crew’s romantic subsistence at sea depends on hunting and fishing. Luffy, Zoro, and Sanji are shown as the main food providers when slaying giant nonhuman animals and procuring the crew’s next banquet. In contrast, Nami and Robin are mostly seen as taking small bites of the special meals and desserts prepared by Sanji, the flirtatious ship’s cook. Such scenes of strong men slaying nonhuman animals, handling their corpses, and consuming their meat, while women are barely involved capture the key points of Adams (2010, pp. 50–52) arguments on the gendered dimensions of eating and cooking meat. What is more, here the captain’s large appetite for meat serves as more than just a comical prop, it reaffirms his role as a masculine hero. Strong characters with ferocious appetites are another common trope in Shōnen manga and anime. Here, the connection between masculinity, gluttony, and meat is better illustrated by a special crossover episode between *One Piece*, *Dragon Ball*, and *Toriko* in which all three main characters compete in a tournament for a highly prized cut of special meat (Nakashima, 2013). Even when women are depicted as big eaters and physically strong, there are reminders of their primarily gendered roles. A key example is the case of Charlotte Linlin. As one of the ‘Four Emperors of the Sea’, she is one of the strongest pirates that rule the ocean. Yet, she has two characterising features. First, she is known as Big Mom, the matriarch and captain of her family-crew consisting of her 85 children. Her crew’s size and strength are directly connected to her reproductive prowess. What is more, a main point in her story arc is centred around her use of political marriages to expand her family’s size and power. Second, Linlin is obsessed with any type of sweets and desserts, not meat. She demands sweets as tribute for her protection and even goes on rampages from sweet-craving hysteria. Thus, despite being one of the few females that displays big strength and appetite, her character remains informed by gendered eating (Adams, 2010, pp. 50–52).

Although *One Piece* does include nonhumans in diverse and fluid roles, a large group of these characters ultimately become *absent referents* (Adams, 2010, p. 66). Carol J. Adams employs this concept to capture the disappearance of the living beings such as cows, pigs, and chickens, and the cognitive distance created by their linguistic and conceptual replacement that takes effect as they become beef, bacon, or hot wings. As such, the concept of the absent referent has been largely applied

to discussions of animals as food. However, it is possible to extend the concept to other aspects in which the nonhuman animal disappears to become something else of human use. Thus, as *absent referents*, animals in *One Piece* are reified in three main ways: as meat, as training tools, and as sources of fighting power. The first case where the animal disappears by becoming meat is the most obvious. In the series, almost any animal can be Luffy's next meal, from common land mammals to fantastic ones such as giant sea monsters and dragons. As animals become food, Luffy yells for meat and declares that he shall be the 'King of Pirates'. Ultimately implying that their flesh is the protein behind the captain's superhuman fighting capabilities as he defeats enemy after enemy. This again illustrates another issue discussed by Adams (2010, pp. 55–56). That is, that meat is often conceived as the fuel behind masculine strength and power, and thus 'Meat is King'. Next is the case of animals as training tools. This can be explored by zooming into Luffy's and Zoro's training regimens during the crew's two-year hiatus from piracy. The Straw Hat captain not only consumes but also tames and wrestles the biggest predators of a remote island while he masters new combat skills. Meanwhile, his right-hand man Zoro trains against and defeats an army of warrior primates on another island. In these instances, animals such as lions, crocodiles, and large primates become the bodies and subjects against which the heroes test their strength. Even though the animals in these scenes display some sentience, they are not equal sparring partners. Rather, their inclusion serves to highlight Luffy's and Zoro's masculinity, dominance in a hostile environment, and determination for self-improvement. Such features are often found in classic shōnen manga and anime that highlight martial discipline and which ultimately inform larger cultural and even nation building imaginaries (Sigley, 2022, pp. 79–80). The last case involves the figure of the nonhuman animal as a beastly source of power. In the world of *One Piece*, consuming a 'Devil Fruit' might result in the ability to turn into a specific animal. There are various characters introduced throughout the series that can shapeshift into common species of animals such as a bull as well as, in rare instances, ancient or mythical creatures such as a phoenix. Although in theory such ability could help blur the boundary between the human and nonhuman, the opposite happens. Rather, the animal as a source of fighting power is essentialized based upon popularly held views about animal qualities. In other words, socially constructed stereotypes about animals (Sevillano & Fiske, 2016). Here, the character of Rob Lucci is illustrative. Lucci is introduced as an operative of the 'Cipher Pol', the World Government's intelligence agency.

He can shapeshift into a Leopard due to eating the ‘Leopard model’ of the Cat-Cat Fruit and is shown as a ruthless leopard-man that embraces the image of an apex predator. He lives and fights under the creed that ‘weakness is a sin’ and talks in terms of devouring his enemies. Thus, what is ultimately foregrounded when a ‘Devil Fruit’ user shapeshifts into an animal is the physicality and power of the wild beast, erasing the animal as a sentient living being that is part of a wider and complex ecosystem.

## [ED]<sup>5</sup>: Rethinking anime/al entanglements

The above discussed themes of gendered (m)eating and anthropocentric fighting in *One Piece* are clearly dependent on the very specific type of medium that is shōnen manga and anime. However, it is important to critically watch these mediums as their consumption translates into material and behavioural influence in the world. Here, manga and anime conventions constitute a key space where such entanglements take place as fans engage in costume play ‘cosplay’, produce fan or self-produced works ‘doujinshi’, and participate in the process of cultural diffusion (Lamerichs, 2013). From a CAS standpoint, the most significant aspect of these entanglements dwell in the ways in which manga and anime materializations further influence human-animal entanglements by contributing to the exploitation of animals. This is the case of meat and nonhuman animal products featured in anime as foods. Iconic anime foods from a variety of manga and anime series not only capture the public’s interests in new foods, but they also inspire fan’s palates and willingness to consume such foods (Basaran & Sunnetcioglu, 2021). At this point it is worth reiterating *One Piece*’s record of portraying animals as food, not only by way of the captain’s meat obsession but also illustrated by Sanji’s cooking. The chef of the Straw Hat crew is behind many of the foods featured in the series, and his recipes are now officially published in a cookbook to be recreated by fans (Elfring, 2021; S. King, 2021). Along these lines, it is important to note that such recreations are not isolated to dishes from *One Piece*. Anime food recreations occupy a considerably popular space of the internet where a flagship example is the *Anime with Alvin* series produced under the *Cooking with Babish Universe* (Rea,

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<sup>5</sup> In contrast to ‘OP’, ‘ED’ refers to a series’ ending credits, employing ‘wrap-up’ themes that vary from reflexive to playful.

2021). Most of these anime foods utilise the flesh of nonhuman animals or their products, such as milk and eggs, in their preparation. Consequently, it is not a far stretch to point out that the consumption of animal-based anime foods and the series that inspire this consumption are entangled with the broader issue of *carnism* – a term coined by Melanie Joy (2011, p.19) which captures the socio-cultural system of belief in which meat consumption has remained normal, accepted, and expected without further scrutiny or challenge.

The consumption of nonhuman animals as food is not the only way in which fictional multispecies entanglements transfer into the material world and vice versa. A next point here is that of the conspicuous presence and use of nonhuman animal imagery in human affairs that involve physicality and violence. Wrestling and hunting wild animals was commonplace in the Roman arena, known as *venationes*. As Lindström (2010) highlights, the history of such spectacles uncover human's complex relationship with animals involving appreciation, instrumentalization, popular psychologies and politics. Beyond the ancient gladiatorial arena, nonhuman animals have also been present in the war theatre throughout history. Trained by humans to aid in military operations, weaponized, and often forgotten among the list of casualties (Nocella II et al., 2013; also see Schreier in this volume). Figuratively, the presence of nonhuman animals in other fields is thematically related. In the sports field, nonhuman animals become mascots, anthropomorphized and marketed for their perceived qualities. In many cases, live animals themselves are held in captivity by the teams and fans supposed to honour them (Atkinson & Nothen, 2016). Within the world of martial arts, nonhuman animals have for a long time been evoked and embodied in disciplinary forms, most notably in the ancient Chinese Martial Arts and its 'animal imitative systems', which continue to influence present day practices in the form of 'animal exercises' (Henning, 2001). Taking these different instances into account, it is possible to make the case that whether literally or figuratively, popular culture influences and is influenced by atemporal human-nonhuman entanglements. As such and considering the CAS project of animal liberation, it is important to expand our frame of reference when it comes to popular media in a globalised world where such entanglements are further spun through trans-national media markets and consumption cultures.

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# Animals and Activism



# Looking Back, to Learn From Activist Histories: Reflecting on the Relationship Between Critical Animal Studies and Critical Pedagogy

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Over the past seven years, veganism has seen an unprecedented rise in the UK and many other European contexts (Oliver, 2021a Oliver, 2021b). Although the popularization of vegan practice has been seen by many as cause for celebration, others have emphasized points of tension. In 2018, for instance, geographer Richard White called for a ‘Yes... BUT’ response to the commercialization of veganism. Though there might be democratizing potentials in veganism becoming more accessible (see Giraud, 2021: 129), White suggests that it is also important to be cautious and avoid uncritically celebrating the proliferation of vegan products in supermarkets and fast-food chains. As A. Breeze Harper has long argued in the context of racialized geopolitical inequalities that underpin global food systems, just because a product is technically vegan doesn’t mean it is ‘cruelty free’ (Harper, 2010a).

Amidst the excitement of veganism’s commercialization, then, it is important that wider questions of food justice are not foreclosed. White’s own argument is that to move forward in crafting hopeful multispecies futures, it is useful to look back at earlier activist histories where vegan ethics has been articulated with other critiques of globalized food systems. This argument, I suggest, is useful not just in socio-political terms, or in terms of animal studies and vegan scholarship, but also has pedagogical value for how Critical Animal Studies is approached in the classroom.

Below I reflect on some of the ways that I have tried to integrate this ethos of learning from activist histories into teaching. My focus, however, is slightly different from existing work that has explored links between Critical Animal Studies

and critical pedagogy – though I do draw inspiration from this scholarship (e.g. Pedersen, 2004; Dinker and Pedersen, 2016). Rather than explore how to integrate the principles of CAS into wider classroom contexts through critical-pedagogic methods, here I reflect on the value of activist histories as critical-pedagogic method. Or, put differently, I suggest that introducing activist histories in the classroom can be a means of enacting critical pedagogies that are specific to critical animal studies.

## Critical animal studies and critical pedagogy

I have had the privilege to teach on the Critical Animal Studies course at Lund three times (in 2016, 2017, and 2018), delivering teaching focused on vegan food activism, and, more specifically, the challenge of communicating the complex, multifaceted issues posed by veganism to different publics. Workshop content varied slightly from year to year; for instance, sometimes I delivered content with other academics and/or activists and one year my contribution was paired with a film screening. While I did adjust my own materials in response to these contexts, I reproduced one particular exercise every year.

Early on in each class, I included a slide with the following text: ‘Write down/draw all the processes, places, and actors (both human and nonhuman) involved in the process of producing a Happy Meal’. This task was inspired by Tim Angus, Ian Cook, and James Evans’s short paper ‘A Manifesto for Cyborg Pedagogy’ (2001), which outlines a task designed for their module Geographies of Material Culture that was designed to: ‘get students to think through their connections with the lives of distant others through simple acts of consumption, and the responsibilities which they might therefore have’ (195). As originally conceived, Angus et al’s exercise was inspired by posthumanism and more-than-human geographies. However, as Helena Pedersen (2011) notes, these bodies of theory have often been embraced by mainstream animal studies but treated with wariness by CAS due to their failure to critique (and tendency to celebrate) relationships between human and nonhuman animals that would be seen as violent from a CAS perspective. Engaging with Pedersen’s critique, I reflect first on the value, and then the tensions, of using posthumanist approaches in the classroom as a means of unsettling anthropocentric norms, before reflecting on the role of activist history in turning such approaches to more critical ends.

As part of Angus et al's module, students were encouraged to keep diaries that contained situated reflections on the complex networks of production that lay behind specific consumption activities. In their article Angus et al focus on reflections from a student – Geoff – who describes making a cup of white coffee, a process that requires: 'A lot of connections ... between humans, between humans and non-humans, between non-humans and non-humans (plants, animals, chemicals, metals, plastics, ceramics, much more besides, combined and connected in specific ways)' (196). As Angus et al elaborate, this (seemingly) simple act enrolls Geoff in the same network as electricity and water infrastructures, coffee plants, farm labourers, supermarkets, multinational beverage brands, and artificially inseminated cows. The act of making a cup of coffee – or indeed any other form of consumption – has far-reaching, complex, and multi-faceted ethical implications, which the diary exercise helped to reveal.

In my own teaching practice, I have regularly translated these insights into in-class activities, due to feeling that they complemented principles of critical pedagogy. One of the difficulties of introducing critical pedagogic practices when teaching theory is that, on one hand, there is an assumption that providing students with intellectual tools to interrogate overlapping forms of oppression is empowering (Giroux, 1988, 2005). Yet, on the other hand, the social and cultural theories that provide these intellectual tools are often complex, and difficult to understand, thus can lend themselves to decidedly disempowering, didactic models of teaching (Shor and Freire, 1987; Ellsworth, 1989). These tensions are negotiated in Angus et al's original exercise, which was designed to introduce students to theoretical work (notably Donna Haraway's 'Cyborg Manifesto', 1983) that foregrounds how human lives are impossible to disentangle from other beings (from microbes and fungi to technologies and, of course, nonhuman animals). This body of theory is far from straight-forward so in using everyday acts of consumption as a starting point, Angus et al argue that students can be empowered to trace complex networks of relations themselves, which affords them confidence in understanding and evaluating more complex theorizations of these networks offered by academic literature. Using their own everyday lives as starting points, in other words, made complex theoretical work less daunting to critically engage with.

When I drew inspiration from cyborg pedagogies for my own teaching, I replaced 'cup of coffee' with 'Happy Meal', as a springboard for discussing the equally far-reaching, complex, and multi-faceted networks of relationships that are

bound up with consuming a McDonald's meal. However, my aim was slightly different from Angus et al. Rather than discussing lineages of animal studies informed by Haraway, I wanted instead to use consumption as a route into CAS understandings entanglements between animal ethics, food justice, and environmental politics (e.g. Nibert, 2002). Building on this recognition, the first learning outcome of the session was to trace some of the specific ways that oppressions can be 'enmeshed' (Wright, 2015) and 'multidimensional' (Ko, 2019).<sup>1</sup>

Students readily engaged with this task; placing the lives of animals front and centre and reflecting on everything from deforestation created by animal agriculture, to the lives on intensively farmed chickens (and how these lives were very different from those depicted in fast-food marketing campaigns). Yet ecological and labour issues were also part of these networks and – to echo Angus et al – necessitated thinking through other knotty connections with 'distant others' (as well as those closer to home): from factories producing industrial dyes needed to stain packaging, to local workers on minimum wages.

Beginning with an act of fast-food consumption also offered entry points for three other academic contexts for studying CAS. Firstly, it was a route into wider social movement studies scholarship that has traced some of the barriers associated with communicating multi-faceted problems to different publics. Secondly, it offered a platform for research-led reflections about the way activist histories might offer a means of navigating these tensions. Finally, it opened space to reflect on tensions between CAS and other strands of animal studies that have shaped the contours of these fields. In the rest of this short chapter, I focus on the first and second academic context (social movement studies, and research-led teaching on recent activist histories), before concluding with some broader reflections about animal studies and critical pedagogies.

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<sup>1</sup> I draw on scholars here who have purposefully used alternative terminology to the language of intersectionality to conceptualize veganism, owing to concerns about inadvertently detaching the term from its lineages in Black feminism. Ko, moreover, also makes a more specific critique of reference to intersectionality in animal studies, arguing that it does not fully capture the co-constitutive (as opposed to overlapping) relationship between oppressions. It should be underlined, though, that debates about how to understand and mobilize politically around related oppressions are evolving rapidly, as with the introduction of alternative theorizations such as 'consistent anti-oppression' (Brueck and McNeill, 2020).

## Social movement studies and the challenge of communicating multi-faceted problems

As Pollyanna Ruiz describes in *Articulating Dissent* (2014) one of the challenges confronting contemporary social movements is that they are often 'polyvocal'; in other words, new social movements do not necessarily focus on singular issues that can be captured in neat, unified narratives. In Ruiz's terms: 'The rise of coalition protest movements requires intellectuals from the radical left to reflect again upon the way in which different groups of protestors communicate with each other, and with a mainstream accustomed to more unified expressions of dissent' (2014: 9). This argument is made in a slightly different context to animal studies literature that has discussed multidimensional and entangled oppressions, as Ruiz is focused more on coalition-based activism (i.e. large social movements that are composed of smaller groups of activists who have to find ways of working together by articulating their individual aims under a shared umbrella).

In UK university settings I have found students struggle with social movement scholarship, as it comes with its own vocabulary and norms that are often different from mainstream sociology and media studies. However, beginning the class through network-mapping exercises offers a felt understanding of how many different issues are at stake, and why the concept of polyvocal protest might be a useful framework for understanding how protest movements respond to this complexity. In addition, some of the challenges that students find when mapping networks – such as where to begin and end, what to include, and how to act amidst this complexity – help to reveal some of the challenges of polyvocal protest.

These challenges are particularly significant for students to grapple with in the context of CAS, in light of a groundswell of academic literature that has reflected on the relationship between animal ethics and other social justice movements (e.g. Brueck, 2017). One of the difficulties that has been frequently underlined by recent scholarship, is the way that previous forms of animal activism have themselves sometimes made it difficult for contemporary activists to articulate interconnections with human social justice. Numerous scholars have been critical of campaigns by large NGOs that have, for instance, drawn crude parallels between animal oppression and atrocities such as antebellum slavery, Indigenous genocide, the Holocaust, or sexual violence (e.g. Harper, 2010; Kim, 2011, 2015; Wrenn, 2015). As well as being problematic on their own terms, these tactics are also



self-defeating, fostering hostility and resistance to animal ethics by leading to people associating it with racism, misogyny, ableism, and class insensitivity (Ko, 2017; Robinson, 2017; Taylor, 2017). The task for activists, then, is a difficult one. Not only is it necessary to find ways to articulate connections between multi-faceted issues, contemporary campaigns must reckon with longer histories wherein these connections between human and animal oppression have been made in intensely damaging ways.

There are, however, risks in using the approach set out by Angus et al to explore these issues from a CAS perspective. Though cyborg pedagogies enable students to grasp complex theoretical frameworks about the entanglement of human and nonhuman beings, the article concludes by pointing out that this framework is less useful in addressing what to do about these entanglements. As Angus et al (2001: 199) reflect, their approach:

...should allow these connections to be seen, made, thought through and expressed, messing with those logics and boundaries in the process. But it cannot divide the world neatly into the right or wrong, the good or bad, the ethical or unethical, the responsible or irresponsible. Things are not black and white here. They are shades of grey at best. In principle this is a radical pedagogical project. But (how) might it work if no clear answers can come from it? What kind of radicalism is that? What effects might it have?

These reflections are especially pertinent to teaching CAS, because this body of scholarship has traditionally been wary of animal studies scholarship inspired by Haraway and related thinkers precisely because it lacks firm coordinates for ethical action (Weisberg, 2009). Teaching CAS through cyborg pedagogies, then, necessarily carries tensions that have to be navigated; while it is a productive approach in revealing the relationship between oppressions (thus complementing CAS in one way), it is less useful in doing anything about them (undermining CAS's commitment to praxis in another way). Like the very problem this pedagogical approach was designed to address, therefore, tracing networks can be disempowering rather than empowering. During the workshops, one way I attempted to move beyond these dilemmas was to turn to grassroots activism that has sought to navigate complexity in practice and ask what could be learned from these social movements.

## Research-led teaching: Learning from activist histories

My in-class focus on Happy Meals was primarily intended to open discussion about the complex relationships between oppressions. However, I also selected Happy Meals because the issues raised by this particular product set the stage for discussing an informative case study.

In 1985, a small campaigning group – London Greenpeace – gathered outside a busy McDonald’s branch in Trafalgar Square to distribute a five-page fact-sheet critical of the corporation. Shortly afterwards, another UK collective, Veggies Catering Campaign, produced a more succinct two-sided leaflet ‘What’s Wrong with McDonald’s’, which offered a pared down overview of key criticisms of the corporation that were related to labour practices, environmentalism, and animal ethics.<sup>2</sup> These themes were grouped together under five sub-headings: ‘Promoting unhealthy food’ (which criticized portrayals of fast food as ‘nutritious’ and instead linked it to health problems); ‘exploiting workers’ (which criticized low wages and anti-union activities); ‘robbing the poor’ (a critique of inequalities that underpin globalized food systems); ‘damaging the environment’ (which touches on rainforest destruction, methane generation by cattle, and litter); and ‘cruelty to animals’ (which foregrounds the millions of intensively farmed animals slaughtered by the fast food industry and critiques labels such as ‘humane slaughter’). After short discussions of each topic in turn, the pamphlet culminated with an overview of different organizations struggling against Big Agriculture before calling on readers to ‘join the struggle for a better world’ by ‘talk[ing] to friends and family, neighbours and workmates about these issues’ and asking people to ‘copy and circulate this leaflet as widely as you can’ (Veggies, ND).

The ‘What’s Wrong with McDonald’s’ leaflet offers a simple example of how animal oppression has historically been articulated alongside other social justice issues. Foreshadowing the principle of ‘cyborg pedagogies’, the pamphlet lists some of the ways that acts of consumption are sustained by exploitative and sometimes violent systems of production that are rooted in colonial and capitalist extractivist logics. However, examples such as ‘What’s Wrong with McDonald’s’ also have

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<sup>2</sup> Veggies are a catering collective who campaign for veganism and animal rights causes and cater at protest events, including high-profile transnational protest camps (see Giraud, 2019: 75-83). See also: <https://www.veggies.org.uk/>

material and discursive limitations that illustrate the difficulty of articulating these relationships in practice. In material terms, local activist groups handing out pamphlets are limited in terms of the audiences they reach. In discursive terms, though it is possible to gesture at the relationship between different issues, the format of an A5 pamphlet limits the volume of information it is possible to include – demanding simple overviews that risk falling into the trap of being overly reductive. In addition, attempts to foreground complex connections between social justice concerns are often met with resistance.

The resistance facing activists was illustrated by an incident in 1987, when McDonald's threatened Veggie's with legal action and: 'demanded an apology over the rainforest section and the heading "In what way are McDonald's responsible to the Torture and Murder of Animals?"' (Vidal, 1997: 68). Veggie's responded to these criticisms in a straight-forward way: slightly adjusting the language (so that torture and murder were replaced by butchery and slaughter) and reframing the narrative in 'damaging the environment' (so it was about the burger industry more broadly, rather than solely McDonald's). This tactic was successful, in that it was accepted by McDonald's legal team and enabled Veggie's to keep distributing their pamphlet. London Greenpeace, however, were not offered the opportunity to adjust the wording on their factsheet; instead, and in the wake of a year of being spied on by private investigators and undercover police, five members of the group were issued with libel writs in 1990.<sup>3</sup> The ensuing trial, which sought to verify claims made in London Greenpeace's pamphlet (all of which McDonald's denied), subsequently became known as 'McLibel'.

In broad terms, libel laws are designed to protect individuals and corporations from published statements that make inaccurate claims that are damaging to their reputation. Libel law in England, however, is famously uneven, which has resulted in high-profile instances of 'libel tourism' where corporations and public figures who wish to silence criticism used spurious reasons to take people to court in England even if both parties are based in other countries (Hartley, 2010). The onus in English libel trials is entirely on defendants – who have to prove that everything they have said is correct – while plaintiffs have no responsibility to prove that

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<sup>3</sup> In the 1980s until the mid 2000s, environmentalists and animal rights activists were subject to an orchestrated campaign of surveillance by under-cover police. These 'spycops' became subject to particular scrutiny after engaging in deceitful long-term relationships with people they spied upon (see Stephens Griffin, 2021).

anything is untrue. In addition, defendants in English libel cases are denied legal aid and forced to fund their own cases. McDonald's already had a long history of using the English legal system to silence critics, including national newspapers and the BBC. Indeed, the documentary *McLibel* (dir. Armstrong and Loach, 2005) begins with a series of statements from media organizations who were forced to apologize for criticizing McDonald's. However, unlike the prominent media outlets that came before them, two of the London Greenpeace activists decided to represent themselves in court rather than bow down to pressure. What ensued was a PR disaster for McDonald's; the *McLibel* case became the longest trial in British legal history, which drew significant levels of attention and emboldened the mainstream media to report criticisms of the corporation by proxy.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the newfound visibility of anti-McDonald's campaigning in the mid-1990s, the *McLibel* two still felt that their arguments were being misrepresented. As described in *McLibel*, the mainstream media were (perhaps unsurprisingly) often more concerned with what they were wearing in court than tracing how ecological, labour, and animal ethics concerns could be woven together as broader anti-capitalist critique. In response, the activists worked with supporters to develop a website – *McSpotlight* – that documented the vast quantities of evidence from the trial, mobilized support through fundraising, and sought to find ways of engaging with different publics (see Pickerill, 2002).

In a sense, the website overcame some of the limitations of paper pamphleteering. On the back of publicity generated by the mainstream media, *McSpotlight* could provide information to far wider audiences than local pamphleteering campaigns. The site could also overcome limitations in terms of the quantity and quality of information offered in hosting the trial transcripts and witness statements. Despite the best intentions of activists, early anti-McDonald's pamphlets – and London Greenpeace's original fact sheet in particular – tended to rely on essentialized narratives about the rainforest, Indigenous peoples, and violence wrought by globalized food systems on the Global South. The *McLibel* trial, in contrast, offered

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<sup>4</sup> Indeed, key criticisms of McDonald's raised in the trial are still reproduced today (e.g. Baksi, 2019).

a platform for those with situated local knowledges and experiences to make more complex arguments, which McSpotlight made available to download.<sup>5</sup>

As I have foregrounded in previous work (2019: 53-4), despite being highly innovative at the time, tactics such as web-forums seem almost passé now. Although McSpotlight was launched before McDonald's themselves had a website, excitement about the potentials for digital media to support radical anti-capitalist activism have waned as the Internet has become commercialized. By the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the rise of commercial social media and decline of well-known activist initiatives (such as anti-capitalist online news network Indymedia), often resulted in activists being cast as naïve for their faith in the Internet – as reflected by think-pieces such as Malcolm Gladwell's 'why the revolution will not be tweeted' (2010).

It is important to note, though, that activists have always been aware of the limitations of digital media, and engaged in messy compromises in order to balance its advantages while mitigating the problems it creates (Pickerill, 2002; Juris, 2008). For instance, amidst all of the excitement of McSpotlight, activists did not naively believe that digital media could straight-forwardly displace longstanding activist tactics and were aware of dangers such as elitism and the risk of only communicating with those who were already interested and searching for information about McDonald's. To ameliorate these difficulties, the site complemented their online materials with resources to support 'offline' protest that could open channels of dialogue with would-be consumers (who could then, in turn, be directed to McSpotlight via a weblink in the pamphlet, to find more detailed and nuanced information).

So what, then, can be learned from revisiting the media ecologies of the McLibel case? Firstly, anti-McDonald's campaigning offers a valuable history of activists trying to situate animal ethics within wider critiques of food production systems while still pushing for a concrete course of action. Secondly, these histories foreground how activists have constantly evolved their tactics in response to constraints upon how they communicate particular issues. Different media are used to engage with different audiences, and brought into relation with one another in order to overcome their respective limitations.

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<sup>5</sup> It should be noted, however, that the type of people who were able to give testimony was limited by the activists' lack of legal aid, which meant that those who were able to travel to the trial cheaply and easily were well represented (notably McDonald's workers) while it was difficult to fund travel for those living and working in other global contexts (thus the section of the trial about deforestation in Brazil was under-represented).

As I foregrounded in class, moreover, activist tactics constantly shift in response to changing socio-cultural contexts and changes in the wider media environment. Ten years after the original trial, for instance, groups such as Veggies were still taking part in anniversary days of action against McDonald's by picketing local stores and distributing *What's Wrong with McDonald's* flyers (which still contained links to the McSpotlight website). Although my experience of these events was broadly positive, by 2007-8 McDonald's themselves had launched new marketing campaigns in response to a backlash brought about by negative publicity. In the UK, for example, restaurants transformed their storefronts from red to green and new advertising campaigns were launched, which played into nostalgic imaginaries of the countryside and featured images of chickens and cows wandering around green fields. These new narratives cut against activist literature and made several members of the public question leaflet content or ignore activists.

As well as changes in wider cultural discourses about fast food, there was growing awareness within activist communities about the need to engage people beyond activist enclaves. Echoing aforementioned academic discussions, a number of critical commentaries had emerged within the animal activist community, which criticized it for being overly insular, white, and middle-class, and failing to draw sufficiently nuanced connections between animal ethics and human social justice (see Giraud, 2019: 83-5 for an overview of pamphlets circulating at the time). More broadly, the decline of the Global Justice Movement had resulted in changes in the wider activist environment that had led to fragmentation across and within movements – making it more difficult to articulate polyvocal anti-capitalist narratives that united animal ethics and social justice.

Just as McSpotlight helped to negotiate some of the limitations associated with paper pamphleteering, this changing environment demanded new tactics. Veggies, for instance, produced new pamphlets that were critical of corporate greenwashing and used food in protests as a means of fostering dialogue with publics. By 2010, for instance, events such as the International Day of Action Against McDonald's were not just marked by picketing McDonald's and distributing flyers, but cooking and serving food for would-be-consumers, as well as sharing this food with local homeless people. These tactics did not exist in isolation, but drew on the ethos of movements such as Food Not Bombs (FNB) who have long practiced vegetarian food sharing in public space as an act of material and symbolic resist-

ance. David Boarder Giles (2021: 5), for instance, makes three core arguments about what FNB symbolize:

First, FNB's redistribution of discarded food throws into relief the rhythms by which waste is produced and circulated under contemporary capitalism. Second, its struggles with food-sharing prohibitions highlight the relationship between waste-making, (bio)political power, and the production of urban life. And third, FNB serves as one possible map of the political potential of that waste [...] capitalism manufactures scarcity through waste-making, world-class cities create both world-class waste and massive displacement, and from those discarded surpluses and displaced people may emerge novel forms of political organization and nonmarket economy.

For groups such as Food Not Bombs, then, sharing food is an act of material resistance to the appropriation of public space. In addition, and significantly in the context of the class in Lund, food sharing can also serve a semiotic act that is polyvocal in what it communicates. Food sharing can convey a critique of food waste and food poverty, at the same time as enacting a right to public space and commitment to animal ethics. While eating is intrinsically relational, due to being sustained by complex systems of production, food sharing can help to interrogate the ethical significance of these relations and contest their exclusions. In addition, sharing food does this through creating a new channel of communication to engage with those beyond the immediate activist community. This is not to say food sharing is somehow beyond critique, indeed, it carries profound problems of its own and must itself be responsive to change: the semiotic meaning of distributing veggie burgers outside fast food restaurants is very different a decade later when these restaurants are themselves serving plant-based options.<sup>6</sup>

Yet, while no communicative tactic is perfect, teaching these histories reveals a tradition of activism that has attempted to draw connections between issues, and explored different ways of communicating these issues, while being reflexive about challenges. Lessons can be learned, in particular, about the value of crafting cam-

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<sup>6</sup> Like all of the other modes of communication bound up with anti-McDonald's activism, no one communicative tactic is perfect. Even food sharing, for instance, can risk enrolling members of the public into communicative acts they are not necessarily aware of, and this is a particular issue in the relationship between activists who wish to make a political point and homeless people who are simply hungry (refs). It is important, therefore, to be attuned to and attempt to mitigate these risks by being explicit about the aims and purposes of food sharing events.

paigns and protest actions that – akin to cyborg pedagogies – centre on particularly potent sites, symbols, or acts (such as eating) that render complex social relations visible and contestable. At the same time, revisiting activist histories helps to complicate the assumption that merely mapping networks and tracing relations is somehow enough, in pedagogical terms, to enact the aims of CAS in the classroom. By foregrounding the importance of making difficult decisions about which social relationships to prefigure and which to contest, moreover, activism brings the ethical limitations of posthumanism and more-than-human theories into relief. Conversely, understanding how and under what conditions activists have made these hard decisions – as well as reflecting on the consequence of decision-making – can offer inspiration for pathways into multispecies justice.

## Conclusion

I wish to conclude by touching on an additional argument I tried (unsuccessfully) to articulate in class. One of the reasons I have found activist practice an important source of inspiration in my own work, is that it does not just offer provocations for more-than-human theories, but speaks back to criticisms of CAS within mainstream animal studies literature. As hinted at earlier, while CAS has been critical of theories of entanglement that fail to advocate more concrete anti-oppressive practices, numerous theorists have in turn been critical of CAS – and practices it advocates such as veganism. More critical perspectives, it is alleged, fail to capture the complexity of the world and propose neat solutions that suggest oppressive relations between humans and other beings can be neatly disentangled (for an overview of critiques levelled at vegan practice see Giraud, 2021: 43-62; Tyler, 2022: 145-152).

One of the points I had sought to make in my own work by drawing on activist practice, was that there is a long tradition within activism of people trying not just to make sense of but find ways of navigating complexity. This is what I attempted to convey in class by introducing the case study of anti-McDonald's activism after the network-mapping exercise. Particular traditions of activism, in other words, offer a route into complexity rather than disavowing it and reveal entangled relationships, rather than cutting them away. At the same time, many protest movements complement this recognition of complexity with a focus on what is violently excluded in acts of consumption, in ways that pose concrete ethical questions about which practices might entrench these oppressions and



which might contest them. In other words, activism centres on contestation rather than accepting existing ways of being entangled with nonhuman animals.

In practice, though, making this argument required me making an overly-brief potted history of wider theories in animal studies that I was pitching my own work against, which didn't really work within the constraints of a single class. This experience offered a reminder, then, of a far more basic pedagogic principle; complexity is not just a political or academic problem, but something that can get in the way of clarity during class too! This very mundane observation, though, nonetheless fed back into my own research where I had time and space to reflect on questions of what comes after the recognition of entanglement in more depth. It is in this context that learning lessons from activist histories is especially valuable and, I suggest, can offer inspiration not just as a pedagogic approach to engaging students with CAS, but in informing wider academic concern with how action and intervention can emerge in entangled worlds. I will always be grateful for time spent in Lund with students and colleagues who explored these questions with me. Thank you.

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# Obedient Civil Disobedience – Imprisonment as the Opposite of Animal Liberation

*J. Kovanen*

## Introduction

Freedom from imprisonment can naturally be considered a fundamental part of animal liberation since imprisonment, in a very concrete sense, is the opposite of liberation. If imprisonment and liberation are seen as processes, they appear to work in opposite directions. It, therefore, seems that anyone – nonhuman or not – interested in animal liberation has strong reasons to do what they can to resist imprisonment. Nevertheless, there are animal advocates who instead engage in such a process; who report themselves to the police, willingly get arrested, wish to have trials and willfully get incarcerated after carrying out direct actions. An example from a Swedish context is the group “Tomma Burar” (eng. “Empty Cages”) (Tomma Burar, 2016). By voluntarily submitting to state repression, these activists help to reinforce widespread beliefs that imprisonment can be genuinely voluntary and submission something to embrace. These beliefs strengthen the legitimacy of imprisoning nonhuman animals, as the assumption of their submission is also reinforced.

The purpose of this text is to discuss the following question: What effects does the strategy of civil disobedience promoting cooperation with the criminal justice system have on imprisoned nonhumans? I will focus on a particular problem: When human beings willingly submit to a process of imprisonment for the explicit purpose of furthering animal liberation. I will argue that this is inconsistent as

an idea as well as counterproductive on the level of the material reality and concrete relations of power; a reality and a system of relations that include all animals.

Prison and the criminal justice system have been opposed by the prison abolition movement, as well as fought by anarchists who argue that these institutions need to be destroyed rather than abolished (ASBO, 2022; Bonanno 2008).<sup>1</sup> The claim that the animal liberation movement needs to oppose the criminal justice system has already been made by critical scholars. For instance, Nocella (2015) argues from an intersectional point of view, focusing on the racist and ableist basis of this system. The relation between prison and nonhuman animal exploitation has been discussed by many. Several important perspectives on imprisonment have been presented by CAS-scholars: from Foucauldian discourses of disciplinary power to comparisons between the Prison Industrial Complex and the Animal Industrial Complex (Colling 2021; Montford, 2016; Nibert 2011; Thierman, 2010; Twine, 2012). In this text, I take inspiration from these perspectives but focus on how human submission towards the criminal justice system structures the power relations between humans and other animals. For this purpose, I will use the analysis of *the logic of submission*, introduced in a series of essays by anarchist Wolfi Landstreicher (2005). This analysis aims to illuminate how submission structures the lives of humans under the current social order by having us constantly adapt to the path of ‘least resistance,’ and by considering this as the normal and healthy thing to do. I will argue that this mentality also plays a significant role in how relations between humans and other animals are currently structured.

Many have claimed that the animal advocacy movement’s aims are many and often competing, and that it is more accurate to speak about several movements rather than one (Garmendia da Trindade & Woodhall, 2016). Hence, I wish to make it clear that the purpose of this paper is to discuss voluntary human imprisonment in the context of animal liberation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This discussion could obviously be compared to that of abolition within animal rights/-liberation contexts.

<sup>2</sup> The questions discussed here could also be discussed in the context of animal rights advocacy, because it could be argued that the right to be free from imprisonment can be considered a basic right. That discussion would require that the relation between animal rights and -liberation would be properly understood, but that is outside the scope of this paper.

## The material reality of imprisonment

When the *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* published an entire issue on the theme *Prison and Animals*, the Animal Industrial Complex was compared to the Prison Industrial Complex in the following words: “Both institutions serve as transformative spaces that encourage physical displacement, limit mobility and create exiled individuals. Both institutions forge identities, shape relationships and take lives” (Thomas & Shields, 2012:4). Although the material conditions of imprisonment are often different for human and nonhuman animals, as well as between animals of different species, there are similar logics at play. For instance, Guenther (2012) discusses human solitary confinement and reports that many nonhuman animals, for example in zoos, share the psychological effects of prolonged solitude. Noske (1997) describes how chemicals keep animals in the Animal Industrial Complex productive and submissive despite confinement and reactions of stress, aggression and fear. A recent study of prevalence and appropriateness of psychotropic medication in prisons in the UK – a country that has the highest prison population in western Europe (ASBO, 2022) – showed that 47,9% of female prisoners receive some type of psychotropic medication and that it is prescribed based on a wider range of indications than what is currently recommended (Hassan et al., 2016).

The tools, weapons and technologies used to imprison and control animals of all species are often similar. Colling (2021) describes how the technological development since the invention of barbed wire has led to increased opportunities for control over imprisoned nonhumans. Drones, thermal cameras and tasers are used to chase and capture nonhuman fugitives. Staff employed within the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums are required to participate in regular firearm training. In addition, radio-tracking of non-domesticated nonhumans is a widespread practice.

We recognise all of these technologies and practices from the repressive control of humans, and it is easy to see that technological inventions in general affect all living beings. In addition, I argue that the development of new technology and practices depend on the influx of new prisoners, the ‘raw material’ of the Prison Industrial Complex. Further, I argue that this development becomes more efficient the more diverse the prison population is since the control of the whole population requires the subjugation of the most unpredictable members, whose strategies of

resistance there is not yet any technologies and practices against. Concerning this point, anarchist and animal liberation prisoner Marius Mason (2012:139) has stated that the overarching aim of both human and nonhuman institutions of confinement is always “better control of the incarcerated population.”<sup>3</sup>

These facts already indicate that there are many ways in which the struggles of different animals held captive seem closely affiliated. Hribal (2007:105) writes that “the resistance of animals has influenced other members of human society – some of whom saw commonalities in their mutual struggles against such forms of exploitation.” Resistance against imprisonment has taken various forms, but considering the massive actions taken by the ownership class to prevent escape, this particular strategy seems to be of great importance. Hedges, fencing and walls have been restrained to prevent other animals from moving freely and thereby disappear beyond the reach of control. Much of this is rooted in the fact that animals are considered human property. Escaping continues to be an important tactic for nonhumans in their struggles against imprisonment, as it is shown, for example, by the many escapes from animal transports, slaughterhouses and zoos (Colling, 2021). The struggles for liberation and against nonhuman animals as property are closely linked (Torres, 2007). Nocella (2015:50) writes: “Just as nonhuman animals are cheap labor and are often property of the state, so too are human prisoners.” The struggle against living beings as property, is, hence, a struggle against imprisonment.

If different forms of resistance by exploited nonhumans have influenced humans historically, then it is reasonable to ask what an interspecies influence and inspiration could look like today. Would civil disobedience activists recommend nonhumans to use tactics similar to theirs? “Civil disobedience differs from other illegal acts because it is engaged in by people who commit the action knowing and accepting the penalties and consequences of breaking the law” (Tindall et al., 2008:2239). Civil disobedience activists typically argue that it is responsible to cooperate with the criminal justice system, and to accept one’s punishment. The background idea is that facing the consequences of one’s actions is to act responsible, however, this, I claim, is a rather narrow way of understanding consequences. The larger consequences of cooperating with the criminal justice system, and

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<sup>3</sup> It is also noteworthy that the similarities between human and nonhuman imprisonment are discussed in many anarchist and total liberation contexts, see for example Semilla de Liberación (2014/2016).

the messages it sends, are not taken into consideration. That civil disobedience activists have privileges that nonhumans lack is obvious, but why employ tactics reproducing the idea that humans are so special that they should be treated completely different from other animals? As Guenther (2012:57) puts it: “It is as *animals* that we are damaged or even destroyed by the supermax or SHU, just as our fellow animals are damaged or destroyed by confinement in cages at zoos, factory farms, and scientific laboratories.” Animal liberation cannot occur in a world where some animals, such as humans, are imprisoned. Instead of employing anthropocentric tactics, I believe anti-speciesists should take inspiration from powerful nonhuman tactics of escape, and resist all stages of imprisonment – arrest, interrogation, trial, incarceration and so on.

The strategy of humans voluntarily subjecting themselves to the criminal justice system can, on the concrete material level, be counterproductive for everyone locked up. But the implications of voluntary imprisonment are wider as it extends far beyond the prison walls, serving as the basis for a whole ideology. Beneath this ideology lies a logic of submission.

## Submission as strategy

Essential features of human domination over other animals are expectations, fantasies and demands of other animals’ submission. These expressions of speciesism can be compared to patriarchal expectations of and fantasies about women being submissive, and without these expectations, a lot of oppression would appear as clearly illegitimate. Cudworth (2008) describes an interview she conducted with a farmer in a so-called livestock show:

Erika: What’s special about this breed? Why should farmers prefer them?

Paul: Oh, they’re easy to handle, docile really, they don’t get the hump and decide to do their own thing. They also look nice, quite a nice shape, well proportioned. The colour’s attractive too.

E: What do you have to do while you’re here?

P: Make sure they look alright really. Clear up after ‘em, wash’n brush’em. Make sure that one (he pokes ‘Erica’) don’t kick anyone.

E: I thought you said they were docile.



P: They are normally. She's abnormal that one-- really bad tempered.

E: Perhaps she doesn't like the crowds and the lights?

P: She certainly didn't like the lift yesterday.

E: I don't suppose she's had much experience in lifts.

P: Nah, it's not that. She's just a bitch, that one" (Cudworth, 2008:32).

If a nonhuman animal is being described as abnormal simply based on her refusal to obey, then there must be an idea of submission as normal in the first place. Where does this idea come from? One could imagine that refusal to submit to dominance and harmful practices would be considered the expected and *normal* thing to do. However, as shown in the quote above, that is not the case. Hribal (2010) describes a similar tendency amongst zoo personnel, who typically claim that 'their' animals behave well, and that the ones who resist and escape are rare exceptions.

Since most people find animal suffering disturbing (Allen et al., 2002; Plous, 1993), there must be something else at work when humans are legitimising human dominance over other animals. Speciesism is amongst other things defined as "a belief that different species of animals are significantly different from one another in their capacities to feel pleasure and pain and live an autonomous existence, usually involving the idea that one's own species has the right to rule and use others." (Spiegel, 1996:3) If this definition of speciesism is accurate, then it seems essential to emphasise other animals' capacity to live an autonomous existence, in order to fight speciesism. The word autonomy also means freedom. Have speciesist beliefs led humans to assume that nonhuman animals lack autonomy, the capability to be free, and, hence, desire human dominance – in other words, that they by their very nature are submissive?

With this analysis of *the logic of submission* (Landstreicher, 2005), I have so far aimed to explain how submission structures the lives of humans under the current social order. This logic underlies a mentality in which people adapt to the path of 'least resistance,' and consider this as the normal and healthy thing to do, when, in fact, the opposite is often the case. I would like to extend the use of this analysis by saying that it also lies at the heart of human ideas about other species.

The logic of submission is being projected onto other animals through statements such as "one cannot simply let an animal out of a cage," "dogs enjoy doing

tricks” and “cows need to be milked.” Whether it concerns confinement, disciplining with violence or treats, or otherwise subjecting nonhuman animals to power; there is often a human assumption, or fantasy, that these animals prefer things the way they currently are and the social order under which they live.

The logic of submission is also at work when humans see animal transports, and the connection is obvious since it is also at work when they see human prisoners being transported. It is considered a normal thing to happen, and not necessarily that bad and perhaps not even bad at all for those being transported. Prisoners might need to go to prison for a while to get their lives back on track; horses might need to be transported to the racetrack since they need to run; pigs might need to go to the slaughterhouse because their time has come. Seeing these things is not supposed to make us react. The material infrastructure and these practices are being normalised in order to sustain the logic of submission. Therefore, in addition to the way activists contribute to the material existence and development of prison technologies by freely agreeing to be a prisoner, they also reinforce the logic that serves to justify imprisonment in general, as these practices are used against animals of all species.

The purpose of the prison system is not only to lock up individuals but also to normalise relations of dominance and submission. By allowing other humans to lock oneself up, activists reproduce the idea that this is a normal thing to happen and that incarceration is a reasonable thing for human beings to do to others. Speciesism relies on the existence of this normalised submission, and an actual system of practices structured by the expectation of submission, to survive as an ideology.

## Criminalising others

”Oppression is systematic; therefore, it affects everyone in society, not just those who are directly targeted by a particular form of oppression.” (Nocella, 2015:42) Similarly, the process of criminalisation affects not only those who are currently and directly targeted by the criminal justice system, but all human and nonhuman beings in society.

Nonhuman animals have agency. They have the ability to long for, plan and take action against oppressors, and they do this. But in the current state of the historiography of animalstudies, animals are not seen as agents; ”They are not

active, as laborers, prisoners, or resisters.” (Hribal, 2007:102) In order to fully recognise the agency of nonhumans, it is necessary to see the risk of them being affected by criminalisation when humans act in ways that establish or reinforce a dichotomy of criminal versus non-criminal.

Escape from imprisonment has historically been central to nonhumans in their struggle for liberation. Still today, nonhuman animals are considered property. When they behave like free individuals, for example, by moving away from situations that are harmful to them, this could be considered a violation of the property rights of the owner. Even though nonhumans are not judged in the criminal justice system nowadays, they break rules when they escape from facilities of imprisonment. Historically, they have been severely punished within criminal justice systems (Hribal, 2010). Today they are subjected to repression in other forms, as is often seen when escapes have taken place. Nonhuman animals in zoos and circuses can, for example, be punished with death if they are caught after escaping. This is what happened to Jonnie, one out of many chimpanzees who have been shot to death by humans. Jonnie and his friend Coco were held at Whipsnade Zoo, England, but managed to escape in October, 2007. The pair had dug a tunnel and reached their freedom one early morning, but Jonnie was gunned down immediately, whereas Coco gave herself up after being surrounded in a nearby field (Ibid.).<sup>4</sup>

Since the nonhuman animals held captive in zoos and circuses are considered valuable property, these killing practices mean that the owners lose money. There must therefore be a point of such punishment. This point is precisely to show everyone, inside and outside the zoo or circus, that the ideology behind the logic of submission is being taken seriously and that everything will be done to prevent animals from going ‘wild’. This is because escape and revolt are the most serious offences regardless of species membership, threatening law and order in a society characterised by submission.

Humans have established a dichotomy between tame versus wild animals (Hribal, 2007). This distinction mirrors other dichotomies affecting both human and nonhuman animals. There is the one between good citizens versus bad outlaws. When one allows oneself to be locked up as a civil disobedience prisoner, there is

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<sup>4</sup> Two weeks after this text was submitted, four chimpanzees were shot dead at the zoo of Furuviiken, Sweden, after they had managed to escape from the house where they were locked up. A fifth chimpanzee was also shot but survived with injuries, including blindness in one eye (Mazhar, 2022; Hamilton, 2023).

the presupposition that one is not a ‘real’ criminal, like other prisoners. One wants to argue that what one has done is, in fact, good and not something that should be considered a crime. But instead of breaking down the categories of good and bad, this dichotomy is being reinforced. Civil disobedience prisoners also make a point out of cooperating peacefully with the criminal justice system by being obedient to the terms of their imprisonment, for example, by not escaping. In this sense, they are ‘exemplary’ prisoners. This tactic reinforces the idea that the good ones are the tame (human) animals, while the bad ones are the wild. On another level, the dichotomy between humans and other animals is also being strengthened by civil disobedience activists. “Proponents of civil disobedience argue that breaking the law is legitimate because they are following a higher moral code” (Tindall et al., 2008:2240). Under the current social order, humans are generally viewed as civilised, rational moral agents, who can be granted some freedom and some rights. Nonhuman animals – beasts – are instead viewed as uncivilised, irrational and incapable of moral behaviour. This prejudice against nonhumans explains, to some degree, why they are being ‘treated like animals’; locked up like prisoners who need to be put under control, even without having committed any crime.

Civil disobedience practices harm imprisoned individuals who want to resist their imprisonment, because their actions will be contrasted with those of the good civil disobedience activists, and thus portrayed as worthy of even more repression.

As I have tried to show, there are both material and ideological consequences of cooperating with the criminal justice system. Instead of cooperating, anti-speciesists need to fully resist this system and act according to interspecies solidarity. This is a solidarity that also includes human individuals and populations particularly affected by criminalisation due to racism, ableism, sexism, cis-sexism and so on. We should use strategies and methods that work in the interest of all, instead of reinforcing the idea that there are criminal others.

## Conclusion

The material conditions for imprisoned human and nonhuman animals are sometimes similar. Some similarities include practices and technology used for control and locking, as well as psychological effects of these. The development of technologies and practices of imprisonment depends on the influx of new prisoners and becomes more efficient the more diverse the prison population is. The civil diso-

bedience practice of voluntary imprisonment can, therefore, on the concrete material level, be counterproductive for everyone locked up.

Escape has been central to nonhuman struggles for animal liberation and continues to be so as nonhuman animals are still considered property. The resistance of nonhumans has historically influenced humans, and human anti-speciesist struggles would benefit from taking inspiration from other animals instead of employing anthropocentric civil disobedience tactics. Animal liberation cannot occur in a world where some animals, such as humans, are imprisoned.

Normalisation of relations of dominance and submission comes about through the existence of prisons, and speciesism needs this normalisation to survive as an ideology. Without an actual system of practices structured by the expectation of submission, the imprisonment of nonhumans would appear as clearly illegitimate. Most people find animal suffering disturbing. In order to justify nonhuman animal oppression, the logic of submission is therefore being projected onto nonhuman animals. This creates a belief that nonhumans are naturally submissive, and that they – due to lacking autonomy – actually desire human dominance. Nonhuman animals who do not obey are portrayed as abnormal and sometimes get punished with death, as evident in cases where animals escape from zoos.

When human beings willingly submit to a process of imprisonment, the logic of submission is being strengthened. In addition to the way one contributes to the existence of prison on a material level by freely agreeing to be a prisoner, activists also reinforce the logic that serves to justify practices of imprisonment in general, as these practices are used against animals of all species.

Dichotomies between civilised, lawful, tame individuals and uncivilised, criminal, wild ones exist and are being reinforced by civil disobedience activists who cooperate with the criminal justice system. These dichotomies are negatively affecting insurgent humans and, on different levels, other animals. Nonhumans who resist imprisonment are, for example, at risk of being criminalised as soon as their agency is recognised.

The civil disobedience tactic of submitting to state repression, as part of the struggle for animal liberation, is inconsistent as an idea, counterproductive on the level of concrete relations of power and on the level of material reality. This is a reality that includes animals of all species. Anti-speciesists should therefore take up a position of resistance against all forms of submission and imprisonment.

Only by doing this can we truly challenge speciesism and the social order that upholds it.

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# Landscapes of Hybrid Activism: 'New Welfarism' Revisited in the Case of the Danish 'Turbo Chicken' Campaign

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## Introduction

A central aspect of Critical Animal Studies (CAS) is how the field actively seeks to link theory to practice and academia to activist communities. There is important knowledge to be shared between academics who write about the lives, rights, and liberation of nonhuman animals and activists who work in more practical ways outside academia. Indeed, research and activism overlap, but generally, the animal rights and liberation movement tends to be divided into a mainly academic or theoretical community and a mainly practical community (Woodhall & da Trindade, 2016). The relationship between these two has not always been without conflict. For example, the strategies of activists and movement organisations have been criticised for being philosophically uninformed, politically regressive, and counterproductive (Aaltola, 2011). Conversely, activists sometimes blame scholars for fiddling while Rome burns and failing to take sufficient action, which is urgently needed.

I have observed that scholarly debates about the suitability of different strategies are often characterised by an absence of activists' experiences. Concerning vegan advocacy, Giraud has highlighted the importance of learning from activists' practical struggles and dilemmas to better understand the tensions and challenges associated with implementing various tactics in practice (Giraud, 2021). Paying



closer attention to activist experiences would likewise be advantageous for analyses of other types of work in which the animal rights and liberation movement engages. This chapter explores activist perspectives on ‘new welfarist’ campaigning, which is common among some animal rights organisations but has been highly debated within academic literature.

The chapter is based on an ongoing research project about Denmark’s animal rights and liberation movement. The empirical data consists of 30 in-depth interviews with key activists from various groupings, two years of internet-based observation, and occasional in-person participatory observation. A sociological framing approach is utilised to explore how the aims and logics of the Turbo Chicken campaign are framed by the activists - with a particular focus on intra-movement framing.

## Welfarism, abolitionism, and in between

The Turbo Chicken campaign illustrates a debate, which historically has been at the centre of animal advocacy; the welfare-abolitionist divide. By briefly outlining welfarism and abolitionism in the following, I do not intend to reinforce the already stagnant theoretical conflict by placing the campaign in one of the two “camps”. Instead, I wish to explore how activists navigate and make sense of these tensions in practice.

While advocacy for non-killing and non-harm towards nonhuman animals can be traced back to ancient times of Eastern and Western histories (Szűcs et al., 2012; Phelps, 2007; Pope 2002), the modern Western animal rights and liberation movement arose in the context of the new social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. In this period, a shift from a focus on humaneness and anti-cruelty towards a language of rights and liberation began to develop and formed the foundation for contemporary abolitionist positions. In the context of animal advocacy, ‘abolitionism’ is sometimes used to refer to specific approaches developed by Francione & Charlton (2015) and Wrenn (2017). However, the term covers a broad spectrum of positions against animal exploitation that move beyond the idea of animal welfare. These positions are typically oriented towards either moral rights, legal rights, animal liberation or intersectional human, animal, and ecological liberation.

Some scholars see welfarism and abolitionism as two ends of a continuum, while others conceptualise the positions as fundamentally distinct and competing strings of thought (de Villiers, 2015). Despite shared hopes and struggles, there are signif-

icant differences between the philosophical positions of welfarism and abolitionism concerning nonhuman animals' fundamental rights to their lives and bodies. Welfarism promotes better treatment of nonhuman animals through the implementation of legislation and reformed industry standards that improve selected conditions under which nonhuman animals live and die (Gillespie, 2020). While the fundamental issue of human use and killing of other animals mostly remains unquestioned, welfarism seeks to eliminate “unnecessary suffering”, a concept central to contemporary animal welfare legislation. This focus on suffering does not include the disadvantage of death. Thus, the deprivation of future life for nonhuman animals is often not considered harmful as long as their days of life and the moment of killing are without “unnecessary” suffering (Wadiwel, 2009). Welfarism contains the ideal that nonhuman animals should live good lives with some possibilities for practising species-specific behaviours while under human control. In practice, however, animal welfare is typically measured in terms of reduced suffering (Balcombe, 2009). Pleasure, joy, bodily autonomy, sociality, and the preference for continuing life are rarely touched upon within mainstream animal welfare ethics. Contrary to welfarism, abolitionist positions reject instrumentalist conceptualisations of nonhuman animals as resources and means to human ends, thus envisioning a world in which nonhuman animals are not treated as human property and economic commodities in the first place. From abolitionist perspectives, welfarism can be criticised for adopting and reproducing an anthropocentric hierarchy of human superiority, exceptionalism and entitlement. That is, welfarism promotes change but fails to work towards fundamental shifts in the ways in which humans relate to other animals (de Villiers, 2015).

In practice, the welfare-abolitionist divide has been blurred by a tendency among dominant animal rights organisations to promote welfare reform as a sort of ‘crisis management’ (Taylor, 1999). This tendency was termed “new welfarism” by Francione in 1996 (Francione, 1996). In a US context, he observed how the organisations continued to use a language of rights and liberation but also started to pursue the same legal and industrial reforms as the traditional animal welfare organisations. One reason was that activists felt an urgent need to do something to ease the acute suffering inflicted on billions of their fellow earth beings and did not consider rights and liberational theory to provide sufficient practical guidance. A distinctive characteristic of new welfarism is how its advocates see welfare reform as being causally related to abolition in that they adhere to the notion that the

incremental reduction of suffering on a goal-by-goal basis can lead to rights or liberation in the long run. New welfarists consider welfare reform effective for three reasons: *First*, they represent a realistic compromise, which reduces acute suffering in the short term. *Second*, additional requirements for farming facilities are expected to increase production costs, make end products more expensive, and thus reduce demand. *Third*, welfare campaigns are assumed to sensitise the public to suffering, leading them along the path to abolition (Francione & Garner, 2010).

## The Turbo Chicken campaign

The Turbo Chicken campaign is led by two professionalised animal rights organisations. However, the activists involved are not all members of these organisations. They represent a wide range of more or less organised grassroots within the broader animal rights and liberation movement. The term ‘turbo chicken’ was coined to raise awareness of the conditions under which “broilers” of the breed Ross 308 are kept. ‘Turbo’ refers to their extreme growth rate: While they only live for 35 days, they increase in weight from 50 to 2200 grams during this time, which leads to breathing problems, difficulties with walking, and organ failure (The Danish Parliament, 2020). The breeder, the multinational agribusiness Aviagen, praises how “independent producers value the growth rate, feed efficiency and robust performance of the Ross 308” (Aviagen, 2022). The chickens live in a shed without sunlight, up to 40,000 individuals at any one time. Twenty chickens share one square metre (The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration, 2022).



Young chickens in Danish Ross 308 farm.  
Photo: Jo-Anne McArtur / We Animals Media, 2017



An injured chicken in a Danish Ross 308 farm. Photo: Jo-Anne McArtur / We Animals Media, 2017

The campaign is connected to the Open Wing Alliance, a transnational coalition of organisations that campaign for corporate “broiler” welfare policies. They estimate that replacing Ross 308 with a breed, which reaches the kill weight within 46 days instead of 35, will reduce growth rate-related suffering. In Denmark, 124 million chickens are “produced” every year, of which the vast majority are of the Ross 308 breed (The Danish Parliament, 2020). The replacement of Ross 308 is seen as a step towards the European Chicken Commitment, which includes a shift to medium-fast growing breeds and, among others, the provision of 2 metres of perches per 1000 chickens, 15 instead of 20 individuals per square metre, and the gassing of chickens before their throats are slit at the conveyor belt (European Chicken Commitment, 2022). Thus, the campaign is focused on incremental welfare reform. At the same time, the two driving organisations consider themselves abolitionist animal rights organisations, which is why I characterise the campaign as new welfarist.

The campaign’s modus operandi is to convince one large company chain after another to remove Ross 308 from its product range in order to trigger a domino effect among sellers and producers. Companies are lobbied and pressured through a combination of dialogue and pressure campaigning. A popular tactic is to hold regular protests outside stores, which has involved many activists for several years. In addition, the campaign has included thousands of adshel-posters, full-page insertions in the most prominent newspapers, petitions, and creative celebrations when policy changes are achieved. Regarding campaign results, multiple companies have stopped selling Ross 308, and in 2018, even Denmark’s largest chicken production concern set the goal to phase out Ross 308 within a year (Dahlager, 2020), which I will return to later.

## The campaign from a framing perspective

Although new welfarists are not only concerned with eliminating “unnecessary” suffering, they choose a welfarist endeavour as a kind of non-ideal real-world politics. Due to this strategic core of new welfarism, a sociological framing approach can be useful to observe how activists strategically present problems and solutions to the public. From a framing perspective, social movements engage actively in “meaning work”; the struggle over mobilising and counter-mobilising ideas in society. They participate by ‘selecting, omitting, expanding and giving

salience to' (Benford & Snow, 2000) certain aspects of reality. This way, framing functions like a picture frame, bracketing what is "in-frame" and "out-of-frame". Core framing tasks include "diagnostic framing" (identifying the problem and who is to blame), "prognostic framing" (articulating a solution or a plan of attack), and "motivational" framing (providing a rationale for engaging in collective action).

The Turbo Chicken campaign externally presents a classic welfare reform-frame, which implies that the industry can improve its methods of exploiting rather than framing the exploitation as the actual problem. For example, consumers are encouraged to send pre-written emails to companies with the statements: "*Tell companies and producers that the chickens deserve better conditions*" and "*The chickens have too little space, and they grow way too fast!*". At protests, signs displaying close-up pictures of a chicken state, "*She deserves a better life*" and "*She cannot keep up with the pressure*". By individualising the chicken, the activists counter-frame the industry's faceless portrayal of "poultry", which is often abstractly referred to in measures of tons or thousands. By referring to her as a female, they also ascribe her individuality contrary to a genderless production unit. Therefore, the problem is diagnosed as the (too) bad treatment of sentient individuals – and the ones to blame are the companies that facilitate their consumption. The prognostic framing presents a plan of attack; to engage in collective or "collectivual"<sup>2</sup> action that pressures companies to stop selling Ross 308. The motivational framing highlights the effectiveness of the campaign. For example, a campaign website states, "*Use your voice to make a difference for millions of chickens*". Similarly, a press release about campaign achievements is titled "*Revolution in Danish production: Better conditions for 12 million chickens*". Thus, the target groups are ascertained that the campaign makes a significant difference.

## Intra-movement framing - welfare improvements on the periphery

Meaning work also occurs internally within social movements as processes of articulating and negotiating "diagnoses" and "prognoses". In the following, I suggest that although the campaign externally illustrates a clear example of new welfarism, the intra-movement framing differs in several aspects from the way new welfarism

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1 Author's emphasis

2 See Stetsenko, 2013

was defined nearly thirty years ago. This adjusted framework may represent a new hybrid position within the movement, which is important for scholars to be aware of when analysing activist strategies.

## The production capacity argument

When introducing the concept of new welfarism, Francione pointed out that celebrating achieved incremental welfare goals can make consumers feel more comfortable about financing the killing and exploitation of other animals, even though the living (and killing) conditions are not significantly improved in practice (Francione, 1996). As mentioned, he described new welfarism as supported by three presumptions. First and foremost, what I will term, the welfare argument (reducing suffering in the short term), secondly, the price argument (increasing end-product price and reduced demand), and thirdly, the sensitising argument (mobilising public concern). However, I have observed that the welfare argument is largely absent from the intra-movement framing of the campaign. Indeed, the two driving organisations focus on reducing suffering. However, the activists I have interviewed do not consider the welfare improvements significant; they are simply “out-of-frame”. Instead, another crucial rationale, which I will call the “production capacity argument”, has been highlighted by almost every interviewee. Thus, the activists emphasise how the campaign could reduce the total production by targeting the producers on their production capacity, as explained by Christina:

”I’m on the abolitionist side. I have inner conflicts about welfare campaigns, but I know they make a difference. I attended a conference at Danpo (Denmark’s largest chicken production concern, red.) to get insight into what they talk about (...) Due to the huge focus on Turbo Chickens, they have chosen to re-organise from almost 100 % Turbo Chickens (...). Now 80 % of the chickens will be of a slower growing breed. This means, provided that they don’t open more farms, that there will be a 15 % reduction in individuals per year. I think that is worth working for. But I don’t think there is a big difference in terms of the life you have to go through whether you live 35 or 46 days”.

The logic is that if a “batch” of 40,000 chickens must be kept for 11 days longer before it can be replaced by the next batch, fewer individuals will be processed by the facility in a year. In contrast to the external framing, the majority of the activists

do not think in terms of reducing the suffering of living chickens, but rather of reducing suffering by “saving” a calculated number of future individuals from being brought into existence, thereby reducing the total number of individuals exploited and killed by the industry. Some interviewees also consider how prolonging the chickens’ lives may increase suffering despite slightly reducing health problems. However, most conclude that the production capacity argument outweighs this concern. While the price and sensitising arguments are about reducing consumer demand, the aim of the production capacity argument is to directly reduce supply. Furthermore, I have noted that this way of framing the campaign as a way to disturb the industry resonates broadly within the activist community: Activists who consider themselves pragmatic as well as those who are more idealistic and critical of welfarist tactics seem to approve of this aspect of disturbance. As Mark explains:

“I haven’t participated (in the Turbo Chicken campaign, red.). In the beginning, it was on principle but since then I have come to think that it might be quite good anyway (...). It does not really challenge humans’ views on other animals fundamentally (...). But if such a campaign is successful in harming the industry economically, then I will look at it positively. If it forces them to produce fewer individuals, and it becomes more expensive and difficult for them. Because then we will stand stronger”.

## Landscapes of hybrid activism

In scholarly debates, new welfarism has frequently been presented as an opposing or competing solution frame to veganism (see e.g. Torres, 2007; Freeman, 2010; Francione & Garner, 2010). For this reason, it is easy to get the impression of a clear-cut “frame dispute”, which implies that activists are thought to either engage in new welfarist campaigning or the spreading of veganism. However, I have observed how the Turbo Chicken activists also participate in vegan outreach or plant-based lobbying. Veganism, understood as more than just a form of consumption, is clearly at the core of the activists’ collective identity. Some define their veganism in ethical terms, i.e., living without harming or causing suffering to others, while others conceptualise their veganism in more political terms, i.e., engaging in a struggle against species injustice and intertwined oppressions. Activists also talk about how they are aware of opportunities for spreading veganism in their every-

day lives by setting an example, thus viewing their lifestyle as a kind of quiet activism<sup>3</sup> or prefigurative politics<sup>4</sup>. In addition, they participate in collective action such as taste-sample hand-outs or vegan protests. There are multiple examples of overlap between activists who attend or support the Turbo Chicken campaign and activists who participate in civil disobedience, such as slaughterhouse blockades. Indeed, the movement consists of a range of groupings, whose attitudes to the campaign varies. However, the terrain of activism is complex and highly characterised by hybrid activists, something which is essential for scholars to consider when analysing movement strategies. All the interviewees bring up the necessity of combining mainstream methods, such as plant-based corporate outreach or welfare initiatives with direct action and vegan outreach. The notion that new welfarist campaigning and vegan outreach cannot meaningfully go hand in hand is non-existent within the sample. Instead, most activists consider certain forms of new welfarist initiatives and anti-speciesist activism to present complementary rather than opposing solution frames.

Frames vary in their restrictiveness or inclusiveness regarding the number of ideas they accommodate. In this case, the intra-movement prognostic framing is surprisingly flexible in the light of much literature on social movements, which tends to put activist types into relatively fixed “boxes”. While the philosophical positions of welfarism and abolitionism may be accurately understood as “oil and water” (de Villiers, 2015), impossible to mix meaningfully, the activists draw the lines in various alternative ways. Not just by placing their activities in the middle of a spectrum of tactics but rather understood within, what I will call, landscapes of hybrid activism: A tangled terrain, in which a considerable number of activists and organisations engage in new welfarist initiatives concurrently with activities such as producing anti-speciesist media content, vegan outreach, civil disobedience, bearing witness, or trespassing in order to document the conditions of farmed animals. This way, most of the activists also complicate the sharp analytical divide between pragmatic and idealistic or radical activists.

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<sup>3</sup> See Oliver, 2021

<sup>4</sup> See Verón, 2016



## Against ‘humane’ recommendations

New welfarism has been criticised heavily for promoting “humane” exploitation and killing (Francione & Garner, 2010). In this case, however, participating explicitly in “humane washing” is where even the activists who are the most supportive of the Turbo Chicken campaign draw the line. As an example of “boundary framing”, i.e., the task of articulating movement protagonists and antagonists, multiple interviewees disassociate themselves from Denmark’s traditional animal welfare organisation, which recommends consuming alternative chickens to Ross 308. The welfare organisation even has a labelling scheme for animal-derived products called “Recommended by Animal Protection Denmark”, which all the interviewees find outrageous as they view killing and protecting as incompatible. The boundary between explicitly recommending the consumption of nonhuman animals and avoiding doing so is an essential precondition for the activists’ support for the campaign.



Unable to walk. Chicken of the Ross 308 breed. Photo: Stefano Belacchi / Equalia / We Animals Media, 2021

## Anti-speciesist single-issue campaigning?

New welfarism takes the form of single-issue campaigns, which have been criticised for being inherently speciesist because they highlight the exploitation of certain nonhuman animals and privilege the species that are already the most favoured. While abolition is advocated for the most popular species, such as dolphins in dolphinariums, less significant reform is advocated for the least favoured species, such as chickens (Wrenn & Johnson, 2015; Wrenn 2016; Francione & Garner 2010). However, the activists make sense of the Turbo Chicken campaign in quite a different way. They tend to view the focus on chickens as an expression of moral consistency in that it focuses on an intervention area where most individuals suffer *regardless* of their species. In their eyes, the campaign is not speciesist due to its lack of liberationist goals and root cause analyses. Instead, it may even be understood as containing anti-speciesist aspects due to its insistence on raising awareness of a neglected species - despite the task being more demanding than petitioning against dog “meat” or elephants in circuses. Therefore, they are not oblivious to speciesist biases but seem to make sense of them differently.

## Intra-movement hybridization

Internally, the activists diagnose the problem as the killing, exploitation, and suffering of nonhuman animals as well as ecological degradation due to numerous interconnected societal issues. The plan of attack is to adopt a multifaceted approach including various, sometimes competing, sets of tactics. Despite critical voices, the Turbo Chicken campaign is overall viewed as a legitimate component of such a multifaceted approach. First and foremost, due to what I have called the production capacity argument based on the expectancy of lower “output” as the production capacity decreases and the price argument based on the expectancy of decreased demand – *not* because the activists consider the welfare improvements to be significant. Second, the campaign is seen as one initiative among others, which also include direct action and vegan outreach. Third, the consumption of “humanely” raised chickens is never explicitly promoted. Fourth, the campaign, despite its single-issue approach, creates attention around a less favoured species. Although the external framing makes the campaign appear as a clear example of new welfarism as defined nearly thirty years ago, the intra-movement prognostic

framing suggests that the campaign represents an adjusted position, which, in the eyes of the activists, counters some of the weaknesses of new welfarism. I suggest that this intra-movement prognostic “frame transformation” is the main reason why the Turbo Chicken campaign has gained relatively broad support from the movement’s various groupings, as its logic resonates with a more comprehensive range of activists. This way, the campaign illustrates a development of internal hybridization within the Danish animal rights and liberation movement. While social movement theory normally presents hybridization as something that happens between two movements, this case represents an example of the intra-movement hybridization of positions. Here, activists across the movement’s spectrum of self-identified radicals or idealists and self-identified pragmatists find common ground in the campaign – first and foremost due to the production capacity argument and its logic of affecting industries economically.

## Unaddressed problems of new welfarism

Although the campaign avoids some shortfalls of new welfarism, central criticisms remain unaddressed by most interviewees. Multiple CAS researchers have problematised welfarist tactics with abolitionist goals for numerous reasons, among others, for being ineffective by failing to address systemic root causes of oppression. According to critics, prioritising an incremental single-issue approach to reducing acute suffering can be visualised as constantly cutting off small twigs from a tree. New twigs and even large branches will eventually regrow if the soil, roots or at least trunk are not targeted. Wrenn (2017) elaborates on this analogy, in which the soil represents the capitalist economic mode of production, which legitimises social structures of exploitation and oppression, while the trunk illustrates speciesism with its roots in naturalised oppressive social relationships. She stresses that pruning a tree can make it grow stronger because the weak parts are continuously removed. Thus, attempts at resistance are often co-opted by capitalist industries. Celebrating minor welfare improvements can strengthen the industries’ images and give the public the impression that welfare issues are being addressed sufficiently. This way, improved welfare standards are also used to facilitate the ongoing use of nonhuman animals (Bourke, 2009). An example of a new twig growing from the tree could be Denmark’s largest chicken production concern, setting a goal of phasing out Ross 308 but concurrently presenting a plan to in-

crease its production of “welfare chickens” by 10-15 million per year. I understand the term “welfare chicken” as the enterprise’s counter-framing of the “turbo chicken”. The term refers to medium-fast growing breeds of which most chickens live under slightly better conditions than the Ross 308 (Danpo, 2022). In 2023, the concern indefinitely postponed the phase-out of their Turbo Chicken production (Schousboe, 2023). As welfarism does not initiate a fundamental shift in the ways humans relate to other animals, it has been suggested that the interim adoption of new welfarist strategies in pursuing future goals of rights or liberation is an unfortunate privileging of the present, which leads to the postponement of the necessary struggle for justice (de Villiers, 2015).

## Effectiveness and “voluntary compulsion”

Most of the interviewees, who have participated in the Turbo Chicken campaign, prefer more uncompromising forms of activism, in which they feel true to their values. Nevertheless, they take part in new welfarist initiatives due to their assumed effectiveness. As expressed by Sarah:

“When you know that by getting this company on board, we will save an additional two million lives this year, when the numbers speak for it, then it makes sense to work this way. But when what you really want is total liberation tomorrow, it is a bit tough to focus on these tiny steps”.

Similarly, Daniel finds this kind of pragmatism “*necessary but emotionally exhausting*”, while Sandra calls it “*hard work that needs to be done*”. Thus, an additional dynamic seems to play a role in the overall support for the campaign, namely a sort of “voluntary compulsion” based on a widespread narrative of the effectiveness of this type of action. There also exists a dynamic, in which new activists start out idealistically but gradually become more attuned to rationales of effectivity. The activists who are the most supportive of the campaign often highlight how the approaches considered pragmatic have proven to be effective. However, what constitutes effectiveness and how it could be understood and measured in various ways is not a common topic of debate within the movement. Nevertheless, a few interviewees mention how they have considered potential biases. For example, Thomas:

“Organisations promoting the pragmatic approach also have an interest in this promotion (...) They are financed by their members, and they also get a lot of support from American funds. They are tied to the need to show results”.

This reasoning touches upon a dilemma of professionalised social movement organisations (SMOs): The interest in setting short-term measurable goals to establish a good track record and articulating this way of working as being the most effective. The dynamics of professionalisation leading to the prioritisation of tactics that support organisational longevity and fundraising have been problematised by Wrenn (2016; 2019), who also points out that the “non-profit industrial complex”<sup>5</sup> puts organisations under a tremendous pressure to achieve victories and hide failures in order to prove their worth to funders. The mainstreaming of the organisations and their status as charities approved by the state to receive donations make it disadvantageous for them to appear too radical. Continuous highlighting of the achievements of short-term welfarist goals tends to naturalise the tactics’ effectiveness as common sense within the movement (Wrenn 2016). This may also be understood in a broader societal context of neoliberal ideas about effectiveness and efficiency in which all efforts must pay off in quantifiable measures within relatively short-term projects.

I have noted that the activists, who consider themselves more idealistic or radical, often motivate their assumed non-pragmatic activities by personal preferences, rather than competing interpretations of what constitutes effectiveness. For example, Mark:

“I think sometimes there is a tendency to talk disproportionately much about suffering. And not about humans’ attitudes towards other animals. The structures in which the oppression is embedded (...). Maybe I just have a preference for working with the aspect of humans’ fundamental views on other animals”.

This way, the movement may lack a language for evaluating goals, measures, and effectiveness from a grassroots perspective rather than premised on the logics of charities and nonprofits. It should be noted that many evaluations of nonhuman animal advocacy are conducted by professionalised movement organisations them-

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<sup>5</sup> See INCITE! 2017

selves or by initiatives such as Animal Charity Evaluators, which base their evaluations on a welfarist position, seeking to reduce suffering within existing systems, rather than evaluating potentials to foster systemic change. Academic research could contribute valuably to activist communities by conducting additional evaluations of effectiveness, such as further comparisons with tactics adopted by other social justice movements, whether historical or contemporary. Likewise, studies of different target groups' responses to actions that involve measures to achieve goals beyond reducing suffering would be insightful. Other aims, such as recruiting new activists through activism or developing action repertoires psychologically sustainable for the activists themselves are also relevant to discuss in relation to effectiveness. The activists can play an important role in the "translation" of such analyses into hands-on initiatives possible to implement in practice. Some activists have historically criticised rights and liberation-based theory for lacking sufficient practical guidance. Therefore, it would be advantageous for researchers to seek out and foster spaces for activist and scholarly knowledge exchange. Here, participatory action research, which seeks to initiate change by including field participants as co-researchers, could be a promising path.

## Conclusion

Although the Turbo Chicken campaign could have caused disputes within the animal rights and liberation movement due to its highly 'new welfarist' approach, it has gained relatively broad support across the movement's various groupings. Two reasons for this have been suggested. First, an intra-movement frame transformation has created a hybrid position, which differs in certain aspects from the way 'new welfarism' was defined nearly 30 years ago. This position places welfare improvements in the periphery and acknowledges that such achievements are often insignificant in themselves. Instead, another crucial rationale plays a central role, namely the "production capacity argument" about targeting the producers on their production capacity through improved industry standards. In addition, most of the activists consider certain forms of new welfarist campaigning and anti-speciesist vegan outreach to be complementary rather than opposing solution frames. Instead of viewing the movement as sharply divided between new welfarist and abolitionist tactics, the activists draw the lines in alternative ways. Not just by placing their activities in the middle of a spectrum of tactics, but rather understood

within “landscapes of hybrid activism”: A tangled terrain where a considerable number of activists and organisations engage in new welfarist initiatives concurrently with numerous forms of more uncompromising activism. The second reason for the overall support of the campaign is a sort of “voluntary compulsion” based on a widespread narrative of the effectiveness of this type of action. However, what constitutes effectiveness and how it could be understood and measured in various ways is not a common topic of debate within the movement. Future academic research could contribute valuably to activist communities by conducting further evaluations of effectiveness from a grassroots perspective rather than premised on the logics of charities and nonprofits.

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# No Total Liberation at the Total Institution<sup>1</sup>

*Lena Lindström*

In a lucid discussion on the role of animal sanctuaries in the animal rights movement, Donaldson and Kymlicka (2015) highlight several valid points of criticism against how animal sanctuaries normally function. One of them concerns that they resemble – I would say are – total institutions. This term, coined by sociologist Erving Goffman (1958), refers to an establishment that is cut off from the surrounding society, has its own distinct rules and conditions, and which most often holds two distinct classes: permanent or temporary residents, who are seen as being unable or unsuited to care for themselves, and staff or carers. Goffman suggests orphanages, jails, boarding schools, and closed psychiatric wards as examples of total institutions, and there are many more examples, including refugee camps and retirement homes. Issues that are common to all total institutions include paternalism and an uneven power dynamic, where the interests or convenience of the staff population takes precedence over the interests of residents. This also applies to the subclass of total institutions that are focused on caregiving, which include animal shelters and sanctuaries.

To ameliorate these problems, Donaldson and Kymlicka (2015) suggest that sanctuaries can be rethought to work as a kind of model societies, where humans and non-humans live together in an intentional community, and where the fence surrounding the sanctuary work as a way to shut the speciesist world out, rather than the animals in. They write:

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<sup>1</sup> Part of this text was previously published in Anlib, [www.anlib.se](http://www.anlib.se), under the heading Djurhem – aldrig ett paradīs.

Animals would no longer be “ambassadors” who educate the public about industrial agriculture. They would be themselves, living as equals in an interspecies community, encountering a wide diversity of humans in different roles and relationships, pioneering new forms of interspecies living from the ground up. If animals could be seen as pioneers of a just future, rather than as ambassadors of an unjust present, this would surely have a more transformative effect on the humans who encounter them

Something similar is expressed by sanctuary researcher Elan Abrell (2019):

In trying to create on a small scale the world they want, sanctuaries face immense challenges, but in facing these challenges, they also [endeavour] to bring about a more fundamental transformation in human–animal relations in the future. Sanctuaries are fundamentally experiments in community building.

This is a beautiful idea. However, based on my experience of sanctuary/shelter work I am finding it hard to visualise, and have increasingly found myself leaning toward non-intervention instead. The following is a sketch of that journey, hopefully with some take-aways for the animal rights movement.

When as a young activist I began sheltering and rehoming non-human animals, I envisioned it would be rewarding but also hard. Rewarding because, like virtually everyone else, I was taken in by the idea of liberation: the victim, maltreated by a vicious pet owner or in line to be killed by the industry, is saved and given a new life of freedom. I realised that it would also be hard, mostly because I would sometimes have to say no and thereby indirectly sentence someone to death or to continuing suffering, and also because there would be times when I would have to decide that euthanasia was the only solution.

These things indeed proved to be terribly hard. But it soon became evident that it is not only in life-or-death situations that running a shelter was ethically demanding. Instead, it is demanding all the time. Each one of the everyday chores – from feeding to fur trimming to fence building – is laden with impossible moral decisions where I, as the appointed human master, was to weigh all aspects of other people’s lives and welfare without them having much of a say on the matter. I did the calculations of future problems that might ensue if the fur was left to grow or the feed not rationed, and though I certainly heard the voice and often

understood the opinion of those directly affected by my decision, I would let my judgement overrule theirs.

One of many examples of this was when I was caring for a pair of “fancy pigeons” – domesticated pigeons bred for exhibition. A core principle for most sanctuaries is to ensure that there is no procreation among the residents, which is ascertained through neutering or separation of sexes. There are very good reasons for this: with procreation, the capacity of the sanctuary would soon be exhausted and it would not be able to take in any new residents, and furthermore the resident animals are more often than not carriers of genetic disadvantages imposed on them by selective breeding. The pigeons in question were no exception. We were unwilling to separate the established pair, or to subject one of them to risky and painful surgery. Instead, we opted for the seemingly non-intrusive method of pricking their eggs just after they were laid, thus aborting foetal development. Time after time, the two pigeons dutifully brooded their pricked eggs for 21 days, the expected time for hatching. They then abandoned the nest, built a new nest at another location and laid new eggs, which I was quick to destroy in turn. Every time with a heavier heart. It just felt so wrong.

Was it wrong? It was certainly against their will. At the same time, it seemed like the least bad alternative. Letting them free would have led to them being instantly killed by wild birds of prey, which had been the painful experience of a couple of their flock mates. To make things worse, one of them was unable to fly. They were thus condemned to our care, a care that apparently entailed having their eggs destroyed again and again.

The egg pricking might seem like a relatively mild intervention in comparison to many much more intrusive things I have subjected others to in my role as a carer. Still, something about the unwavering but hopeless brooding gave me a new perspective on what I was doing. To put it mildly, the entire business of captivity and supervision is not in harmony with my basic stance towards non-human animals as competent adults with no need for a custodian. To take on that role disfigures and corrupts the very love and solidarity which motivated it in the first place.

I do not want to imply that dependency is bad in itself. Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011) make a convincing case against this idea. It is not that autonomy is the ideal, it is that it is often the case. Many animals in sanctuary custody are, in principle, fully capable of caring for themselves but are not allowed to by human society. Sometimes the natural environment in the part of the world where they

find themselves is unfit to support them, or such an environment does not exist anymore. Even those who could thrive if they were let free would, in most cases, quickly be killed by humans. This is what mostly compels the existence of sanctuaries, rather than intrinsic needs of their residents.

Given my awareness of the disastrous situation for non-human animals in our society and the lifesaving importance of sanctuary work, I never thought the day would come when I would stop sheltering and rehoming animals. However, that has been the case now for a number of years. One reason is that the ethical burden of giving unasked-for care began weighing too heavily on me. It gradually became clear that having to ignore basic decency in interactions with others – stepping over their boundaries, ignoring their all-to-clear wishes – did not bring out the best in me. The extent of the corruption became evident when I recently came across a “rabbit cage” at a flea market. For the first time in some 20 years, I could see the cage for what it was – an instrument of torture. I felt pure disgust. I wanted to destroy it. Previously, I would also have had the parallel thought, “Can I use this?” No doubt, there is a substantial difference between using a cage temporarily for transport or convalescence and using it for life-long imprisonment. Still I was, in a way, on the same playing field as those who put a rabbit in a cage just for the fun of it. The relief I felt at my reaction when confronted with the cage suggests that the dilemmas of caring for animals affect you at a rather deep level, and do something to what you are able to see.

The powerful idea of liberation and a happy ending, which so enchanted me years ago, not only motivates animal activists but is also used deliberately by us to evoke sympathy in the broader public. Most people are touched by stories of saved individuals, from rehomed street dogs to cows escaping slaughter. Many sanctuaries participate in spreading this image, and not unlike in commercials for the animal industry, the animals are usually depicted as constantly happy. If an animal is acknowledged as suffering at a sanctuary, it is usually because of where they came from and not their current situation. For me, these narratives seem to have lost their lustre. Sanctuary life is no happy ending, no total liberation. It is a life as a subordinate that continues instead of ending.

The deterioration of this idealised image, however, need not be a loss. Instead, accepting sanctuaries as a painful compromise rather than a model community can make us wiser as a movement. Our condemnation of animal oppression is not dependent on a myth of eternal happiness. This does not imply that animal shel-

ters and sanctuaries should cease to exist: they fill an important function and will – unfortunately – likely keep doing so for quite some time, and they deserve all due respect and support. Nevertheless, they are places of frustration, suffering, disease and death, all at the mercy of humans. Humans, who will inevitably and unwillingly be wrongdoers, as there is no right action in a situation that is fundamentally wrong. This is a difficult thing to express for any enterprise dependent on volunteers and donations. For this reason, addressing and perhaps embracing these complexities should not only be a responsibility of those directly involved, but rather a collective issue for the animal advocacy movement.

Last summer, a couple of city pigeons decided to build a nest on my balcony. I declared my intention to keep spending time on the balcony and they accepted the deal, so we cohabited peacefully for a couple of months. It was a true pleasure for me not to intervene in their lives. Perhaps even healing, seeing the two chicks hatch after 21 days. I remained a neutral presence in their lives, neither harmful nor beneficial. We were just the average neighbours, saying a quick hello in passing before going on with our lives. Only outside the sanctuary setting could something resembling an equal interspecies interaction play out.

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# Animals and Art





# The Garden

*Linnea Rysbke*



# EXHIBIT I

*Anything in there?*



*It must be hiding.*

*I see it.*

*Come here, you'll get a good shot.*

*A straight shot.*



*(click click click )*

*Did you get him?*





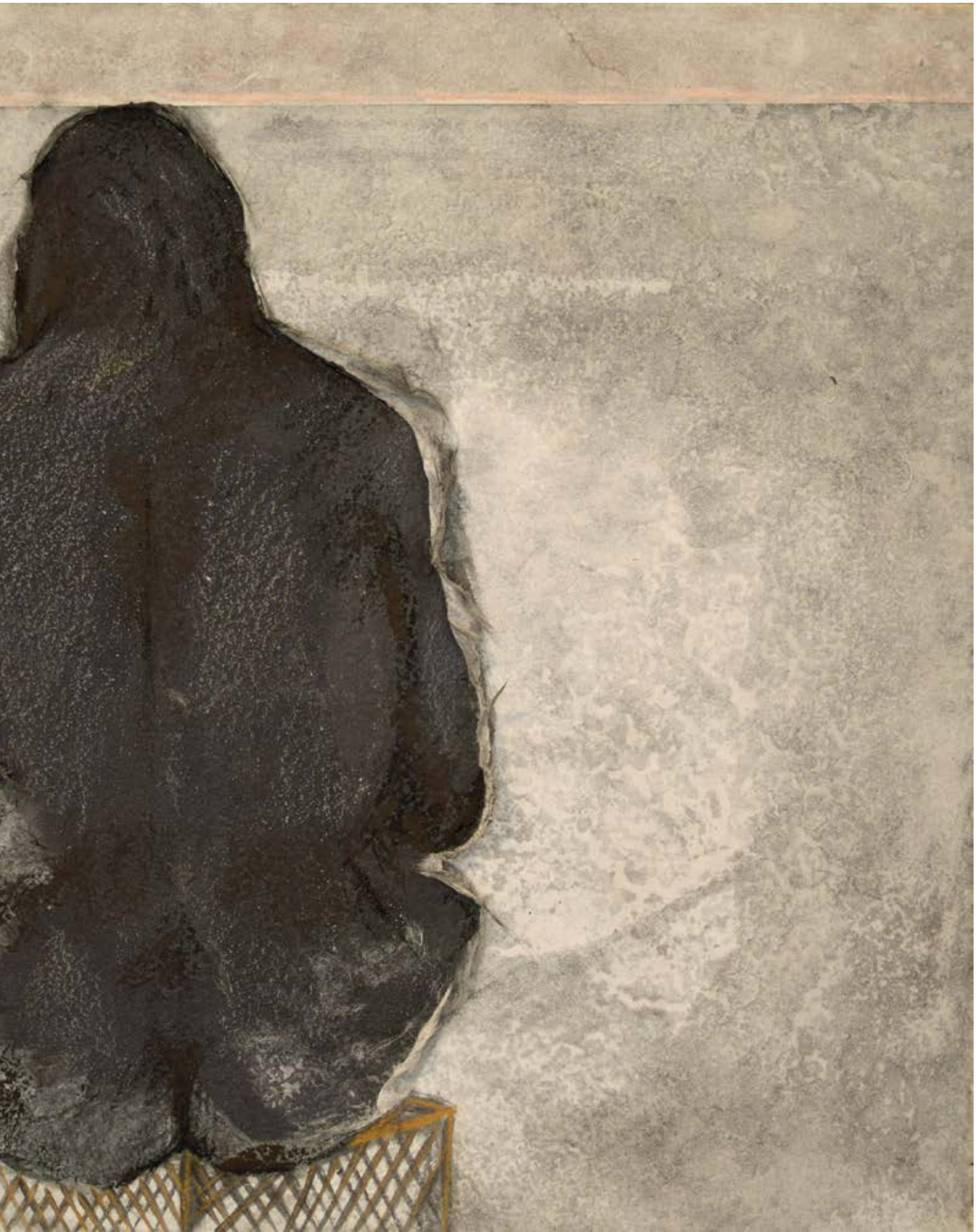
*Got him.*

*Okay, let's go find another.*



EXHIBIT V





*Look at it. says she*

*He turned his back to us. says he*

*How rude. says she*

*(bang) (bang) (bang) does she*

*(bang) (bang) (bang) does he*

*He still won't look at us. says he*

your back is a  
broad door  
to a  
closed room.

EXHIBIT VII







*I wish it wasn't pacing.  
He's putting on a show for us.  
That's not what I want.*

*It won't turn around for me.  
It's exercising.  
I wish it wasn't pacing.  
He's putting on a show for us.  
That's not what I want.*

*It won't turn around for me.  
It's exercising.  
I wish it wasn't pacing.  
He's putting on a show for us.  
That's not what I want.*

*It won't turn around for me.  
It's exercising.  
I wish it wasn't pacing.  
He's putting on a show for us.  
That's not what I want.*

*It won't turn around for me.  
It's exercising.  
I wish it wasn't pacing.  
He's putting on a show for us.  
That's not what I want.*

*It won't turn around for me.  
It's exercising.  
I wish it wasn't pacing.  
He's putting on a show for us.*

you are a grey storm, swirling. your eye, as the center  
of the storm, is still. at the back of the enclosure,  
in the only corner partially out of view, you  
pace. with each step, the pounds of you  
pound into the ground a story  
in sound we can never hear.  
the weight of your body  
is beloved by a  
distant land  
who needs  
your steps  
to be  
bowls  
that hold  
water, quenching  
thirsty mouths of antelope,  
a land who needs your steps to  
shape the grasslands that are homes to  
wildebeests and larks. but here, your steps  
in the dusty ground draw one single shape over  
and over again, an infinity sign: that which is endless,  
that which is boundless, that which does not exist in nature.

# EXHIBIT VI



*Is it real? says he*  
*I want one. says she*  
*See that thing? says he*  
*Is it real? says she*  
*Is he really alive? says she*  
*Yeah, it's real. says he*  
*It looks dead. says he*  
*It's a real one. says she*  
*Let's go find something that's moving. says he*

your eyes are dewed with moisture  
under yellow heat lamps, that pretend to be the sun.  
your cast shadow darkens  
the blue and white concrete wall, that pretends to be the sky.  
your chest swells with breath  
on sculpted concrete rocks that pretend to be the land.  
you turn your head, as slow as a mountain range moving  
while fingers tap on the glass window.  
you open your mouth.  
your throat is a jeweled cave, alive with  
crimsons, pinks, magentas, rubies.  
you are the only  
part that is *real*.

## EXHIBIT II





*... Animals look at space  
differently than we do ...  
says the curator*

*... Minimum space requirement  
... All they need  
are four basic necessities:  
food, water, shelter, and  
the opposite sex...  
... We provide that here.  
It's not a bad life...  
says the curator*

*... The habitats, yes, in a way  
are built for us,  
to imagine the animals in the wild...  
says the curator*

*... We don't call it captivity anymore  
but under  
human care....  
says the curator*

*... The way I say it is, wouldn't you  
rather spend a day in a room  
full of magazines, phones, food, entertainment?  
says the keeper  
(I didn't correct him:  
not a day,  
but a lifetime)*

gull cries sound  
from black speakers  
mounted on rocks,  
covered with dried starfish.

with your every turn,  
turn, turn, turn, turning  
water brims over the rim  
of the glass tank.

you know the sea  
to be not only water,  
but a wide blue chest  
whose deepest depths  
you can almost touch.

you know the sea  
as pair of cool hands  
that tendly shaped your fins  
to be the perfect paddles.

now, in the tank  
your head breaks  
the water's surface.  
your nostrils flare  
towards the flaming sun.  
through the glass, it looks

as if your head  
has been severed  
from your body.

## ARTIST STATEMENT

This selection of paintings, photographs and poetry originate from a series titled *The Garden*. Every weekend, for one and a half years, I visited the zoo near my home to witness the neighboring lives of nonhuman animals, mere miles from me, who remain contained between walls as I move freely. I created images and poetry that both make strange the aesthetics of captivity while also honor a privacy of being that nonhuman animals are denied while perpetually on display for consumption by the human gaze.

As an image-maker who is deeply devoted to the work of challenging human exceptionalism and cultivating reverence and moral sensitivity to nonhuman life, I always account for the ethics with which I depict animals. Each painting or drawing originates from many visits to the same enclosure, where I would stand still for hours and sketch in all weather. I never took photographs of the individual to paint from, for photography is a subtle, but significant way in which zoo animals are captured yet again. Sketching however is inherently fallible and incomplete, therefore felt to be a more honest manifestation of the act of empathetic witnessing. While at the enclosures, I was attentive to the various ways in which the animals limited or denied completely the gaze of human visitors, either with their eyes closed, their back turned, or their endless pacing in a far corner of the enclosure. The animals in the paintings and drawings similarly refuse the viewer's gaze.

The unbalanced compositions and unnatural colors of the paintings and drawings visually communicate the dissonance between the nonhuman animals and the artificial environments of their enclosures. Paired with each image are poems made up of two blocks of text that relate to one another across the divide of the page. The left side is composed of comments by passing visitors and by the curator and keeper I interviewed, while the right side describes the animals as I witnessed them.

The photographs show details of the glass wall of the orangutan enclosure, which is covered with scratches that are made, not from the outside by human visitors, but from the inside by the captive apes. These marks undermine any notion of the animal as object in a display case. To take a tool and make a mark on a surface is, ultimately, the act involved to create a drawing or painting. In art, a mark can be described as having movement and energy, or suggestive of the emotional state of the maker. Given that the root of the word "mark" means "boundary or border," these emphatic scratches and sweeping, gestural lines are

even more haunting, knowing their makers drew them on the border of their world, a border we alone maintain and contain them in. Even within their hyper-surveiled and controlled environment, they were able to find tools with which to gauge the triple-paned, industrial glass walls. There is no way to know the inner lives of these orangutans and their experience of endless captivity. But, somehow, these marks need no translation.

As artifacts of colonialism, now advertised as Noah's Ark in this era of plummeting wildlife populations, zoos use the veneer of entertainment and conservation heroism to sanitize what is otherwise an extremely disturbing reality. Through an isolationist logic of keeping species in separate cages from others and in sculpted habitats arranged like a stage, zoos deprive these creatures of belonging to the web of entangled relations in which they are a vital part. With mouths full of cotton candy, visitors press their palms up to the glass as if it was a TV screen. Curators oversee the "genetic reserve" of captive populations like vulnerable jewels. No one stops to grieve. No one shudders to think: if we have stripped all these beings of belonging, what will be of the Earth's tomorrow?

## IMAGE CAPTIONS

### *Exhibit I*

*(The Writing on the Wall)*

2022

Four digital photographs  
in a series of ten

### *Exhibit VI*

2021

32" X 27"

Oil paint and acrylic paint on  
translucent fabric

### *Exhibit II*

2021

31 1/2" X 20 1/2"

Oil paint and acrylic paint on  
fabric

### *Exhibit V*

2021

16" X 16"

Acrylic paint, pumice, tissue  
paper and graphite on canvas

### *Exhibit VII*

2021

32 1/4" X 56 1/4"

Oil paint, acrylic paint, graph-  
ite and oil pastel on canvas



## To Represent a Cow

*Kristina Meiton*

Dear cow! Let us present ourselves and the setting for our meeting. So, we are standing opposite one another – on a meadow, surrounded by a fence, in a small village outside Gothenburg in Sweden.



If we stretch our necks, we can see the ocean. At least I can since I am standing upright on my two legs, while you are standing on your four legs. My two additional limbs, with which I hold the camera and reach to pat you on the forehead, are called arms. For a long time humans have bred cows into different breeds, and we have decided that you are a Hereford cow. Your breeding origin is in Great Britain, but you were born here on the farm. I am of the Caucasian race, although the relevance of dividing humans into different races is contested by us humans.

I could also describe myself as a white northern European middle-aged woman. I am rather tall for a woman; my eyes are bluish and my hair grayish if I don't dye it, which I do. Your eyes are brown; you have curly hair in large brown and white patterns. Your hair seems long for that of a cow. When I touch it, the hairs feel rougher than it appears. You have a tag in your ear, a soft damp nose, a tail, and – if I may say so – quite a big head.

My occupation, how I spend my days, is making documentary films. That is why I am standing here with you in the middle of a grazing field, feeling both exhilarated and nervous.

Do you believe it is possible to create a sense of connection between us – a human and a cow? Me, I am not sure, but I do know that I need to find a different starting point, to give us a chance. Everything I have learned in my life I have learned by being a human in a society where humans put themselves above all other species. I know this is not a good start for my encounter with you.

To begin with, I discovered some things I need to unlearn:

- The idea that you enjoying your life is less valuable than me enjoying mine (this is going to be challenging).
- The idea that my language is more sophisticated than yours.
- The idea that my time is more valuable than yours
- The idea that my desire to film you is more important than your needs (perhaps the need to be alone).
- The idea that you represent all cows instead of only yourself. In other words, it matters whether I film you or one of the other cows (but how will I ever find you again?)

Standing opposite each other, I am looking at you and you are looking at me, seconds pass and we share a moment. I feel both nervous and curious. It feels like you also are a bit curious about me, but not being able to talk to you makes me worried and, after a while, disappointed that you might look back at me without interest. I am afraid that my idea that we would be able to interact in a meaningful way will be perceived as naive and not taken seriously. But how could our encounter have a chance if, at the same time as we meet, I question you.

I do hope that soon we will find that we have things in common; that we can enjoy the weather together. Perhaps we will be scared by the same sounds? Maybe we both appreciate having our hair stroked.

You and the others in the herd are the kind of cows that are not noticed very much by us, humans, probably because you are bred for slaughter and production, for us to eat and use – and not for being together with us.

In John Berger's famous essay "Why look at animals?" (Berger, 1980), he describes how humans have lost the ability to see you. He writes about the tragic costs of humanity's march toward progress and away from the natural world. He claims that this has alienated us and we have lost contact with you but also ourselves. I am wondering – have you also been alienated from us?

In response to the question, "Why look at animals?" reader in film studies, Anat Pick, asks if we even have the right to look at animals? (O'Sullivan, 2015) What kind of gaze is in place when we simply presume animals are available for us to look at? Her question made me see another shortcoming in my attempt at building a healthy relationship with you. I should have asked before I started filming if it was ok with you. I might not have understood your answer, but it might have mattered to you. Maybe this is why you left me that day. You stayed for a bit and then walked away to the other side of the meadow. Even though the grass was not greener there at all. My ignorance and my idea that your opinion was not worth asking for feels embarrassing. That said, I did feel like an intruder when I entered your group with my camera, meaning that at least in my body I sensed I was doing something questionable.

I have some doubts. When watching the film of you in the meadow, people will enjoy that you eat grass in this idyllic place with a sea view. It is a nice and comforting scene, but the way you live your life reveals very little about the lives of most other cows. Even if I succeed in portraying you as an individual, you may still be perceived as a representative of other cows and their lives. So I need to find a way to build bridges from your life to the life of other cows, where the majority stand inside cramped stalls with no possibility to ever place their noses into the dewy grass. The challenge is to find our common ground, to focus on you as the unique cow you are and not forget the system that enables the oppression to which farmed animals are subjected.

When the film is ready to be shared, it will be screened in a public space. Here, your gaze will meet the gaze of an audience. You will be at the center of attention and people will have come especially to meet you. In this context, their gaze will be different from the ones you experience at the farm.



I believe – even if only momentarily – this could change the relationship between you and the human so that another kind of conversation can take place.



While writing this text, time has passed. I am looking at a photo of you on the screen looking back at me, and I realize that I am not sure if you are still around, since life is short for a cow like you.

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## Art is a Tyrant

*EvaMarie Lindahl*

For several years, I have been absorbed by the French animal painter Rosa Bonheur (1822-1899). I have been fascinated by her choice of motifs, format, lifestyle, and the narrative that surround her person. But above all, I am touched by her ability to portray personalities. To me, her portraits of non-human animals do not function as representatives of an entire species, but rather she portrays individuals with feelings, experiences, and agency. Her paintings feel alive, and they have had a profound impact on my own artistic practice. The breathing through nostrils and the stomping of dry soil are felt when the fields are plowed in the painting *Ploughing in the Nivernais* (Bonheur, 1849) I can hear the whip and sounds of hooves in *The Horse Fair* (Bonheur, 1852-55). I can sense the loneliness and longing in *Lion (The Look Out)* (Bonheur, n.d.).

In Anna Klumpke's (auto)biography of Bonheur's life, Bonheur calls art a tyrant, an absorbent that demands her heart, brain, soul, and body (Klumpke, 2001). Art is her companion, someone who grants her freedom through her success as a painter, but also dictates her life. She does not allow herself to be limited and refuses to agree to the conventions of her time that require women to submit. She also talks about how much she loves the animals she surrounds herself with (ibid, p. 22). And how much they in turn love and respect her – and this is where it gets really interesting. For the love of which Bonheur speaks is conditioned by art, that is, the tyrant, and therefore has fatal consequences for those depicted when caged and killed to be studied.

The description of Bonheur as an animal lover seems to be the key personality trait brought up when describing her person in art history. Dore Ashton, an American art critic and author of the book *Rosa Bonheur: A Life and a Legend* (Ashton, 1981), describes Bonheur as having a “lifelong love affair with the nature of animals” (ibid, p. x). When reading about Rosa Bonheur it seems that the idea of her

as an animal lover is one of the first descriptions that is mentioned of her. For example, when Denver Art Museum lists “10 fascinating facts about the women artists in her Paris” Rosa Bonheur is described as an “animal lover and painter” (Denver Art Museum, 2017).

Bonheur is also well known for her portraits of lions. When she tells the world about her life and relationship with the many lions she kept in her private menagerie over the years, she fills her stories with love, devotion and affection, directed from herself towards the lions but even more so from the lions directed towards herself (Klumpke, 2001, p. 184). Her stories seem, even though animals to her have personalities and emotions and are worthy of love, highly anthropocentric, since her artistic needs have terrible consequences for the animals that she keeps. These consequences become especially apparent in her relationship to the two lions in her menagerie to whom she claims to have a special bond: Nero and Fathma.

The first lion to whom Bonheur describe this special bond is the male lion Nero who, according to Bonheur, gives her “tender looks” (Klumpke, 2001, p. 183) and misses her terribly when she sends him and his female companion back to the zoo of Jardin des Plantes in Paris when they, as she phrases it, “were of no more use to me” (ibid). Later when she visits Nero at the zoo he has gone blind and is said to be literally dying of boredom but according to Bonheur he still recognizes her voice and drags himself towards her when she calls his name (p. 184). The second is Fathma who Bonheur kisses goodnight, keeps inside the house and who follows her around “like a poodle” (ibid). Furthermore, Fathma, who dies only three years old, to great shock of Bonheur, is described as “a model of obedience and docility” (ibid). The testimony of Fathmas death as shocking is remarkable to me, when in fact she is one of the lions who lived the longest within the cages of Bonheur. Even in Fathma’s moment of death Bonheur describes herself as the centre of her life when explaining that Fathma wanted to die “someplace closer to me” (ibid) when finding her dead after falling down the stairs in Bonheur’s house.

When researching Bonheur, I become more and more fascinated by her way of portraying personality, and not only symbolic representations of other species. To me, individuality and personality is especially strong in her portraits of individual non-human animals such as the donkey in the three-quarter view portrait *The Forlorn Donkey* (Bonheur, n.d.) and the dog in the full-face portrait Martin, a Terrier (Bonheur, n.d.). To be able to portray individual expressions in this way, I believe you need to interpret and connect to the emotions of the one being por-

trayed. Therefore, together with the aforementioned testimonies in her “(auto) biography” (Klumpke, 2001) of her emotional relationship to some of her animals, I draw the conclusion that Bonheur knows of the suffering of the lions she brings to her menagerie. In fact, she even portrays it.

So, why does she keep on bringing them to a chateau filled with cages, even though they become sick and die young. Because she loves them? Because she cares for them? Or is it exactly because she doesn't care for them? Perhaps her feeling *with*, is morally detached? Is Bonheur an animal lover? The answer is no, or perhaps I should rephrase, Bonheur is an anthropocentric animal lover. If art is the tyrant that demands caged animals to exist, then Rosa Bonheur is the warden of the ones enslaved by this tyrant. To contest the written and oral histories of these paintings, centred around an “animal loving” artist, I have taken upon myself to try to imagine another perspective that derives from behind the bars of her chateau. A version of history where the consequences of Rosa Bonheur's love towards her caged animals hopefully becomes more visible with the help of one of her beloved, Nero.

*Voiceover for the video artwork*

## The Artist Named me Nero

Dear artist,

When you died in the village of Fountainblue in 1899 the town erected a sculpture in your honour, shaped as a bull. How come there was no sculpture in my honour? I died for art.

To me art is a tyrant. It demands heart, brain, soul and body. The entirety of me. Nothing less will win its highest favour. The artist is both the warden and the caretaker employed by this tyrant, feeding me, keeping me warm, caressing me but also imprisoning me and accompanying me to my death. This means the sculpture in your honour is a sculpture of oppression.

The artist named me Nero. I find myself in a courtyard of a chateaux with walls that are heavy of animal trophies. The artist lives and works here. I am surrounded by gazelle, deer, elk, mouflon, horse, bull, goat, yak, dog, pig, monkey and birds who cannot fly. The artist has built a great studio of red brick and large windows through which she can study us all.

I have permission to walk around in the courtyard. Every morning the artist passes me by, going over the courtyard and the lawn until she reaches the wall and the white wooden gate that opens towards the forest. Sometimes she travels in a carriage that has a transparent wall on one side, it is because she wants to be able to paint even though the weather doesn't permit it. Those days I stay inside the cage.

There is a place by the wall where I can see and smell the forest that she disappears into daily. People pass by every day on the small path that runs between the trees and the wall. They walk closer to the forest when they see me. Now and then the artist comes back with prey. If it is a small animal she gives it to me, but usually she takes it to the brick house.

Behind the big house there is a pasture. It is full of sheep. I can smell them, they must be plenty. The great gate to the road is opened daily. More animals than people pass. The animals are transported on carts, are tied to donkeys and horses, are imprisoned in wooden boxes. She is collecting us, studying us for her paintings and when she is done we disappear through the gate again.

Dear artist, how come you need the bodies of animals to express what you need to tell and show the world? It is as if you need to conquer me to be able to respect me. I am a beast that is formidable only when I am feared or caged.

I have seen a painting of myself where I am standing alone in a landscape so vast the horizon is almost invisible. I am looking out into the landscape with my back to the viewer. There is so much longing in me and you have understood and portrayed this longing. You must have felt what I feel to be able to portray me like this. You felt my suffering but you kept on causing it. You know of our suffering, of the knife that has to pierce our bodies for us to become material, still you keep on doing it.

I am living in a cage, on a courtyard of a chateaux that was once a hunting lodge and I am going to die in a cage at a zoo next to a natural history museum where animals will be imprisoned, exhibited and experimented on for hundreds of years. Paintings of myself, and other animals who have passed the gates of this chateaux, will be filling the walls of museums all over the world. It keeps on going. I cannot see an end to it.

I am not the first lion staying in this cage. Before me was a male lion that died the first week of entering this cage that I am in. After that came a feline who tried to climb the stairs of the house while sick and fell down and died and I will be followed by your most beloved Fathma. I am told that you looked upon us as fellow creatures and that you always thought of the soul of the animal

while painting us. That you loved me. That you loved us. But it cannot be love when you in the future send me away to a certain death.

For the last months of my life I was taken to the Jardin des Plantes in Paris when you left the chateaux for one of your longer journeys. The courtyard and the place where I used to sit and look into the forest is no more. The other animals that have surrounded me are gone. In the end you came to visit me and you were with me when I died. It felt good not being alone. That there was someone there who had once said that she loved me. And sometimes I believed that I loved you. But this isn't a love on equal terms. This is a "love" where someone is in control of the other, where someone is imprisoned.

You talk to me, you mourn me, you treat me differently than the lion next to me. You do that because you know that I have personality, I am an individual and you know this. You feel it. But it doesn't matter. These feelings don't give me freedom. Perhaps you are too lonely to let me go, or perhaps you don't think I deserve it. After all I am still only animal to you.

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## Schwein: A Work Process

*Julia Lindemalm*



In the spring of 2019, I met free-range pigs on an organic farm outside Malmö. I felt a buzzing in my chest. That summer I couldn't stop thinking about pigs. I began a photographic and artistic work that spanned four years.

At the farm, Ängavallen, I was welcome to photograph as I wanted. There, the animals are allowed to go outside all year round, to root, dig, play, and bathe in mud puddles during their short time on earth. In the beginning I was afraid of the pigs and they were afraid of me. Gradually I dared to approach them and gained their trust. I felt like Jane Goodall when I sat in dusty fields summer mornings and evenings trying to understand what kind of animal the pig is. When my exhibition was finished, I missed them. Being able to lie in the straw in the sun and hear their content snores around me was a respite from human life.



Part of my work was to understand the pig's place in society. I stood with the animal rights activists Kristianstad Pig Save outside Scan's factory to greet the pigs going in for slaughter. I also visited one of the largest pig factories in Germany.

With me I had my analog medium format camera and a small video camera, a GoPro, and a notebook.

Here are excerpts from my process diary:

*20/8 2019, Ängavallen.*

I wonder if the pigs smell the gelatin when I change the film?

*11/11 2019*

All species disappear. Pigs exist in hundreds of millions.

*6/3 2020*

The radical thing is to make the pigs look beautiful. Beauty and humor. The violence as a hidden message. Everyone should want the pictures on the wall.

*19/5 2020, demonstration with Kristianstad Pig Save outside Scan.*

The adrenaline rush when the slaughter truck arrives. The pigs are so real. Pink with human eyes. Body. Then the rapid heartbeats and the silence afterwards. One pig has scratch marks and wounds. Blue eyes, scared eyes. One is lying on the floor unable to get up. My instinct is to comfort them "Little pig, we're trying, we're trying". The smell of smoked ham mixes with that of pig poo and live animals at the slaughterhouse entrance.

Thoughts:

- We live in a society that makes it extremely difficult to do good. Those who try must exert themselves to the utmost.

- Life after this - heaven - is it animal-free? Imagine getting there and all the pigs are there too.



*17/8 2020, Ängavallen.*

I could start working faster today, they were calmer. Maybe it was the heat, maybe they recognized me. Like a relationship. I have been interested in them and scouted for almost a year. And now I have been granted access. Now I love them. I could control a little more today. Went to the mud puddle by the sows, and then everyone came there. Got a feeling that two of the sows, especially one of them, liked that I photographed her. I know this can go well now. Proud that I was so persistent. Maybe I will only use the pictures I take from now on, discard the others. Getting really close now. Totally covered in mud.

*1/10 2020, scanning pictures in the office.*

I was at Ängavallen 3 hours straight last week. Only with the sows with litters in the meadow. Want that to be the universe now. The universe of pigs. Always summer, closeness, calm, pleasure. I feel like I'm close to a breakthrough. But time is running out. Soon the light and heat will disappear. Soon the sows are moved and the piglets are slaughtered.

– Motherhood. Friendship. Existence.



*14/10 2020, pig factory, Sachsen-Anhalt, Germany*

My skin smells like pig. The cameras smell like pigs. I did breathing exercises on the way in. Panic was close.



Fixated sows. Dead piglets. Felt like I could barely make it. Had to take pictures constantly. Without the camera it was unbearable. Started telling all the sows “I love you”. Felt it. Seeing them and giving them my love was my only means. The system is merciless. The powerlessness is total. The roof and beams completely covered in spiderwebs. The pigs have such cute, beautiful faces. The young are curious like children. The big ones suffered the most. They fixated the sows while waiting for them to give birth. Lying in their own shit. Filling their cages, genitals pushed through the cracks, teats red and tense. Panting, biting the beams, but most of them completely apathetic. Only women who worked with them. Everyone in the staff was kind to the animals from what I saw.

10/5 2022, Ängavallen.

I made a friend today! Went out at 06.15. The year-old sows were sleeping in the straw outside. She (Carmen? Stina?) lay down right next to me wanting to be scratched. Wonder if she had a calming effect on the other pigs. It went so well today. I got to join. It is wonderful to film and include the sounds. The dust that swirls around the snout as they breathe in their shed. I could co-exist with them. She made me feel safe.

They are slaughtered one by one when they reach a slaughter weight of 100 - 110 kg. She was big. Going back on Thursday. Hope she lives then.

27/5 2022, Ängavallen.

Damn crappy day. She is gone. Sold in pieces in the shop now. She didn't come up to me and lay on her side to be scratched. I was so sad. Just crying. The others care as little about me as people do about pigs. But she wanted to be with me. Sensed when I needed support. Then she came and laid down next to me. With full confidence. I looked for her everywhere. Scanned the area. Checked in all the sheds. Looked for her spots and the yellow round tag in her ear. My friend.

They are getting disgusting now. Puberty. Riding each other. Smelling each other's asses.

All technology malfunctioned. I forgot the microphone. Accidentally turned on continuous shooting instead of video on the GoPro. Then the GoPro died completely. Fucking shit.

*5/6 2022, Ängavallen.*

It is being in existence. No goodbye, beginning or end. Except for the imminent absolute end. It's addictive to me. An original, higher state.



*23/6 2022, Ängavallen, with the sows.*

Animals that feel good are in absolute zen. The enviable state of the present. In life.

A shrill call and all five or six sows gathered with their heads towards the middle and the piglets came running. Some kind of conference. Then everyone went back to their own.

*8/8 2022, Ängavallen.*

Why am I doing this when I'm so afraid of death?

*17/10 2022 Exhibition text:*

What is a life? A soul in a body? What is the purpose of that body? It's longing?

I only know mine. My body wants to feel the warmth of another body. The smell of earth and rain. The look at the horizon and the anticipation of what is there.

For four years I have been photographing pigs. A pig's life is short. They say pigs are like us. They can definitely teach us how to enjoy ourselves – you have to look hard to find more sensual creatures than pigs.

But the vast majority of pigs are losers. Industrialization's biggest loser.



# Animals and Exploitation





# Who Wants to be Blue?

## Aquaculture Expansion and the Concept of Blue Food

*Daniel Burgos-Nyström*

### Introduction

A few months ago, I was selling a used bicycle to a person. As we small-talked he asked what I did, and I told him that I was taking a course in Critical Animal Studies. I said I am interested in human-animal relations, more specifically how humans relate to fishes<sup>1</sup>. As coincidence would have it, he then told me he was a retired head of operations at a fishing company.

I think they are sensitive to sound, he said.

He accounted for his experience in the process of slaughtering them, how they, when being transported on the conveyor belt toward the machinery with two rotating blades that would kill them, would start to move their bodies vigorously attempting to escape. On occasions he said, their bodies would bounce up in the air and actually flap off the power switch of the machinery, causing it to stop.

Similarly to the fishes on the conveyor belt who were captured in the ocean off the west coast of Sweden, fishes around the world living their lives in oceans, lakes, rivers and other bodies of water, have historically been confronted with, and resisted, human tools and technologies. Designed to outsmart, capture and exploit them,

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<sup>1</sup> When speaking of two or more individuals of fish in this chapter, “fishes” used as opposed to traditional language-use where the plural form for two or more individuals of fish remain “fish”. This is done to make visible when referring to a plurality of individuals.

such as different kinds of hooks and nets, and more recently aquaculture<sup>2</sup> constructions. Hooks, for example, have been found at excavation sites; sharp, carefully shaped pieces of bone splinters the size of tooth-picks. They were possibly baited and tied to lines with which to haul fishes in (Klein and Edgar 2002, p. 20). And the net, formed in a mesh pattern out of rope or twine, when thrown in the water allows for large fishes to be caught, while water and smaller creatures of lesser interest move through it. The hook and net however rely on capturing evasive animals<sup>3</sup> in large open spaces. Aquaculture is a technological innovation that responds to this evasion by keeping fishes captive in enclosed spaces from birth to death (Wadiwel 2016). This furthermore involves human “interventions in the rearing process to enhance production” (FAO 2022). In marine aquaculture, fishes are captive in net pens in the water, or in tanks on land. And for freshwater aquaculture, fishes are kept in ponds or other systems made by humans (NOAA 2021). Contrary to what would be suggested by human language-use as in ‘cultivating’ or ‘harvesting’ fishes, the effort that humans put into the design of these tools, technologies and architectural solutions are proof of resistance among fishes. For if fishes gave themselves freely to humans, no tools or technologies for capture or for making evasion impossible would have been needed. As the anecdotal story about fishes fighting for survival on the conveyor belt highlights; far from passive, indifferent or insensitive to their lives and destinies, fishes are actively resisting human acts of domination (Wadiwel 2016).

Compared to the domestication<sup>4</sup> of land-living animals, such as dogs, pigs, cows and bulls, and horses, which started about 12000 years ago, the domestication of fishes has a much shorter history (Teletchea 2015, p. 1228, Balon 2004, p. 1). The first practice of domestication in the form of aquaculture is believed to have taken place in China about 2500 years ago, as per documentation from 460 BCE. Indi-

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2 In this text, “aquaculture” is used interchangeably with “farming of fishes”.

3 The term *anymal* – a contraction of ‘any’ and ‘animal’ – is used to denote “any animal who does not happen to be the species that I am” (Kemmerer 2006, p.10). Using *anymal* avoids alienating terms such as ‘non’ and ‘other’, as in ‘non-human animal’ or ‘other-than-human animal’, thus as well having the advantage of being a one-word term which is less cumbersome. Also, using *anymal* makes way for using the term ‘animal’ when actually referring to both animals and humans, which in turn eliminates a false and harmful understanding of ‘animal’ and ‘human’ as dichotomies. (ibid. pp. 10–11)

4 Adhering here to Clutton-Brock’s (1999) definition of a ‘domestic animal’ being “one that has been bred in captivity for purposes of economic profit to a human community that maintains total control over its breeding, organization of territory, and food supply.”

viduals of carp were most commonly the ones exploited. Goldfishes – probable descendants of Chinese gibel carp individuals – constitute one of the documented branches of this exploitation. Domesticated in China during 960-1278 CE, and from the 1200s and onwards all the more popular as ornamental animals, then introduced in Japan approximately 1500 CE and in Europe in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Clutton-Brock 2012, pp. 96-97, Balon 2004). Romans in south-central Europe started domesticating individuals of carp about 2000 years ago (Balon 2004)

While the first domestication of individuals of fish species dates back at least about 2500 years, domestication of fishes is a development that really took off in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the late 1960's and early 1970's, international development agencies saw farming of fishes as a means to tackle problems pertaining to shortages of arable land and food. To the detriment of the individuals involved, the bodies they inhabited proved to perform well on metrics of importance to humans, such as 'grain feed conversion rates'. And after international aid agencies and resource planners in the early 1980's proclaimed that a 'Blue Revolution' was desired, funding of genetic modification projects followed. For example, in 1993 researchers in the Philippines engineered individuals of tilapia that outgrew their 'wild' counterparts by 60 percent. The 'aquatic chicken', World Bank officials called "it" (Platt McGinn 1998, p. 12), referring to the extreme and unprecedented rapid growth of chickens in animal agriculture post-intensive selective breeding (Chalmers 2021).

It is difficult to determine how many individuals of fish have, and do, live and die at aquaculture sites since fishes traditionally are not measured in number of individuals but in the aggregate weight of their bodies. However, in 2012 it was estimated that globally 37 to 120 billion individuals were killed at aquaculture sites – yearly – figures that in the case of land-living animals for human consumption in 2010 corresponded to 63 billion individuals (Mood and Brooke 2012, p. 1, Wadiwel 2016, pp. 196-197).<sup>5</sup>

Globally, from the 1960's to the 2010's, per capita consumption of fishes, by the weight of their bodies, increased from 9.9 kilograms to 19.2 kilograms per year – a near doubling. This despite that, since the 1980's the number of 'wild caught' fishes globally have stayed about the same, meaning that since the 1980's the in-

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<sup>5</sup> For 'wild caught' fishes, the yearly average estimate for 2007-2016 was 790 billion – 2.3 trillion individuals (See: fishcount.org.uk).

crease in human consumption has been contingent upon an intensified exploitation of fishes at aquaculture sites (Wadiwel 2016, pp. 197, 217).

In 2015, farmed fishes accounted for as much as 53 percent of allfishes killed for human consumption (FAO 2018). Two years prior, in 2013, the so-called Blue Growth Initiative was launched by FAO. ‘Blue Growth’ is defined as “sustainable growth and development emanating from economic activities using living aquatic resources of the oceans, inland waters and coastal zones, that minimizes environmental degradation and biodiversity loss and maximize economic and social benefits” (FAO 2020, p. 158). Other terminology used interchangeably with ‘blue growth’ are ‘blue economy’, ‘green economy in a blue world’, or ‘ocean economy’ – all stemming from ‘the green economy’ concept endorsed at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development<sup>6</sup> (also known as “Rio+20”) in 2012 (FAO 2020, p.158).

Despite the already steep and extreme growth of industries involved in the exploitation of fishes, global demands for human consumption of marine and freshwater fishes, crustaceans, and molluscs is projected to double until 2050 as a consequence of human population growth as well as endeavours to meet human development goals (Naylor et al. 2021).

Most recently, in 2021, a new conceptualisation has been launched, of both animal and plant aquatic species for human consumption grouped together under the name ‘Blue Food’, which is defined as “foods derived from aquatic animals, plants and algae cultivated and captured in freshwater and marine environments” (Leape and DeClerk 2021, p. 6). The blue food concept appears to enjoy broad support, ranging from UN initiatives<sup>7</sup> for meeting sustainable development goals (UNDESA 2021), to research performed at many universities in for example Sweden (Blue Food – Centre for future seafood 2022). Seemingly at the centre of advocacy for the global conceptualisation of blue food is the Blue Food Assessment (2022a), which is “an international joint initiative that brings together over 100 scientists from more than 25 institutions around the world. The Stockholm Resilience Centre at Stockholm University and Stanford University’s Center for Ocean Solutions and Center

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<sup>6</sup> Please keep in mind that sustainable development is a very anthropocentric concept, not least as evidenced by the lack of consideration for animals in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. (Visseren-Hamakers 2020)

<sup>7</sup> e.g. the Aquatic Blue Food Coalition; a multi-sectoral coalition consisting of nation states, NGOs, academic institutions, consumer groups, financial institutions and more, launched at the United Nations Ocean Conference in Lisbon 2022. (EDF 2022)

on Food Security and the Environment are lead science partners and EAT is the lead impact partner” (Blue Food Assessment 2022b).

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A scan of literature on ‘blue food’ reveals lacking animal-ethical deliberations and problematisations in the sector, suggesting anthropocentric and speciesist norms at the core of policy and research pertaining to ‘blue food’. Given this, as well as issues regarding aquaculture provided above, this chapter aims to explore how developments concerning aquaculture and the conceptualisation of fishes as ‘blue food’ may be understood from a CAS perspective. How do these developments affect individuals of fish? And, how may policy and research on ‘blue food’ be influenced by CAS perspectives?

The method used for this chapter consisted of text analysis, focusing on documents such as UN publications and research articles on aquaculture and ‘blue food’ as well as websites such as the Blue Food Assessment website. Considering the short history of the ‘blue food’ concept and only a small number of relevant findings during the literature review, the total data on ‘blue foods’ is limited. This was one reason for deciding to opt for a strategic selection: to focus mainly on the Blue Food Assessment Initiative – their website and publications. Another reason was that the initiative represents 100 scientists and 25 institutions around the world, which thus was estimated to imply that perspectives and rationales put forward on their website reflect common views among a considerable group of parties. The data gathered was then analysed using concepts and theory building from the CAS research field. Given time and space constraints this chapter is limited in scope and is of explorative character. While recognising additional important areas that could have benefited the chapter, delimitation choices were made<sup>8</sup>, resulting in the chapter in its current form.

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8 One excluded area is the relatively recent research pertaining to sentience among individuals of aquatic species, and its possible implications (Birch et al., 2021). On the one hand, there are possible implications for protection in legislation of members of those species, as well as possible implications for human perceptions of their ontologies, and perhaps in turn perceptions of for example edibility. On the other hand, these research findings imply the possibility for aquaculture industries to – through innovation – capitalise on adapting to animal sentience in order to make operations more efficient and profitable, as exemplified by Temple Grandin’s construction of “stairway to heaven” – an innovation that resulted in lesser stress among cows and bulls on their way to slaughter, while simultaneously reducing resistance and thus making possible for exploiters to slaughter an even greater number of individuals than before (Williams 2004).

## Ontological implications of aquaculture, and the power of naming

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, abattoirs for land-living animals were optimised for the disassembly of animal bodies. The modern abattoir was made possible through many different modern technologies such as railways for transport, architectural solutions with specialised spaces for different purposes such as cooling, and machinery that enabled animal bodies to be transported to different stations of a disassembly line. The effectivisation, mechanisation, division of labour at the different disassembly stations, as well as the detailed usage of every part of the animals' bodies, altered the ontological perception of the animals exploited – from individuals and subjects to commodities and objects (Pick 1993).

The recent, ongoing and projected future, massive expansion of farming of fishes provides for an unsettling resemblance, and invokes thoughts on implications for human-fish relations. Whereas before, fishes caught for food were thought of as free until the moment of capture, now, with the aquaculture industry in 2015 having expanded to represent 53 percent of total “seafood production from fisheries and aquaculture” (FAO 2018, Oddsson 2020, p. 1), what ontological alterations may follow in human perceptions of fishes, and of most concern, what will it imply for fishes? While responding to these questions with any degree of embellishment, depth or certainty is beyond the scope of this chapter, is it not reasonable to assume that fishes – at least members of the most exploited species at aquaculture sites, such as salmon, tilapia and carp – have already started to, and increasingly will be ontologically understood as ‘farm animals’<sup>9</sup>, leading to normalisation of captivity and domination of fishes from birth to death?

### Continuously bi-constructing fishes at aquaculture sites

On the question of perceptions and constructions of animals, from a realist-Cartesian perspective animals are fixed in different ways, determined by their history and genetics, and thereby predictable in their reaction to stimuli. A bi-constructivist approach on the other hand centres animal individuality, creativity and ability for anticipation, and furthermore acknowledges the subjective human ob-

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<sup>9</sup> I am aware of alternate language-use such as “farmed animals” that better reflects a CAS perspective, but am using “farm animals” here to refer to common language-use.

server as significant when constructing perceptions of anymals, as opposed to anymals being available to humans for objective observation (Lestel 2011).

In adhering to a bi-constructivist approach, there is an openness to what fishes will become when interacting with the circumstances that the aquaculture sites and systems, and the conditions of living and dying there, entail. Fishes, innovative and creative agents in these new environments compared to those in which their ancestors spent their lives, will undoubtedly engage in new ways with humans and their technologies for domination, dialectically subjecting each other to challenges and adaptations (Wadiwel 2016, Hribal 2007). Moreover, as stated earlier, another way in which the human aquaculture project has imposed ontological changes on fishes has been through genetic modification.<sup>10</sup>

Last but not least, from the perspective of fishes, what is a being to think about their place in the world, to think about themselves as a being – what they are – when born into confinement, and with restrictions of movement, variety, opportunities for spontaneity, expression of personality and desires? Restrictions through meticulously controlled terms of the environment in which their existence plays out in its entirety?

## Naming

The practice of naming anymals – be it on an individual or species level – has consequences for the one(s) named, as well as for human-animal relationships at large. For example, perceptions of what constitutes ethical treatment toward one and the same rabbit is likely to differ majorly depending on the rabbit being labelled as ‘pet’, ‘food’, ‘research subject’, or ‘vermin’ (Borkfelt 2011).

In China, in 618 CE a change in dynasties occurred, and the name of the new lineage of emperors - Lee - happened to be very similar to the word for carp in Chinese. With this event, some 1078 years of domination and killing of carp individuals came to a stop due to human exploiters’ anxiety regarding eating that

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<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that according to Lestel (2011) – philosopher and associate professor in the Department of Cognitive Science at the École Normale Supérieure, Paris – we ought not to ask the ontological question what an anymal is, but rather what anymals are capable of, which cannot be fully known a priori, but is something that continuously is subject to surprise. Therefore, it may be more fruitful to speak of ontologies in plural, and to thereby mirror both plurality in anymal individuality as well as the continuous transformation of beings becoming.



which sounded like the name of the Emperor. Instead, in their place, individuals of numerous other species with less sensitive names filled the spaces of confinement (Platt McGinn 1998, p. 12). This example of future generations of individuals of carp avoiding an existence of subjugation and exploitation due to naming, is telling of the power of language and symbols in human webs of meaning. Labels, names and their connotations can and does mean the difference between freedom and captivity, life and death.

## Conceptualising fishes as blue food

A first recognition when confronted with the term ‘blue food’ is that it functions as a mass term. Regardless of how much blue you add to blue, the result is ‘blue’, the same way that adding food to food results in ‘food’. This mass term language-use suggests an interchangeability and a de-ontologisation of the individuals who make up the ‘blue food’. Another way of putting it is that the individuality of fishes is removed, and those who the term ‘blue food’ refers to become ‘absent referents’ (Adams 2009). This way, the ‘blue food’ conceptualisation functions as an *Oppressive conceptual framework* as it “explains, justifies, and maintains relationships of domination and subordination” (Warren 1990, p. 127).

Provided below are bits of two answered questions on the website of the Blue Food Assessment in the FAQ section (Blue Food Assessment. 2022b) (bold style added), followed by analysis:

“What does the Blue Food Assessment mean by ‘blue food’?”

Blue foods, also known as aquatic foods, are foods that are captured or cultivated from the ocean, rivers, lakes, ponds, raceways and tanks. **Blue foods can derive from aquatic animals, plants, or algae.** They support hundreds of millions of livelihoods and are a **critical source of nutrition for several billion people around the world.**

/.../

For example, **food system policies and analyses have often considered blue food as a homogenous “fish” category, overlooking the vast diversity of animals, plants and algae that are produced or harvested for food.** The Blue Food Assessment begins the **critical work of moving beyond “fish” as one category.** For example, the **nutrition paper** offers the most comprehensive database of

**blue food nutrition** ever assembled, mapping **nutrient content across more than 3,750 aquatic species**. Other papers highlight the need to analyze data across various regions (**demand**) and production systems (**environmental performance**). /.../”

As stated earlier, and as reiterated above, ‘blue food’ does not only refer to fishes, but reflects a recognition of members of thousands of both plant and animal species. From a CAS perspective, arguably it is a welcome development to move away from ‘*a homogenous “fish” category*’. However, at a closer look, even though there is greater attention to detail, the metrics highlighted as important are not recognition of individuality, moral worth or the likes, but *nutrient content*, human *demand* and *environmental performance*. Thus, from a CAS perspective, this recognition of diversity seems to be something like what Syl Ko (2017) calls “cosmetic diversity”, when talking about black bodies being present in white spaces, rather than black Life actually being acknowledged – “Life” meaning “those activities that make life worth living and valuable” (Ko 2017, p. 5). Put differently, while those behind the Blue Food Assessment website recognise the diversity of the members of species making up ‘blue food’, they omit crucial aspects of that diversity – factors that bear ethical implications with them. That is highly problematic.

#### “Does the Blue Food Assessment recommend expanding aquaculture?”

The Blue Food Assessment’s **demand** paper projects that demand for blue food is expected to **roughly double by 2050**. This **demand** will likely be met principally by **aquaculture expansion**. /.../

As noted in our environmental performance paper, progress in recent years has demonstrated the potential for substantial gains in both **efficiency and sustainability** through **better management and reduced reliance on wild fish for feed**. **Between 1997 and 2017, for example, the amount of wild fish used to produce a kilogram of farmed fish declined by 85%**. /.../

/.../ The Blue Food Assessment supports **sustainable aquaculture** operations that actively **mitigate environmental risks and optimize for sustainable feeds**, as indicated in our **environmental performance paper**.”

The focus on human demand while neglecting ethical considerations and individuality among animals is anthropocentric and speciesist. Furthermore, while the

85 percent reduction in wild fish exploitation as feed to the aquaculture production is of great importance from a CAS perspective, we are soon again reminded that it was not the spared lives of individuals that mattered, but sustainability and *environmental performance*. Thus, the answer from the Blue Food Assessment seems to imply an indifference to the scale of domination and neglect of desires among the individuals whose bodies make up the end product of what is produced. What seems to be expressed in this answer is an interchangeability between anymals and plants, implying a de-animalisation<sup>11</sup> of those anymals.

In sum, in regards to the question of expanding aquaculture, the Blue Food Assessment is passive, even supportive. Thereby it's supporters are complicit in the ongoing increase in exploitation of aquatic anymals and furthermore contribute to what Zygmunt Bauman calls adiaphorisation; “making certain actions, or certain objects of action, morally neutral or irrelevant – exempt from the category of phenomena suitable for moral evaluation.” (Emel and Wolch 1998, p. 22).

## Discussion and conclusions

From a CAS perspective, recalling that the Blue Food Assessment is “an international joint initiative that brings together over 100 scientists from more than 25 institutions around the world.” (Blue Food Assessment 2022b), it is very frightening to take part of anthropocentrist and speciesist narratives and discourses expressed on their website, as it serves as a platform for proliferation of their recommendations. Their narratives are not surprising however, considering the seemingly strong historic ties to human and sustainable development agendas, including the different variations of growth promotion framings. These frames, be they coloured in green or blue, their commonality is their commodification and exploitation of nonhuman “resources” that humans claim ownership over. This makes the task of CAS scholars all the more vital – to make up a counter weight by engaging in a discursive battle – which not least, as this chapter has indicated, has to do with deconstructing normalised perceptions and constructions of what

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<sup>11</sup> De-animalisation is an act in which the characteristics of anymals are represented in non-anymal terms, often by reference to characteristics of plants or vegetables, or in terms of human purpose. These representations serve as euphemisms for a reality that is too harsh to be faced directly, and thus facilitates anymal exploitation. (Vialles 1994).

anymals are, to recognise that they are continuously becoming, what they are capable of, including to recognise their resistance to domination.

One possible explanation for a lacking perception among humans of anymals as sovereign subjects may be found in humans learning to adopt a Cartesian logic of relating to anymals, deeming them guilty of being mindless, non-sentient and thus not deserving of moral consideration until proven otherwise. (Aaltola 2013) However, given the astronomical aggregated exploitation of anymals – fishes most represented – and all indications of mindedness and sentience, it is hard to conceive of a more suitable situation in which to adhere to a precautionary principle and to reverse the burden of proof, as Dinesh Wadiwel (2016, p. 204) has argued. In other words, it might be helpful for policy-makers and researchers to ask themselves, as Wadiwel has posed the question: ‘why is it we can justify using animals in the way we do when there is the possibility, every possibility, that they think, reason and suffer as we do?’ (Wadiwel 2016, p 227). The Blue Food Assessment, through the adiaphorising narrative on their website – of fishes as instruments for meeting human development goals rather than as subjects with inherent worth – fails to address this important question. I urge researchers and policy-makers on blue food and related fields to apply CAS perspectives when formulating research questions and policy. How may food-systems of the future refrain from exploiting and dominating anymals?

To conclude, my argument is that fishes – at least members of species most exploited at aquaculture sites, such as salmon, tilapia and carp – have begun to, and given projected developments increasingly will be ontologically understood as “farm animals”, leading to normalisation of captivity and domination of fishes, from birth to death. I deem it an important scholarly task to keep track of developments in this domain. I furthermore argue that the ontological implications of categorising fishes as “blue food”, the stereotyping rather than recognition of individuality, as well as the anthropocentrist and speciesist language-use found at the Blue Food Assessment website, reinforces and legitimises an extreme increase in exploitation and domination of fishes at aquaculture sites around the world. Conceptualising individuals of aquatic species as “blue food” seems to be yet another anthropocentric practice of naming that facilitates and promotes further exploitation of those assigned this label. Under this paradigm, and in general, who wants to be blue?

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# It's Complicated: Reflections on Pet Ownership and the Dynamics of Love and Domination

*Astrid Totté*

Throughout my teenage years, I often reflected on my own and other humans' inconsistent treatment of animals. How can it be that we view animals differently depending on what species they belong to and in what context they are encountered? These thoughts were contextualized through my experience growing up in a household with both pets and human meat-eaters.

Studying Critical Animal Studies (CAS) theory made it possible to add an 'academic' lens to my reflections on the complexity and paradoxicality of pet ownership. One of the central texts in the literature on this topic is 'Animal Pets: cruelty and affection' (1984), in which Tuan argues that the domestication of non-human animals is an act that combines cruelty and affection. While studying the literature, I found myself returning to the concepts of *anthropomorphism* and *anthropodenial* as key elements in explaining the co-existence and interplay of love and domination that having a pet entails. Whilst anthropomorphism—the attribution of human characteristics or behaviour to a god, 'animal' or object (Parkinson, 2019, p.1)—is a frequently used term in multiple academic disciplines, 'anthropodenial', coined by the ethologist Frans de Waal, is not as common. The term refers to a "rejection of shared characteristics between humans and animals when in fact they may exist" (de Waal, 1999, p.258).

Last summer my family decided to get a new pet, a Labradoodle they named Luke. In just a couple of weeks, it became evident to me that Luke was a victim of both anthropomorphism and anthropodenial. He quickly became seen as an important family member with his own bed, personality, and Instagram account. He was in many ways treated as a human member of the family, but then in some



ways not. In contrast to human members of the household, Luke had very little autonomy as his daily regimen was in the hands of his owners. Although I had no doubts that my family cared for Luke, seeing them interact with him made me question how much of what they know about Luke is fundamentally true, and how much is an anthropomorphized version of his reality. Is scratching his paw on your leg really a sign that he wants to ‘play’ with you? Does jumping and barking when you come home really indicate that he has ‘missed’ you? What purpose did these anthropomorphic depictions and practices serve in my family members’ relationship with Luke?

Throughout this paper, my observations of Luke and my family will be utilised to reflect on the complexity of the relationship between a pet and its owner(s). I aim to investigate in what way anthropomorphic practices can serve an important function in legitimizing pet-owner relationships and the combination of affection and domination it entails.

## Aim & approach

When non-human animal oppression is brought up and questioned in media and society it often concerns spaces—laboratories and factory farms—and/or practices—hunting, experimentation, meat production—in which animal exploitation and domination is self-evident, casting a negative moral assessment on the situation. However, the phenomenon of animals that are treated ‘good’ but still owned and dominated by humans has not been problematized to the same extent. I believe this phenomenon, particularly evident in pet ownership, can serve as an example to better understand humans’ ambivalent feelings towards and inconsistent treatment of, other animals.

This study explores the social construction of pets and how the concepts of anthropodenial and anthropomorphism can shed light on the complexity and ambivalence that permeates humans’ relationships with other animals. The purpose of this paper is not to argue for or against domesticating animals, but to investigate and challenge the anthropocentric cultural and social constructions that pervade modern society.

Throughout this paper, my ethnographic observations of my family and their pet Luke will function as a case study to explore the focus area of this paper. I have conducted my observations through an ethnographic participant-observer ap-

proach where, as Arluke & Sanders explains, the participating observer functions as partly a member, and partly a guest (1996, p.23). As a member of the family who has moved out of home and only interacts with Luke on occasional visits, I have a close familiarity with the subject without being so close as to be influenced by personal feelings of ownership. Although subjectivity is inevitable in ethnographic fieldwork (ibid, p.19), my level of access to the case study allows for ‘thick descriptions’ and an in-depth view of the relationship between my family and their pet. With this level of closeness to the subject in mind, I have made efforts throughout my observations to remain critical, and to ground my interpretation of these human-pet interactions and acts of anthropomorphization through the lens of CAS literature.

## Anthropomorphism – a brief overview

Non-human animals are inevitably anthropomorphized when humans communicate with or about them, as humans’ understanding of animals is invariably anthropomorphic and “an interpretation in terms of human concepts” (Parkinson, 2019, p.25). However, as Parkinson and de Wall point out, there are different types of anthropomorphic practices. Parkinson’s notion of naive anthropomorphism and de Wall’s ‘anthropocentric’ anthropomorphism both refer to the act of naively attributing human qualities, thoughts, and feelings to animals based on wishful thinking and/or insufficient information (Parkinson, 2019, p.26ff; de Wall, 1999, p.260).

Parkinson argues that naive anthropomorphism can be harmful, as it contributes to a romanticized and stereotyped picture of what a non-human animal is, needs, feels, and wants. Critical anthropomorphism, on the other hand, derived from systematic interaction with other animals over time, can function as an interrogative tool to help humans understand and reflect on the non-human animal’s perspective and lived experience (Parkinson, 2019). Similar to critical anthropomorphism is De Wall’s notion of animalcentric anthropomorphism. Whilst anthropocentric anthropomorphism answers the question “What would I feel in this situation?”, animalcentric anthropomorphism seeks to answer “What would this animal feel in this situation based on its species-typical behaviour?”. De Wall argues that it is possible to explain the world from an animal’s viewpoint by using human language and concepts. Although we cannot know for certain what an animal is feeling or thinking, we can attain knowledge about an animal’s natural

tendencies, behaviors, and intelligence over time which can help us accurately describe and understand its experiences.

Research suggests that there is, to some extent, a common ‘interspecies language’ between humans and dogs, consisting of facial expressions, gestures, and physical behaviours that can help us interpret what a dog is experiencing or feeling (Cudworth, 2011, p.154). Although we cannot be certain that our interpretation correlates with the truth, Cudworth emphasizes that if we do not try to imagine what other animals are feeling “other species’ lives disappear from view” (ibid.). In line with Cudworth, de Wall argues that we should not fear anthropomorphism, but its opposite, anthropodenial. A rejection of our shared characteristics with non-human animals leads to a blindness to not only human-like characteristics of animals but animal-like characteristics of ourselves.

Anthropomorphization can therefore be described as a double-edged sword. It can work as an effective tool “in raising public awareness and concern for other animals” (Parkinson, 2019, p.18) as well as a reminder to ourselves that we are also animals who share biological and behavioral similarities with other species. However, used naively, anthropomorphic practices can justify human domination over other animals by naturalizing an anthropocentric worldview in which human values, needs, and ways of being are seen as the ideal. In short, anthropomorphic practices, can make non-human animals more visible and important to humans, with the risk of “losing sight” (ibid, p.1) of the real animal.

## Friendship without Freedom

Since Luke became a part of my family, I have been surprised by my family members’ sense that they can communicate with Luke and interpret his feelings and needs. Throughout my observations, I noticed my family members’ reading of Luke was greatly dependent on his facial expressions. Parkinson (2019) points out the centrality of the face in humans’ interactions with other animals; when non-human animals’ faces are visible and similar to ours, we tend to feel like we understand and relate to them, facilitating feelings of connection and empathy (Parkinson, 2019, p.49).

My sixteen-year-old sister often shows me pictures she has taken of Luke and, without hesitation, explains how his countenance communicates what he wants or is feeling in different pictures. By showing me photos on her smartphone, she



Image 1: 'Hungry' Luke, March 2021

told me that Luke expressed hunger through 'drooling' (image 1), that he was tired because he was laying down still but following the camera with his eyes (image 2), and that he was sad because he had his head down and his eyes were shiny, indicating that he was 'tearing up' (image 3). Her explanations were strikingly similar to the ways in which humans express different emotions and needs, which made me suspect that I had just observed a case of 'naive' or 'anthropomorphic' anthropomorphism. But even though I doubted the legitimacy of my sister's interpretations, I had a sense that they contribute to a reciprocal relationship between her and Luke. Although my sister's anthropomorphic interpretations might be 'naive', they imply that she believes there are enough emotional and cognitive similarities between her and Luke for them to share meaningful experiences with each other. When my sister and Luke play in the backyard, go out for walks or 'chill' on the couch together, their relationship is more similar to one between two human friends than an object and its owner.

Even though my family members' interpretations of and interactions with Luke are well-intended and at first glance fairly mundane, they can also be argued to contribute to the false notion that Luke has agency. Luke's emotions, needs, and experiences are acknowledged many times throughout the day, but only through the lens of my family's anthropomorphic depictions and vocabulary. Tuan (1984)



Image 2: 'Tired' Luke, March 2021

would perhaps define this as an act of domination while Parkinson (2019) would call it naive anthropomorphism based on 'wishful thinking' (p.28). Such wishful thinking allows for anthropomorphic constructions which obscure the power imbalance inherent in the pet-owner dynamic. Projections of emotions of love and affection, or claims that a pet has missed its owner, for example, obfuscate the realities of ownership: that the pet is confined to its owner's house, that its diet and activity is controlled, and that it is almost entirely stripped of agency. In this way, applying human concepts to non-human animal behaviour can be seen as an inadvertent practice that legitimises the dynamics of human domination over other animals. Although my family is endeavouring to better understand Luke, their anthropomorphic interpretations also affirm their status as owners. In doing so, this perhaps distances them from the 'real' animal more than it makes them understand it.

Through anthropomorphic practices, pets are ascribed an identity and a personality, but they are still far from reaching the same status as human members of the family. Pets are often deeply loved, but also marginalised family members. Similar to humans, but not similar enough to have the same agency and autonomy. My sister refers to Luke as a friend whom she understands and can communicate with, but implicit in this "friendship" is Luke's inability to express his opinion and con-



Image 3: 'Sad' Luke, March 2021

sent. Luke is only allowed to go out when he is let out by her, only allowed to play when she feels like it and only allowed to eat when she puts food in his bowl. The 'friendship' between my sister and Luke lacks reciprocity. It is a charade comprised of anthropomorphic practices. When Luke is 'sad' (app. 3) my sister pats him on his head or belly, and when he is 'tired' (app. 2) she puts a blanket on him. These anthropomorphic depictions affirm for my sister her status as an empathic and understanding friend, letting her feel she is sensitive to Luke's needs and wants.

My sister humanizes Luke's facial expressions and emotions in ways that affirm that she is a good friend, while also having him as his plaything and denying him agency. Perhaps pet owners find comfort in anthropomorphic practices as it conceals the harsh truth about pet ownership—that their beloved pet is confined and controlled in every single aspect of its daily life by themselves. If so, one could argue that it is not anthropomorphism, but anthropodenial—dismissing similarities between owners and pets—that underlies and legitimizes the pet-owner dynamic. If we admitted we share emotional, cognitive, and biological similarities with other animals, maybe we would start to ask ourselves whether it is morally right to claim ownership over them.

## New sites of anthropomorphism - pets on Instagram

As a result of the increased mediatization of society, the anthropomorphization of pets has entered new domains. A survey made by Mars Petcare in 2016 found that every sixth pet owner has created a social media profile specifically for their pet (Better cities for pets, 2017). Luke is not an exception to this trend, and my family quickly created an Instagram account for him once he came into their lives. The account has been updated regularly and has over 70 posts with pictures and videos of Luke accompanied by captions written from 'his' perspective. The content is shaped and framed to please and entertain humans and is centered around the stereotype of 'the cute pet'. 'Luke' shares his everyday life with 'his' followers and interacts with other human and 'dog' accounts through comments and direct messages. The anthropomorphic gaze is evident—the posts tell a story about a dog that celebrates his birthday and Christmas, wears clothes, drinks water from a glass, enjoys listening to birds chirping, and goes on dates with other dogs. Although the act of running an Instagram account from the perspective of a pet can be seen as overly anthropomorphic, it has become clear to me that creating this mediated narrative about Luke is an important way for my family to express their appreciation and love for Luke. Through the Instagram account, they can articulate and share with others what a wonderful dog Luke is, how fun he is to spend time with, and the fact that he has become an important family member.

Through the account Luke's life and experience is once again interpreted by my family members, this time using Luke as the narrator. Implicit in the mediation of Luke is the collective recognition of the impossibility of a dog running an Instagram account. In this way, the account functions to entertain and amuse humans, rather than as an attempt to understand or reflect on Luke's actual lived experience. The mediated version of Luke on Instagram is far from critical or animalcentric anthropomorphism', as it does not aim to get as close to the non-human animal perspective as possible. The 'Instagram pet' is perhaps a new site of anthropomorphism that functions to gratify pet owners and obscure pets' status as 'property'—bought and controlled by their owners.

Although the Instagram account makes no direct claim to be an accurate representation of Luke's experience, the 'Instagram pet' is a mediated construction that can be harmful as it affirms the perspective that animals not only should, but

want to, be with, entertain, and love humans. Much of the content on 'Luke's' Instagram is centred around his interactions with humans which creates an anthropocentric narrative where Luke's life and happiness is dependent on humans. Thus, legitimising anthropocentric dynamics of human-animal relationships in which non-human animals' function in society is to "satisfy our various lusts for protein or companionship" (Malamud, 2012, p.13), thereby facilitating and justifying non-human animal oppression and exploitation.

## Concluding thoughts

Through my observations of Luke and my family, I have come to realize that anthropomorphic practices can serve functions of both love and domination in pet ownership. Observing my family's interactions with Luke and seeing them ascribing meanings to his mannerisms and behaviors made it clear to me that anthropomorphism is one of the few tools we have to make sense of other species and articulate in what ways we might be similar to them. Even though we cannot be sure our interpretations are accurate, they make it possible to take part in shared meaningful experiences with other animals, facilitating feelings of love and affection for other species.

However, the reflections made throughout this paper also prove that anthropomorphic practices can hide the true nature of pet-owner relationships. My family expresses their love and appreciation for Luke through anthropomorphic practices, but are at the same time stripping him of agency, privacy, and independence. Anthropomorphic practices have the power to make us forget that the relationship between a pet and its carer is, in its raw form, one between an owner and his property, or maybe even a captor and victim. The CAS perspective, employed throughout this paper, elucidates the complexity and calls into question the ethicality of pet-owner relationship.



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# Sex, Violence and Transgression: Feminism and Necropolitics in the Commercial Egg Industry

*Charlotte Lim*

Difference is that raw and powerful connection  
from which our personal power is forged  
—Audre Lorde, 1979

## Introduction: The vegan “extreme”

In February 2019, I became vegan. I vowed to commit to a diet and lifestyle excluding all animal flesh and animal products (including eggs, dairy, honey and gelatine). This decision led to a paradigm shift: I no longer saw meat as separate from the once sentient individual whose life was brutally taken to satisfy a human whim for mere taste. I saw eggs and dairy products as vestiges of animal suffering, cruelty that was legitimised through a speciesist lens devaluing animal life and autonomy and justifying the systemic exploitation of animal reproductive systems. How did I reach this “extreme” position?

The seed was planted in first-year Gender Studies, taught by Dr. Astrida Neimanis. It was during the lecture on intersectionality that I experienced my first moral epiphany: could I call myself a feminist if I ate animals? I had spent my childhood frolicking with chickens in my backyard, yet never made the connection between the pets I adored and the body on my dinner plate. Later, this developed into: could I label myself a feminist if I contributed to the abuse of certain bodies on the grounds of their species? And then: what kind of feminist would I be if I

continued to uphold structures of oppression and exploitation imposed on animal bodies – predominantly female ones – through my consumption of animals and animal products? To rephrase Audre Lorde, what does it mean when the tools of a *speciesist* patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of that same patriarchy? ‘It means that only the most narrow perimeters of change are possible and allowable’ (Lorde, 1984, pp. 110-111).

Sex and violence are inextricably intertwined with the animal agriculture industry. This paper aims to demonstrate how violence towards chickens, founded on the sex/gender of the animal, is utilised to procure eggs for human consumption. Part I argues that the egg industry wields a form of necropolitical power (Agamben, 1998; Mbembé & Meintjes, 2003) over animal lives, justified through ideologies of capitalism, anthropocentrism and carnism (Joy, 2010). Part II engages in dialogue with sanctuary founder Catherine Kelaher and tells the story of Ariel, a member of Kelaher’s “disabled flock,” as an example of how vegan animal activists can transgress necropolitical norms. I conclude by demonstrating how the violence of the animal agriculture industry can be both subverted and transgressed by committing to a vegan diet and lifestyle, engaging in vegan animal activism, and through telling Ariel’s story prove how the survival of those liberated is an act of protest against the violence of the industry.

## Part I: Taxonomies of power and necropolitics in the poultry industry

Capitalism and anthropocentrism – the belief in human exceptionalism – are the intertwined “taxonomies of power” (Kim, 2015) that create and perpetuate necropolitical (death-inducing) power structures in poultry and egg industries. These ideological frameworks seek to legitimate an existing or desired social order, and reinforce the socially normative shared belief that it is morally permissible to use animal bodies for the sole purpose of human “needs” and privilege (Nibert, 2003, p. 8). In egg production, female poultry are oppressed, abused and exploited not only due to their species but also their biological sex. The industry uses their reproductive abilities, or in other words, the poultry equivalent of human ovulation (laying), as a means of production and, thus, profit. The exploitation of chickens as objectifiable “Others” is justified by anthropocentrism, validated by capitalism and in turn genders the nature of oppression in the egg industry – the “right” to

use animal bodies and (female) reproductive systems for profit. Capitalism is then reinforced through the oppressive dominant human/nonhuman binary operationalised in the egg industry (and animal agriculture more broadly) as animals are transformed conceptually from subjects to objects and treated accordingly (Cavanaugh, 2017, p. 34).

Anthropocentrism enables the organisation of human society through a rigid “species hierarchy” in which humans are placed firmly at its apex so that the “needs, desires, interests and even whims of human beings shape the kinds of relationships we are likely to have with non-human species” (Cudworth, 2008, p. 34). The species hierarchy justifies the normative ideology of carnism, the belief system that conditions humans to eat certain animals but abstain from eating others (Joy, 2010). The violence of carnism is embedded in fragmented notions of tradition and modernity; notions of what constitutes a “normal,” “natural” and “healthy” diet. Carnism exists in strict opposition to veganism and is informed by the biopolitical belief that some (animal) lives are worth less (e.g., poultry) than others (e.g., canines) and therefore those lives should be “let go,” implying that such lives should be made to exist without the rights afforded to those species that humans deem worthwhile. Carnism exists as a means to prop up normative human society (and industries). Michel Foucault conceptualised this shift from sovereign power – “the right to kill”, or rather, “to take life or let live” (Foucault, 1976, pp. 240-241) – to biopower: a form of power that sought to “regularise life, the authority to *force* living not just to happen but to endure and appear in particular ways” (Berlant, 2007, p. 756). In relation to animal agricultural industries, I argue, however, that *necropolitical* power (Mbembé, J & Meintjes, L, 2003). reshapes both sovereignty and biopower: it is the right to *create* animal life, *force it* to endure in particular ways, and then *take* that life through slaughter when their productive (profitable) capacities slow.

Necropolitical power is rife throughout the egg industry. Animal life is systematically managed through the dispersion of implicit and explicit violence that seeks to control the outcome of life even before an egg hatches. Battery chickens have been systematically bred and genetically modified to lay 300-360 eggs per year (C. Kelaher, personal communication, February 9 2020). This number is in stark contrast to their ancestors, the red jungle fowl laying just 15-30 eggs per year (C. Kelaher, personal communication, February 9 2020).

Hens, however, only make up 50% of the chickens born. Their male counterparts are deemed “useless” – or unproductive – by the industry, and are either put through a machine that grounds them alive or are gassed to death just after hatching (Kelaher, 2020). Due to the abuse of female reproductive organs, male chickens are categorised as “waste” objects that need to be disposed of in the most efficient way, rather than individual, autonomous subjects with lives that matter to them. Female chicks that are “lucky” enough to be “allowed” to live are then debeaked: a horrific process involving the severing of a portion of the hen’s beak – the most sensitive part of the animal’s anatomy – with a hot blade and without the aid of anaesthetic or analgesics (Capps, 2013). Chicks often experience difficulties eating and drinking after this mutilation and suffer from hunger and dehydration (Kelaher, 2020). Debeaking occurs because seven to ten hens can be crammed into a single battery cage. Without the space to roam and engage their natural behaviour of dust-bathing, hunting and wing-flapping, hens often attack each other to defend their minimal territory and cause injury with their full beaks.

Rather than utilising ‘governmentality’ to regulate and maintain the hen population, that is, to operate “through politics and departments, through managerial and bureaucratic institutions, through the law” (Butler, 2004, p. 52) and changing the conditions of the structures in which these birds live (for example, introducing law reforms that effectively transition the animal agriculture industry to one that is plant-based), the egg industry has instead pinned fault on the animal’s natural attributes and mutilated their beaks. Forced to live in crammed conditions without the space to stretch their legs or wings, hens are made to lay, intensively, for 18 months, before their egg production slows and death at the slaughterhouse awaits (Kelaher, 2020). Once they reach the slaughterhouse, hens are treated with horrific violence: shackled by their legs and hung upside down as they are stunned before being run through blades designed to slit the animal’s throat (Kelaher, 2020). The short lives of these animals reflect Lauren Berlant’s definition of “slow death”: “the physical wearing out of a population and the deterioration of...that population that is very nearly a defining condition of their experience and historical existence” (Berlant, 2007, p. 754).

I would like to take a moment to briefly refute the arguments put forth by welfarists or advocates of “free range” or “ethical” eggs, who argue that the aforementioned conditions are not reflective of the whole industry, despite being standard practice. Welfarism is an ideology that claims to abide by the “ethical” use of

animals involved in production. Its intended purpose is to enable consumers to resist challenging the normative status of animals implicated and often exploited in the participation of food industries (Canavan, 2017). Welfarism seeks to justify the consumption of eggs, dairy and other animal products as “ethical” as the consumption of these food groups does not directly result from the death/slaughter of an animal. However, while “free-range” eggs, for instance, claim to guarantee adequate room for chickens (less than two A4-sheets of paper per hen), “free range” only caters to the portion of the animal’s *laying* life. Male chicks are still ground alive, hens are still debeaked, and whether free range, barn or cage, no hen can escape the fate of slaughter once their egg production begins to wane after 18 months (Lim, 2020a). Ultimately, the systemic use and abuse of animal reproductive systems create and sustain the egg industry. “Better conditions” for laying hens do not subvert, nor will they transgress the structural make-up of the industry that relies on the exploitation of animal bodies.

## Part II: Transgressing carnist cages

How can humans *and* animals overturn necropolitical power structures which govern carnist norms? Lorde (1984, p. 112) suggests that “Interdependency between women is the way to a freedom which allows the *I* to *be*, not in order to be used, but in order to be creative.” She also argues that it is the *difference* between women (Lorde, 1984, p. 112), and as I argue, the difference *between species* that forges a new kind of power: one which can “dismantle the master’s house” – through connectedness. Catherine Kelaher is a feminist, vegan and animal activist as well as the founder and CEO of NSW Hen Rescue, a charity dedicated to the liberation of all animals with a focus on caged hens. Kelaher also became vegan due to her intersectional-feminist ethos and was driven by the injustices inflicted upon animals because of their reproductive organs to run her own animal sanctuary (Lim, 2020b). The act of being vegan, according to Kelaher, *is* an act of transgression against the carnist norm. It openly defies the necropolitical and capitalist logic that has structured the multi-billion-dollar animal agriculture industry, which relies on the exploitation of animal bodies (Statistics, 2019).

Kelaher takes in several disabled hens who have been liberated from their cages. Like the ‘traditional hierarchy of relations’ in ableist human society, disabled hens are often considered “economic burdens” and either “abandoned and left to their

destiny” of a slow death via dehydration and starvation or simply killed at a slaughterhouse (Mitra, 2013, p. 1286). There exists a disturbing conviction in industries where animals are used – not just as a food source but as objects which generate profit, such as greyhound (Busby, 2019) and horse racing (Stayner, 2012) – that the death of the animal is actually preferable to disability (Puar, 2015, p. 219).

The relationship between Ariel, a member of Kelaher’s disabled flock and survivor of the egg industry, and Kelaher defies and transgresses such a neoliberal and necropolitical view of animal life. Rescued from a battery cage and suffering neurological damage due to past trauma, Ariel requires a higher provision of day-to-day care (Lim, 2020b). She is hand-fed brought water twice daily and sleeps in a pet carrier on a yoga mat and soft towel, as the usual straw irritates her face due to her disability. She sleeps inside the human house when it rains as the dampness triggers neurological episodes. Once she started laying again, post-rescue, her eggs were “sloppy” – meaning eggs without shells, or soft shells, which got stuck in her oviduct causing pain and distress. Thanks to a hormonal implant, she will never have to lay an egg again.

A month after her rescue, Ariel gained the strength to stand on the grass and walk in small, battery-cage sized circles. It was as though she did not believe she could walk any further than that – a vestige of the trauma of her caged days. Over time, Ariel’s circle got bigger and bigger, and now, five years on from her rescue, she zooms from one side of Kelaher’s garden to the other. Ariel would have died in that battery cage, alone, not knowing the sun, the feeling of grass beneath her feet and love, had Kelaher not transgressed the property borders of Ariel’s prison and pulled her out. Ariel’s story of survival against necropolitical, ableist, sexist and speciesist capitalism is a testament to her power to protest animal-based violence.

## Conclusion

‘To lead an ethical life is to be feminist, and to be feminist is to be vegan’ is the conclusion I came to when I reckoned with horrific acts of violence inflicted upon farmed animals. To view all life, regardless of sex/gender, dis/ability and species, as equal, with rights worthy of protection, is the foundation of intersectional feminism. It is through the generous storytelling of feminists – bravely shared in books, poetry and speeches – that I learned to critically reflect on my practice of feminism and how this ethical framework could be extended to what I ate, wore

and how I lived. Feminist storytelling transformed the way I view and participate in the world, and in turn, allows humans to reimagine more just interspecies relationships. Whether that be through diet, lifestyle, activism, education initiatives and consciousness-raising activities, it is my hope that Ariel's story possesses the same transformative potency to those who encounter it. The vegan diet (and lifestyle more broadly) are acts that defy the necropolitical, carnist norm – and provide the foundational tools in which the master's house of sexist, speciesist and ableist patriarchy – can finally be dismantled.

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## On Vivisection, Interest Groups and Influence

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The word vivisection is barely used today, and for some people therefore a fully unknown concept. However, for a long period of time it was what experimenting with animals (human and nonhuman) was called. Since human vivisection came to be considered a form of torture, the term ended up being applied to nonhuman animals alone. The dictionary of the Encyclopaedia Britannica defines vivisection as “an operation on a living animal for experimental rather than healing purposes; more broadly, all experimentation on live animals.” Note that when the Britannica says “animal” they mean “nonhuman animal.” Typically, vivisection has been understood as experimenting with nonhuman animals without the use of anaesthesia, as was the case in the past. But here, “the past” does not mean since the times of Descartes, the 17th century philosopher who famously claimed that animals could not possibly feel pain when cut up, as they did not possess a soul. By “the past” here, I mean since the very beginning of Western classical knowledge.

Galen, the Greek physician, surgeon and philosopher from the days of the Roman Empire (AD 129-216), considered to have been the founder of anatomy, physiology, pathology, pharmacology and neurology, amongst other disciplines, used vivisection intensively. He had little, if any, concern for the nonhuman animals he used, actually advising his students to cut into living beings “without pity or compassion” (Guerrini, 2003, p. 18). By our current standards, Galen would today be considered a psychopath. However, vivisection without anaesthetics is still conducted on nonhuman animals in modern times, and, more importantly, operating on living animals for experimental purposes, with or without anaesthetics, is the norm in modern research. Even anaesthetized, they still are “living animals,” at least until they are killed. Vivisection is thus a word that still largely

applies to what we do to animals in laboratories, with or without narcotics and painkillers, in spite of modern-day attempts to bury the term.

Scientists dropped it from their terminology long ago. It was too explicit. It did not fit well with the clean narrative of modern progressive science. Today, the word is mostly remembered and used by animal advocates. Vivisection continues to precisely reflect what we do to other animals in laboratories: we cut nonhuman animals' bodies and perform all sorts of other harmful and invasive practices on them while they are alive, with or without anaesthetic, including psychological and trauma testing, whether in a laboratory or in military, educational or other environments. In spite of its accuracy, replacing vivisection with the less graphic animal experimentation or animal testing is one of the many public relations decisions adopted by the animal experimentation industry.

Because animal experimentation is a major source of suffering for millions of nonhuman animals<sup>1</sup>, we need to have a sophisticated understanding of the industry that uses them if we are to accurately evaluate its claims of vivisection being essential for the progress of science. This chapter offers a short overview of what this industry is all about and its huge lobbying power, and, therefore, its enormous capacity to shape public policies, messages and opinion.

## Industrial complexes and the vivisection industrial complex (VIC)

Many people think that modern research is mostly the manifestation of science. Unfortunately, it is also, if not above all, the manifestation of influence and money; that is, of the capacity of a very powerful industry to influence society for continuing business as usual, so that the industry's activities are accepted or even praised, even if involving massive suffering for a large number of individuals, humans and nonhumans alike. This is so because science and medicine have become big business

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<sup>1</sup> In the name of science and progress, millions of rodents, fishes, birds, dogs, cats, amphibians, cephalopods and reptiles, along with other mammals, including primates, are used in animal experimentation each year. In the European Union alone, more than 10 million individuals were used in experiments in 2019 (EC 2022). Because many countries do not properly keep track of the animals used in experimentation, the total global figure is unknown. However, estimations point to between 150 and 200 million animals used in experiments around the world each year.

within capitalism. In particular, the industry based on vivisection, that is experimentation on nonhuman animals, is so mighty that Natalie Khazaal and myself awarded it the name “industrial complex” (Almiron & Khazaal, 2016).

The term “industrial complex” refers to the entanglement of business with social and political institutions for the sake of maximising profit. U.S. president Dwight Eisenhower popularised the concept in the 1960s in applying it to the military. With it, he pointed to the confluence of the military industry’s economic interests and militaristic or imperialist policies. More specifically, he referred to the American industrial groups interested in maintaining the arms race for economic benefit during the Cold War.

Eisenhower’s phrase has inspired other authors, including those critical of animal exploitation. Dutch anthropologist Barbara Noske (1989) was the first to mention the “animal-industrial-complex,” a concept that Richard Twine (2012) later elaborated on further. Noske’s phrase referred mostly to animal exploitation in the food system and addressed the political economy of this exploitation, that is, the distinct interests entangled within it, which cannot be properly understood outside of the corporate capital accumulation process. Twine produced a definition which applies not only to animal exploitation for human food, but to all other types of animal exploitation. He defined the animal-industrial-complex as:

A partly opaque and multiple set of networks and relationships between the corporate... sector, governments, and public and private science. With economic, cultural, social and affective dimensions it encompasses an extensive range of practices, technologies, images, identities and markets. (Twine, 2012, p. 23)

Needless to say, these and other “industrial complexes,” not only the military but also the prison-industrial-complex, the entertainment-industrial-complex and the pharmaceutical-industrial-complex, to name the most widely studied ones, are undemocratic forces. Eisenhower himself described the military-industrial-complex as a “threat to democratic government” (NPR, 2011). But I adhere to Richard Twine’s warning regarding the need to avoid automatically associating the industrial complex’s power with any sort of secret, unlawful, coordinated, planned action by a handful of wealthy people. Although conspiracies do exist, here we are talking of something more intricate and multifaceted. As Twine put it, an industrial complex

Points to relatively powerful alliances and networks in particular sectors of the global economy that strive to maintain a hegemonic position. It underlines how capital accumulation and resource control may become the overriding rationale in spheres such as global food production or military conflict and how these relations are implicated and used as conduits for geopolitical strategies. Yet it would arguably be a mistake to overplay the degree of control that particular actors and actor-networks are assumed to have. (Twine, 2012, p. 23)

This is an important clarification to make, since in doing so we contribute to clarifying what an industrial complex is —an entanglement of economic, political and social interests that may also include the media, academia and other elites, in alignment with C. Wright Mills’ idea of a power elite. Mills believed that we should overcome the “simple” Marxian and liberal views that make “the big economic man the real holder of power” and “the big political man the chief of the power system,” respectively. It is so as to avoid these “oversimplified” accounts that Mills employed the term “power elite” (Mills, 1956, p. 277). The participants in Mills elite need neither be nor act as a homogeneous pack, and may compete or even clash with each other, although they may act together when it is convenient to do so. This perfectly reflects the functioning of modern-day industrial complexes.

The above serves as an explanation for the theoretical framework that illuminated our definition of the vivisection-industrial-complex (VIC), which with Natalie Khazaal I devised to characterise all the interests surrounding animal experimentation in current financial capitalism. Thus, we defined VIC as a complex comprising different types of organisations and businesses whose source of funding depends on or is related to using nonhumans for research. These mostly include (Almiron & Khazaal, 2016, p. 261):

- (a) public or private companies directly conducting or commissioning animal testing (mainly pharmaceutical, but also chemical, cosmetic and tobacco companies, as well as the government and the military);
- (b) academic institutions (universities, research labs, medical schools); and
- (c) suppliers of animals for research and of related services besides animal testing, such as providing organs, instruments and training.

VIC therefore includes any business that directly or indirectly conducts or supports vivisection. Although VIC overlaps with the pharmaceutical-industrial-complex, it has a broader reach. It is useful to clarify the interests specifically surrounding animal experimentation in order to gain a better understanding of what is behind the promotion and justification of this particular type of animal exploitation. To this end, in the following sections I will proceed to describe the political economy of the vivisection-industrial complex, including its capacity for influencing and the forms of persuasion it uses.

## The VIC's economic power and lobbying capacity

Nonhumans are used in several types of experimental research. Among the most common of these are basic research (genetics, developmental biology, behavioural studies), applied research (biomedical research, xenotransplantation<sup>2</sup>), drug and toxicology testing, educational research (mainly at universities), breeding research (genetic selection) and defence research (by governments). The largest number of nonhuman animals used in laboratories are for the purpose of basic research. In 2019, for example, 45.0% of all animal use in experiments in the EU was for basic research, while 26.7% was for translational and applied research, 16.9% for regulatory use and 5.9% for routine production (EC, 2022a). The number of animals in experimentation in Europe follows a similar distribution among the aforementioned categories each year.

In contrast to what many people think, these figures show that the majority of animal testing is not for direct and applied uses (to directly produce medicines, for instance), rather for the sake of attempting to collect knowledge, which is the main goal of basic research, where more animals are used in experimentation, in order to improve or confirm scientific theories. Actually, the category of applied research includes non-regulatory toxicology and ecotoxicology testing, which makes the percentage of animals used for real applied research even less relevant compared to basic research.

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<sup>2</sup> According to the World Health Organization, xenotransplantation refers to the transplantation of cells, tissues or organs among different species (<http://www.who.int/transplantation/xeno/en/>). This research is done as an alternative to procuring material of human origin, purportedly to bridge the shortfall in human material for transplantation.

Many people are also ignorant of the fact that governments are major players in the VIC, mostly being involved in animal experimentation through research funding, public universities and defence. Furthermore, governments also impose regulations on the testing of products and substances for human consumption like drugs, chemicals, and cosmetics on nonhumans before they are marketed. In this respect, regulations can be rather contradictory. For instance, although EU regulations require promotion of the 3Rs in animal research (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement), including a ban on animal testing for cosmetics, they also stipulate that the toxicity of thousands of chemicals produced in or imported to the EU in large quantities be assessed through animal experimentation (Directive 2006/121/EC on the Registration, Evaluation, Authorization, and Restriction of Chemicals [REACH]).

Universities, medical schools, research labs, and some public repositories focusing on theoretical research and education are the main recipients of public R&D funds worldwide. Although data regarding the exact amount of funding invested in research using nonhumans is unavailable, a large proportion of these very relevant budgets<sup>3</sup> is usually allocated to basic and applied hard sciences, where animal testing is customary.

In spite of the important role played by governments, the main user by far of animal experimentation is the pharmaceutical industry, which, directly or indirectly, hugely contributes to the demand for animal experimentation.<sup>4</sup> Other sectors also conduct or commission animal testing, including the chemical, cosmetic and tobacco industries. As in the case of public funding, the amount of private research expenditures involving animal experimentation is unknown, but animal

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<sup>3</sup> For instance, in 2020, the U.S. public budget for R&D was US\$156 billion (Congressional Research Service, 2020), while in Europe, the total budget of the Horizon 2020 programme for research and innovation (2014-2020) was €76.1 billion (EC, 2022b) and the budget for the new Horizon Europe (2021-2027) was €95.5 billion (EC, 2022c).

<sup>4</sup> The increase in the pharmaceutical industry's R&D expenditure, and therefore of companies involved in animal experimentation, has been remarkable over the past two decades, from €7.8 billion and \$6.8 billion in 1990 in Europe and the U.S., respectively, to €37.8 and \$64.4 billion in 2019 (EFPIA, 2021).

testing is the norm, and legally compulsory for marketing chemicals and medicines in most countries.<sup>5</sup>

All of the above actors allow for the existence of a major subsector within animal experimentation, which provides them with products and services: that is, the suppliers of animals for research and related services besides animal testing. Such companies supply animals bred or genetically manipulated for research, as well as capture free-living primates and other nonhumans from their natural environments; they also supply biological products such as blood, tissues or organs obtained from animals. In addition, these companies provide research accessories and tools, in vivo tests on animals, training for animal laboratory science and numerous other clinical research services. Although the—very profitable—contribution of this subsector to VIC business pales in comparison with that of the pharmaceutical business,<sup>6</sup> they constitute a key pillar of it.

In 2020, the pharmaceutical market had total revenues of US\$ 1,112.6 billion (Yahoo Finance 2021), concentrated among a small number of companies, whose resources allow them high lobbying expenditures (Table 1).

Table 1: Revenues and lobbying spending for the top six pharmaceutical companies

COMPANY	LOCATION	2021 REVENUES (BILLIONS OF US\$)	2021 LOBBYING SPENDING IN THE U.S. (MILLIONS OF US\$)
Pfizer (1)	United States	81.28	10.25
Roche	Switzerland	63.15	11.21
Merck & Co	United States	48.70	8.01
AbbVie	United States	56.20	7.00
Johnson & Johnson (2)	United States	52.10	6.08
Merck & Co	United States	48.70	8.01
Sanofi (2)	France	33.69	4.58

Sources: Annual accounts (Revenues) and Opensecrets.org (lobbying) (1) All of these companies increased their revenues compared to the 2020 financial year; however, Pfizer's increase is worth a mention: the company's revenues in 2020 were 41.9 billion dollars, while the 2021 figure saw a 93% increase. The Covid-19 vaccines business are the main reason for this huge rise in revenues.

(2) Johnson & Johnson and Sanofi's figures are only for their pharmaceutical segments.

<sup>5</sup> On December 2022, U.S. Congress lifted the requirement that all new drugs be tested on animals before being tried in people. In place of the 1938 stipulation that potential drugs be tested for safety and efficacy in animals, the law now allows FDA to promote a drug or biologic—a larger molecule such as an antibody—to human trials after either animal or nonanimal tests.

<sup>6</sup> Labcorp, probably the largest laboratory in the world providing services strongly based on animal testing, had total revenues of US\$ 16.12 billion in 2021 (Lapcorp, 2022, p. F-7).



The total expenditure on lobbying by the pharmaceutical industry in 2021 was US\$ 358 million in the U.S. alone (Opensecrets.org, 2022). This level of investment was unprecedented, and by far the largest figure in lobbying history by corporate business and the top lobby spender sector in the U.S., at least according to the public data available (Opensecrets.org). The second industry by lobbying expenditure in the U.S. in 2021 was the electronics sector, with half that of the pharmaceutical industry. The lack of transparency in EU lobbying prevents us from having the real figures on lobbying expenditure by company and sector in Europe, thus hampering public scrutiny. A very conservative estimate by Corporate Europe (2021), according to inconsistent and incomplete EU public data, accounts for an average of €36 million of lobbying spending per year in the EU by what is called Big Pharma, or the top pharmaceutical companies. Pharma companies and lobby groups also reported employing the notable figure of 290 lobbyists (an estimated 104.75 full-time lobby jobs) in Europe in 2020; this figure does not include lobbyists hired from lobby consultancies.

## How the VIC's influence is exercised

The capacity for influencing policy making and public discourse exerted by the vivisection industrial complex is, therefore, colossal, and among the largest, if not the largest, amongst top lobbying industrial sectors in liberal democracies. This economic capacity has expanded the scope and sophistication of its political influence as a major interest group, as has happened with all major corporate interest groups to different degrees over recent decades.<sup>7</sup> Three main strategies for directly influencing policymakers, the media and, increasingly, also public opinion can be identified: contribution to political campaigns; direct and indirect lobbying; and the dissemination of information via platforms with a scientific or expert profile (like research institutes or think tanks) under its control, including advocacy platforms.

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<sup>7</sup> The pharmaceutical and health products industry is consistently near the top of all spenders when it comes to US federal campaign contributions and lobbying spending. For trends between 1990 and 2022, including the huge lobbying effort conducted in the United States to promote their vaccines during the Covid-19 crisis, see: <https://www.opensecrets.org/industries/indus.php?ind=Ho4>. Also, in Europe, during the pandemic, the pharmaceutical industry further increased its political access and influence in EU decision-making (Corporate Europe, 2020).

In the U.S., for instance, the pharmaceutical industry is consistently among the biggest political spenders on the two dominant political parties, though with a tendency to contribute slightly more to the Republicans (Opensecrets.org).

As for direct and indirect lobbying, three types of lobby groups represent the VIC's interests: in-house lobbyists employed by companies; trade associations that represent their members; and third-party lobbyists for hire engaged either by companies or trade associations. That is, given its resources, all types of lobbying are available to the VIC, which it uses intensively (Almiron & Khazaal, 2016).

The VIC's lobbying strategies follow established patterns. One consists of building and maintaining a network of contacts. The VIC nurtures traditional links between big business and political elites, visits the offices of new politicians and invites old and new contacts to discuss soft issues. When a specific legislative opportunity or threat arises, lobbyists use their established networks to push their agenda (Corporate Europe, 2012). Two notable instances of the VIC's lobbying and networking power were the 2006 US Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA; which replaced the 1992 Animal Enterprise Protection Act) and EU Directive 2010/63 on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes.

In the U.S., the National Association for Biomedical Research (NABR), a corporate front group representing around 300 institutions involved in animal research, was, among others, instrumental in securing the adoption of AETA, a law that criminalises nonviolent activism in defence of nonhumans and humans in unprecedented ways, while protecting the interests of the global Animal-Industrial Complex. The NABR employed a number of strategies, ranging from providing talking points, smear campaigns, disinformation and cherry-picking testimonies in Congress, to rushing the bill through the legislation (Del Gandio & Nocella, 2014).

In Europe, the tentative language of the future EU Directive 2010/63, introduced in a 2008 Commission draft, was strongly criticised by the biomedical research industry because it placed tight restrictions on issues like invasive studies using primates (Nature, 2008). Due to opposition from the industry, the European Parliament approved a final 2010 version that diluted the legitimate concerns for animals (Abbot, 2010). Members of Parliament criticised the interactions that took place between lobbyists and legislators between the introduction of the 2008 draft and the altered 2010 version as “excessive lobbying” by the drug industry (Harrison, 2009).

A comparative analysis of the VIC's lobbying strategies in the U.S. and the EU shows how in the past the American VIC was more developed and aggressive than its less proactive EU counterpart. The examples above show, on the one hand, that the AETA, like other U.S. laws that censor information on animal abuse, is legislation that was pushed by the industry as a reaction to animal rights activism, and thus explicitly protects the industry. On the other hand, Directive 2010/63/EU was initially meant not so much to protect the industry in the EU as to restrict its use of animals out of a degree of compassion for them. Whereas adoption of the AETA was celebrated by the industry in the U.S., the Directive caused great concern in the European industry and a turning point in its lobbying strategy. The 2008 discussion of the Directive sparked a number of unprecedented lobbying platforms. For the first time, European lobbyists adopted the same criminalising narrative strategy that the U.S. uses to equate animal rights with terrorism, while suppressing compassion and discussion on the ethical dilemma posed by the use of nonhumans in research. The discourse by both the U.S. and European members of the VIC confirms the above. An analysis of the websites belonging to the main U.S. lobbies advocating for animal research exhibits a discourse coalition on the post-1992 criminalization of animal rights. In the EU, the terrorization of dissent was absent until 2008, when the debate around Directive 2010/63/EU stirred the industry towards more aggressive lobbying (Almiron & Khazaal, 2016).

Nowadays, pure lobbying is closely combined with the use of discourse generation tools for manufacturing consent. An increasingly used tool by interest groups, as is the case with the VIC, consists of promoting lobbyists as experts, co-opting real experts, and creating research institutes, information platforms and think tanks to generate often self-serving data, then feed it to policymakers and journalists. This also includes indirect or grassroots lobbying that aims to educate public opinion (the media and citizens) and subsequently move it closer to that of the industry. This strategy increasingly includes platforms that target ordinary citizens, promoting a conviction that animal research plays a positive and essential role in the progress of science and the improvement of human health care. To dissent against this narrative automatically leads to stigmatisation by the industry. Some of the organisations that very intensively advocate for animal experimenta-

tion have created online platforms with titles as illustrative as *Animalrightsextremism.info*.<sup>8</sup>

Of course, this does not mean that all content produced by the industry or industry-paid research is biased, but at the very least such strategies reduce the threat that leading experts in a field pose to sponsors' interests and guarantee that those experts with the most convenient bias are funded.

Critical research on corporate power has clearly shown how the economic elites have displayed great skill in supporting their interests beyond mere lobbying to unite efforts at the corporate level with the support of the political elites by means of very effective coalition and network building. The vivisection-industrial-complex is an outstanding example of this. The economic strength behind the VIC is supported by the state and intricately entangled with other key areas of the global economy,<sup>9</sup> with the result that pharmaceutical companies manage to become influential in the main international health political forums, including the World Health Organisation.<sup>10</sup> This has allowed this industrial complex to settle the narrative by means of increased, and very effective, networking through transnational actor constellations and coalitions that influence policymaking, the media and public opinion. To put it simply, this means that in spite of competing amongst themselves, companies within the VIC are able to work together to disseminate a

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8 Some of the most important VIC platforms advocating for animal experimentation in the U.S. are: the National Academy of Sciences; the American Physiological Society; the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology; the American Association for Laboratory Animal Sciences; the National Association for Medical Research; the Foundation for Biomedical Research; the National Animal Interest Alliance; the Americans for Medical Progress; and the States United for Biomedical Research. In Europe, there are the following examples: the Federation of Laboratory Animal Science Associations; the European Animal Research Association; Understanding Animal Research; and Animal Testing perspectives.

9 For instance, the three largest asset management firms in the world —Vanguard, Black-Rock and State Street— are the largest shareholders in almost 90% of S&P 500 firms, including Apple, Microsoft, ExxonMobil, General Electric and Coca-Cola. They are also major stockholders in a number of top legacy media in the world, as well as of a number of top pharmaceutical companies and other members of the VIC. This connects the VIC through ownership with many other top corporate sectors and companies (Fichtner, Heemskerck & García-Bernardo, 2017).

10 The pharmaceutical companies are actually funders of the WHO through the GAVI Alliance, an alliance of governments, NGOs and private companies created with the aim of spreading vaccine use around the world. The GAVI Alliance is one of the top ten funders of the WHO (WHO, 2022).

self-serving narrative that is fully aligned with the need for scientific narratives behind the formulation of much public policy and media discourses. This entanglement of interest reflects Mills' elite theory. More recently it has been referred to in public affairs theory as the knowledge-policy nexus (Stone, 2013) or knowledge-interest nexus (Plehwe, 2014). Applied to the VIC, this reveals the capacity of the animal experimentation industrial complex to become the main disseminator of "knowledge" regarding vivisection —shaping policies and public opinion on animal testing.

## Reputation vs corruption

The main aim of this chapter was to provide a glimpse into the monumental capacity of the VIC to manufacture social consent through public relations and public affairs, and thereby play a major role in discourse dissemination regarding animal experimentation. As David Nibert put it, "for institutionalised oppression to occur, it must be supported by state power and justified through ideological manipulation" (2013, p. 5). The VIC has both in high doses, and is able to maintain its strong reputation despite the unethical background of its main actor, the pharmaceutical industry.

The pharmaceutical industry is likely the most corrupt business in the world. Abundant research has shown that it corrupts medical science not only through conflicts of interests, but also its funding of medical training and bias in sponsored research, with a systematic tendency toward results serving the industry's interests (Transparency International, 2016; Sismondo, 2021; Sears, 2022). The pharmaceutical industry is also the one that has paid out the highest settlement amounts after trials for negligence or misrepresentation of products (Enjuris Editor, 2022; Wikipedia, 2022). Since this all goes unchallenged, its corruption does not diminish the influence of the VIC but normalises and expands fraud into academia, the media and public opinion: academic research in the field is mostly co-opted by pharmaceutical interests; protesting military animal experimentation is taboo in a society where security fears have overcome fundamental freedoms; the mainstream media are in the hands of governments lobbied by the VIC and working in partnership with it, or of the very same investment funds that control pharmaceuticals and other key industries.

The much-needed move towards alternatives to animal experimentation has typically been obstructed by the VIC. The discussion only exists due to the massive efforts made by animal advocates, backed by independent citizens, who support animal advocacy out of awareness and compassion. Conversely, awareness and compassion are increasingly criminalised by states influenced by the VIC discourse and its vicious fight to maintain dominance for its narrative. However, a close analysis of its political economy and discourse shows that the main goal of said narrative is to conceal the fact that this is not a fight for science, but one for money and power.

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## Bios

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DANIEL BURGOS-NYSTRÖM, MSc in International Administration and Global Governance and BSc in Human Ecology, is an aspiring Critical Animal Studies scholar. His research interests include critical animal studies and global development studies. Daniel took the course Critical Animal Studies: Animals in Society, Culture and the Media at Lund university in spring 2022.

MARÍA R. CARRERAS holds a PhD in Communication from Pompeu Fabra University (Spain), a Master's in Communication from Rey Juan Carlos University (Spain), and a Master's in Translation from Menéndez Pelayo International University (Spain). She previously graduated in Advertising and Public Relations (San Jorge University, Spain, and Haute École Louvain en Hainaut, Belgium) and in Graphic Design (Escuela Superior de Diseño de Aragón, Spain). She is currently working as a lecturer and researcher at the Strategic Communication Department at Lund University (Sweden). She is a member of the Lund University Critical Animal Studies Network (LUCASN). Her research examines different issues related to strategic communication, political economy, critical animal studies, and public affairs. María joined the Critical Animal Studies course at Lund University

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LAURA FERNÁNDEZ holds a PhD in Communication from Pompeu Fabra University (Spain), she previously graduated in Social and Cultural Anthropology (Autonomous University of Madrid) and completed a Master's degree in International Studies on media, power and difference (Pompeu Fabra University). Her work has focused on critical animal and media studies, strategic visual communication, graphic violence and moral shock in the European animal liberation movement, but she is also interested in media representations of oppressed groups and total liberation approaches in social sciences. She is a board member of the UPF-Centre for Animal Ethics. Laura Fernández joined the Critical Animal Studies course at Lund University in 2019 while doing her predoctoral international stay. She participated in teaching a session titled "How to research human-nonhuman relations in communication studies."

EVA HAIFA GIRAUD is a senior lecturer in Digital Media & Society at the University of Sheffield. Her research explores the ways that activists negotiate tensions associated with the media platforms they use, particularly the challenges posed by social media. She also has a broad conceptual interest in non-anthropocentric theoretical work, which explores ways of thinking and acting in the world that move beyond the treatment of (some) humans as exceptional. Her publications include *What Comes After Entanglement? Activism, anthropocentrism and an ethics of exclusion* (Duke University Press) and *Veganism: Politics, Practice, and Theory* (Bloomsbury Academic).

J. KOVANEN took the CAS course at Lund University in 2017, due to her many relationships with nonhuman animals as well as long time interest in animal liberation struggles. She has also studied psychology at Lund University. J. currently works as an olive farmer in Italy where she lives with a dear dog friend.

MARIE LETH-ESPENSEN holds a PhD in Sociology of Law from Lund University. Her research explores the ethical, social and political implications of animal agriculture and activists' attempts negotiating and creating better care for animals. To

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EVAMARIE LINDAHL, PhD, is a visual artist and researcher based in Sweden. Her research-driven art projects are situated in the intersection of Critical Animal Studies and visual arts. Through her projects, Lindahl is questioning the writing of art history from an anthropocentric and patriarchal position by correcting, re-writing and imagining new (art) histories. Lindahl earned her doctoral degree at Edge Hill University (UK) at The Centre for Human Animal Studies in 2022. Her doctoral research project is practice-based and explores how to write counter art histories that decenters the human in art history in favour of non-human animals. Lindahl earned her Master of Fine Arts at The Malmö Art Academy in Sweden, and is frequently engaged as a teacher at several universities and art schools as well as on panels related to her fields of interests. She is also regularly exhibited and has been awarded several project and working grants throughout her career. Lindahl started as a student at the Critical Animal Studies course at Lund University, and is now working as a guest lecturer in the same course.

JULIA LINDEMALM, based in Malmö, works at the intersection between documentary photography and art, with photo and video as her main medium. She works in long term projects with focus on the human-animal relationship and has depicted zoos, the relationship with the domestic cat and most recently the pig. She has published two photo books, *Katt People* (2017) and *Zoo World* (2018) and has had several solo exhibitions. She took the CAS course in Lund in 2016.

LENA LINDSTRÖM has been teaching the introductory course to Critical Animal Studies at Lund University since 2020. She is an ethologist with a special interest in interspecies variations in subjectivity, which has led to her ongoing research concerning varieties of self-consciousness in humans. She has co-founded one of Sweden's first sanctuaries and volunteered at animal shelters and sanctuaries in other countries.

TOBIAS LINNÉ holds a PhD in Sociology and is Assistant Professor in Media and Communication studies at Lund University. He founded the course in Critical Animal Studies at Lund University in 2012 and has acted as director of the Lund University Critical Animal Studies Network (LUCASN) since its inception in 2016. His research deals primarily with animals in the dairy industry and the intersections of food, gender, race and species.

CHARLOTTE LIM is an unapologetic vegan feminist killjoy who holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Sydney with a major in Gender Studies. Charlotte is a previous student of the course. In 2019, she studied at Lund University and presented her research on the fashion and down-feather industry at the 6th European Association for Critical Animal Studies Conference in Barcelona. Charlotte's current research interest is in examining the intersections of race, gender and species in relation to, and with, justice and climate change. She currently works at the Australian Senate and spends her spare time volunteering at NSW Hen Rescue, a sanctuary for rescued poultry.

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LINNÉA RYSHKE creates paintings, drawings, artist books, installations and poetry that seek to restore the value of nonhuman animals as kindred beings worthy of our adoration, respect and empathy. She received her B.F.A. in Painting from Pratt Institute and M.F.A. in Visual Art from Washington University in St. Louis. Her work has been exhibited nationally, and she released her first book, *Kindling*, with Lantern Publishing and Media in the fall of 2021. She is currently based in St. Louis, MO.

FRANK SCHREIER is a graduate of the Master's in Media & Communication at Lund University in Lund, Sweden, and of Communication and Electronic Media Studies at the University of Cincinnati in Cincinnati, OH, USA. He has a strong

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GINA SONG LOPEZ (Chih-Lan Song) is a PhD candidate at the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies at Lund University. Her project focuses on the development and expansion of 'new' veganism in the contexts of Taiwan and China. Gina was a guest lecturer of the CAS course in 2022 and has joined the teacher team since 2023. She enjoys manga, anime, and training Brazilian JiuJitsu during her spare time.

ASTRID TOTTE holds a BSc in Media and Communications Studies from Lund University. Her research interests include media in everyday life, digitization of public spaces, and representations of animals in media and pop culture. She attended the CAS course in Lund in 2021 where she developed her interest in the domestication of animals. Astrid recently completed an exchange semester at the University of Sydney and is currently working in marketing at a jewellery brand in Sydney.

NAJA YNDAL-OLSEN is a PhD candidate in Sociology at Lund University. She is a member of Lund University's Critical Animal Studies Network (LUCASN) and has been involved in teaching the introductory course to Critical Animal Studies in Lund since 2023. Naja is part of Lund University's Agenda 2030 Graduate School. Her research concerns animal rights activism in a Danish political and cultural context.

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