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Introduction

Vesna Liponik

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I can still see myself sitting in the dark of the old and now sadly almost deserted cinema Udarnik (Strike worker) in my home town of Maribor, not more than seventeen years old, waiting for *Unser täglich Brot* (Geyrharther 2005) the documentary that shows long scenes of food production without any voice-over and practically no dialogue, to begin. I was hardly aware that I would not be able to watch the film to the end. Soon after the scene of artificial insemination of a cow began, my brain began to make unexpected comparisons with the unbearable rape scenes I remembered from other films, and I was gripped by an even more unbearable feeling that I was not only enabling these scenes, but was complicit in *rape* by drinking milk, something my feminist stomach could not bear. And as horrible and simple as this seemed at the time, what I could not have predicted as clearly as I felt it was that this question, the question of specific ‘dreadful comparisons’ and heavy (dis)entanglements, would probably stay there to puzzle me for the rest of my life.

Entanglement refers to a situation of difficult but inevitable connection, a situation in which two or more things, beings, concepts, particles are connected, regardless of the amount of proximity, and in this connection, they affect each other. The initial question for this special issue is how the question of the animal, of species(ism), enters, overlaps and is (dis)entangled with questions of race, class, gender, sexuality and ability, especially how to think these (dis)entanglements in the era of global capitalism, or rather with Marina Gržinić ‘racial necrocapitalism’ and ecological vulnerability, how to think of these (dis)entanglements in a time when a human demand for meat, a human demand for dead animal parts and fluids endangers the lives of other beings on this planet, a time when extinction cannot be thought of *as* extinction, but rather, as John Sanbonmatsu argues in this issue, as extermination, and this, unfortunately, says much more in one word about the true nature of things.

In a way, (dis)entanglement tries to capture what is so uncomfortable, and at the same time so urgent, about comparisons between the forms

of violence used by humans against humans and those used by humans against animals, which, as Dinesh Wadiwel points out in his *The War against Animals* (2015), are primarily about shared techniques and logics of violent management of life and death.

In thinking about these connections, these (dis)entanglements we are confronted with the question of how to 'get the whole picture,' and to get the whole picture means to see these connections but not to confuse things with each other, since 'the risk of addressing the entanglement of all forms of oppression [always risks] obstructing the idiosyncrasies of each' (Boisseron 2018, xxi–xxii).

Yet this is an increasingly pressing task if we are to think of our future and present as a shared transspecies future, if we are to think of the (un)common, the community, as possible sites of common revolt and transspecies alliances in this increasingly disintegrating world.

And as the conversation 'Hegemony, Animal Liberation, and Gramscian Praxis' between Wadiwel and Sanbonmatsu begins in this issue, thirteen years after Sanbonmatsu edited the collection *Critical Theory and Animal Liberation* the questions and challenges he raised: the tension between the left and the animal liberation movement, and the need for the movement to engage in a 'penetrating critique of, among other things, patriarchy and male violence, the links between racialization and animalization, or the capitalist state as such' (Sanbonmatsu 2011, 30) remain as relevant as ever.

The issue opens with a text 'Animal (Dis)Entanglement: Value-Form and Animal-Form' by Marina Gržinić Mauhler. Drawing on her extensive work on racial necrocapitalism, Gržinić places the animal as commodity at the centre of her reflections, coining the terms animal-form and sub-forms (animal-money, animal-object) to better grasp the animal's position in capitalist production, reproduction and accumulation, while also highlighting the role of colonialism and racialisation.

Animals are deeply embedded in the process of capital accumulation, but as Gržinić argues, animals have a special position within the capitalist system and can also function as 'counter-capital.' This is where animal money comes into play. And Gržinić could hardly give a better example than the current plan to eradicate the nutrias from the Ljubljana River, an example that (unfortunately) also perfectly illustrates the deadly link between racism and speciesism in capitalism.

This is the fate of the descendants of those South American nutrias that escaped from fur farms in the 1930s, as Gržinić points out, and be-

came full-blooded citizens, forming bonds of affection and coexistence with many, nutrias without whom Ljubljana will never be the same, nutrias whose eradication must necessarily be considered in the context of the accelerated gentrification and touristisation of ‘the most beautiful city in the world.’ As soon as they were no longer useful to the fur industry, when their existence was no longer profitable, nutrias became redundant and were labelled as a threat, as invaders that threatened ‘native species’ and ‘upset the balance,’ which, as soon as they were no longer useful in the capitalist system of exchange, had to be eliminated or reintroduced into that system. Their carcasses, therefore, should not be wasted either, but can become food for dogs in animal shelters. And the deadly cycle is complete.

Claire Parkinson, also co-founder and co-director (with Richard Twine) of the Centre for Human-Animal Studies at Edge Hill University, which celebrates its 10th anniversary this year and was the first of its kind in Europe when it was established (Parkinson and Twine 2024), continues with another topical issue, this time in the British context – the Dangerous Dogs Act (1991). Her text ‘Defining Dangerous Dogs: Breed, Class and Masculinity’ unfolds another deadly entanglement in capitalism, this time a historical connection between gender, class and breed in British culture, while answering the question of what it is that is ‘really’ dangerous.

The article begins by problematising the very concept of ‘breed,’ which emerged precisely in the period of rising capitalism in the 19th century that also saw the occurrence of institutional standardization and classification of dogs by national kennel clubs based on their appearance. It goes on to show the historical continuities that link social class to certain types of dog, the links that have influenced legislative decision-making, and analyses how these links have simultaneously been reinforced by a media and political discourse that has completely dominated the public and political debate on ‘dangerous dogs’ and affected the lives of many transspecies communities.

The followings papers by Justin Simpson titled ‘A Posthumanist Social Epistemology: On the Possibility of Nonhuman Epistemic Injustice’ and Simon John Ryle’s ‘The Uncanny Poetics of Capitalocene Meat: Carnologistics and Octavia Butler’s “Bloodchild”’ both focus on the (dis)entanglements of critical animal studies and posthumanisms. Simpson’s additional focus is on positioning of animals in the environmental ethics and social epistemology. If the former conceives of non-humans

primarily as passive victims, the latter can be accused of not including non-humans at all, which means that any further consideration of possible epistemic injustices towards non-humans is already pre-empted by the anthropocentric assumption of social epistemology. Simpson therefore ‘stays with the trouble,’ or rather ‘troubles the trouble,’ and suggests that non-humans – and it should be emphasised that he is not just referring to animals here – should first be considered as non-human knowers and moreover as teachers, and analyses the ways in which non-humans are subjected to epistemic injustice.

But where Simpson points to the productive links that critical animal studies can weave with posthumanisms, Ryle focuses on the places where the relationship between the two disciplines becomes ‘entangled,’ or more specifically, he challenges posthumanist positive readings of symbiotic notions of interspecies relations in Octavia Butler’s short story ‘Blood-child’ (2005) that overlook the dynamics of power and control in her literature.

Ryle therefore, while ‘staying with the flesh’ (Ryle 2023, 232), suggests a significantly different reading of this sci-fi feminist classic. Thus, if we read Butler’s *Lilith’s Brood* trilogy (2000) in the context of a nuclear mundane (Brezavšek and Čičigoj 2023) in the special section on the return of nuclear weapon discourse edited by Nina Cvar for the last issue of *Anthropos*, Ryle at the intersection of vegan studies and recent anthropologies of animal agriculture and slaughter offers an uncanny carnological reading of Butler’s work that points to symbiotic relationships as a mode of anthropocentric and epistemic control.

The first part of the journal closes an extensive and in-depth look not only at the philosophy of the Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci and a discussion of the relevance of his thought to the contemporary animal rights movement, but also a whole analysis of how speciesism is irredeemably embedded in our understanding of the world. The second part of the title of this special issue is taken from this conversation. In this passage, Sanbonmatsu (2023, 241) emphasises that

[w]hat animal advocates seek isn’t merely the ‘liberation’ of animals, but a *new form of civilization*, a civilization based on quite different social, ecological, economic and ethical principles than the ones that form constitute the present basis of society. In this connection, the problem of speciesism cannot be solved in the courts. Only through gaining mastery over the terms of debate and thought can the animal

rights movement thereby transform the total ensemble of existing social relations.

Miscellanea brings together three book reviews and three conference reports. Les Mitchell reviews Teya Brooks Pribac's award-winning *Enter the Animal: Cross Species Perspectives on Grief and Spirituality* (2021). *Animals, Mind and Matter: The Inside Story* (2022), the latest book by literary theorist and eco-feminist Josephine Donovan, is the focus of Aljaž Krivec's inquiry. Jelka Kernev Štrajn takes a closer look at the 'result' of the last European Researchers' Night, held under the slogan Man, Animal – a comprehensive collection titled *Človek, žival: poglavja o njunih soočanjih*, edited by Sašo Jerše and Mateja Gaber (2023). The triad of reviews is followed by another triad of conference reports. Betlem Pallardó-Azorín reports on the international conference 'The Factual Animal: Audiovisual Representations of Real Other-than-Human Animals,' held from 29 November to 1 December at the Faculty of Philology, Translation and Communication of the Universitat de València in Spain. In the same year, the joint 8th International Animal Futures Conference and the 8th Bienial Conference of the European Association for Critical Animal Studies (EACAS) was held in Tallinn, Estonia, and online, from 16 to 18 June, known for its horizontal structure, as Saara Mildeberg points out in her report on the conference. The last text in this section is not so much a report on the international conference Thinking Animals, organised by the Institute of Ethnomusicology, ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana, Slovenia, from 16 to 19 October, but rather Anja Radaljac's critical response to some 'animal conference issues,' with their broad implications, which in a way underlines why we need contributions such as the one before you, why we need 'a better alternative' (Sanbonmatsu 2023, 242). This is the 'better alternative' that the authors in this issue have allowed me to put together. Please enjoy the read!

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Animal (Dis)entangled or towards 'A New Form of Civilization'

Animal (Dis)Entanglement: Value-Form and Animal-Form

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Abstract. My thesis is that we should comprehensively and consistently examine the value of the animal taken and used as a commodity and think about the animal-form within the constellation of excessive killing of animals and mass disempowerment of their lives. In the article I dive into this topic and look at it from different angles because it is clear that ethics cannot greatly help us in this political endeavour to stop continued extermination and dispossession of animals. In *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times* (2009), Nicole Shukin begins by showing how capital, in its form of profit, is related only to destruction and valued by money and more money. Shukin analyses a material genealogy of animal traces that are, as she puts it, 'three early time-motion economies: animal disassembly, automotive assembly and moving picture production.' The main point is to go beyond fake morality and to show that historically the abuse of animals is always co-substantial to capitalism and its transformation that involves the modernisation of technologies.

Key Words: animal-form, animal-money, animal-object, racial capitalism, necrocapitalism

Živalska raz-/zapletenost: vrednostna forma in živalska forma

Povzetek. Moja teza je, da bi morali celovito in dosledno preučiti vrednost živali, ki se uporablja kot blago, ter razmišljati o živalski formi v konstelaciji prekomernega ubijanja živali in množične abdukcije njihovih življenj. V članku se poglobim v ta sklop in ga obravnavam z različnih zornih kotov, saj je jasno, da nam etika pri političnem prizadevanju za zaustavitev nadaljnega iztrebljanja in razlaščenja živali ne more veliko pomagati. V knjigi *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times* (2009) Nicole Shukin najprej pokaže, kako je kapital v obliki dobička povezan le z uničevanjem in vrednoten z denarjem ter s še več denarja. Nicole Shukin analizira materialno genealogijo živalskih sledi, ali kot pravi, »tri zgodnje ekonomije časovnega gibanja: razstavljanje živali, sestavljanje avtomobilov in proizvodnjo gibljivih slik.«

Bistvo je preseči lažno moralo in pokazati, da je zgodovinsko gledano zloraba živali vedno soodvisna od kapitalizma in njegovega preoblikovanja, ki vključuje modernizacijo tehnologij.

Ključne besede: živalska forma, žival – denar, žival – objekt, rasni kapitalizem, nekrokapitalizem

Introduction: The Place from Where We Speak

With reference to Cedric Robinson (1983)¹ and Achille Mbembe (2003; 2019),² I have maintained for some time that we live in racial necrocapitalism, where we can only examine the structure of capitalist reproduction in general, if we consistently racialize every concept, every relationship of production and reproduction, and the related structures and institutions, theories, and practices that contribute directly or indirectly to the maintenance of racial capitalism. If the time of modernity was a time of universals, and our most important parameters were time, space, and the subject, then the time in which we live is not ‘another time.’ Of course, the valences of these three lines remain, but if we think that they have acquired a free-floating status because they have evaporated in postmodern fragmentation, we will soon find that this is not the case. They can be taken apart and are in a free-floating form, but they are each reinforced, or rather intensified by an ornament or adjective ‘necro,’ ‘financial,’ and ‘racial’ when applied to capitalism. These modifiers serve to emphasize and intensify the contradictions inherent in capitalism at specific historical moments, including the present. The use of terms like ‘necrocapitalism,’ ‘financial capitalism,’ or ‘racial capitalism’ underscores the multifaceted nature of capitalism and how it intersects with other social, economic, and political dynamics. Each modifier carries its own implications and highlights different aspects of capitalist systems, whether it’s

¹ Cedric James Robinson (1940–2016) was professor in the Department of Black Studies and the Department of Political Science at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). Robinson ‘challenged liberal and Marxist theories of political change, exposed the racial character of capitalism, unearthed a Black Radical Tradition and examined its social, political, cultural, and intellectual bases, interrogated the role of theater and film in forming ideologies of race and class, and overturned standard historical interpretations of the last millennia’ (Kelley 2016).

² Achille Mbembe (born 1957) is a Cameroonian philosopher, political scientist, and public intellectual. Mbembe is a professor of History and Politics and a researcher at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER) of the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. He is a contributing editor of the journal *Public Culture*, in which he published the influential article ‘Necropolitics’ (2003).

the exploitation of death (necro-capitalism), the dominance of finance in economic structures (financial capitalism), or the entrenchment of racial inequalities within capitalist frameworks (racial capitalism). These terms are important because they testify to a financialized, pyramidal structure of what was once a postmodern fragmentation. This understanding is crucial for studying and describing capitalism accurately, especially in today's world where these dynamics continue to shape socio-economic relations.

When I recently read Shemon Salam's³ dissertation dealing with race and racism, he proposed a very similar thesis in his 'Limits of the Black Radical Tradition and the Value-Form' (Salam 2019). He suggests that if we are to talk about race and racism, we must racialize the value-form. Salam proposes the race-form to be taken as integral to the value-form of capitalist production. Salam's dissertation, soon to be published as a book, is therefore concerned with the study of race and racism through the analysis of the race-form inside the Marxist value-form under racial capitalism. This means that we must include the race-form as intrinsic to the value-form in any further analysis of the value-form.

Marx first introduced the concept of the 'law of value' in his polemic *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1955), in which he criticized the ideas of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and drew on the economic theories of David Ricardo. The 'law of value' is a regulative principle that governs the economic exchange of products produced by human labour. It states that the relative exchange values of these products, usually expressed in money prices, are proportional to the average amount of labour required to produce them under the capitalist mode of production.

When Marx speaks of 'value relations,' he is not referring to the monetary price of goods or services, but to the intrinsic value that exists between the various products of human labour. This principle underlies much of Marx's economic and philosophical analysis. To put it simply, in capitalist production, the value-form is the socially necessary labour time for production of the commodity; the value-form represents the social relations of production.

³ Dr. Shemon Salam has been an activist since 2001. He has organized against the war in Iraq and Afghanistan and has been involved in anti-racist struggles around US bases in South Korea, Islamophobia, and police brutality. He has been involved in Occupy Wall Street and organizing fast food workers in New York City. Salam researches the rise and fall of the Black Liberation Movement and class struggle in the 20th century. He is a lecturer in social thought and political economy at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Salam (2019, 261) states about the race-form and its relation to the value-form,

I open with David Harvey's⁴ diagram of the full circuit of accumulation of capital. This is the value-form in motion. Every part of society is incorporated into the value-form here including the human body and 'nature.' This full circuit does not just focus on the production process, but includes consumption, circulation, and distribution of value throughout society. Central to my argument is that the race-form is constitutive of value-form. This means that every flow, every process, every node is racialized.

Salam makes clear that every part of society is involved in the value-form, including the human, the body, and nature. I would like to propose something equally radical, the animal-form, with which to elaborate the category of the animal in capitalist production and reproduction and accumulation. My thesis is that we should comprehensively and consistently examine the value of the animal taken and used as a commodity and think about the animal-form within a constellation of excessive killing of animals and mass disempowerment of their lives. In *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times*, Nicole Shukin begins by showing how capital, in its form of profit, is related only to destruction and valued by money and more money. Shukin analyses a material genealogy of animal traces that are, as she puts it, 'three early time-motion economies: animal disassembly, automotive assembly and moving picture production' (2009, 90). The main point is to go beyond fake morality (which is another symptom of the Occidental epistemology) and to show that historically the abuse of animals is always co-substantial to capitalism and its transformation that involves the modernization of technologies.

In what follows, I will take these aspects apart and look at it from different angles, because it is clear that ethics cannot help us in this endeavour of continued extermination and dispossession of animals.

In traditional agricultural practices, animals played a crucial role in farm work, assisting human labour in various tasks such as pulling carts, and transporting goods. However, despite their indispensable contribution, animals were often regarded merely as tools or objects to be utilized for human benefit. In this context, the value generated by the work of

⁴ David W. Harvey is a British Marxist economic geographer, podcaster, and Distinguished Professor of anthropology and geography at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

animals was typically attributed solely to the time saved or the efficiency gained in human labour. In other words, the value of animal labour was measured in terms of its contribution to human productivity rather than being recognized as intrinsic to the animals themselves. The animal as such had only the status of an object – a commodity. What is important for us, however, is that ‘the movement of value’ could not take place without, as I put it, the animal-form. This suggests that the human animal, in the context of labour, is also the form through which the time of the worker is expressed. In other words, human labour is also measured and structured by animal time, which means nothing to animals.

For farmers who have invested their labour time in farming and agriculture, non-human animals, such as wolves, are not perceived as beings with inherent rights in the environment, but rather as sources of harm. This harm is measured in terms of labour hours invested in agriculture but now impaired, with no thought of the possibility of interdependence in organizing their shared life and survival. In an era of hyper-financialization, any loss or damage is seen primarily through a financial lens. Even emotional and affective responses are financed, leading to potential long-term problems for workers struggling to survive. On the other hand, non-human animals are portrayed as trying to survive without being controlled or exploited. However, if their survival is perceived as uncontrolled and non-capitalized, this is seen as a threat to capital and may lead to efforts to eliminate or remove them.

In the context of global capitalism, animals are often subjected to exploitation and mistreatment for economic gain. This exploitation occurs in various forms, including industrialized farming practices, deforestation, habitat destruction, and pollution, all of which contribute to ecological devastation; the capitalist drive for profit and efficiency has historically led to the over-exploitation of animals, as well as the destruction of natural habitats and ecosystems. Industrialized systems of animal exploitation are deeply rooted in capitalist modes of production and reproduction, which have evolved over time through processes of modernity and the spread of neo-colonial technologies. This implies that the exploitation of animals is not just a byproduct of capitalism but is inherent to its logic and structure.

It is imperative to link the causes of environmental disasters to processes of racialization, class and gender, and last but not least, to the political economy of capitalism. Vincent Mosco, in *The Political Economy of Communication* (2009), aptly notes what an intertwining of science

and technology could do for such an analysis. Mosco (2009, 234–235) asserts,

Rejecting Socrates by trusting the mob and replacing Descartes's 'mind in a vat' with an interconnected world of people, ideas, animals, technologies, and everything else, is an enormous project. Like political economy, cultural studies, and public choice theory, STS [science and technology studies] rejects disciplinarity and the border police that accompany efforts to rein in ideas. In fact, what it calls actor network theory aims to understand the social life and relationships not only among people but also, and most importantly, between people, technologies, and what Haraway calls 'companion species,' or those creatures people have domesticated, hunted, and otherwise called animals and pets. In this respect, STS moves beyond even the most ambitious definition of political economy, which calls for the study of control and survival in social or even organic life. STS does not stop at social life because of the centrality of organic life, but it also wishes to energize technology. The latter is not just an inert mass, the computer on the desk, but a force that grows, retreats, and otherwise interacts with nontechnological actors in its network.

The cruel mistreatment of animals, on the one hand, considered domesticated and totally appropriated by the food industry and its multinational owners, and on the other hand, animals at the level of violent extinction as a result of total capitalist environmental destruction (more than 61,000 koalas and nearly 143 million other native mammals likely fell victim to Australian bushfires in late 2019 and early 2020, causing devastating losses in habitats across the country), entangled with dispossessed humans and non-human animals, must be linked to colonial history and racism on the one hand and class and gender and race on the other.

Racialized communities are disproportionately affected by environmental problems, including pollution and lack of access to healthy food. Animals in marginalized and racialized communities are maybe at greater risk due to limited resources for proper waste disposal and habitat protection.

Dinesh Wadiwel, in his seminal 2015 book *The War Against Animals*, talks about the contemporary industrialized chicken slaughter system that echoes the industrialized prison system. As Wadiwel (2015, 147) writes, 'The war on animals is located upon a violent form of continual appropriation, and an equally violent form of conversion of the lives

of animals into value within a human exchange system; property and commodity cohabit as artefacts of war.' Wadiwel raises one important point and this is that in the privatization of sovereignty through capitalist private property, the violence of property is full and untouchable.

Traditional notions of masculinity and femininity influence attitudes toward hunting, owning pets, or participating in animal welfare activities. Women have always been associated with the role of nurturer and caregiver, which may also affect their interactions with animals. Although not often discussed, a connection can be made between sexuality and attitudes toward animals. Some LGBTQ+ activists⁵ argue that social norms that dictate the binaries of gender and sexuality also reinforce the exploitation of animals. Some queer theorists have explored the connections between queerness and veganism, emphasizing nonconformity and empathy. People with disabilities may face particular challenges in caring for animals, but they may also offer very different perspectives of empathy and connection with non-human animals. In addition, the use of animals in therapy or assistance roles raises ethical questions about the treatment and rights of these animals.

Rereading

I propose a possible Marxist perspective of the category of non-human animals within financialized capitalist social relations. Under capitalism, everything, including nature and animals (non-human animals), is commodified. Even if they are considered 'natural,' they are transformed into commodities for exchange and production. This is also true for nature, animals, or non-human commodities. The value form of commodities, including animals, is a result of this process of commodification. Some commodities, including non-human animals and nature, require an ideological framework to legitimize their status as commodities. This can include social norms, laws, and cultural beliefs.

In his 2020 book *Being and Swine: The End of Nature (As We Knew It)*, an analysis of the non-human animals that have been constantly abused and overused throughout the long history of capitalism by a systematic and thorough majoritarian, non-indulgent human agreement, Fahim Amir proposes a return of animals as 'zombie Marxism.'

Amir defines as zombie Marxism the historical collective revolt of the multitudes and animals (swine revolt) when they had to be removed from

⁵ For example, Vesna Liponik.

New York. The pigeons also resisted, and the proletariat's love for the pigeons specifically referred to the proletariat training the pigeons in the same way the working class was trained in the factories for temporal precision and execution drill. The pigeons also disappeared when the use of their guano as fertilizer was replaced by nitrate, another modernization of capitalism and the chemical industry. However, I do not want to be misunderstood that my proposal to enter the animal-form does not exonerates Marxism, which has failed to see the abuse of nature in all kinds of products of non-human animals.

The birth of Fordism in 1913 was influenced by the rapid and efficient process of the slaughterhouse, where the animal's body is dismembered according to Taylor's ideas⁶ – but in reverse. The system Frederick Taylor invented is supposedly a 'systematic fast control of animal suffering.' If in the slaughterhouse the killing, dismembering, and packing of animals all consisted of tearing them apart, in the Fordist model of the assembly line it was the other way around – building assemblies. Consequently, Amir argued, the slaughterhouse is primarily a laboratory for industrial modernity (Amir 2020, 82). Amir shows that the Fordist assembly line starts from the rapid, massive ripping of the carcass of the meat industry.

The usage of animals in laboratory settings and its intersection with biopolitical concepts, started earlier, particularly during the late nineteenth century. During this time, the utilization of animals in experimental and biomedical research began to merge, creating a new biopolitical space. Jonathan L. Clark explained in 2014 that in the late nineteenth century, the experimental animal and bio-medical laboratory merged to form the new biopolitical space. This space, as described by Robert G. W. Kirk, saw the transformation of non-human animals into objects of biopower. In this space, as Robert G. W. Kirk (2017, 195) argues, the non-human animal was transformed into an object of biopower and 'enmeshed within biopower even when the biopolitical aim is ultimately the transformation of human life.' As biopower refers to the control and regulation of populations and individuals through biological means, such as healthcare policies, reproductive regulations, and scientific interventions. The interconnectedness of animal experimentation, biopolitics, and societal power structures, highlights how animals have been instrumental-

⁶ Taylorism is a management theory first advocated by Frederick W. Taylor in the late nineteenth century that uses scientific methods to analyse the most efficient production process to increase productivity.

ized and subjected to biopower within laboratory settings, particularly since the late nineteenth century.

The biopolitical conditions and contradictions of animal destruction advanced by the occidental world are supported by the occidental citizen's monstrous biopower desire for greater pleasure through destruction and consumption. The result of these biopolitical efforts is not more life, but a necropower, as pure destruction, suffering, etc.; we cannot speak only of biopower, as non-human animals are used in the processes of calculation to change human life at the expense of their extermination as crude objects of capitalist industry and science.

Capitalist logic is based on the abstraction of commodities, including animals, leading to the creation of an abstract society in which exchange value becomes 'the central element of social relations.' The impact of global capitalism on ecosystems increases ecological vulnerability and makes animals more susceptible to captivity. Therefore, we must recognize the connection between consumer choices, demand for products, and their ecological consequences.

By categorizing the capitalist economy and examining the role of the commodity form within it, scholars like Mosco aim to provide analytical frameworks for understanding the dynamics of capitalist societies, including their environmental implications, animal commodification, and their massive exploitation.

Mosco even proposes the categorization of the capitalist economy and the place of the commodity form to distinguish between commercialization, commodification and objectification (Prodnik 2015, 260):

Commercialization could also be called marketization and it is the narrowest of the three processes. It refers to what is happening on the surface of the capitalist economy, so to say, on the transparently visible market: in the exchange process, the sphere of circulation. In communication studies, commercialization/marketization would for example refer to the relationship created between audiences and advertisers. Capitalist market necessarily encompasses a lot more than just exchange relations of this kind; as already pointed out, it, for example, presupposes commodification of labour that produces commodities and should therefore also encompass the production process. In this sense commodification, which is the main focus of political economy of communication, is a much broader notion. Lastly, objectification refers especially to specific process of dehu-

manisation. [Georg] Lukács⁷ for example used the word reification to denote how human beings and personal relations become *thing-like*. Not everything that is objectified is necessarily a commodity of course.

The animal-form as a particular manifestation of value engages with these forms presented by Mosco. The animal-form represents (over)commercialization (as animal-money), commodification (as animal-object), and paradoxically capital (as animal-form). Paradoxically, the animal-form can also represent capital itself, indicating animals' role in the accumulation and circulation of capital within capitalism. My analysis delves into the idea that within the context of capitalism, the concept of 'animal-form' can be further elaborated through various sub-forms, offering deeper insights into the position and treatment of non-human animals within capitalist systems.

Animals can be seen both as products of capitalist relations and as separate from them. This duality suggests that animals can occupy a unique position within the capitalist system. My point? If we consider recent nature, fighting back through an inexorable destructive force, as the result of ongoing capitalist devastation of the environment, in the form of 'mad nature' reappropriating its own flow, then the animal is at once constitutive of capital, and, one might say, a derivative of the commodity form under capitalism. Or, differently, the nature going mad is in essence the result of an unstoppable valorization, which typically represents the increase in value under capitalism, and is associated with destruction. In our analysis, valorization is nothing but the destruction of the environment, of non-human animals and humans. This means that the process of capital accumulation has destructive consequences, for the environment or animals. When animals are commodities, they are subject to the logic of capitalist exchange. However, when they function as 'counter-capital,' when the environment 'goes mad' (flood, tornado, tsunami), their role shifts, suggesting a more complex relationship. In this case, nature, when it shows its power, is something alien to capital.

Animal-money comes to the fore when it is decided to eradicate animals because they are harmful to agriculture or the extermination itself brings in money. Horses, for example, served various purposes in the capitalist system, from transportation and labour to sport and eventually the

⁷ See Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* (1971).

meat industry. The course of their life cycles is linked only to the possibility of making money. This fragmentation suggests that animals can be viewed in multiple ways, each associated with different aspects of their existence within the capitalist framework and depending on how the historical momentum of capitalism repeats itself.

In the context of capitalist relations, nature and animals are viewed primarily as objects subject to control and exploitation for their use value. This view ignores the consequences of environmental degradation and implies that nature is seen as a free resource for capitalist exploitation. Animals are protected, artificially bred, and consumed in the capitalist system. Their value comes from the fact that they are barely valued, and they are included in profit calculations. This means that animals are seen primarily as commodities for profit. Animals historically played an important role in the reproduction of life in capitalist systems. This could refer to the fact that animals were used for agricultural purposes, transportation, and other functions that contributed to the survival and growth of the human population. Nature and animals are treated primarily as resources to be exploited for profit within capitalist relations, without consideration of their intrinsic value or the potential ecological consequences of such exploitation. This indicates a discrepancy between capitalist interests and the call for environmental consciousness. All stay purely rhetorical as in the background the lust for profit is unstoppable.

The animal is often considered an archaic or trans-historical form that has its history in pre-capitalist market economies appropriated for capitalist purposes, while disproportionate attention is paid to the commodity as constitutive of the dynamics of the capitalist mode of production. The analysis of the animal focuses on the fact that the animal has its roots in the commodity and as such functions as a formal expression of value. In this web of relations, different commodity forms must relate to each other, and value must pass between forms in order to reproduce the conditions of production and accumulate more value. Here, it is just a matter of extracting more value from what is devalued in terms of rights to life, reproduction, ecosystems, and autonomy and agency. It is important to see how different commodities relate to each other in a capitalist economic system. In this case, animals are treated as a variable within the capitalist value form. They are absolutely objectified, being used for industry and corporations and within the state regulation of the ecosystem only as money. A good example is the 2023 plan to completely eradicate the nutria on the Ljubljana river, as these are designated an alien

species that seriously disturbs the balance of the natural environment.⁸ This slaughter plan was heavily disputed.

Animals are also essential in connecting different temporal aspects within the practices of capitalist production and social reproduction. Animals have their own unique characteristics and functions, including being a medium of circulation, a measure of value, and an instrument of hoarding. Moreover, non-human animals are temporalized forms, meaning their value and existence are shaped by the duration of their circulation or life cycles. This perspective underscores the role of time in understanding the place of animals within the capitalist system, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of their representation within the system.

The Historical Role of Colonialism, Violence, Racialization

This involves not only placing the animal-form in the context of global capitalism and its political economy, but also considering the historical role of colonialism, violence, racialization, discrimination, and exclusion, particularly in relation to transatlantic slavery and its impact on capitalist accumulation.

Joshua Bennett's⁹ critical perspective highlighting the neglected proximity of race and the racialized Black community to animals in contemporary analysis is therefore a very important critique. Clapperton Chakanetsa Mavhunga, in his book *The Mobile Workshop: The Tsetse Fly and African Knowledge Production* (2018), explains 'how the presence of the tsetse fly turned the forests of Zimbabwe and southern Africa into an open laboratory where African knowledge formed the basis of colonial tsetse control policies.' Moreover (MIT Press Direct 2018), Mavhunga

restores the central role not just of African labor but of African intellect in the production of knowledge about the tsetse fly. He describes how European colonizers built on and beyond this knowledge toward destructive and toxic methods, including cutting down

⁸ Nutria originally come from South America and have been native to Slovenia since the 1930s, when they escaped from fur farms. Over the years, the number of nutria in Ljubljana and in the protected Ljubljana Marshes has increased. The nutria is also on the list of invasive alien species. The Slovenian Ministry of Agriculture has drawn up a plan to completely remove (kill) the nutria from the Ljubljana Marshes, which has met with strong public disapproval.

⁹ Joshua Bennett is the Mellon Assistant Professor of English and Creative Writing at Dartmouth College. He is the author of three books of poetry and criticism: *The Sobbing School* (2016), *Owed* (2020b), and *Being Property Once Myself* (2022). See also Bennett (2020a).

entire forests, forced 'prophylactic' resettlement, massive destruction of wild animals, and extensive spraying of organochlorine pesticides.

Neel Ahuja (2017, 237) writes about colonialism, which he develops in relation to postcolonial and biofeminist scientific studies:

Because colonialism is a large-scale process that has shaped human settlement across the planet, it has an intimate relationship to matter. In fact, the very idea of 'matter' – physical objects making up the universe and its constitutive systems and elements – has developed in tandem with the spread of colonial forms of knowledge and settlement over the past five centuries. Modern colonialism involves the development of sciences that describe the material form of the universe as well as the biology of human, animal, and plant life. These sciences, along with capitalist industries that deploy them, have historically helped spread colonial worldviews that separate inanimate matter, the living biological body, human culture, and the spiritual domain into distinct spheres.

This fits well with another shift that leads to what Kelsey Dayle John defines as 'animal colonialism' in her 2019 paper 'Animal Colonialism – Illustrating Intersections Between Animal Studies and Settler Colonial Studies through Diné Horsemanship.'

John (2019, 42–43) explains that the concept of animal colonialism is necessary because it allows us to rethink how

to articulate the interconnected nature of Indigenous nonhuman animals, peoples, and lands, and the ways these relationships encounter and are tangled with oppressions confronted by various disciplines. I also center animals in colonialism to show that settler colonial erasures specifically assault animals, but also that animals resist and show humans how to resist. I use the word 'Indigenous' or 'Din.' before horses, animals, or land not as a way to show anthropocentric dominance over nonhumans (that is to say, land is possessed by those of Indigenous heritage), but to designate these nonhumans as belonging to an Indigenous ontology that might not make the same divisions that the western world does (i.e. animal/human, alive/dead).

As Billy-Ray Belcourt notes in his 'Animal Bodies, Colonial Subjects: (Re)Locating Animality in Decolonial Thought,' 'we cannot address animal oppression or talk about animal liberation without naming and sub-

sequently dismantling settler colonialism and white supremacy as political machinations that require the simultaneous exploitation and/or erasure of animal and Indigenous bodies' (Belcourt 2015, 1). We are thus at the very beginning of this journey.

Conclusion

In this article, I have tried to focus mainly on the status of capitalism and the concept of the non-human animal. I have shown that discrimination against animals is not only related to other forms of discrimination, but that in global capitalism, which is not even that, but a racial necrocapitalism, the animal and nature are simultaneously constitutive (intrinsic) and derivative of the capitalist system of production. I have explored how various forms of intertwined (connected) and disentangled (unconnected) exploitation, dispossession, and disposal enter into the complex relations and divisions between speciesism and other forms of discrimination. Finally, I have attempted to identify potential sites of common revolt that arise from the different ways in which the terms and concepts used in the analysis are conceptualized, how they are to be defined, and where they are to be located within a structural analysis.

Animals in necrocapitalism are considered as beings shaped by capitalism and existing within that framework. We propose a dual relationship: while animals can be fully reified (objectified) as animal-money, animal-objects, and animal-form within the capitalist system, they can also be considered as something distinct from capital. This highlights the complexity of the relationship between animals and capitalism, in which animals are both integral to capital accumulation and exist outside its boundaries.

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Defining Dangerous Dogs: Breed, Class, and Masculinity

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Abstract. This article examines historical connections between social class, masculinity, and dog breeds in British culture. It gives an account of the nineteenth and twentieth century origins of the pit bull terrier and Staffordshire bull terrier, and the dogs' links to masculine identity, working class culture and practices. It examines the introduction of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, UK legislation intended to protect the public from dangerous dogs. Through an examination of the discursive framing of pit bulls, this article argues that there are historical continuities that connect social class with specific dog types, and these associations have informed legislative decision-making. Analysing media and political discourses, this article establishes how the relationship between class identity and breed shaped the public and political debate on dangerous dogs and impacts the material reality of dogs' lives.

Key Words: dog, breed-specific legislation, pit bull terrier, masculinity, class

Definirati nevarne pse: pasma, razred in moškost

Povzetek. Članek obravnava zgodovinske povezave med družbenim razredom, moškostjo in pasmami psov v britanski kulturi. Predstavi izvor pitbul terierja in staffordshirskega bulterierja v devetnajstem ter dvajsetem stoletju in povezave med psi, maskulino identiteto ter kulturo in praksami delavskega razreda. Preučí uvedbo Zakona o nevarnih psih (Dangerous Dogs Act 1991), zakonodajo Združenega kraljestva, katere namen je zaščititi javnost pred nevarnimi psi. S pomočjo diskurzivnega uokvirjanja pitbulov članek pokaže, da obstajajo zgodovinske kontinuitete, ki družbeni razred povezujejo z določenimi vrstami psov, te povezave pa so bile podlaga za sprejemanje zakonodajnih odločitev. Z analizo medijskih in političnih diskurzov ugotavljamo, kako je razmerje med razredno identiteto in pasmo oblikovalo javno in politično razpravo o nevarnih psih ter vplivalo na materialno resničnost pasjih življenj.

Ključne besede: pes, zakonodaja za določene pasme, pitbul terier, moškost, razred

In the latter decade of the twentieth century, pit bulls and their owners were the focus of breed-specific legislation in the form of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and constructed by media and governmental discourses as deviant. Following a series of widely reported dog attacks in the UK, dangerous dogs legislation focused on the pit bull terrier. News articles referred to pit bulls as ‘devil dogs’ and across the political spectrum there were calls for a breed ban (Molloy 2011a). Through news media narratives, pit bulls became strongly associated with drug culture, violence, deviant masculinity, and a rise in illegal dog fighting. There were an estimated 10,000 pit bulls in the UK when the 1991 Act was introduced, although how many of these were family pets with no history of aggression, how many had been involved in dog attacks, and how many were involved in dog fighting was unknown as no reliable records existed (Molloy 2011b). Instead, media reporting on dog attacks was used by government and the public as a proxy for quantitative evidence.

This article argues that the vilification of certain types of dogs, used to allay public concerns about dog risk in general, has relied on discourses that connect breed, class identity, and forms of masculinised deviance. Media reporting has amplified this discourse, shaping public and political debate on the topic of pit bulls, and dangerous dogs more generally. A consequence of this strategy is that breed-specific legislation fails because it has been informed by identity politics, and problematic notions about ‘breed’ which rely on institutional methods of standardisation developed in the nineteenth century. Previous studies have established that, during the nineteenth century, the introduction and regulation of dog classification into breeds was intrinsically bound up with ideas about class, gender, and race (Ritvo 1987; McHugh 2004; Brandow 2016; Worboys, Strange, and Pemberton 2018; Pearson 2021). Concurrent with the formalisation of breeds, the later decades of the nineteenth century were also an important time in the development of the pit bull terrier, a type of dog that originated in the UK and was exported to the US in the 1860s.

There has been academic interest in contemporary relationships between dog fighting and masculinities (Walliss 2023; Nurse 2021) and, specific to the topic of this article, the pit bull terrier and identity politics (Molloy 2011a; 2011b; Harding 2012; McCarthy 2016). There is, however, a lack of studies that explore the history of the UK origins and development of the pit bull, dog fighting and their links to working class identity, a gap which this article aims to fill. More recent studies have focused on the US context (Weaver 2021; Guenther 2020a; 2020b; Arluke and Rowan

2020; Alonso-Recarte 2020) where, unlike the UK which has national legislation that prohibits pit bull terriers, there is no equivalent federal or state breed-specific legislation (BSL). Instead, where they exist, US breed laws are enacted by individual cities, American Indian reservations, and military facilities. Not only are there differences in the enactment of legislation, the social and cultural contexts of the US and UK differ with a concomitant variance in the experience of breed, gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and nation. This article, therefore, contributes to scholarship on inter-relations between humans and dogs to examine intersections between class, gender, and the symbolic capital of breed within a UK context. Moreover, intersectionality, in this article, is informed by a critical animal studies perspective which draws attention to the ways in which the symbolic and material exploitation of animals maintains and is maintained by dominant categories of class, race, and gender (Taylor and Twine 2014, 4).

Starting with the late nineteenth century, this article traces the development of the pit bull terrier and Staffordshire bull terrier, and maps intersections with changing ideas about class and masculinity. It then examines the introduction of UK breed-specific legislation in the twentieth century. Although media and political discourses assert that breed-specific legislation protects the public from dangerous dogs (Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 2009, 2), this article argues that the legislation on dangerous dogs is flawed. Through an examination of the discursive framing of certain dogs, it proposes that there are historical continuities that connect social class with specific dog types, and these continued associations have shaped public debate and legislative decision-making. This strategy is used to calm public anxieties about dog risk but does not address key issues such as unregulated dog breeding and poor understanding of dog communication and behaviours.¹ For instance, poor breeding practices have detrimental effects on the long-term health and behaviours of dogs (British Veterinary Association 2023) and, in the UK, most bites occur in the home whilst interacting with a dog known to the adult or child who has been bitten (Jakeman et al. 2020). Whilst, in general, dog bites are contextual and multifacto-

¹ There is a licencing system for those breeding three or more litters per year. So-called 'hobby breeders' (those breeding less than three litters per year) remain unregulated. For further discussion about public understanding of dog communication and behaviours see Parkinson, Herring, and Gould (2023).

rial, a lack of understanding of a dog's specie-specific body language and communication is often a major aspect of such incidents (Jakeman et al. 2020, 3–5).

However, addressing breeding practices and the widespread lack of understanding of dog behaviours and communication would impact the normalised commodification of dogs and generalised practices of 'pet ownership'. As Gary Francione has pointed out, animal welfare laws tend not to affect the interests of humans while exploitation is normalised through a system that classifies dogs and other animals as property. Francione argues: 'because animals are our property, the law will require their interests to be observed only to the extent that it facilitates the exploitation of the animal' (Francione 2008, 43). As such, increasing numbers of dog attacks which stem from factors such as unregulated breeding, and 'pet ownership' practices which do not recognise the specie-specific behaviours and interests of dogs, remain untroubled by any meaningful intervention, legislative or otherwise. Given this context for intervention, this article establishes how a relationship between class identity and breed has informed public and political debate and resulted in significant impacts for the material reality of dogs' lives, while legislation remains ineffective at tackling the issue of dog attacks and dog bite fatalities.

Breed, Gender and Class

In British culture, dogs have been companions to humans for centuries, but it is only since the nineteenth century that the concept of 'breed' came to define and classify the modern dog (Brandow 2016; Worboys, Strange, and Pemberton 2018; Pearson 2021). The invention of breed emerged from Victorian values and ideas about class and gender, influenced by new thinking about evolution, industrialisation, and commerce (Ritvo 1987; Worboys, Strange, and Pemberton 2018, 7). In this sense, breed was and continues to be an idealised construction imposed onto the bodies and behaviours of dogs to organise their appearance and temperament into classificatory groups that satisfy the interests of humans according to varying aesthetic whims and functional requirements. Although perhaps self-evident, it is nonetheless worthwhile pointing out that the concept of breed does not, in any way, recognise the interests of dogs. The first breed standards – classifications that detail the look and character of each breed – were written in the 1860s and these became the blueprints by which pedigree dogs were, and continue to be, judged at conformation dog shows.

In the UK, contemporary breed standards are owned by The Kennel Club. Reviewed and updated to take account of changes to breeds over time, the standard serves as a guideline to the ideal characteristics, appearance, and temperament. Each breed standard includes sections on general appearance, characteristics, and temperament, followed by more detailed descriptions of the ideal head and skull, eyes, ears, mouth, neck, forequarters, body, hindquarters, feet, tail, gait/movement, coat, colour, and size (The Kennel Club n.d.). When they were first introduced, breed standards functioned to organise and order the variability of nature and reflected nineteenth century concerns about purity and superiority which permeated dominant thinking about canines and humans (Pearson 2021, 31–35). These concerns were also evident in the recording of pedigrees, a form of ‘proof’, albeit sometimes disputed, of the lineage and ‘pure’ blood of a particular dog. To these ends, in 1874, the first *Kennel Club Stud Book* (Pearce 1874) was published. A huge tome at over 600 pages, Volume 1 of the *Kennel Club Stud Book* attempted to record in the first half of the book, all the prize winners at dog shows since 1859, with the second half organised by breed as a record of each individual dog’s pedigree accompanied by the names of breeders.

Since the 1860s, modern dog breeds have been associated with certain social classes, often connected to ideas about breed function and human occupation or social status, and subject to fluctuating trends and popularity. For instance, while the rural and urban poor were thought to share attributes with feral dogs, also known as ‘curs’, the classification of pure-bred dogs mirrored the Victorian preoccupation with social stratification (Howell 2012, 228; Worboys, Strange, and Pemberton 2018, 50–51). In the markedly defined class hierarchy of nineteenth century Britain, middle and upper-class fashions for dogs were often led by the royal family. Moreover, there was a clear gendering of breed types with, for example, smaller breeds of dog thought to be better suited to women and referred to as ‘ladies’ dogs.’ One commentator noted in 1896 that Yorkshire terriers had overtaken King Charles and Blenheim spaniels as the favourite ‘ladies’ dogs’ because, when it came to the trends in fashionable dogs, ‘Royalty leads the way’ (Fitzgerald 1896, 545–546). At the other end of the social spectrum, the poor and working classes expressed quite different views about what counted as a desirable dog. In his accounts of the London poor, the journalist and reformist Henry Mayhew expressed bemusement on finding that the male patrons of a London tavern who took part in rat-baiting described a white bulldog as ‘a great beauty’ (Mayhew

1861, 5). Mayhew noted that the dog had a forehead that protruded 'in a manner significant of water on the brain' had legs 'as bowed as a tailor's' and had an overall 'sore look, from its being peculiarly pink round the eyes, nose, and [...] all edges of its body' (Mayhew 1861, 5).

It is unsurprising that Mayhew held different views about dog aesthetics to those of the tavern patrons. At a time when middle-class dog fanciers were endeavouring to establish a regulated and stable system of pedigreed dog classification, the bulldog had fallen out of favour and was in decline following the ban on bull baiting in 1835. Initially considered a respectable 'sport' with aristocratic and royal patronage in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, royal support for baiting was withdrawn in the eighteenth century. But, even without royal patronage, baiting continued, the main reason being that commercial breeders of bulls, bears and dogs were from the aristocracy and the economic benefits of baiting ensured there was continued upper class support until the early nineteenth century. There was, however, a shift in the symbolic capital of dog fighting during this time. No longer the preserve of the upper classes, working-class participation in bull and bear baiting grew and, during the same period, dog fighting became prevalent.

Nineteenth century legislative reform made baiting illegal, and this forced dogfighting underground where, unlike other baiting sports, it could be conducted in relative secrecy (Evans and Forsyth 1997, 63). Although the upper classes continued to participate covertly in dog fighting, the main proponents were working class men. After baiting became illegal, those who engaged in the sport were considered deviant and dog fighting was considered a cruel and specifically working-class practice (p. 63). As a result of these shifts and the bulldog's connections to baiting, the breed had little appeal for the educated middle or upper classes. Harriet Ritvo (1987, 111) writes that the bulldog was 'a breed that had outlived its usefulness, that had no social cachet, and that appeared to ordinary dog lovers ugly, stupid and brutal.' To have bulldogs included in the newly established practices of dog exhibition, the Bulldog Club, formed to preserve the breed, had to find a way to overcome the stigma and decouple the breed from its associations with the lower classes and cruel practices. One approach was to claim that bulldogs were 'the only dog with sufficient endurance to serve the cruel purposes of depraved owners' (Ritvo 1987, 111). The rhetorical strategy worked and by 1885 the bulldog enjoyed a newfound popularity as a breed that looked powerful but was 'peaceable' (p. 111).

Pit Bull and Staffordshire Bull Terrier Origins

The pit bull terrier, which would become the focus of UK breed-specific legislation in the latter decades of the twentieth century, originated from nineteenth century bulldogs, terriers, and rat-baiting dogs, the types of dog Mayhew had encountered in taverns more than a century earlier. According to Joseph L. Colby, author of *The American Pit Bull Terrier* (1936), the first comprehensive guide to the pit bull terrier, the dog was developed for pit fighting by crossing Bulldogs and English White Terriers (Colby 1936, 14). Nineteenth-century pit bulls had the powerful head and jaws of the bulldog combined with the lithe speed of a terrier-like body.² The dogs were closely associated in the UK, and later in America – where they were renamed American pit bull terriers – with prize fighters, and tavern and saloon keepers (pp. 14–15).³ Once a favoured dog of young nineteenth century British gentlemen, they fell out of fashion following the introduction of the 1835 legislation. With the shift in Victorian middle-class sensibilities towards working-class ‘animal sports,’ gentlemen no longer wanted to be identified as ‘the owner of a battle-scarred pit dog’ and, Colby noted in 1936, ‘from the start the breed earned an unjust reputation due to his fighting ability and the character of the owner’ (p. 15).

Despite dog fighting being illegal after 1835, dog fights continued to be held in the pits of taverns and, in an industrialised area of England known as the Black Country, at ironworking foundries, forges and coal mines. Rat baiting, which was not initially enforced under the 1835 legislation, remained popular until the turn of the century and was often used as a cover for illegal dog fights, both ‘sports’ taking place in pits.⁴ Although bulldogs had been formally recognised by The Kennel Club as a breed in 1873, pit bull terrier dogs were considered ‘mongrels,’ which, as one expert explained, were crossbred dogs ‘whose antecedents may be apparent or obscure [...]’ but ‘the chances are that he bears the unmistakable stigma of his unfortunate parentage’ (Our Kennel Correspondent 1931a,

² In other accounts, the pit bull terrier is a descendent of dogs referred to as the Bulldog-Terrier and Bull-and-Terrier. See, for example, John F. Gordon (1971, 41).

³ A number of famous English pit dogs were taken to America in 1865 by dog fighting trainer ‘Cockney’ Charlie Lloyd where they were crossed with bull terrier-type dogs to produce American pit bull terriers (Gordon 1971, 42).

⁴ Impromptu dog fights would also take place during workers’ lunch breaks at foundries and mines.

17). Only pedigreed dogs from recognised breeds escaped the pejorative label of ‘mongrel.’⁵ Not only did the pit bull’s outward appearance fail to meet the standard of an elite pedigreed breed, but the dogs’ temperament was also brought into question. In 1935, *The Times* correspondent wrote about the pit bull terrier: ‘his character suited the temper of those who deplored the embargo placed by Parliament upon bull-baiting [...]’ (Our Kennel Correspondent 1935, 17). The dogs’ temperament was considered to parallel that of the owner and, due to their background as fighting dogs, pit bulls were closely associated with working-class masculine brutality.

The pit bull terrier shared origins with the type of dog that would eventually become known as the Staffordshire bull terrier, a breed recognised by The Kennel Club in 1935 with the formal establishment of the Staffordshire Bull Terrier Club. The Staffordshire bull terrier was so named in recognition of the breed’s heritage as a Black Country fighting dog. Commenting on the Staffordshire bull terrier’s transition from fighting dog to legitimate breed, *The Times* correspondent noted that the dogs had ‘out-lived a past that was disreputable in the extreme’ to ‘become an orderly member of canine society’ (Our Kennel Correspondent 1935, 17). This management of canine bodies into standardised breeds and official recognition of the Staffordshire bull terrier resulted in the pit bull falling out of favour. As interest in dog shows grew, the popularity of dog fighting diminished and pit bull numbers declined. One commentator wrote, ‘we have now too much respect for our dogs to test their mettle by encouraging them to maul and kill one another’ (Our Kennel Correspondent 1931b, 15). The, now reputable, Staffordshire bull terrier breed made their first appearance at Crufts dog show in 1936 where they received generous public attention, helped in part by the attendance of well-known actor, Tom Walls, the owner of ‘Brother of Looe,’ winner of the ‘best bitch’ award.

Although the Staffordshire bull terrier had official recognition and was regularly exhibited at dog shows, the dogs’ symbolic capital remained closely tied to working-class identity. This was made most apparent in an exchange that took place through a series of letters to the editor of *The Daily Mail* concerning which breed should be regarded as the ‘national dog of England,’ a designation that had been attributed to the bull-

⁵ However, to develop breeds and particular characteristics, it was permissible to cross-breed between pedigreed individuals and the progeny registered (Our Kennel Correspondent 1931a, 17). See also Worboys, Strange, and Pemberton (2018, 219–220).

dog since the end of the nineteenth century. Some Staffordshire bull terrier supporters tried to renegotiate the meanings attached to the dogs, claiming the breed deserved the accolade of the ‘national dog of England’ (Paget 1934, 8). Others involved in the world of pedigree dog exhibition were quick to respond, saying that even if they were classed as a distinctly British dog, the Staffordshire bull terrier was a working-class dog that had ‘changed hands so often in the “pit” or “pub”’ (Hollender 1934, 8). Working-class spaces – the pit and pub – were the sites of masculine violence which combined to function as a reminder of the fighting dog origins of the breed. The notion of the unruly mongrel canine body and questionable practices of some breeders were also brought to the fore. The public were warned that there were issues with the standardisation of the breed and that ‘coloured mongrels and whippets’ were being sold as Staffordshire bull terriers (Our Kennel Correspondent 1935, 27), this rhetoric of standardisation and purity being employed to both criticise and defend the newly recognised breed.

In the late 1930s, press coverage of a suspected resurgence of dog fighting involving Staffordshire bull terriers was denied by both breeders and The Kennel Club. Those involved in breeding and exhibiting Staffordshire bull terriers were quick to defend the breed and argue that the dogs were increasing in popularity, being bred for the show ring, and were ‘standardized in type’ (Our Kennel Correspondent 1939, 18). Institutional standardisation through recognition by the Kennel Club may have leant legitimacy to the breed but the Staffordshire bull terrier’s reputation as a fighting dog persisted in some circles, leading one breed expert to note in 1971, that the dogs were ‘associated with ruffians and people who cared little for him as a dog, owning him instead, for what he could win them by fighting’ (Gordon 1971, 34).

Masculinity

During the 1980s, dog ownership increased significantly in the UK and the popularity of Staffordshire bull terriers also grew. By the mid-1980s Kennel Club registrations of the breed numbered in excess of 40,000 (Young 1985, 3). In media accounts from the 1970s and 1980s it is notable that Staffordshire bull terriers began to appear in major news stories about the re-emergence of badger baiting and dog fighting, practices considered to be directly linked to high levels of unemployment that affected young working-class men. *The Times* reported that ‘such activities work out frustrations and ownership of a good fighting dog can give a “ma-

cho” boost to the faltering self-confidence’ (Samstag 1985, 3). In an article on badger baiting, the *Daily Mail* reported that those responsible were urban gangs and the unemployed, ‘mindless thugs too cowardly to fight for themselves. The dogs are surrogates, outlets for their own violence [...]. These thugs boost their macho images by killing beautiful animals’ (Walker 1987, 6). There were reported to be around 50 badger baiting prosecutions annually by 1985, the year of the first prosecution of the twentieth century for dog fighting (Samstag 1985, 3). Those involved in the 1985 case were referred to as the ‘Enfield dog fighting ring.’ Making the point about the link between unemployment and organised dog fighting, *The Times* duly reported that the main figures involved were young unemployed men (Young 1985, 3).

1984 had seen record unemployment figures, the highest in post-war history and, as the decade progressed, a record number of house repossessions due to unprecedented interest rate rises. Against this economic backdrop, there were reported increases in drug use and violent crime, and high-profile media campaigns by the RSPCA presented new statistical evidence of record levels of animal cruelty in Britain (Molloy 2011b, 103). Mass unemployment and decreasing heavy industry in the UK undermined traditional gender roles that assumed that the main wage earner was male, a situation that served to disenfranchise large numbers of working-class men.⁶ Media reports about dog fighting and badger baiting connected the economic realities of unemployment with an emergent masculine identity that valued brutality and violence and used dogs to elevate personal status within social groups. Emergent forms of masculinity – hypermasculinity and the ‘new man’ – combined with equality legislation for women in the 1970s served to undo the certainty of previous traditional forms of hegemonic masculinity. Additionally, the influence of American gang culture on British masculinity was cited as a particular problem in news media discourse and those involved in cruel animal practices contradicted, what was assumed to be, the enduring representation of the UK as a ‘nation of animal lovers.’ Reports of pit bulls mauling people to death in America made their way into UK papers and connected ownership of the dogs with the same problematic masculinity, street gangs, and drug culture. Ownership of a pit bull terrier was considered emblematic of a deviant masculine identity that valued violence.⁷

⁶ For a full account of British masculinity during the 1980s, see Crowley (2020).

⁷ See, for example, George Gordon (1987, 6).

By the late-1980s, a dominant narrative of pit bull ownership was intrinsically connected with social deviance and masculinised aggression.

News coverage of the Enfield dog fighting ring in 1985 had brought the Staffordshire bull terrier's origins as a fighting dog back into public focus. Although the Staffordshire bull terrier who had been involved in the fight – a dog named Kim – was constructed by media accounts as a victim of the situation, the breed's fighting dog origins were made clear. The 1985 press reports also mentioned the American pit bull terrier, a type of dog that was, until that point, virtually unknown to the UK public. Devoting a full page to the subject of dog fighting, *The Times* reported that an estimated 500 American pit bull terriers were already in the UK, half of which were used regularly for fighting, and that the dogs changed hands for large sums of money (Samstag 1985, 3). Another article claimed that the dogs were bred for fighting and while they shared the same origins as the Staffordshire bull terrier, the dogs differed in two main ways: unlike the Staffordshire bull terrier, the pit bull was not a recognised breed either in the UK or the US and had been bred to be a larger type of dog (Samstag 1985, 3). The article ended with a quote from the RSPCA that the pit bull was 'lethal as a loaded gun' (p. 30), a sentiment echoed in other reports where the dogs were also referred to as 'a deadly weapon' (Brompton 1989, 11).

Within a month of the 1985 prosecution, an American pit bull terrier show was held in Salford organised by Ed Reid, the man credited with introducing the dogs to the UK and the first person to legally import an American pit bull terrier to the country. More than 40 dogs were reported to have taken part in the show that included agility and strength tests, and which was promoted as an event that showed the dogs' positive aspects. Quoted in one press article, Reid pointed out that 'The American pit bull has the same background as the Staffordshire bull terrier; although there is an element that does go in for illegal dog fighting, the dog cannot be blamed for that' (Parry 1985, 5). Whereas the shared origins of the two types of dog were used to vilify the Staffordshire bull terrier in media reports, those defending the American pit bull terrier employed the same rhetorical strategy to leverage some degree of legitimacy for the pit bull. Authorised by The Kennel Club as a recognised breed, the Staffordshire bull terrier could lay claim to a pedigreed ancestry which signified legitimate status, while the American pit bull terrier lacked any such recognition. Highlighting the shared heritage of the dogs was used by some supporters to argue for the pit bull to become a recognised breed, but all

attempts to negotiate an authorised breed identity for the pit bull were denied by The Kennel Club (Molloy 2011b, 102).

After 1985, and for the rest of the decade, news stories about dog fighting prosecutions continued to appear, accompanied by a growing sense of alarm about the links between dog fighting and drug-related crime (Molloy 2011b). As the decade progressed, mentions of the involvement of Staffordshire bull terriers in dog fighting diminished and American pit bull terriers became primarily associated with dog fighting practices. However, Staffordshire bull terriers did not disappear from news coverage, but the narrative shifted to their involvement in attacks on humans, particularly children. Dog attacks would become a regular feature of media reporting after 1985 and according to one newspaper, the Staffordshire bull terrier was fourth on a list of breeds responsible for most attacks in the UK after German shepherds, rottweilers and pit bull terriers (Boseley 1989, 5).

Dog Risk and Class

The surge in UK dog ownership in the 1980s led to newfound concerns about a range of issues connected to dogs: fouling, straying, and an increase in dog attacks. An article that labelled Staffordshire bull terriers 'devil dogs' and one of two breeds – the other being the bull terrier – responsible for most of the attacks on children suggested that the problems went beyond only these two breeds. Dogs owned by working class people were, the article suggested, out of control on the streets. There had been 241 dog attacks in London alone over a period of six months and 1,000 stray dogs were being euthanised every day (Ryan 1990, 13). This media narrative on dog ownership and risk drew a clear line between socially responsible owners and those who were unable or unwilling to keep their dogs under control. In 1990 the then Junior Environment Minister, David Heathcoat-Amory, declared in a newspaper report on 'danger pets' that some dogs were 'not only potentially dangerous – they are often cowed mangy creatures breaking open rubbish bags, fouling pavements and parks where children play and creating traffic accidents' because their owners put them 'out on to the street to roam around housing estates' (p. 13). Associations between Staffordshire bull terriers and working-class spaces such as the 'pit' and 'pub' had been replaced by the housing estate, public housing built by local authorities for the working classes which had, by the 1980s, become labelled as a social problem, places with high levels of crime and antisocial behaviour (Boughton 2018). Housing es-

tates were labelled in government discourse as 'pockets of lawlessness' and young boys and men were considered primarily responsible for the 'mindless violence' (Baker 1993, 436). If nineteenth century discourses had likened the poor and working classes to stray 'curs,' the media discourse of the 1980s and early 1990s framed working-class dog owners as violent and socially irresponsible; an analogue of their out-of-control dogs.

Following six years of media coverage of dog fighting, reported increases in dog attacks, and problems with stray dogs and fouling, a catalysing event in 1991 led to the introduction of breed-specific legislation in the UK. An attack by a pit bull terrier on a 6-year-old girl in Bradford was widely reported, accompanied by pictures of the child's wounds. The incident drew public outrage and intense media pressure on the government to act and introduce legislation that would curb the dangers posed by dogs. Despite the many media reports of attacks by breeds other than pit bulls – particularly rottweilers, German shepherd dogs, Staffordshire bull terriers and bull terriers – the decision was made to prohibit the pit bull terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino and Fila Brasileiro, none of which were officially recognised by the Kennel Club. There was no doubt that the legislation was based on class politics, a point confirmed when the then Home Secretary, Kenneth Baker, responsible for the Dangerous Dogs Act, admitted that a ban which included Kennel Club recognised breeds would have upset the middle classes (Baker 1993, 434–435). He wrote, 'the issue was made more complicated by the fact that the largest number of dog bitings was caused by Alsations and other domestic breeds whose owners would never have regarded their pets as dangerous' (p. 434). The distinction between 'domestic' and non-domestic breeds and their relative levels of dangerousness was constantly replayed in political and media discourses, promoting a prejudicial narrative that 'foreign' dog breeds were a greater risk to public safety. In this regard, pit bull terriers were considered the greatest public danger and Baker wrote, 'unlike other recognized breeds they were unpredictable and could not be reliably trained' (p. 435). This discourse on the instability of the pit bull and other 'foreign' dogs ignored the national origins of dog breeds, regarding so-called 'domestic' breeds as only those officially recognised by the Kennel Club.⁸ A nationalistic zeal for institutionally au-

⁸ For example, the Alsatian or German shepherd dog, rottweiler and Dobermann breeds were developed in Germany.

thorised and categorised canine bodies, those that were awarded a Kennel Club breed standard, marginalised pit bull terriers, a dog that, despite having UK origins, was considered to be a definitively American import. The owners were, like their dogs, also stigmatised through stereotypes of gendered working-class deviance. This was exemplified by Baker's comment that 'the "pit bull lobby" came to my aid by appearing in front of TV cameras with owners usually sporting tattoos and earrings and extolling the gentle nature of their dogs whose names were invariably Tyson, Gripper, Killer or Sykes' (p. 435). Men wearing earrings breached conventional standards of hegemonic masculinity while tattoos represented a form of bodily subversion which, at the time, was considered socially unacceptable. The notion that a dog's character reflected that of the owner was continually underscored in official pit bull narratives and, in the debate on breed-specific legislation and methods to identify dogs on 22 May 1991 in the House of Commons, Members of Parliament joked about 'whether the dog's tattoo should match that of the owner. Would' Baker asked, 'pit bulls have "love" and "hate" inscribed on each knuckle' (pp. 435–436).

Conclusion

The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 was rushed through in only six weeks and became law on 24 July 1991. UK breed-specific legislation made illegal the ownership, breeding, selling or exchange of pit bull terriers.⁹ The issue with banning pit bull terriers quickly became apparent as the dogs did not exist as a recognised 'breed.' In other words, pit bulls did not have a Kennel Club standard that specified the appearance and character of the dog. Identifying an officially recognised breed is relatively easy as each dog shares a physical similarity. However, the pit bull terrier had been developed as a fighting dog with value placed on 'gameness' – a desire to continue fighting regardless of pain or injury – rather than outward appearance. Although pit bulls shared some broadly similar characteristics, variability was, and is, common. 'Breed' in this context was, and remains, a product of nineteenth century processes of institutional standardisation that relies on general adherence to and acknowledgement of the fixity of official classification by a national kennel club. Although recognised by other registries set up as alternatives to national kennel clubs, for the

⁹ In 1997, an amendment to the 1991 Act removed the mandatory destruction order and reopened the Exempted Dogs Index, a register of those banned dogs which a court considered would not be a risk to public safety.

purposes of UK 'breed'-specific legislation, pit bulls are described not as a breed but as a 'type.'¹⁰ A series of head and body measurements adapted from a 1977 American pit bull magazine continue to be used to define whether a dog is a 'pit bull type' (Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 2009).

UK breed-specific legislation targets dogs because of how they look, regardless of their behaviour. If a dog 'looks' like a pit bull type, that dog will either be euthanised or placed on a register, neutered, and ordered to be muzzled and leashed in public places for the remainder of their life. Despite being at one time a favoured dog of the upper classes, the pit bull's continued associations with deviant working-class masculinity have circulated through media discourse and informed public and political debate on dangerous dogs. As I have demonstrated elsewhere, since the introduction of breed-specific legislation in 1991, dog attacks on humans and dog bite fatalities have increased (Parkinson, Herring, and Gould 2023). The material impacts of the Dangerous Dogs Act on the lives of dogs are significant and, due to the misplaced focus on pit bulls, the legislation fails to protect the public.

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¹⁰ Examples of other registries include the United Kennel Club (UKC), Unified Bull Breed Registry (UBBR) and the UK Bully Kennel Club (UKBKC).

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A Posthumanist Social Epistemology: On the Possibility of Nonhuman Epistemic Injustice

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Abstract. This paper seeks to intervene in environmental ethics and social epistemology. Within a predominant strand of environmental ethics, one witnesses accounts based on nonhumans' ability to suffer, and consequently, the passivity of nonhumans. On the other hand, social epistemology is often not social enough insofar as it does not include nonhumans. Seminal accounts of epistemic injustice often conceal or exclude the possibility that nonhumans can be subjects of knowledge and victims of epistemic injustice because of an anthropocentric bias that maintains propositional language is a necessary condition for knowledge. By presenting a non-anthropocentric, corporeal epistemology, this paper reveals a more affirmative account of nonhumans as epistemic agents with tacit, embodied knowledge. To prevent epistemic depreciation turning into ethical indifference or wrongdoing, this paper focuses on whether it is possible to commit epistemic injustices against nonhumans. In particular, this paper argues that humans can commit fourth-order epistemic exclusion, testimonial injustice, and testimonial smothering against nonhumans.

Key Words: posthumanisms, social epistemology, epistemic injustice, nonhuman knowers

Posthumanistična socialna epistemologija: o možnosti nečloveške epistemske nepravčnosti

Povzetek. Namen tega prispevka je poseči v okoljsko etiko in socialno epistemologijo. V prevladujočem delu okoljske etike smo priča opisom, ki temeljijo na zmožnosti trpljenja nečloveških bitij in posledično na njihovi pasivnosti. Po drugi strani pa socialna epistemologija pogosto ni dovolj socialna, saj ne vključuje neljudi. Temeljna dela o epistemski nepravčnosti pogosto prikrivajo ali izključujejo možnost, da so lahko neljudje subjekti vednosti in žrtve epistemske nepravčnosti

zaradi antropocentrične pristranosti, ki trdi, da je propozicionalni jezik nujni pogoj za vednost. Z obravnavo neantropocentrične, telesne epistemologije prispevek prinaša afirmativnejši opis nečloveških bitij kot epistemskih vršilcev s tiho, utelešeno vednostjo. Ker želimo preprečiti, da bi se epistemsko razvrednotenje sprevrglo v etično brezbriznost ali napačno ravnanje, se prispevek osredotoča na vprašanje, ali je mogoče zagrešiti epistemsko krivico nečloveškim bitjem. Trdimo zlasti, da lahko ljudje zagrešijo epistemsko izključitev četrtega reda, pričevalsko nepravilnost in pričevalsko zatiranje nečloveških oseb.

Ključne besede: posthumanizmi, socialna epistemologija, epistemska nepravilnost, nečloveški znalci

From Peter Singer (2011) to Ralph Acampora (2006) and Cynthia Willett (2014), one witnesses environmental ethics that attend to nonhuman suffering, and consequently, nonhuman passivity. While important in certain contexts, such accounts can inadvertently reinforce the same problem they are attempting to address. As ecofeminists such as Karen Warren (1990) and Val Plumwood (1993, 2002) contend, the indifference to, subjugation of, and violence against nonhumans were historically justified according to a human-nonhuman dualism that presents humans as active, communicative, and intelligent, while nonhumans are passive, non-communicative, and unintelligent. With so much at stake in terms of climate change and the sixth mass extinction, this paper pursues an alternative, more affirmative, environmental ethic that attempts to 'make us feel the possibility of a thought that goes beyond human thought, to make us sensitive to other modes of thought that dwell at the edge of thought' (Despret and Meuret 2016, 27). Developing upon Karen Barad's posthuman performativity, this paper submits that nonhumans are epistemic agents with tacit, embodied knowledge. To pre-empt epistemic depreciation resulting in ethical indifference and/or harm to nonhumans, this paper seeks a more 'capacious' epistemology – a more social, social epistemology (Alaimo 2008, 251). Feminist social epistemologists first enlarged epistemology by replacing an abstract, self-sufficient epistemic agent with situated, interdependent epistemic agents (Grasswick 2004). However, social epistemology remains not social enough insofar as it not only does not include, but often excludes, nonhumans from consideration. This paper argues for the inclusion of nonhumans in the epistemic community and considers whether it is possible for humans to commit epistemic injustices against nonhumans. In particular, this paper argues

that humans can commit fourth-order epistemic exclusion, testimonial injustice, and testimonial smothering against nonhumans.

Fourth-Order Epistemic Exclusions – The Self-Imposed Lacuna in (Social) Epistemology

To open a space for a more capacious epistemology that allows one to take seriously the possibility of nonhuman testimonial injustice and smothering, it is worthwhile to begin by arguing for the possibility that humans can commit fourth-order epistemic exclusions against nonhumans. Fourth-order epistemic exclusion is an extension of Kristie Dotson's third-order epistemic exclusion, which she articulates through a retelling of Plato's Allegory of the Cave. In her retelling, Dotson imagines mobile people feeding the fettered people in the cave from the right. The leftmost fettered person would thereby be the only person that has not experienced a human sound to their left. The leftmost fettered person, Dotson explains, 'has the ability to detect something about the larger social world none of the other members can detect in quite the same way' (Dotson 2014, 130). Yet, these experiences are excluded from being seriously acknowledged by the larger epistemological system, which orients one's instituted social imaginary and grounds epistemic resources. Since the epistemological system was developed based on the shared experiences of the fettered people, and the leftmost person's experiences are not a common, shared experience, their experiences are dismissed as either 'nonsensical [...], dangerous, [or] impossible' (pp. 130–131).

This epistemic exclusion is a recalcitrant problem. The very epistemic resources that would detect and change this third-order exclusion are part of the resilient epistemological system that itself makes the exclusion. In Dotson's words, the system reveals 'what the system is prone to reveal, thereby reinforcing the idea that one's system is adequate to the task, when one is actually stuck in a vicious loop' (Dotson 2014, 132). Moreover, the epistemic resources would only be able to capture these aspects if there were fundamental changes to the epistemological system. As they are, the epistemic resources are unable to 'shed light on why they are incapable of accounting for the farthest left-fettered person's insight' (p. 131). Rather than a hypothetical example, Dotson maintains that third-order epistemic exclusions are much more common. Indeed, they are 'the stuff "culture clashes" are made of' (p. 131).

Instead of an *intraspecies* clash between human cultures, fourth-order epistemic exclusions refer to *interspecies* clashes that result from the dif-

ferences between humans and nonhumans. Instead of homogenizing the human group by excluding the testimony of the leftmost person, fourth-order epistemic exclusions homogenize the entire group of life forms. Fourth-order epistemic exclusions effectively reinforce anthropocentrism. Like Dotson's account, nonhumans are revealed only according to what the human system is prone to reveal. Embodiment is reduced to human embodiment, knowledge practices are reduced to human knowledge practices, and worlds are reduced to the human world. Since nonhumans are not humans, the possibility that they are intelligent with their own onto-epistemic practices is excluded as nonsensible, dangerous, or impossible.

The additional order of exclusion is not intended to assert that one order of exclusion is worse than the other. Rather the point is simply to avoid attempting to locate nonhumans to the left or right of the leftmost human. Either location would be problematic. On the one hand, placing nonhumans to the left of the leftmost fettered human creates a commonality between nonhumans and the leftmost humans, which has historically justified sexism and racism (Warren 1990; Jackson 2020). On the other hand, placing nonhumans on the same line assumes a continuity between humans and nonhumans, but one that is defined by humans. Making a similar point, Yogi Hale Hendlin (2019, 353) writes:

While certainly other creatures behave similarly to humans in many ways, their processes and orientations are fundamentally different. Not worse, just different. The pernicious inertia of homogenizing consciousness and intelligence onto a single spectrum, usually hierarchized, prevents acknowledging a pluralistic understanding of these faculties that creates a multidimensional approach.

The notion of nonhuman fourth-order exclusions seeks to recognize these non-hierarchical, non-absolute differences and hold accountable the homogenization of consciousness and intelligence as well as the exclusion of nonhuman consciousness and intelligence (Gunnarsson 2013).

More specifically, fourth-order epistemic exclusions involve a human epistemological system that inherently fails to recognize and dismisses the ability of nonhumans to detect something about the larger world, which is to say, they understand something that humans do not and have different modes of intelligence. For instance, reflecting on his dog, Aldo Leopold writes, 'I delight in seeing him deduce a conclusion in the form of a point, from data that are obvious to him, but speculative to my un-

aided eye' (Leopold 1970, 67). Fourth-order epistemic exclusions can also involve denying the epistemic and ontological differences between humans and nonhumans, which result from differences in biology, anatomy, physiology, evolutionary history, environment, and sociality (Ingold 2013; Morizot 2021).

In a certain sense, nonhumans do not inhabit the exact same cave as humans, nor do they engage in the same practices to understand the cave. Jacob von Uexküll (2010) defends a similar claim, maintaining that the different bodies, functional cycles, and subjective aims of nonhumans engender different epistemic and worlding practices. Each nonhuman transforms a world into a world of species-specific tones and meanings based on its body and biology (Schroer 2019). To use Uexküll's famous example (Uexküll 2010), since the subjective aim of a tick is to survive by feeding on the blood of mammals, the tick's world consists of butyric acid, body warmth, and follicle size. The butyric acid awakens the sleeping tick on the tree and notifies it to drop from the leaf. The follicle size provides a path for the tick to find the mammal's skin. Furthermore, its causal theory is different because of its different corporeal sense of spatiality and temporality as well as its different world of particular meaningful entities. The tick engages in different practices of differentiating and knowing how the meaningful objects in its world interact. That is, the tick has a different epistemology and a different understanding of the world. Fourth-order epistemic exclusion, though, denies this difference in understanding as well as epistemology and ontology.

Rather than a speculative concern, fourth-order epistemic exclusions are much more common due to the prevalence of anthropocentric epistemological systems. One form of this anthropocentric bias is the assertion that formal propositional/conceptual language is a necessary condition for knowledge. In addition to Descartes' system of clear and distinct ideas, this bias has taken the form of Plato's or Socrates' demand for propositional/conceptual justification. Epistemic anthropocentrism, however, is not limited to modern and ancient epistemological systems. It can also be found in seminal accounts within social epistemology.

For instance, Kristie Dotson states that epistemic violence involves the refusal of an 'audience to communicatively reciprocate a *linguistic exchange*, owing to pernicious ignorance. Pernicious ignorance should be understood to refer to any reliable ignorance that, in a given context, harms another *person* (or *set of persons*)' (Dotson 2011, 238; italics added). This definition rules out the possibility that nonhumans can be subject to

epistemic violence by making the participation in (propositional) linguistic exchanges and personhood a necessary condition. Furthermore, Gaile Pohlhaus claims that '[k]nowing requires resources of the mind, such as language' (Pohlhaus 2012, 718). Since many animals lack formal language and other conceptual criteria, this would suggest that they cannot be knowers. Additionally, Miranda Fricker (2007, 1; *italics added*) initially describes testimonial injustice as resulting in a 'deflated level of credibility to a speaker's *word*.' Testimonial injustice consequently does not seem applicable to nonhumans because they are not speakers of words. The above examples thus effectively exclude or dismiss the intelligence and epistemic agency of nonhumans as nonsensical and impossible.

Even figures making important steps forward in animal ethics can be seen implicitly reinforcing anthropocentric assumptions. Paul-Mikhail Podosky (2018) submits an other-oriented form of nonhuman hermeneutic injustice, which occurs when a human listener's conceptual framework and structural identity prejudices objectify nonhumans and ultimately prevent humans from understanding nonhuman experiences and oppression. Hermeneutic justice, on the other hand, involves the recognition of nonhuman experiences and moral dignity, which 'can *only* be appropriately realized through language' (Podosky 2018, 227; *italics added*). By liberating words so that they can fully reach their 'expressive capacity,' Podosky contends that one can overcome hermeneutic oppression and help liberate animals (p. 226).

Although it is certainly true that *particular* conceptual schemas can be oppressive, Podosky's claim that language is the *only* way to know, and therefore the only solution, is itself oppressive and hegemonic. Like a totalizing, foundational discourse, Podosky's solution could serve as a 'mechanism of *de facto* repression of at least some of the experiential dimensions of the situation' (Cheney 1998, 120). That is, Podosky underappreciates other modes of human knowing in the form of affective, bodily, and emotional engagements with the world. Such an oversight can result in concealing the tacit, embodied knowledge of nonhumans. Making an analogous point in the contexts of humans, Alexis Shotwell (2017, 79) writes, 'focusing on propositional knowledge as though it is the only form of knowing worth considering is itself a form of epistemic injustice' because it neglects embodied epistemic resources. Additionally, Mihaly Héder and Daniel Paksi contend that '[s]cience education forces us to ignore our tacit and personal knowledge and commitments in an effort to be more objective, more exact. [...] This leads to questioning the exis-

tential knowledge of animals and its continuity with our own tacit and explicit knowledge' (Héder and Paksi 2018, 63).

Moreover, Podosky implicitly reinforces a human-nonhuman dualism in writing that '[n]onhuman animals do not have social power; they cannot impose functions, they cannot change norms, and they cannot converse to sway the minds of those who wish to eat them' (Podosky 2018, 225). But why can nonhumans not converse, albeit not in a conventional human way, with humans? Similarly, animal rights organizations have presented their mission as 'giving a voice to the voiceless.' Such a framing, however, assumes an anthropocentric view that only 'accepts a human-centered definition of voice' (Adams 2010, 311). Such a definition conceals the expressive, agential abilities of nonhumans. These shortcomings demonstrate how applying concepts from social epistemology to nonhumans alone is insufficient. The anthropocentric and dualistic assumptions within social epistemology must also be simultaneously jettisoned.

The Possibility of Nonhuman Testimonial Injustice

With reason to question the limitations of predominant human epistemological systems, it is now possible to argue that humans can commit testimonial injustice against nonhumans. Such an argument will require expanding/transforming the epistemological system to recognize nonhuman intelligence and epistemic practices as well as tacit, corporeal knowledge. In her seminal book, *Epistemic Injustice*, Miranda Fricker contends that testimonial injustice stems from a listener's negative identity prejudices about the speaker. For instance, a listener's sexist and/or racist prejudices distort their perception of the speaker, ultimately deflating the speaker's credibility and epistemic competence. Due to this deflation, the listener fails to believe or seriously consider the speaker's testimony. While the primary harm of epistemic injustice is that the 'subject is wronged in her capacity as a knower,' the specific harm associated with testimonial injustice is that the 'subject is wronged in her capacity as a giver of knowledge' (Fricker 2007, 44). Accordingly, the case for nonhuman testimonial injustice depends on demonstrating the following: (1) nonhuman are knowers and subjects of knowledge; (2) they can convey this knowledge to humans; and (3) humans hold negative identity prejudices about nonhumans.

Quantum physicist Karen Barad's posthuman performativity is particularly helpful in making the case for nonhumans as subjects of knowledge because it disrupts the division between ontology and epistemol-

ogy, matter and meaning, body and mind. In their words, 'being and knowing, materiality and intelligibility, substance and form, entail one another' (Barad 2007, 375). Barad presents an ontology of knowing that underscores how matter matters in terms of how bodies performatively affect meaning and knowledge practices. Inspired by Neil Bohr's interpretation of quantum mechanics, this ontology of knowing is based on Barad's account of intra-actions. Unlike interactions, which presuppose pre-existing, discrete, and independent entities, an intra-active account begins with 'practices/doings/actions' that are performative and constitutive (Barad 2008, 122). Intra-actions such as scientific observations do not merely reveal a pre-existing hidden state of, or truth about, an external entity. They are boundary drawing practices that enact an agential cut, separating agency of observation from observed agency. The intra-action makes the latter matter in particular ways by differentially constituting its boundaries, meaning, properties, and agential abilities while simultaneously excluding other ways from mattering. Even observations are intra-action in that the observation affects what is observed. When measuring an atom with a fixed and rigid ruler, for instance, the ruler differentially constitutes the phenomenon resulting in an atom-as-particle with a determinate position. Since the atom would not be the same without the ruler, the atom-as-particle – like every phenomenon – is an entangled relation of difference. The atom 'includes the apparatus that helps constitute it' (p. 472). Intra-actions therefore do not only cut things apart, they also simultaneously cut things together. In addition to entangling bodies, intra-actions entangle matter and meaning. The concept and meaning of 'position' are constituted in relation to a specific material apparatus – the ruler. In general, Barad (2008, 132) maintains concepts are always embodied, being entangled with '*specific physical arrangements*.'

Such an ontology of knowing creates space for a non-anthropocentric, corporeal epistemology that acknowledges nonhumans as knowers, subjects of knowledge, and epistemic agents. Barad (2007, 147) writes that 'practices of knowing cannot be fully claimed as human practices, not simply because we use nonhuman elements in our practices, but because knowing is a matter of part of the world making itself intelligible to another part.' Put differently, human epistemic practices represent only one form of knowing – one instance of the world making itself intelligible to another part. Nonhumans can also be knowers because 'phenomena do not require cognizing minds for their existence' (p. 361). On the one hand, nonhumans also engage in discursive practices. Following Foucault's use

of discursive, Barad asserts that they co-constitute what can count as meaningful. They do not merely describe the world. Nonhumans actively engage in knowledge practices that co-constitute worlds in the process of making sense of it. On the other hand, nonhumans can be knowers with knowledge that manifests in their differential responsiveness to, and direct material engagement with, the world. Such a claim disrupts the traditional, anthropocentric understanding of knowledge as a correspondence between a propositional, linguistic thought and the world. Rather, this more-than-human, corporeal knowledge involves a correspondence between body and world.

To justify this claim, Barad provides the example of brittlestars. Relatives to starfish, brittlestars are brainless and eyeless echinoderms with ten thousand spherical calcite crystals on their five limbs and central body. These crystals function as tiny lenses that focus light onto its nerve bundles. Together these create a complex optical system like the compound eye of an insect. Despite not having eyes, Barad maintains that 'they *are* eyes. [...] [I]ts very being *is* a visualizing apparatus'. The brittlestar is a living, breathing, metamorphosing optical system' (2007, 375). The brittlestar's activities are boundary drawing practices that enact an agential cut that performatively differentiates the brittlestar (subject) from its environment (object), and further differentiates its environment into parts (objects). These bodily practices make a world intelligible to the brittlestar. They allow the brittlestar to make sense of and discern (without a brain and ideas, mind you) the parts of its environment. By maintaining a level of visual acuity, the brittlestar can successfully detect shadows, track food, find hiding spots, and flee predators. Given that these are matters of life and death, brittlestars are concerned epistemic agents with an interest in knowing and acting in the right way.

The brittlestar's knowledge is reflected in its achieved embodiment and differential responsiveness. There is not a firm and fixed separation between a brittlestar and its environment. The brittlestar's material-discursive intra-actions enfold the environment into its being. The brittlestar is 'constantly changing its geometry and its topology – autonomizing and regenerating its optics in an ongoing reworking of its bodily boundaries' (Barad 2007, 375). In addition to changing its position by moving around, the brittlestar actively reworks its body in relation to its environment. It can change colour based on whether it is day or night, break off an endangered arm to distract a predator, and regrow that limb. This history of specific intra-actions with the environment is 'written into

their materialization, their bodily materiality holds the memories of the traces of its enfoldings' (Barad 2007, 383). The brittlestar's knowledge, in other words, is embodied. This differential re-materialization engenders internal metrics that co-produce a specific meaningful world. As Rosi Braidotti (2013, 60) puts it, living matter is intelligent because 'it is driven by its informational codes, which deploy their own bars of information.' Hence, like how brittlestars do not have eyes but are eyes, brittlestars do not have knowledge, their body is a crystallization of knowledge. Their knowledge is dynamically entangled with their body's material configuration, which is itself entangled with the changing materiality of the bodies that populate their world.

Michael Polanyi and Leopold each separately substantiate the claim that nonhumans are knowers. Polanyi's work on tacit and embodied knowledge (Polanyi 1962) eschews the view that beliefs must take the form of propositions that are explicitly represented through language. Accordingly, nonhumans can also have beliefs in the world in the form of existential commitments. Nonhumans believe that there is a world, and that this world is a particular way. To survive, animals must successfully navigate the world, which depends on an accurate understanding of the world. They must know the difference between what is nourishing and what is dangerous. Additionally, they must track the truth amidst different and changing situations. Commenting on Polanyi's work on nonhuman tacit knowledge, Héder and Paksi note how '[t]rue knowledge is an achievement of a living being's heuristic action to adapt, to stay alive, to be successful. By true knowledge a living being can create a contact with reality for its benefit. A fish has true knowledge when it can successfully differentiate between a prey and a bait' (Héder and Paksi 2018, 60). Leopold submits that nonhumans can intelligently draw inferences about the world despite lacking the formal, conceptual systems that allow humans to make rational deductions. Again, reflecting on his dog, Leopold (1970, 67) describes how '[h]e persists in tutoring me [...] in the art of drawing deductions from an educated nose.' For example, the dog can infer a bird's direction based on 'the story the breeze is telling' (p. 59).

Although this nonhuman knowledge might not be linguistically articulable, it nevertheless resembles accounts of explicit human knowledge. For instance, it 'open[s] up a meaningful realm of experience' (Noë 2005, 289). These resources also resemble good epistemic resources insofar as they help nonhumans 'understand, investigate, and know about specific parts and particular aspects of the world' by foregrounding certain details

(Pohlhaus 2012, 717). Indeed, the continued existence of an organism, and the species, attests to their competency as knowers and the accuracy and reliability of their sense-making activities.

This embodied knowledge and corporeal correspondence between body and world are not necessarily given but can be the achievements of nonhumans as individual epistemic agents that actively inquire into the world as well as change and learn over time. Barad's contention that intra-actions are a congealing of agency and that a nonhuman's history of intra-actions is written into their materialization does not entail that nonhumans are determined by this history. Due to the exclusionary nature of intra-actions, in which some ways of mattering are excluded, the world is never completely given, nor (dis)closed. For Barad, the world is an open-ended process of becoming, in which 'possibilities do not sit still. [...] [N]ew possibilities open up as others that might have been possible are now excluded' (Barad 2007, 234). Subsequent intra-actions can consequently re-configure, re-entangle, and re-constitute the organism and its environment. Each organism, that is, is an open-ended, relational process of becoming. Each can change over time such as how the brittlestar transforms its topology in relation to its environment.

More specifically, while materialized knowledge can come in the form of genetic inheritance and instinctual dispositions, nonhumans are not simply intelligent machines governed by pre-programmed genetic knowledge, which is entirely given, fixed, and complete (Ingold 2001). Making a similar point, Héder and Paksi (2018, 61) note how 'during its ontogenesis the animal must make heuristic efforts to develop its genetic heritage into real skills.' There is a gap between generic, genetic knowledge and its application to a singular, unique environmental situation. Through the individual's heuristic efforts, nonhumans bridge this gap to determine how to apply it to this situation and ultimately develop skills. Moreover, the experience of bridging this gap can affect their epistemic resources (Ingold 2001). It is these efforts that provide reasons to think that nonhumans can be learners and their tacit knowledge can be acquired. Furthermore, scientific research recently investigated whether magpies were self-conscious and had a concept of self. Using the mirror test, a sticker or dot was painted on their forehead. The magpies were then placed before a mirror to see if they would try to remove the sticker or dot, which would imply that they recognized themselves in the mirror – that the reflection is a reflection of themselves. When the mirror test was conducted on magpies, only some of them passed the test. As Vinciane

Despret (2016, 101–103) notes, the fact that some failed shows that ‘[t]he dispositive does not *determine* the behavior that is acquired; rather, it creates the occasion for it. [...] [T]he dispositive is a necessary but not sufficient condition [...]’. In other words, the failures revealed that the acquisition of self-consciousness was an individual achievement of the successful magpies. The success was neither an artificial product caused by the external environment and the researchers, nor a necessary consequence of the magpies’ genetic, biological nature. It was something they individually acquired – something they learned.

Not only does an organism’s history of intra-actions not determine and foreclose its future, but it can also open new possibilities. Turning to Henri Bergson’s concept of duration, one witnesses how the past interpenetrates the present to generate novel possibilities. For instance, duration can result in the sensory-motor system becoming more complex. As Alia Al-Saji (2010, 156) explains, the ‘complication of material structure can proliferate the routes by which an excitation may develop, at once delaying the immediate reaction and permitting a different motor response’. It is the delay of duration that opens different possibilities. And it is these possibilities that give an ambivalence to nonhuman life, which in turn necessitates choice. As Emanuele Coccia maintains, there is not a perfect harmony in nature, between organism and environment, such that organisms automatically tend toward the Good and always make the right decision. As he explains, ‘[e]very species is a conscious actor, capable [...] of mistakes and bad choices’ (Coccia 2021, 155). The good choice and the right belief are therefore an individual achievement of the nonhuman as an epistemic agent. Moreover, insofar as nonhumans and their existential commitments can change, it is then plausible to consider a series of such achievements as a corporeal learning process that occurs over time through their iterative intra-actions with others.

With reason to regard nonhumans as epistemic agents and subjects of knowledge, it is worthwhile to press the point that they can also be epistemic authorities. As Leopold’s reflections about his dog convey, while formal linguistic systems provide particular advantages for humans, non-human modes of knowing are superior in different respects and provide access to different aspects of the world (Taylor 1986). For example, Leopold (1970, 59) contends that ‘[t]he dog knows what is grouseward better than you do. You will do well to follow him closely’. Likewise, Robin Wall Kimmerer often invokes nonhumans such as lilies and sweetgrass as epistemic authorities – as teachers. As she explains, ‘[i]n the indigenous

view [...] [humans] are referred to as the younger brothers of Creation, so like younger brothers we must learn from our elders. Plants were here first on the earth and have had a long time to figure things out' (Kimmerer 2013, 346).

The case for nonhuman testimonial injustice now depends on showing that nonhumans can convey their knowledge. Since most nonhumans lack propositional language, this claim requires extending the sense of testimony beyond the explicit articulation of beliefs. Miranda Fricker herself intimates such an extension in a footnote, writing how testimony can 'include not only cases of telling but also cases of expression to an interlocutor of judgements, views, and opinions' (2007, 50). Put differently, testimony can also include the bodily expression of information. Nonhumans can provide this type of testimony. As Leopold writes, '[l]ike people, my animals frequently disclose by their actions what they decline to divulge in words' (Leopold 1970, 83). This disclosure can include sounds such as when a dog whimpers or barks. It can also include bodily movements and behaviour. For instance, Leopold's dog conveys to him the direction of a bird through 'the cock of his ears' (Leopold 1970, 59). Moreover, Kimmerer's framing of nonhumans as teachers is premised on the possibility that they can convey this knowledge. She notes that while one can expect a verbal answer to a human question, '[p]lants answer questions by the way they live, by their responses to change; you just need to learn how to ask' (Kimmerer 2013, 159). Nonhumans are consequently neither unintelligent nor non-communicative.

With this said, one potential difference between human and nonhuman testimony is intentionality. A human speaker typically provides testimony with the intention that the listener will uptake it and possibly change their beliefs or actions. Yet, there seem to be cases in which the bodily expression of nonhuman testimony is intentional. A dog can make noises to go outside or alert others of the arrival of a guest or stranger. Ravens have been observed pretending to be injured (Despret 2016, 127). Insofar as the imitation of an injury is a type of deception, imitative bodily expressions are premised on not only the recognition that the other has mental states, but they are the intentional and active attempt to change, in this case mislead, those mental states.

Additionally, Plumwood (2002, 182) recounts how '[a] young wombat I used to play vigorous chasing games with would sulk if he did not win; he was an expert at feinting and manipulating a playmate's expectations, often feigning deceptive disinterest prior to mounting a surprise attack'.

Plumwood continues, noting that '[a]ll these behaviours require sophisticated higher-order intentionality' (p. 182).

Finally, nonhuman testimonial injustice depends on the existence of negative identity prejudices. While Fricker focuses on cases of sexism and racism, humans also have negative identity prejudices against nonhumans. As Peter Singer (2011) argues, moral speciesism discounts the moral standing of nonhumans because they are not members of the human species. Extending Singer's concept, there also are cases of epistemic speciesism, which involve discounting the epistemic competence of nonhumans simply because they are not human. For instance, Rene Descartes' (1971) *Discourse on Method* presents humans as thinking things, while nonhuman animals are mere extended things. Humans have an interior life consisting of self-conscious experiences and thoughts. Because humans possess language, humans are free and subjects of knowledge. Articulating an anthropocentric propositional epistemology, Descartes ultimately maintains that knowledge involves explicit, linguistic articulations – clear and distinct ideas. Meanwhile, animals are reduced to machines determined by the laws of nature. Not only do they not possess knowledge of the world (because this requires propositional language), but they are devoid of experience. Animals are simply passive, unintelligent matter. If speciesism and the ghost of Descartes continue to haunt the contemporary world, it is plausible that there exist negative identity prejudices against nonhumans. In summary, given that nonhuman animals are knowers, givers of knowledge, and can be subject to negative-identity prejudices, it follows that it is possible for humans to commit testimonial injustice against nonhumans.

Nonhuman Testimonial Smothering

Why are cases of nonhumans providing testimony to humans not more prevalent, though? One reason could be nonhuman testimonial smothering. According to Kristie Dotson, testimonial smothering is form of 'coerced silencing' that occurs when a speaker truncates the content of their testimony due to the listener's testimonial incompetence or unwillingness to uptake the testimony (Dotson 2011, 245). The speaker's testimony consequently only contains content that is accurately intelligible based on the listener's perceived competence or willingness. Nonhuman testimonial smothering would thus involve nonhumans truncating their testimony due to a perceived testimonial incompetence or unwillingness of humans to uptake their testimony.

The possibility of nonhuman testimonial smothering is revealed by an experiment involving psychologist Irene Pepperberg and Alex, a grey parrot from Gabon. Pepperberg successfully taught Alex to use language to speak, describe, count, and classify. When Alex first inadvertently uttered a new sound, Pepperberg responded to Alex as if he had intentionally made this sound to make a comment or make a claim on her. The sound became a word that ‘signifies something for the parrot because it has signified something for the researcher’ (Despret 2008, 125). To keep Alex interested in learning, Pepperberg would give him rewards for correctly describing or naming the object. For Despret (2008, 125), the reward ‘translates for Alex as the right to “want” and take a position in relation to what is offered to him.’ Alex ultimately picked up on how making a sound impacted the scientists, influencing their actions. He learned that he could use language to influence Pepperberg by saying “come here,” “I want to go to that place,” “no,” “want this” (p. 126). For example, sometimes Alex did not want the reward offered and would indicate that he would rather go on a walk, to which Pepperberg would comply. Pepperberg’s recognition of Alex as a subject and her involvement in the experiment was ultimately the key to the success because parrots do not have a referential conception of language, but a pragmatic conception of language, which is premised on the ability to influence their environment. Hence, the success depended on Pepperberg being receptive to Alex as a subject and subordinating ‘her desire to what makes sense for Alex in the matter of speaking’ (Despret 2008, 127). In doing so, she was able to ask questions that mattered to Alex and would solicit a response.

But why did science not make this discovery before? Despret helps answer this question by noting how scientists often control the conversation. Experiments often take the form of making the test subject ‘submit to the theories that guide research, submit to the problem that is imposed on them in the manner in which the researcher constructs and defines it’ (Despret 2008, 131). Moreover, scientific objectivity requires scientists to be impartial, bracketing anything subjective or personal so that they do not bias the experiment’s outcome and invalidate its universality. The good scientist is like an automaton, which according to Despret’s etymology, is ‘one who is moved by itself, and only by itself, that is the one who will not be moved, put into motion by others. In sum, it is the one who will not be affected, and therefore who will not affect’ (p. 117). In the case of previous objective and impartial experiments with parrots, it is therefore possible the problem was that for the parrot it seemed like they were

addressing no one. Parrots, Despret (2008, 125) explains, ‘cannot speak if they don’t feel they are speaking to someone.’ That is, there would be no reason for the parrot to learn to use language, or provide testimony, since it would not have affected the detached, objective scientist. Putting it in Dotson’s words, it is therefore plausible that nonhumans might truncate their testimony, or provide no testimony at all, because of the perceived unwillingness of humans to engage in communicative exchange and/or the perceived epistemic incompetence of humans to track the truth of their testimony.

Outside the laboratory, nonhuman testimonial smothering could occur in pet-owner relationships. Due to an owner’s indifference, neglect, or abuse, the animal would not have a reason to provide testimony because they have learned that it will not make a difference to the indifferent owner. Or, worse yet, they might have good reason not to provide testimony because of previous instances in which it resulted in abuse. Both cases would lead the animal to truncate a portion, or all, of their testimony.

Conclusion

Disrupting the resiliency of a maladjusted epistemological system will not be easy. As Dotson explains, the ‘[f]ettered persons to the right of the farthest left prisoner will need to extend extraordinary amounts of credibility to the farthest left prisoner’ (Dotson 2014, 132). This paper has sought to justify extending credibility to nonhumans as subjects and givers of knowledge with their own onto-epistemic practices, thereby making the nonsensical a little more sensible and the impossible a little more possible. ‘Staying with the trouble’ of nonhumans entailed challenging anthropocentric epistemologies and the human-nonhuman dualism, while recognizing the non-hierarchical differences between human and non-human knowledges and onto-epistemic practices (Haraway 2016). By recognizing nonhumans as epistemic agents, this paper attempted to trouble human epistemological systems, expand social epistemology, and provide a means to hold humans accountable for epistemic injustices committed against nonhumans.

To end on a positive note, it is worth briefly reflecting on the value of including nonhumans in the social, epistemic community. Due to their biological, anatomical, and environmental differences, nonhuman animals not only have different perspectives and knowledges, but also different epistemic and worlding practices. By appreciating these differences, hu-

mans can come to have a better understanding of the world. As Uexküll notes, '[the forest] is hardly grasped in its true meaning if we relate it only to ourselves. [...] The meaning of the forest is multiplied a thousandfold if one does not limit oneself to its relations to human subjects but also includes animals' (Uexküll 2010, 142). In other words, recognizing and engaging with nonhumans as knowers promises an inter-species form of strong objectivity (Harding 1991; Alcoff 2008).

Making a similar point, Kimmerer writes that '[w]e Americans are reluctant to learn a foreign language of our own species, let alone another species. But imagine the possibilities. Imagine the access we would have to different perspectives, the things we might see through other eyes, the wisdom that surrounds us. We don't have to figure out everything ourselves: there are intelligences other than our own, teachers all around us' (Kimmerer 2013, 58).

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The Uncanny Poetics of Capitalocene Meat: Carnologistics and Octavia Butler's 'Bloodchild'

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Abstract. This paper explores motifs of interspecies symbioses, posthumanism and flesh in Octavia Butler's short story 'Bloodchild.' Butler's interspecies symbioses have been much celebrated as investigating sensuous modes of living with other species. By contrast, this paper argues that new materialist symbiotic analyses too frequently miss dynamics of power and control that are central to Butler's posthumanism. Addressing this imbalance, the paper focuses on the industrial infrastructures, or 'carnologistics,' of animal agriculture. By reading Butler's uncanny poetics of carnologistics alongside recent work in the emergent fields of animal studies and vegan studies, in particular recent anthropologies of animal agriculture and slaughter, a different picture emerges of industrial symbiosis as a mode of anthropocentric and epistemic control. As the paper shows, this approach is particularly appropriate given Butler's own personal commitment to veganism. The paper argues that Butler's uncanny flesh poetics condemns humanism as dependent upon the violent carnologistics of industrial livestock.

Key Words: animal studies, the Capitalocene, carnologistics, flesh, parasitism, posthumanism, vegan studies

***Unheimlich* poetika kapitalocenega mesa: karnologistika in »Bloodchild« [Krvavi otrok] Octavie Butler**

Povzetek. Članek obravnava motiv medvrstnih simbioz, posthumanizma in mesa v kratki zgodbi Octavie Butler »Bloodchild« [Krvavi otrok]. Avtoričine medvrstne simbioze so bile največkrat opevane kot raziskovanje čutnih načinov življenja z drugimi vrstami. Nasprotno pa pričujoči članek trdi, da novomaterialistične simbiotične analize prepogosto spregledajo dinamike moči in nadzora, ki so osrednjega pomena za posthumanizem Octavie Butler. Pri naslavljanju tega neravnotežja se članek osredotoči na industrijsko infrastrukturo ali »karnologistiko« živinoreje. Branje avtoričine *unheimlich* karnologistične

poetike skupaj z nedavnimi deli s porajajočih se področij animalističnih in veganskih študij, zlasti nedavnih antropologij živinoreje in zakola, izriše drugačno podobo industrijske simbioze kot načina antropocentričnega in epistemskega nadzora. Kot je prikazano v članku, je ta pristop še posebej primeren glede na avtoričino osebno zavezanost veganstvu. Trdimo, da njena *unheimlich* poetika mesa obsodi humanizem kot odvisen od nasilne karnologistike industrijske živinoreje.

Ključne besede: animalistične študije, kapitalocen, karnologistika, meso, parazitizem, posthumanizem, veganske študije

This essay proposes a new interpretation of Octavia Butler's celebrated and much-studied 1984 story 'Bloodchild.' The essay draws from and situates itself within the emergent literary critical fields of animal studies, vegan studies and ecocriticism in order to develop its original 'carnologistic' interpretational framework. As the essay demonstrates, carnologistics turns theories of Capitalocene exploitation and commodification of animals towards literary analysis.

Butler's 'Bloodchild' describes the symbiotic relationship of Earthling humans (named 'Terrans' in the story) and a giant insect species, the Tlic. As the story reveals, the Terrans have agreed to allow Tlic to lay their grubs in their bodies in return for being allowed a place to live. Butler's fiction herein sets up the narrative of an ambiguous and imbalanced power struggle that wavers between mutual symbiotic and one-sided parasitic species interrelations. Having been forced to flee Earth several generations ago, the Terrans seemingly owe their survival to the parasitic use of their flesh by the Tlic. Intrigued by the ostensibly allegorical or parabolical quality of the story's uncanny symbioses, critics have paid the story significant critical attention. What is notable is the fact that these critical studies can be grouped into two seemingly incompatible camps. In the first camp are the scholars of posthuman relationality. This is most widely known in Donna Haraway's celebratory reading of Butler's symbiosis from her trilogy of novels *Lilith's Brood* (2000) as 'sympoiesis' at the close of her influential book *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* (1991). Similarly, critics such as Laurel Bollinger and Zakiyyah Iman Jackson read the partnership between Terrans and Tlic as expressing mutuality and connectedness, standing as an allegory for our (post)human embeddedness within Earth's ecologies. It is notable that the other dominant critical tradition reads the story as a parable for slavery (a reading that Butler's preface specifically denies). Critics such as Donna Donawerth, Amanda

Thibodeau and Marty Fink find not mutual symbiosis, but rather the violent exploitation of slavery allegorized by the tale's parasitism.

This essay proposes a carnologicistic reading of 'Bloodchild,' that positions the fiction as an allegory for human commodification of nonhumans (reading the exploited Terrans as allegories for livestock). It claims that, in so doing, it draws together the two seemingly incompatible critical traditions that the story has elicited: commodification of livestock by industrial meat production might be seen as both a form of violently exploitative parasitism and yet also normative, conventional, seemingly unremarkable – and often assumed to comprise a form of mutually beneficial arrangement (see Ingold 1994, 1–22). As the essay shows, a carnologicistic reading locates in Butler's story both a forceful exploration and a rejection of the normative violence of carnologicistics – the human commodification of livestock animals for consumption. As the essay suggests, such a reading is sensitive both to the story's tonal uncanniness and weird horror regarding the consumption of flesh, and also to Butler's own veganism, which previous critics of the story have not deemed significant.

Capitalocene Meat

Capitalocene meat is arguably one of the most urgent problems humanity currently faces. Theorized (in partially divergent historical forms) by Jason W. Moore and Andreas Malm, 'the Capitalocene' describes the exploitative metabolic acceleration of ecologies and energy extraction from planetary geology during either colonialist plantationism (Moore 2015), or fossil capital's later shift to industrial production (Malm 2017). The term 'capital' itself derives from Latin *capitalis* ('of the head'), referring to heads of cattle and the possession of livestock. In David Nibert's account, from the beginning capitalism and the extractive domestication of animals share an intimately imbricated history, so that repeated historical violence, colonialism, and the ranching of indigenous land can be traced back to livestock domestication: '*pastoralist and ranching practices* [...] have been a precondition for and have engendered large-scale violence against and injury to devalued humans, particularly indigenous people around the world' (Nibert 2013, 2). As the culmination of this history, modern meat production constitutes a preeminent exemplification of Capitalocene metabolism. Sixty percent of planetary mammal biomass is now livestock, which biologists say is eight times more than the Earth can support (Bar-On, Phillips, and Milo 2018, 6506–6511). Meat production and consumption is a central driver of catastrophic biopoliti-

cal crises, such as global warming, land degradation, and mass species extinction, not to mention rapidly accelerating increases in rates of diabetes and obesity in human populations – which is why the UN Sustainable Development Project (Goal 12: Sustainable Consumption) urges governments to promote reduced meat consumption (United Nations 2016). The most recent IPCC report repeatedly stresses the carbon intensive nature of meat production, and the urgency of adopting plant-based consumption (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2022). Animal agriculture and associated land degradation are an ongoing pandemic danger, responsible in recent years for outbreaks of zoonotic pathogens including ‘African swine fever, *Campylobacter*, *Cryptosporidium*, *Cyclospora*, Ebola Reston, *E. coli* O157:H7, foot-and-mouth disease, hepatitis E, *Listeria*, Nipah virus, Q fever, *Salmonella*, *Vibrio*, *Yersinia*, and a variety of novel influenza variants, including H1N1 (2009), H1N2V, H3N2V, H5N1, H5N2, H5NX, H6N1, H7N1, H7N3, H7N7, H7N9, and H9N2’ (Wallace et al. 2020). Global poverty and wealth inequality is a key zoonotic pathway for these diseases to spread from industrial farming operations into global populations. Around 70 percent of the 1.4 billion world population who live in extreme poverty also live in proximity to livestock (World Animal Protection 2022, 25). Agri-business epidemiology is almost certainly also significant in the origins of SARS-CoV-2, the cause of the Covid-19 pandemic – with yet more severe pathogens highly probable in the future (Wallace 2020, 280). Yet rather than reduction, the rate of meat consumption is accelerating precipitously. Over one hundred billion animals are now slaughtered annually, almost doubling the rate of consumption of less than a decade ago (Schlottman and Sebo 2019; Weis 2013) – with global demand for meat anticipated to increase by 73 percent by 2050 (Percival 2022).

The accelerated commodification of creaturely flesh is at the centre of both the cultural life and the ecological catastrophes of late modernity, altering our work, our food, our gender relations, and our relations with other creatures: a situation in which ‘the most iconic symbol of the modern era’ has been described recently as ‘the Chicken McNugget’ (Moore and Patel 2018). Meat has shifted ‘from the periphery to the center of human diets’ (Hansan and Syse 2021, 2), a process Tony Weis has conceptualized as ‘meatification’ (Weis 2013). As Donna Haraway states: ‘Follow the chicken and find the world’ (Haraway 2008, 274). Since 1979, there has been a quadrupling of animals slaughtered. By comparison, the global population less than doubled in the same period, from 4.4 billion to 7.7

billion (Hansan and Syse 2021, 6) – indicating a speeding up of global average meat consumption. These transformations, which Marx theorizes as a ‘metabolic rift,’ arguably involve the internalization of planetary life processes by capitalism, and the subsequent internalization of capitalism by the biosphere (such as in ecological breakdown) (Moore 2015). In pursuit of profit margins, Capitalocene meat strips its livestock of all vestiges of the life that their instincts long for: housed for most of their lives in steel and concrete crates barely larger than their bodies (as a result of which their bodies are covered in sores and abscesses, as a result of which they are fed daily a cocktail of antibiotics), tail-docked, de-beaked, teeth-clipped and castrated at birth (Efstathiou 2021, 171–172). Alongside the interminable suffering of livestock animals, overwhelmingly ethnic minorities, women and the socially disempowered suffer from working in slaughterhouses and living in proximity to the effluent pollution of industrial farms (Bolin, Grineski, and Collins 2005; see also Pachirat 2011). By centralizing epistemic links between the violence of global meat production and systemic racial and gender inequalities, the concept of Capitalocene meat describes the naturalization and epistemic invisibility that enable such violent inequalities (Agarwal 2011).

Care and Carnologistics

Capitalocene globalism means, for the French philosopher Bernard Stiegler, that we are bound by the urgent need to care: to live carefully and caringly. Due to accelerating technical mastery, prosthetic tools, oil capitalism, and rhizomic informational systems, human technical infrastructures exercise power to an ever-increasing degree over the planetary biosphere, inducing, amongst other effects, climate change, accelerating rates of deforestation and habit loss, and mass extinction. Yet this mode of living is accompanied by dependence upon prosthetic existence – this is the state Stiegler terms ‘exsomatization’ – meaning, in simple terms, that we cannot simply give it all up. We are enmeshed in a logic of metabolic acceleration. To the extent that we cannot live without it, prosthesis is out of our control: it is controlling us too. Our source of power is also our powerlessness. Given that this situation has taken us close to, or beyond in some cases, the limits of key planetary biosystem thresholds, this means the need for care, and for thinking the complexities of care, is urgent. Yet what would caring and careful living entail? Writing on the etymological and philosophical link between care (*panser*) and thought (*penser*), Stiegler notes, in various places, that (2017, 398–399):

These histories of *panse*, which would undoubtedly have delighted Nietzsche, call for an *organology of pansée*, inasmuch as it is also written as – and hence ‘thinks itself’ (so to speak) as – *pensée*, and as the act of *taking care firstly by nourishing*, this question of nourishment being a question of assimilation, on which Nietzsche would both meditate and ruminate. [...].

The word *panseur* is ‘found in the fifteenth century in relation to those who care for a horse and after 1623 in medicine (*panseurs de vérole*, pox dressers).’ *To think* would always be *to exert therapeutic activity: hubris*, which as we will see Heidegger names both violence (*Gewalt*) and in-quietude (*Unheimlichkeit*, uncanniness) (Heidegger 2000; Boehm 1960) is what, as the *excessiveness of exosomatization*, generates *pharmaka* that require *panseurs*.

What is needed, for Stiegler, are *panseurs* – those who think care, who recognize the need of exercising the power from which we cannot withdraw with care. Yet, like so many philosophers, anthropocentric assumptions seem to shape Stiegler’s *panser*. It is notable, for example, that many of the examples of *panser* that Stiegler references describe agricultural care for animals. *Panser* is in these examples something potent humans do to impotent animals – it locates active (human) and passive (nonhuman animal) roles. Yet a telos of usage, of caring for animals that will become meat or produce dairy, circumscribes animal agriculture. Agricultural care makes instrumental use of that which it supposedly cares for, so there is necessarily a kind of dominion assumed in this care – mastery and compassion bound together in the production of commodities. Though Stiegler’s overwhelming philosophical influence is Derrida, and he concedes that ‘[t]o care-fully think [*panser*] the Anthropocene in the twenty-first century is to think at the limit of the thinkable’ (Stiegler 2017, 390), he seems not to draw deeply from Derrida’s work on animals, nor to recognize the anthropocentric control of agricultural husbandry or stewardship as limitation or closure of the logic of *panser*, in the way that Derrida’s deconstruction pursues the ‘carnophallogocentric’ trace of the nonhuman as the limit that closes logocentric thought.

For this reason it is useful briefly to consider Stiegler’s care alongside Timothy Morton’s ecocriticism. For Morton, the control that agriculture exerts upon biosystems, by practices of breeding and enclosure, is positioned as involving various symbolic degrees of closure, which ultimately seek to divide humans from biology: ‘agrilogistics is precisely a sever-

ing of human-nonhuman ties' (Morton 2017, 74). Morton argues that the seeds of the human transcendence that for so many philosophers connote the absolute difference between humans and nonhumans in so many diverse (and self-serving) formulations are planted in this work of division: 'agricultural religion is one of the most basic ways in which agricultural society talks about itself [...] Our very image of solidarity is predicated on never achieving solidarity with nonhumans!' (Morton 2017, 25). From this perspective, the kind of stewardship that Stiegler draws from *panser*, albeit it well intended, would seem to annul the possibility of solidarity, involving a perpetuation of the abyssal divide separating human and nonhuman (Morton 2017, 25):

Solidarity with nonhumans becomes radically impossible: it *mustn't* be achieved, otherwise something very basic will fall apart. You can't get there from here – so 'stewardship' and other varieties of command-control (ultimately religion-derived) models of human relationships with nonhumans are also no good for ecological solidarity.

For Morton, agrilogistics and stewardship involves principally the denial of cross-species solidarity. Yet we might also question the conceptual target agrilogistics as an unhelpfully broad object of critique. Does not Morton's critical energy seem misplaced and disconnected from any possible meaningful praxis? What would be the alternative to agrilogistics, one might ask – to give up farming? To resort to paleo hunter-gathering? Rather than the condemning all horticulture, which indigenous cultures have developed in various sustainable forms (Kimmerer 2013), might not a more nuanced ecofeminist position specifically confront the most destructive and violent element of agrilogistics, that is to say, industrial livestock? Aside from its interminable violence to the flesh, and its perpetuation of sexist and colonialist hierarchies, Capitalocene meat is responsible for 'Ocean dead zones. Fisheries depletion. Species extinction. Deforestation. World hunger. Food safety. Heart disease. Obesity. Diabetes,' and around 30 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions (Hyner 2015). What I am terming the 'carnologistics' of Capitalocene meat are the reason why the world is on track, for example, to consume nearly a trillion chickens in the next decade, most of whom will live and die young in terrible conditions (Torella 2023).

In approaching carnologistics, I place an emphasis on Stiegler's *panser* because it helps to chart the perverse and uncanny violent telos of care

deployed strategically in contemporary carnologicalistics. Take undercover anthropologist Alex Blanchette's evocative description of the desperate attempts of migrant workers to save vulnerable piglet life at a concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO) after the uterus of a sow prolapses during delivery of her litter. First of all, the migrant workers shoot the mother (Blanchette 2020, 152):

as the bullet bounced around in her brain, involuntary spasms of her legs began thrusting her torso across the ground as we tried to splay out her legs and hold her powerful twitching body steady so Felipe could safely work with his bolt cutters around her belly. 'Fifteen seconds!' shouted Francisco as Felipe appeared to be tearing through layers of flesh. 'Thirty seconds! Hurry up!' Felipe must have lost his grip on the bolt cutters, which fell into the sow's belly; he started ripping layers with his hands to get at the womb. Pints of blood pooled out around his knees and rubber boots.

'One minute! Focus!' Felipe pulled out the first of the piglets, unmoving and covered in placenta. He passed it to the women, a gendered division of labor forming on the spot around death and life, killing and nurturing. 'Too late – they're dead,' rang out several times as piglets were passed from the puddle of red. 'Give them air!' I glanced over at the women and saw them blowing into the piglets' tiny mouths, flexing the piglets' front and hind legs together to resuscitate them, their hands covered in the sow's blood.

In this intensive scene of multi-species care, which due to the genetic hybridization that selects for large litters is an increasingly normalized part of industrial pork production, Blanchette witnesses the complex relationality of Capitalocene entanglement: the violent processing of the flesh alongside the production and capitalization of care within the factory system. Compassion is rendered a tool of the industrial system, placed as industrial symbiosis under the aegis of full vertical integration because of the seemingly instinctual care of female workers for the piglets, a gendered impulse exploited and put to productive use in the factory systematized labour division. This involves activating a gendered recognition of contiguous cross-species flesh vulnerability, or 'surplus affect' as Blanchette puts it, that is embedded within and, more specifically, deployed as an essential component of increased efficiency in the production of meat. This is care in the name of the slaughter-to-come. As Nancy Fraser describes, capitalism is a 'guzzler of care' – cannibalizing, in her

simile, currents of anti-capitalist impulse as ‘integral parts of the capitalist order’ (Fraser 2014, 70). Rather than the vague hope of justice *à-venir* that is marked by the Derridean trace, *panser* is here the systematized telos of surplus relational affect that is extracted from female migrant labourers in order to accelerate the efficient production processes of cheap meat.

‘Bloodchild’

One astonishing quality of Butler’s ‘Bloodchild’ is the extent to which it anticipates and draws narrative urgency from a form of exploitative multi-species relationality of the flesh comparable to the full vertical integration of the factory system’s violent telos of surplus affect. In the story, a group of humans, who are named Terrans, have fled Earth to start a new life on a distant planet. They have formed a symbiotic relationship with a large insect species, the Tlic, who are inhabitants of the planet, and with whom they can communicate linguistically. The Terrans have agreed to allow the Tlic to lay their eggs in Terran bodies, parasitically using Terran flesh as hosts, in return for being allowed to live in relative peace in a compound named The Preserve. At one point in the story, the central protagonist Gan observes a Terran, Lomas, receive emergency surgery from a Tlic named T’Gatoi after grubs hatch from the eggs in Lomas’s body and begin killing him (Butler 2005, 15):

His body convulsed with the first cut. He almost tore himself away from me. The sound he made [...] I had never heard such sounds come from anything human. T’Gatoi seemed to pay no attention as she lengthened and deepened the cut, now and then pausing to lick away blood. His blood vessels contracted, reacting to the chemistry of her saliva, and the bleeding slowed. I felt as though I were helping her torture him, helping her consume him. I knew I would vomit soon, didn’t know why I hadn’t already. I couldn’t possibly last until she was finished. She found the first grub. It was fat and deep red with his blood – both inside and out. It had already eaten its own egg case but apparently had not yet begun to eat its host. At this stage, it would eat any flesh except its mother’s.

The emergency evacuation of Tlic grubs in Butler’s story weirdly anticipates the surplus affect of contemporary piglet evacuation in the industrial-livestock-carnologistics described in Blanchette’s *Porkopolis*. Certainly, the care of T’Gatoi for the Tlic grubs, devoid of the telos of slaughter, is quite unlike the carnologistic care extended to the piglets

in Blanchette's report. Yet aspects of the symbiosis of cross-species care are similar: the Terran is functional flesh for T'Gatoi, just as the care is extended to the piglet litter in Dixon in the name of their meat. As Gan perceives, in aiding T'Gatoi as she attends to Lomas, it feels 'as though I were [...] helping her consume him' (Butler 2005, 15). Though the sow with the prolapsed uterus is killed and the Terran is not in this instance, we later learn that humans in similar situations have been killed by the Tlic. Gan's brother Qui states of a similar emergency surgery: 'I saw them eat a man [...] The man couldn't go any further and there were no houses around. He was in so much pain, he told her to kill him. He begged her to kill him. Finally, she did. She cut his throat. One swipe of one claw. I saw the grubs eat their way out, then burrow in again, still eating' (p. 20). Certainly, Terrans have more input into the cross-species relation than hogs do in industrial pork production. The man that Qui describes seeing begs for his own death: which is to say, the Tlic are less parasitically dominant over Terrans in Butler's tale than meat factories are over the swine in their charge. No pig ever begs for death – yet all industrial swine end up being killed in the factory system, unlike most of the Terrans in Butler's story. Nevertheless, despite these differences, and despite the already large critical attention the story has received, there is yet a strong case to be made that Butler centrally addresses the power dynamics of carnologistics.

Several subtle details in Butler's writing encourage this reading. Early on we are informed that Gan has a particular way of sleeping enfolded in the spiny limbs of T'Gatoi. At one point he observes his mother sleep this way: 'She lay down now against T'Gatoi, and the whole left row of T'Gatoi's limbs closed around her, holding her loosely, but securely. I had always found it comfortable to lie that way, but except for my older sister, no one else in the family liked it. They said it made them feel caged' (Butler 2005, 6). In this early passage, Butler seems to foreground an agricultural reading. The dominant insects are holding pens for human flesh: they farm Terrans, while their bodies describe both the biopower of animal agriculture, and the control of the flesh exercised by industrial agricultural holding crates. They care in the manner of Stiegler's *panser*, as livestock farmers, for the productivity of the flesh, for that value they can extract. Fahim Amir writes: 'The whole apparatus of fences, cages, pens, and surveillance and monitoring systems is an answer to the monstrous agency of animals and a testament to their world-forming power' (Amir 2020, 20). Carnologistic infrastructures enclose animal agency, normal-

izing conceptions of passivity by strictly regulating all bodily behaviour.

Just as normative violence regulates the natural flesh resistance of livestock animals, so too the Tlic determine the Terrans' normative comprehension of the range of spatial agency. In another instance, Gan is told by T'Gatoi 'Thinness is dangerous' because for the Tlic, Terrans are principally flesh. It has been common since Haraway's influential remarks to read Butler in relational terms, as describing and allegorizing the mutual symbiotic intersection of species. However, as recent work in black studies has made all too apparent, too often a new materialist approach evades iniquities of power (see also Weisberg 2009, 22–62). As Zakiyyah Iman Jackson asks, 'What if we read the story in light of and with an eye for the politics of species?' (Jackson 2020, 40). Despite this important question, and despite the fact that Butler in the later part of her life practiced a vegan diet due to the fact that she 'could not stomach the torture of animals' (Due 2020, 276), and depicted her conception of the visceral bodily refusal to consume flesh as a central plot and character motif in her Oankali trilogy *Lilith's Brood*, to my knowledge no critic has yet considered the specific power dynamics and the use of the flesh in 'Bloodchild' as allegorizing animal farming.

One subtlety of the story is that its first-person narrator and central protagonist, Gan, is largely unaware of the carnologistic systems of control that he lives within, which has been naturalized for him from an early age: 'I'm told I was first caged within T'Gatoi's many limbs only three minutes after my birth' (Butler 2005, 8). We see, in following the forced habituation to a 'caged' existence from birth, Gan normalizes his entrapment. Educated within the Tlic cage, as unreliable narrator Gan is habituated to this treatment, so the story becomes centrally about the misrecognition of carnologistic power. In effect, Butler combines in Gan the enclosure suffered by livestock with the all-too-common human failure to perceive that enclosure as suffering. As Carol J. Adams writes, 'Everywhere animals are in chains, but we image them as free' (Adams 2010, 19). Criticism has not generally recognized this centrally important element of the story. This is unfortunate, as Butler foregrounds the skewed and distorted worldview of Gan early in the story (Butler 2005, 4):

When I was little and at home more, my mother used to try to tell me how to behave with T'Gatoi – how to be respectful and always obedient because T'Gatoi was the Tlic government official in charge of the Preserve, and thus the most important of her kind to deal

directly with Terrans. It was an honor, my mother said, that such a person had chosen to come into the family. My mother was at her most formal and severe when she was lying.

Gan recognizes the flesh as signifying power, but he has been cut off from the meaning it invokes by the normalization of the Tlic cage that he has been raised within. Gan's mother functions as warning that Gan's viewpoint is limited and distorted, epistemically beholden to Tlic uses of Terran flesh. Gan asserts, 'I had no idea why she was lying, or even what she was lying about. It was an honor to have T'Gatoi in the family' (Butler 2005, 4). His subject position is constructed within the normative infrastructures of carnologistics, and not able to conceive his mother's apparent revulsion for the Tlic's parasitism. The story is tricky, a slippery exercise in recognizing misrecognition, because Gan must be felt as wrong, an unreliable narrator, failing to understand, even as we learn the situation of the story only from his words. At another point he notes the apparent frustration that his mother expresses about the continual presence of T'Gatoi: 'My mother made a wordless sound of annoyance. "I should have stepped on you when you were small enough," she muttered. It was an old joke between them' (Butler 2005, 7). Gan's limited view understands this desperate desire to be free of the Tlic presence as a dark joke, but does not seem to recognize the sincere impotent frustration of his mother at the dominion of carnologistics wielded by the Tlic over Terran life. Gan's mother offers a powerful yet submerged alternative perspective, a warning concerning Gan's narrative voice.

Posthuman Animals and Free-Range Horror

A carnologistic reading of Butler's story focuses on the story's horror. Reversing conventional carnologistics, it is Terrans – humans – who are farmed. In this reversal lies the story's uncanny horror. In her afterword, Butler expresses particular interest in the reversal of conventional power dynamics in the story's motif of male birth (generally male Terrans are used by the Tlic to host eggs), and a non-imperial vision of human encounters with other life. She also specifically notes the story is not about slavery. A carnologistic reading, which recognizes the manner in which the story positions humans as farmed creatures, is consistent with Butler's over-arching aims of reversing conventional power relations. The possibility of the Tlic industrially farming the Terrans is also briefly described in the story (Butler 2005, 9):

Back when the Tlic saw us as not much more than convenient, big, warm-blooded animals, they would pen several of us together, male and female, and feed us only eggs. That way they could be sure of getting another generation of us no matter how we tried to hold out. We were lucky that didn't go on long. A few generations of it and we would have been little more than convenient, big animals.

This industrial-livestock-carnologistic reduction of life remains hypothetical in the world of the story, due to T'Gatoi's innovation of the Preserve, a compound where the Terrans are allowed to live in relative freedom, on the condition that their males agree to host Tlic eggs. The 'free-range' Preserve thus enables Terrans to retain some degree of bodily autonomy, while individual Terrans are taught to internalize the power dynamics of Tlic carnologistics. Gan's brother Qui refuses the benign understanding of the Preserve. Horrified by the Terran acceptance of entrapment, Qui critiques his own stupidity: 'Stupid. Running inside the Preserve. Running in a cage' (Butler 2005, 9).

In fact, Butler aligns acceptance of this exploitative use of Terran flesh with Gan's unreliable point of view, and also a narcotic condition that T'Gatoi and the other Tlic attempt to propagate among the Terrans. The Tlic eggs fed to the Terrans have a tranquilizing effect, so that it is significant that Gan's mother refuses these. At the very least, Gan's mother and brother offer a submerged alternative perspective. Gan feels he chooses the male pregnancy of positive symbiotic relationality, as in Haraway's sense of ecology as 'sympoiesis': 'Nothing makes itself; nothing is really autopoietic or self-organizing' (Haraway 2016, 58). Yet there is alternative anti-productive and feminine resistance: one that is not ready to consume T'Gatoi's eggs. Gan cannot understand why his mother will not eat these, and nor can T'Gatoi. 'Why are you in such a hurry to be old?' (Butler 2005, 5), she asks. As a new materialist, Gan's perspective aligns with T'Gatoi's, internalizing the logistics of Terran control, while his mother wants to hold firm to an outside, or merely stage a form of resistance to the narcotic agrilogistic relationality of the Tlic farming. Though powerless, she nevertheless resists Tlic carnologistics.

In these moments of resistance, the story maintains a subtle devaluing of Gan's point of view. This is also to be found in Gan's fight with his brother Qui, who has lived further from the Tlic and despises them. Qui expresses frustration at the manner in which Gan internalizes Tlic views: "Don't give me one of her looks," he said. "You're not her. You're just her

property” (Butler 2005, 18). Relational critique based on the work of Haraway understands Qui, Gan’s brother, as expressing the destructive misrecognition of self-autonomy. Yet Gan’s brother also questions the invisible power of carnologistics. ‘Qui’ is he who questions: the Latin root *qui* used in question, quest and inquiry. Gan expresses, rather, unquestioning acceptance – doped on Tlic eggs. The etymology of Gan is less certain, but possibly suggests Latin for his willing consumption of Tlic framings of symbiosis, and Tlic narcotics: gluttonous (*ganeo*), the basis for ‘gannet.’ T’Gatoi gives a narcotic to Gan to calm him after the traumatic incident of the larvae: ‘I felt the familiar sting, narcotic, mildly pleasant’ (p. 27). This means the entire positive discussion at the end, of the posthuman symbiotic-sympoiesis that so inspires new materialist relational critics, is conducted while Gan is drugged by Tlic narcotics. To read this forced symbiosis merely as positive mutuality is to miss power relations and the coercive caging, drugging, emotional self-sacrifice (Gan giving himself to save his sister Hoa).¹ This is not precisely mutuality, but rather drug-induced carnologistic parasitism – and in Butler’s self-consciously upside-down presentation (‘my pregnant man story’), the Tlic are the farmers, the alien carnologistic dominators. The Tlic, that is to say, are what humans must look like to livestock animals – except Tlic do not slaughter humans in the story at the rate of 200,000 deaths per second. This makes ‘Bloodchild’ a story about existent power relations exercised upon nonhumans, but seen differently because human protagonists are the ones who suffer this power.

It is also a story about the misrecognition of political power, such as wielded in industrial animal agriculture, as benign symbiosis. Uncanny flesh horror is the stylistic that Butler employs to depict this reversal. Butler states in her Preface: ‘I found the idea of a maggot living and growing under my skin, eating my flesh as it grew, to be so intolerable, so terrifying that I didn’t know how I could stand it if it happened to me’ (Butler 2005, 30–31). It is a similar reaction that she replicates in Gan, who is deeply traumatized by seeing Terran flesh: ‘The whole procedure was wrong, alien [...] Finally, I stood shaking, tears streaming down my face. I did not know why I was crying, but I could not stop. I went further from the house to avoid being seen. Every time I closed my eyes I saw

¹ In the story, the central dilemma involves Gan’s growing discomfiture concerning his imminent role as providing with the flesh of his body a home for T’Gatoi’s grubs. Ultimately, he decides to accept this duty so that his sister Hoa will not be compelled to instead.

red worms crawling over redder human flesh' (p. 17) – this is the feeling of horror peeking through Gan's narcotic acceptance of symbiosis: the unsettling alternative to Gan's naïve unreliable perspective. Normalized carnologistics are upset, cracked open for a moment, so that the suffering flesh becomes disturbingly visible. For this reason, we should read 'Bloodchild' as a horror story, a story of flesh terror, not primarily about the positive 'living with' of relationality, but about the coming to terms with the self-deception necessary to 'live with.'

In fact, one might argue that with Gan the story narrativizes the struggle to face the uncanny poetics of Capitalocene meat. As Gan watches the bloody grubs 'ooz[e] to visibility in Lomas's flesh,' he questions his future role as a surrogate: 'I had been told all my life that this was a good and necessary thing Tlic and Terran did together – a kind of birth. I had believed it until now.' (Butler 2005, 13). This is Gan, the indoctrinated one, seeing the flesh ooze to the extent that it threatens the normative epistemes that have organized his life, so that the story is about whether uncanny awareness can break epistemic normalization in a person who has internalized carnologistics.

This means the horror aesthetics of Butler's carnologistics undoes from within arguments, such as Haraway's, that claim unambiguously positive accounts of human-nonhuman relationality, even in the most violently exploitative contexts, such as to be found in Haraway's attempts to justify vivisection: 'What happens if experimental animals are not mechanical substitutes but significantly unfree partners, whose differences and similarities to human beings, to one another, and to other organisms are crucial to the work of the lab and, indeed, are partly constructed by the work of the lab?' (Haraway 2008, 72). The answer to Haraway's question, from the point of view of the vivisectioned animals is of course: *nothing at all* changes for the vivisection animal if we change the way we signify the metaphysics of their exploitation. Rather than seeking material change in the deployment of capitalist power, Haraway's elaborate theorizations of sympoiesis centrally concern themselves solely with the way the human operatives of the Capitalocene think about the power they wield. Given that Haraway's smooth new materialist words function as palliative, justifying the status quo with a calming soporific effect, and also due to the fact they have in many cases a readership who might in practice be open to questioning the power that capital inflicts upon nonhuman creatures, the likelihood is that Haraway – like the Tlic eggs – defuses the possibility for anti-exploitative praxis, functioning as an agent that sustains

traditional Capitalocene carnologistics. As Fahim Amir states: ‘when it comes to animals the left goes right’ (Amir 2020, 6).

As an example of relationality in respect to ‘Bloodchild,’ Laurel Bollinger (2007) suggests that the Terran-Tlic relation involves love and ‘connectedness,’ reading the partnership between Gan and T’Gatoi as maternal. It is notable that the other dominant critical tradition reads the story as a parable for slavery (a reading that Butler’s preface specifically denies). Despite Butler’s denial, Donna Donawerth describes ‘Bloodchild’ as a tale of ‘exploitation’ (Donawerth 1997, 40), while Amanda Thibodeau describes a ‘parasitic’ partnership (Thibodeau 2012, 270), and Marty Fink perceives a ‘violent physical invasion’ and ‘alien appropriation of human bodies’ (Fink 2010, 417–418). Something about the tale either compels the reading of connectedness or violent exploitation. One might dwell on the apparent incompatibility of these two dominant traditions of reading: the exploitative reading of the story as a slavery allegory reads violent domination of Terrans, whereas relationality reads symbiotic togetherness. I believe my carnologistic reading of the story fits both these critical traditions together, and allows them to speak to one another in new ways, because the violence of carnologistics is both symbiotic and largely unseen. Carol J. Adams’s ‘absent referent’ is the missing element here, which enables symbiotic love to be perceived in the place of violent exploitation. Reading with carnologistics helps draw together ‘Bloodchild’s’ presentation of relationality as both violently exploitative and normative relationality.

One important recent attempt to link these two manners of reading comes from Zakiyyah Iman Jackson’s rightly celebrated study *Becoming Human*. Jackson’s states of Butler, ‘her oeuvre is not an unqualified endorsement of symbiosis, as some feminist posthumanists have claimed but rather a complex meditation on the promise and perils of symbiogenesis, symbiosis, and parasitism under conditions of unequal power’ (Jackson 2020, 129). Aware both of the inescapability of ecological symbiosis and violently exploitative forms of Capitalocene biopower, Jackson aims at a position between posthumanism and unconditionally positive accounts of relationality. Where I would want to dialogue a little further with Jackson is the way her antihumanist reading of Butler might seem to downplay the horror of flesh exploitation: “‘Bloodchild’ re-establishes fleshly embodied subjectivity as a multispecies processual environment characterized not by Self-control but the transfer of control rather than a sovereign “I” (p. 122). For Jackson, the flesh must firstly be consid-

ered always-already, 'a multispecies processual environment.' While this certainly is true with regard to complex networks of shared ecologies (including those of intensive animal agriculture), the absence of a truly 'sovereign "I"' in ecological networks ought not to be taken as shorthand for the irrelevance of flesh as ethically fraught substance. As with Haraway, Jackson seems less concerned with the carnologistic uncanny horror of using flesh as an instrumental commodity form that Butler centralizes, which is arguably the central tonality of the fiction. If the story undoes the 'sovereign "I,"' it also associates uncanny horror with the forms of parasitism involved in this undoing.

This also means, while the most uncanny and gripping moments from the story describe the exploitative use of human flesh, for Jackson, "Bloodchild" is a meditation on the embodied mind's encounter with other species, particularly insects, parasites, bacteria, fungi, protozoa, and viruses, which are the dominant forms of life composing our world and bodies' (Jackson 2020, 134). Notable in all the species encounters that Jackson proposes here is the fact that none deploy carnologistics the way the Tlic use Terrans. Arguably, the use of industrial livestock much more closely parallels the Tlic's use of humans in Butler's fiction than fungi symbioses, yet livestock remain absent from Jackson's consideration. Moreover, the distance between the *umwelt* of fungi and humans arguably reduces the uncanniness involved in the symbiotic use of one and the other. In this way, Jackson arguably perpetuates the Humanist desire to divide human and nonhuman life by expressing a mode of relationality between safely dissimilar lifeforms, employing the strategy that Derrida terms the 'general singular' of 'the animal,' which is repeatedly used by western philosophers to evade confronting in their own reasoned arguments the actual flesh of the animals that they are cutting open (Derrida 2008, 41). Notably, a similar strategy is used by the Tlic themselves, in order to justify their parasitic symbiosis: 'You know you aren't animals to us' (Butler 2005, 24). If one believes the Tlic here, as Gan does, and as various posthumanist critics do, this might seem to mean that, as a radically different lifeform that recognizes the abyssal difference of humans, the Tlic in fact legitimate the carnologistic use of animals. Yet the story is interesting (and tonally uncanny) because it also continually questions this assumption, by disrupting the believability of the Tlic, placing in doubt Gan's ability to understand, and by showing carnologistic care, as in Stiegler's *panser*, as also violently exploitative.

Yet, what is also strange and forceful in Butler's tale is the way Tlic and

Terran are brought so close together. For Jackson, the Tlic's insect basis makes the story about the disassembly of subjectivity effected by parasitical microorganisms: 'Through their relation, Butler reveals that parasites and microorganisms mark the limit of liberal humanist conceptions of subjectivity characterized by autonomous agency and consent' (Jackson 2020, 142). But surely, the way that the story places human life into a systematic and exploitative parasitism in which coercive and unequal social arrangements structure the relation of two symbiotically interlinked species, asks us to recognize a more uncanny mode of parasitism? The failure of consent is not limited to microorganisms, but is central to the parasitic human uses of livestock flesh in systems of Capitalocene meat.

As an ethically oriented mode of posthumanism, the carnologicistic reading understands Tlic as expressing something about human farming, and the story's Terran as a critical expression of the position of livestock. In this reading, Butler's story demonstrates how the qualities celebrated by Cartesian humanism, such as autonomy, agency and consent, are themselves fuelled by the symbiotic domination of other species. It is not simply, or even centrally, that humanist subjectivity is undermined by symbiosis – as in the posthumanist reading of the tale. 'Bloodchild' goes further than this, describing how Tlic subjectivity, as an allegory of humanity, is dependent on carnologicistic power and its own unrecognized and violent parasitism of Terrans.

Conclusion: Parasitism and Conceptual Larvae

The dissolution of the subject is celebrated in many classic anti- and posthumanist analyses of the story. What Butler troubles, in the ethical dilemma ingeniously arranged by the story, is the way that such a dissolution is aligned with the violent carnologicistic parasitism of vertical integration, such as to be found in the most intensive factory farming. By reading from the position of exploited flesh, relationality is not the overcoming of impermeable humanism, but rather its very foundation.

Staying with the flesh, there is something conceptually disarming about the story's parasitism. Butler's 'Preface' has been much considered by feminists and black studies scholars for its discussion of male pregnancy and its denial that the story is an allegory for slavery. Yet perhaps less attention has been turned to the botfly that Butler describes, that filled her with fear on a visit to South America. Botfly lay their eggs in human flesh and thus supply the model for the Tlic and their parasitical symbiosis with Terrans. Yet Butler here perhaps also makes a reference to her occluded

zoë-politics. In Plato's *Apology for Socrates*, he reports Socrates's notable speech, delivered before the Athenian citizens in an attempt to save his own life (Plato 1966, 124):

[I]f you kill me you will not easily find another like me, who, if I may use such a ludicrous figure of speech, am a sort of gadfly, given to the State by the God; and the State is like a great and noble steed who is tardy in his motions owing to his very size, and requires to be stirred into life.

As Hannah Arendt comments: 'The role of the philosopher is not to rule the city but to be its 'gadfly,' not to tell philosophical truths but to make citizens more truthful [...] Socrates did not want to educate the citizens so much as he wanted to improve their *doxai*' (Arendt 1990, 81). It is notable that the botfly that preoccupied Butler is a species of gadfly, and it is unlikely that this escaped Butler's attention. Her work, like Socrates' overturning of doxa, is an annoyance, and a weirdly uncanny frustration that does not quite resolve into a satisfying celebration of symbiosis, despite so many brilliant and ingenious critical efforts, because it is at the same time a refusal of the doxai of carnologistic power and the industrial use of livestock flesh – a position that Butler's own veganism also turned to quotidian praxis. The story troubles because it offers the dialectic of two partial answers: horror at flesh parasitism and (narcotized) posthumanist relationality. Notably, too, the egg parasite of the botfly and of Butler's Tlic is more disarming than the mere sting that Socrates describes, also involving a sneaky burrowing within, an implanting, and a reorganizing of self-knowledge based on an alienating vision of the flesh. Recognition of one's flesh as an ecosystem, contiguous with the world, involves examining one's place in the uniquely accelerated systems of parasitism that constitute Capitalocene modernity. The Tlic, like botflies, undo human transcendence by developing the Socratic gadfly sting – planting conceptual larvae, introducing a bug into the cultural ecology of carnophallogocentric humanist transcendence.

'Poetry is invasion not expression,' Amy Ireland writes (Ireland 2017). Yet this bug is also a debugging (the most fraught and dramatic moments in the story involve taking these grubs out of human flesh), so that one might position the story's aesthetic force as involving a debugging of industrial carnism – one that shifts the meaning of the human away from both transcendent otherness and narcotized symbiosis with industrial meat, towards worldly contiguity – our fleshy continuum with those be-

ings whose flesh we harvest. Recognizing the inevitability of symbiosis, as the story's horror-ambiguity insists, does not need to imply unquestioning ethical approval of carnologicistic parasitism. As a discomfiting detournement via uncanny poetics to a firmer sense of embodied solidarity, the Terrans Gan and Qui are fundamentally of the Earth, but must travel great distances away from the known to discover the contiguity of their flesh with our planet's exploited livestock.

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Hegemony, Animal Liberation, and Gramscian Praxis: An Interview with John Sanbonmatsu by Dinesh Wadiwel

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Abstract. Political theorist Dinesh Wadiwel interviews philosopher John Sanbonmatsu about the relevance of Antonio Gramsci's theories of capitalism and collective action for the contemporary animal advocacy movement. Wadiwel and Sanbonmatsu discuss Gramsci's key concepts, including hegemony, the distinction between 'organic' and traditional intellectuals, the capitalist crisis, and the necessity of 'moral and intellectual leadership' in praxis. Sanbonmatsu acknowledges the historical tensions between the political Left and animal rights, but makes the case for a theoretical and practical merging of the two. In this context, he suggests, Gramsci's phenomenological conception of praxis – i.e. as the engendering of a new political and social reality through the exercise of human will – offers important lessons for the animal movement. Sanbonmatsu suggests that as growing contradictions in the capitalist animal food economy open up fissures in the system of domination and consent, Gramscian analysis can help us to identify points of strategic weakness, ones we might collectively leverage to create radical social change.

Key Words: Antonio Gramsci, Marxism, animal rights, animal ethics, critical theory

Hegemonija, osvoboditev živali in Gramscijeva praksa: intervju Dinesha Wadiwela z Johnom Sanbonmatsujem

Povzetek. Politični teoretik Dinesh Wadiwel se s filozofom Johnom Sanbonmatsujem pogovarja o pomenu Gramscijevih teorij kapitalizma

in kolektivnega delovanja za sodobno gibanje zagovorništva živali. Wadiwel in Sanbonmatsu razpravljata o Gramscijevih ključnih konceptih, vključno s hegemonijo, z razlikovanjem med »organskimi« in tradicionalnimi intelektualci, s kapitalistično krizo ter z nujnostjo »moralnega in intelektualnega vodstva« v praksi. Sanbonmatsu prepoznava zgodovinske napetosti med politično levico in pravicami živali, vendar se zavzema za teoretično in praktično združitev obeh. V tem kontekstu Gramscijevo fenomenološko pojmovanje prakse – tj. kot ustvarjanje nove politične in družbene realnosti z uporabo človekove volje – izpostavi kot pomembno lekcijo za gibanje za pravice živali. Sanbonmatsu predstavi razmišljanje, da nam, medtem ko vse večja protislovja v kapitalistični ekonomiji živalske hrane povzročajo razpoke v sistemu nadvlade in privolitve, Gramscijeva analiza lahko pomaga prepoznati točke strateške šibkosti, ki jih lahko skupaj izkoristimo za doseg radikalne družbene spremembe.

Ključne besede: Antonio Gramsci, marksizem, pravice živali, etika živali, kritična teorija

Dinesh Wadiwel (DW) *In 2011 you edited the collection, Critical Theory and Animal Liberation (Rowman and Littlefield). In some respects the book was unprecedented and remains unique in exploring connections between left theory and pro-animal politics. Your introduction to the book lays out some of the challenges before us, including a historic antagonism from many leftists towards the animal liberation project; and simultaneously, an urgent need for animal liberation analysis to engage a 'penetrating critique of, among other things, patriarchy and male violence, the links between racialization and animalization, [and] the capitalist state as such' (Sanbonmatsu 2011, 30). Could you explain a little about the impulses behind the collection?*

John Sanbonmatsu (JS) One of the few positive developments I see on the left regarding animals is Critical Animal Studies (CAS), a small, emerging academic field that seeks to bring radical social critique to animal liberationism, while bringing an animal liberationist perspective to radical critique. The point of my anthology was to provide a space for some of the emerging voices in CAS to map the totality of human domination. The original impetus for the volume came from the Marxist philosopher Renzo Llorente, in Spain, whose idea was to co-edit a book about capitalism and animals. When Renzo had to bow out of the project, however, the collection became broader in scope, exploring not only the linkages between speciesism and capitalism, but bringing in feminist critique, the Frankfurt School, ideology critique, etc.

Unfortunately, though there are now dozens if not hundreds of scholars working in this arena, CAS remains a very small domain. Meanwhile, the left as such remains indifferent to animal liberationist critique. In 1989, I wrote an article for *Z Magazine* (a leftist journal based in Boston) on why the left should take animal rights seriously, both as an idea and as an important social movement. When the article was published, I was a bit anxious, anticipating a backlash from the magazine's readers. In the event, I needn't have worried – because there was no reaction at all. Unfortunately, the left's attitude towards animals and to animal rights has not changed much in the intervening 30 years. There have been some exceptions. In the 1990s, for example, William Kunstler, the celebrated leftist attorney, publicly spoke out against human exploitation of animals in laboratories and farms, describing our treatment of other species as 'barbarism.' More recently, the leftist journalist Chris Hedges has drawn some attention to the suffering of animals in agriculture.¹ However, these are the exceptions that prove the rule, and animal liberationist thought remains marginal to leftism as a whole. *Jacobin* magazine has published one or two articles in an animal welfarist vein, but they've also published atrocious pieces attacking animal rights – including one that even defended factory farming.

Not only isn't the left interested in animal rights, but countless leftist journalists and critics have enthusiastically thrown their support to small-scale animal farming and aquaculture as 'forward-looking' developments in environmental sustainability. For example, George Monbiot, one of the few leftist writers to have criticized animal agriculture, published a repugnant article in *The Guardian* about how he hunted down and killed a deer, ostensibly as a way of demonstrating his commitment to a post-agricultural order.²

DW *In left discussions, one often finds the term 'hegemony' cropping up, a term most often associated with the work of Antonio Gramsci. Can you first explain what is meant by hegemony, and perhaps too the overall significance of Gramsci's politics for praxis?*

JS *Hegemony is a complex term.³ The word derives from the ancient Greek word *hegemon*, for a leading or dominant city state. Hegemony*

¹ See e. g. Hedges (2015).

² See Monbiot (2020).

³ See Perry Anderson's book length treatment of the subject, *The H-Word: The Peripeteia of Hegemony* (2017).

is often still used in this sense, as the power or influence of a ruling or dominant group or power. Leftists thus refer to the 'hegemony' of the World Bank, to the hegemony of capital, to racial hegemony, and so on. While these are valid uses of the term, what Gramsci meant by hegemony was rather more specific.⁴ Broadly, *hegemony* encompasses the means through which a group or class establishes, and subsequently maintains, its rule. By 'rule,' however, I don't mean only or even primarily its control of the state or political institutions. Rather, I mean its authority and influence over society as such. It's one thing to rule over others solely using force – the police or military, etc. But it's another to gain the consent of the populace to a form of authority and a mode of life by redefining the common sense of society itself. The contest for power plays out in all spheres of society, not only at the ballot box, but in the workplace, in academia, in popular culture, and therefore too in language and the realm of ideas. A dominant group maintains its power not only or chiefly through control of the state, but through the propagation of values and beliefs, norms of behaviour, structures of practice. As Benedetto Fontana observes, for Gramsci a 'group or class can be said to assume a hegemonic role to the extent that it articulates and proliferates throughout society cultural and ideological belief systems whose teachings are accepted as universally valid by the general population' (Fontana 1993, 140). If we think of society as a consensual reality shared by those dwelling within it, then politics is the art of defining that reality. Those who exercise hegemony are thus able to define the meaning and purposes of human life.

It was one of Gramsci's most important insights, however, to recognize that hegemony is simply built into the nature of political life. It is therefore in vain to suppose that an oppressed class or group has only to *overthrow* a hegemonic group or system in order to succeed. It must instead institute its own form of rule, its own form of hegemony. A *counter-hegemonic* movement therefore seeks to crystallize a new form of popular consent.

⁴ Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937) was an Italian political theorist and revolutionary who wrote most of his major works while languishing in a fascist prison, having been sent there under the direction of Benito Mussolini in 1926. Gramsci's essays (smuggled out of prison and published long after his death as *The Prison Notebooks*), ranged widely over a great many cultural, literary, historical, and political topics. For an introduction to Gramsci's life, see Giuseppe Fiori's *Antonio Gramsci: Life of a Revolutionary* (1995). Among the best treatments of Gramsci's conception of politics as dialectic between leaders and led, and as the creative shaping of human social reality, is Benedetto Fontana's, *Hegemony and Power: On the Relation Between Gramsci and Machiavelli* (1993).

This, in turn, requires ‘moral and intellectual leadership.’ In the specific case of the animal advocacy movement, an effective counter-hegemonic praxis would transform the prevalent ‘common sense’ view of nonhuman animals as our natural inferiors and slaves. What animal advocates seek isn’t merely the ‘liberation’ of animals, but a *new form of civilization*, a civilization based on quite different social, ecological, economic and ethical principles than the ones that constitute the present basis of society. In this connection, the problem of speciesism cannot be solved in the courts. Only through gaining mastery over the terms of debate and thought can the animal rights movement thereby transform the total ensemble of existing social relations. Legal reforms will follow only when the movement has achieved a certain level of social consent.

Counter-hegemonic praxis must therefore be differentiated from the liberal view of social change. The latter takes a static view of society, taking the existing social forces and social beliefs at face value, more or less as immutable ‘givens.’ The liberal view also believes that meaningful social change can be achieved through formal democratic processes, and hence through a compromise between different political blocs.⁵ By contrast, the oppositional movement sees the forces in society as dynamic and therefore contestable. Moreover, the counter-hegemonic movement seeks to impose a new system of values on the old, thus changing the epistemological ‘ground’ of daily life. The work of the activist intellectual is to prepare this ground. White Americans today no longer give any thought to how they stand on the ‘question’ of slavery, because that ‘choice’ was taken off the table by abolitionists (and civil war). Though *de facto* slavery still persists throughout the world, it is no longer acceptable or legal to buy and sell human beings outright as commodities, based on their race. Similarly, though women are still treated as subordinates by men, no one in our society asks whether women should have the right to vote. Suffrage – an idea once considered radical and controversial – is now accepted by nearly all (though women still face numerous obstacles to full political representation). Feminists imposed this idea on society through a panoply of tactics, including marches, civil disobedience, letter-writing campaigns, and arson attacks.

⁵ Nonviolent direct action is one potent form – as potentially ‘coercive’ a mechanism as violence. See Barbara Deming’s instructive critique of Frantz Fanon’s defense of revolutionary violence in ‘On Revolution and Equilibrium,’ *We Are All Part of One Another* (1984).

DW Gramsci had a particular view about the role of leaders within movements. Can you say more about this?

JS I would first emphasize again that social movements must conceive of *themselves* as leaders – the leaders of society itself. It is not enough simply to oppose an existing order – one must convince at least a significant minority of society that one has the better alternative. In order to do that, however, leadership must also be exercised within the oppositional movement. Though movements and revolts often arise spontaneously, they are unlikely to last or to achieve concrete objectives without leadership of some kind.

Some on the left understandably bridle at any mention of ‘leadership,’ fearing that it implies hierarchy or even a self-appointed elite. Vladimir Lenin’s conception of the ‘vanguard party,’ said to embody the will of the proletariat and to provide ‘correct’ political direction for the working class, offers the paradigmatic case. Though Gramsci is sometimes described as a Leninist, however, his conception of leadership was considerably more democratic. Why, though, have leadership at all? Because not everyone starts out from the basis of knowledge. It is not in the interests of those who wield power for subordinated subjects to have a complex understanding of the nature of the system that oppresses them. Elites maintain their hegemony, thus, by mystifying the true origins, and machinations, of the dominant social authority. Critical consciousness therefore doesn’t arise spontaneously, but must be educated. If workers, say, already had a sufficient understanding of their situation, and of how to change it, then presumably they would have already liberated themselves by now. However, while the lived experiences of workers is the proper basis of any socialist praxis, those experiences might easily be channelled instead into a right-wing politics. Hence Bebel’s famous remark that ‘anti-Semitism is the socialism of fools.’ And hence the groundswell of populist authoritarian movements throughout the world today. The far right is proving more adept than the Left in turning alienation, class oppression, and ontological insecurity into a potent political project.

For this reason, Gramsci felt it important to distinguish between ‘those who know’ (*chi sa*) and ‘those who do not know’ (*chi non sa*). Whereas the capitalist class seeks to maintain this distinction, however, by keeping *chi non sa* in a state of ignorance, the socialist movement seeks to dissolve it. The goal of oppositional praxis is therefore to democratize knowledge by providing ordinary people with the epistemic tools they need to make

sense of social reality – i.e. to grasp the true nature of the existing order. Once given an unobstructed view of the system, those in the movement can share this knowledge with others, and contribute their own insights to collective oppositional understanding. In this way, the circle of critical understanding, of knowledge, propagates outwards, until it coincides at last with the whole of society itself.

In grasping the totality of social relations, the working class achieves self-consciousness, becoming the ‘subject-object’ of history – that is, it becomes both the product of social forces and the new agents capable of leading society beyond the capitalism and its alienating mode of life. This may all sound like a subtle paternalism – the all-knowing party leadership telling the masses ‘what is to be done.’⁶ On the contrary, however, the whole point of Gramscian praxis is to diminish the ranks of those ‘who do not know,’ so that the leaders become the led, and those who are now being led themselves become the leaders. Mediating this exchange are the ‘organic’ intellectuals, individuals from the subaltern classes who are able to unite theory with practice, drawing on their own understandings and social experiences. The oppositional movement grows ‘organically’ and dialectically out of, and in conversation with, the perspectives, experiences, and needs of ordinary people.

DW *You mentioned Gramsci’s idea of the ‘organic intellectual.’ Gramsci is understanding ‘intellectual’ here in a specific way – and he is not necessarily referring to university professors. Can you say more?*

JS Clearly, if hegemony is engendered, and maintained, through ‘moral and intellectual leadership,’ then presumably intellectuals must play some role in the matter. Everyone, in a sense, is a ‘philosopher’ or ‘intellectual,’ because we all have opinions about the world, and we all bring intelligence and creativity to our work, no matter how simple that work may be. At the same time, not everyone specializes in intellectual labour. As Gramsci notes, while ‘everyone at some time fries a couple of eggs or sews up a tear in a jacket, we do not necessarily say that everyone is a cook or

⁶ As the Black narrator of Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* bitterly concludes after spending months with ‘the Brotherhood’ (the Communist Party), organizing the African-American community in Harlem: ‘What did they know of us, except that we numbered so many, worked on certain jobs, offered so many votes, and provided so many marchers for some protest parade of theirs? [...] For all they were concerned, we were so many names scribbled on fake ballots, to be used at their convenience and when not need to be filed away.’ (Ellison 1972, 496–497).

a tailor' (Gramsci 1971, 9). In the same way, everyone is a 'philosopher' in some sense, but not everyone has intellectual expertise. Properly speaking, then, we can identify intellectuals by their social function as intellectual labourers. The latter are involved in the production and circulation of the *ideas* and beliefs of society. Thus defined, there are technical intellectuals (scientists or engineers, or state bureaucrats), artistic or literary intellectuals (novelists, poets, or journalists), legal intellectuals (law professors and jurists), clerical intellectuals (priests, imams, rabbis), and academic intellectuals (philosophers, theologians, and so on). All such intellectuals exert a cultural influence over civil society at the level of ideas and beliefs. In other words, Gramsci writes, their 'function [...] is directive and organizational, i.e. educative [and therefore] intellectual' (Gramsci 1971, 16).

Gramsci draws a further distinction between so-called 'traditional' intellectuals and 'organic' ones. Broadly, 'traditional' intellectuals are aligned with the humanist tradition and with the existing social order. In the idealized version, the traditional intellectual's function is to reflect on truth, ethical life, and the nature of society or the human condition. Ostensibly, the traditional intellectual is an independent mind, beholden to no particular class identity or formation. In reality, however, the traditional intellectual is closely attached to the dominant class. The discourses of such intellectuals thus tend to correspond to, or reinforce, the worldview, forms of life, and interests of the dominant class. In Gramsci's era, the most important 'traditional' intellectual in Italy was the philosopher Benedetto Croce, whose classical humanism had the function of organizing society in defence of the status quo. An equivalent today would be someone like Steven Pinker, in the US context, or like the philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy, in France. In theory, Lévy is an independent and courageous 'free thinker.' In reality, he is wholly a creature of the French establishment and its elitist educational system, and his work serves to conserve a particular traditionalist, racist, and patriarchal conception of French national identity.

'Organic' intellectuals, by contrast, are individuals connected to a specific realm of economic activity – out of professions or work environments where they exercise a chiefly intellectual function. The influence of organic intellectuals, however, often transcends their specialized labour activity. Such individuals thus exert a 'directing' influence, either in civil society (the realm of *consent*: discourse, persuasion, and argument), or the state (the realm of *coercion*: the judiciary, diplomatic statecraft, war

colleges, etc.).⁷ Journalists and editors in the mainstream corporate press might loosely be described as organic intellectuals, insofar as they are drawn predominantly from the upper-middle and upper classes, and thus express the views of a sector of the capitalist class. Hence the open conspiracy in the press to undermine Sen. Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign in 2016.

However, Gramsci rejected the view that only an elite few, those from the upper classes, are 'naturally' suited to engage in intellectual activity or theoretical reflection, while 'the many' are best equipped for 'thoughtless' manual labour. On the contrary, Gramsci was intent to show the importance of a new type of organic intellectual. The capitalist division of labour had given rise to specialized intellectual labour not only at the erstwhile 'higher' levels of production – white collar work, science, diplomacy, law, etc. – but, too, in the 'lower' sphere of production, on the factory floor. Just as the landed gentry of earlier centuries had given rise to the country priest or parson who exerted moral, spiritual, and political influence over his parish, the emergence of the proletariat had engendered a new kind of intellectual – e.g., the shop steward, union leader, party representative – who exerted a 'moral' leadership and influence in the workplace and outside it. The organic intellectual is enmeshed in the communal needs, experiences, and perspectives of their class: such an individual doesn't pretend to hover 'above' the fray, as the traditional intellectual does, as a mere 'theorizer' of revolution or societal change. Rather, the organic intellectual, arising out of the working class itself, participates actively 'in practical life, as constructor, organizer, "permanent persuader"' (Gramsci 1971, 10). They assume responsibility not only for educating and organizing others in their working class, but in exerting leadership over society, as such. That is, by virtue of their activity, they are engaged not merely in the 'technical' work of organizing union meetings, but also in the work of articulating a new *philosophy of life*, a new ethics, a new *culture*. The choice between philosophical ideas, on the one hand, and the practical activity of labour, on the other, is thus a false one – an artefact of the division of labour and, hence, of class oppression.

DW *Is there some way that Gramsci's conception of 'organic' intellectuals might be helpful to us in thinking through leadership and the role of intellectuals within the animal rights movement today?*

⁷ For a discussion of Gramsci's distinction between organic and traditional intellectuals, see King (1978).

JS The animal rights movement cannot be said to have ‘organic’ intellectuals in Gramsci’s specific sense, since activists necessarily operate at an ‘ontological’ remove from the historical subjects/beings whose interests they defend (i.e. nonhuman animals). Nonetheless, Gramsci’s analysis of intellectuals has important implications for contemporary animal advocacy. First, intellectuals continue to play a crucial role in reinforcing human supremacy and the ideological system that legitimates our exploitation and killing of other beings. It is therefore vital that we do our best to place our own intellectuals, ones committed to an anti-speciesist politics and system of values, in positions where they/we can disrupt the circulation of speciesist knowledges – in the media and culture industry, in journalism, in academia. We need to think of ourselves as producers of culture. It is a mistake to see animal rights as a ‘protest’ movement; as I have said, it represents an attempt to lead our species in a new civilizational direction.

Second, we need to grapple with the fact that the animal rights movement right now seems more ‘organically’ tied to the middle class than to the working class. There are some advantages to this, insofar as the middle and upper classes are privileged with higher levels of education, and hence are better prepared to make inroads into the culture industry – into journalism, law, politics, and so on. However, the movement’s ‘organic’ connection to more advantaged classes also comes at a cost. For one thing, we see animal rights being blurred into a voluntarist and often liberal politics (or *anti*-politics) of white, middle-class, vegan consumerism. We can partly thank the corporate ‘welfarist’ wing of the movement, and its Effective Altruism backers, for that. The class, race, and gender of the welfarist wing – upper middle-class, male, and white – has stifled grassroots animal advocacy, compromised the movement’s ethical vision, and silenced many women in the movement.⁸ We are therefore losing out on opportunities to build cross-class alliances organized around an intersectional politics. And that is an important deficit if we are truly to exert ‘moral and intellectual leadership’ over society as such.

The continuing public perception of animal rights as a ‘bourgie’ and white, middle-class concern (the Whole Foods syndrome) limits our ability to connect the working class majority of our fellow humans. Convincing trade union leaders or shop stewards to introduce workers to animal rights issues would help advance animal interests; and an animal rights

⁸ See Adams, Crary, and Gruen (2023).

perspective would in turn deepen the meaning of the socialist project, ethically and ecologically. However, the labour movement is still very weak today. Furthermore, meat-eating, fishing, and hunting have long been associated with working class masculinity. It therefore remains unclear whether there is any one social class or group around which we might organize an animal liberationist movement. What we need is a broad-based socialist project in the Gramscian sense, i.e. one that would draw upon numerous social strata to form an effective oppositional bloc. It is clear that animal liberationism is the only truly universal liberationism, hence the only true socialism. But it remains unclear how we are to convince our fellow leftists of that fact.

DW *Gramsci's work is often focused on analysis and strategy within a particular political terrain, with clear goals in mind about structural change. Would you describe Gramsci then as a 'pragmatic' political philosopher?*

JS Gramsci was a *practical* philosopher, but I wouldn't describe him as 'pragmatic.' On the contrary, Gramsci distinguished between a liberal or pragmatic conception of politics and a radical one. So-called pragmatists conceive of society in static terms, as a fixed system of 'facts.' They consequently think of politics as consisting of calculated, instrumental manipulation of existing people and institutions in order to achieve 'realistic' objectives. The trouble is, if we set out believing that the world *already is what it is*, rather than believing that it can become *other than it is, and ought to be*, then we have in a sense ended the 'game' of social change before it's properly begun. The pragmatist looks at the way things 'really are,' then adjusts his or her expectations and goals to suit the existing reality. He or she looks out upon a world whose underlying elements seem immutable.

For example, seeing the enormous power of the animal industry, and realizing the low-level of public consciousness around animal rights, the pragmatist cautions more radical activists against 'alienating' the public by exposing them to disturbing videos or descriptions of animal slaughter. The pragmatist may also sponsor legislation to end the use of gestation crates, say, rather than seek an end to the reproduction of pigs for slaughter. But what the pragmatist fails to grasp is that what we can *know* depends upon the exertion of our *will*, and therefore too upon our dynamic and creative *actions*. 'Only the man who wills something strongly,' Gramsci wrote, 'can identify the elements which are necessary to the realization of his will' (Gramsci 1971, 171). The division of reality into 'what

is' versus 'what ought to be' (a just world) is therefore false. What exists is certainly real; but reality is itself an open field of possibilities to the activist or politician or movement who wishes to change it.

Imagine for a moment that you're standing at the end of a corridor that you know leads to three rooms, each of which you've visited before. Your choices therefore appear to be limited to three. Suppose, however, that a fire breaks out in the building. The way you came in is blocked behind you, and you realize that none of the three rooms has a window or an exit. So, what do you do? Now that your safety is at stake, you look for another option. So you run to the far end of the corridor, past the three rooms, and discover a second corridor – and a stairwell. Gramsci is saying that the only way we can *know* what is possible, and what isn't, is by exercising our will. That is because what we call reality is merely 'a product of the application of human will to the society of things' (Gramsci 1971, 171). Knowledge of reality and of the 'possible' cannot be arrived at independently of action and will, Gramsci wrote, because 'strong passions are necessary to sharpen the intellect and make intuition more penetrating' (p. 171).

Human social reality contains hidden pathways, junctures, and possibilities that we discover only when we have a kind of 'faith' that these things might really exist. In seeking an alternative, in a practical rather than merely 'theoretical' way, new historical possibilities are revealed to us. This is by no means to say that all things are possible, or at all times. But it is to say that reality is not something we passively 'receive.' It is only through our passions and through our will that reality assumes form or shape. This point is not merely epistemological, but phenomenological and *ontological*. Just as the exact position of an electron is fixed only at the moment when an external subject actively *observes* it, the myriad possible worlds we might live in only become 'fixed' into channels of possibility at the moment we strive to realize them. The function of leadership is to investigate the conditions necessary for the realization of our collective will. Gramsci's insight, which he takes as much from Machiavelli as from Marx, is that reality is not given to us in advance, but is something we must invent. What we call 'facts' can buckle and be overcome or be transformed through the exertion of conscious will and collective action.

One of the limitations faced by both the animal rights movement and the broader Left today, in this connection, is the absence of a properly strategic orientation to social change – the ability to analyse the totality of social relations through time – the terrain of culture, ideas, economic

forces, and so on – in order to identify moments of strategic advantage to our movements.

DW *So this is why, at least historically, moments of social or economic crisis can appear as opportunities for many leftists?*

JS Yes. To return to my metaphor of the fire in the building, the revolutionary subject conjures the stairwell or exit in the very process of actively seeking to ‘find’ it. Moments of social crisis offer sudden glimpses of the precarious nature of the existing system, opening up new opportunities for praxis. While every act of politics is an act of creation, one cannot create *ex nihilo*⁹ – one must work within the objective framework that one has been given by history, taking into close account the complex interplay of institutions, cultural norms, values, political parties, economic forces, social classes, and so on. Reality emerges from the dialectic of the objective and the subjective. Or as Marx famously put it, people ‘make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past.’ (Marx and Engels 1978, 595).

DW *In Stuart Hall’s The Hard Road to Renewal, his Gramscian analysis of the rise of Thatcherism in Britain, Hall suggests that the political right at times seems to grasp this point better than the left does. Do you agree?*

JS Alas, yes, the right often does seem to have a better grasp of this insight, that politics is ‘about’ the creation of a new social reality. As Stuart Hall showed in the British case, the right was able to displace the Labour Party by establishing a new form of social consent. Thatcher adroitly turned the working class against itself, through myths of national greatness, foreign war (the Malvinas/Falklands conflict with Argentina), racist demagoguery, cultural appeals to individual self-reliance, etc. What’s key is that both she and President Ronald Reagan went well beyond defending an existing status quo and accepting the citizenry ‘where they were.’ Instead, they transformed society and reshaped the human personality, rolling back the social welfare state, destroying unions, privatizing public goods, weakening civil rights and environmental protections, and so on, while interpolating a new kind of white subject, one that would correspond to the needs of neoliberal capital.

⁹ ‘Political man is a creator [...] but he does not create out of nothing’ (Gramsci 1975, in Fontana 1993, 78).

The Thatcher-Reagan approach stands in stark contrast to the approach of the liberal who sets out from the world of supposed ‘facts,’ which he or she reifies or treats as self-evident ‘givens.’ During the aforementioned 2016 presidential campaign in the US, liberals said that while Bernie Sanders had good ‘ideas,’ they were ‘unrealistic,’ because Sanders’ proposals, like Medicaid for all, free college tuition for all, and so on, were at odds with political ‘realities.’ However, what liberals failed to grasp is that a skilful politician backed by a dynamic social movement potentially has the power to change the *nature* of existing political realities. Establishment Democrats and Republicans alike failed to grasp this fact, which is why they failed to grasp the threat Donald Trump posed until it was too late. Even today, when we find the institutions of liberal representative democracy unravelling everywhere, technocratic elites continue to treat politics as a cynical game of manipulating the electorate. For the corporate mandarins who run the Democratic Party in the US, politics is a form of *Realpolitik* in which only winning and maintaining the corporate status quo matters – never the creation of a new form of shared political life, a new society or economy. But one cannot treat individuals in society merely as static elements, as pawns on a chess board to be pushed around. The Left must instead change the wider context, and hence the rules of the game themselves. And the only way to do that is to understand ordinary people’s experiences and beliefs and to address them in a language they understand.

Another way to put this is to say that human purpose, human will, must be organized. ‘Human beings, for Gramsci, are not “givens” whose nature is immutable and fixed,’ observes Benedetto Fontana. Instead, ‘they are a “becoming,”’ i.e. they are agents ‘who posit themselves and create themselves in and through historical action’ (Fontana 1993, 1). What the political right does is give the people the *illusion* of political control, while in reality maintaining them in their ignorance – their bad faith and irrationality. The Left’s task is harder: it is to give ordinary people the tools they need to educate themselves and to lead society in a new direction.

DW *So, if the right can transform societies, the way they think and the way they operate (neoliberalism and Trumpism being examples), what is stopping the left from similarly taking forward a vision for a transformation of societies?*

JS For the left, the work of organizing new forms of consent is more difficult, I think, because it is always easier to defend an existing order than

to engender a new one. The Right enjoys the advantages and prerogatives of power (including vastly superior resources), and it also has no moral scruples whatsoever. The tools employed by the Right – the casual lie, propaganda, xenophobia and race hatred, cynical national myths, appeals to patriarchal authority, and so on – are powerful, but they aren't ones that we can use or want to use.

DW *In the 'Introduction' to Critical Theory and Animal Liberation you refer to speciesism as an 'ideology.' The concept 'ideology' has a long tradition of debate and theorization within the left project. However 'ideology' is rarely spoken about within animal liberation theory. Could I start by asking, what is 'ideology'?*

JS I have described speciesism or human domination as a mode of production, a way of producing the material and cultural substrate of all human life. And *ideology* is central to the legitimation and reproduction of this system. But what is ideology? Typically, we think of ideology as a more or less closed system of self-confirming beliefs, a kind of orthodoxy. In this view, an 'ideologue' is someone immune to any proposition or counter-factual case that might contradict his or her system of beliefs or arguments. However, that is just one definition of ideology. Of the 16 usages of the term identified by Terry Eagleton (1991, 1–2), three are particularly germane here:

- the process of production of meanings, signs and values in social life;
- a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class;
- ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power.

The first definition importantly conveys a sense of ideology's nature as a *total* system of beliefs, hence as forming the horizon of everyday life and experience. The second two definitions show that the ideology is bound up with *power* (Eagleton 1991, 5). Eagleton of course takes this point from Marx and Engels, who in *The German Ideology* (1998, 67) write:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production, so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are on the whole subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the domi-

nant material relations, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relations which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance.

The ideas that people have largely converge with the material interests of those who dominate economic life – and, hence, with those who dominate social, political, and cultural life. Ideology both reflects the structure of domination and reinforces it.

DW *I note that the term 'speciesism' originated in liberal and analytic philosophy – e.g. Richard Ryder and Peter Singer – as referring to a prejudice or mode of discrimination. It's clear that when you describe speciesism as an ideology you intend something different. Could you say more about this?*

JS Liberal theorists tend to reduce systems and structures of power or oppression to problems of individual belief – to individuals having 'prejudices,' and so on. However, the liberal view fundamentally misconstrues human ontology and sociality. Utilitarianism suffers from this problem. In *Animal Liberation*, Peter Singer (1975) in fact equivocates between a liberal and a more radical conception of speciesism: he begins by comparing speciesism to a form of 'prejudice,' a set of ideas, then in a later chapter identifies 'man's dominion' as the core of the problem. But I don't think he adequately explains the relationship between the two. Nor does he acknowledge the structural relationship between speciesism and capitalism, or between our domination of animals and male domination of women.

Animal welfarists have a weak understanding of ideology because they proceed from the liberal view of society as an 'aggregate' of isolated, monadic individuals. This mistaken social ontology in turn becomes the basis of campaigns geared toward changing the ideas and behaviour of 'consumers,' e.g. through prudential appeals to personal health and safety. The welfarist imagines that the worst excesses of the speciesist system can be overcome by reforming animal agriculture and by providing consumers with vegan food alternatives. By reducing the problem of speciesism to one of 'unnecessary suffering' (caused by 'factory farms'), welfarist discourse ends up legitimating smaller-scale and organic animal production. In fact, however, the problem of animal suffering is merely a consequence of the prior decision *to kill*. That is, it's because we treat other animals as disposable 'things,' rather than as 'someones' or persons, that they inevitably suffer in the animal gulag.

DW *Melanie Joy is perhaps one of the few animal advocates who discusses ideology through the concept of ‘Carnism.’ However, as far as I am aware, Joy does not explicitly situate the idea of carnism within the historical and theoretical developments of left theory. With this in mind, I would like us to unpack ideology further as a concept, and get to the bottom of how it might function with respect to animal liberation.*

JS Let me say first that I applaud Joy’s work for introducing animal rights issues to a broader public, though I sometimes disagree with her approach. In her book, *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows* (2010), Joy deconstructs meat-eating as an ideology, exposing the irrationality latent in the stories we tell ourselves about the validity of eating animals. A popular dodge used by the meat-eater is to describe himself/herself/themselves as a ‘carnivore’ – an ideological term that serves to naturalize what is really a normative, historical practice. So Joy introduces the neologism of ‘carnism’ – the inverse of veganism – to denote meat-eating as a cultural rather than natural practice (i.e. as a *choice* we make). Joy then goes on to make the case for an alternative way of relating to other beings, through compassion and empathy. The rhetorical strategy she uses is to compare farmed animals to companion animals, inviting her reader to imagine the horror of eating a dog, say, rather than a cow or pig.

Joy’s approach has the virtue of building on Americans’ affection for dogs and cats to challenge their perceptions of other kinds of animals. However, the approach she takes can only be described as liberal. In her description of feminism in *Why We Love Dogs* (2010), for example, she writes: ‘Feminists have been successful in their attempts to challenge sexism not by arguing that everybody should become a feminist, but by highlighting the ideology of patriarchy – the ideology that enables sexism.’ While patriarchy is certainly ideological, however, it is not itself an ideology – patriarchy is a system or mode of domination – i.e. a set of concrete social relations, including a sexual division of labour, institutions and norms bound up with capitalism and the state, and so on. Joy thus risks reducing patriarchy – and, I would argue, speciesism, as well – as a system of *power*, of domination, of violent exploitation – to a problem of mistaken *belief*. But ideology is the expression of relations of power, rather than power itself.

On Joy’s telling, there is a ‘gap’ in our consciousness that constricts ‘our freedom of choice’ (Dr. McDougall Health and Medical Center 2012).

The key to overcoming carnism, then, is to get more and more people to ‘choose’ veganism. The trouble with this conception, however, is that it reduces complex social systems and modes of economic production to problems of ‘belief’ and ‘relational dysfunction’ (VeganLinked 2023) – the latter to be overcome through the choices of many individuals. Joy’s conception of social change, however, is *idealist* – as can be seen in her deterministic contention, in Hegelian fashion, that ‘the number of vegans is going to increase, the number of [and] availability of vegan products is going to increase, and it’s going to be easier and easier for people everywhere to become vegan’ – until suddenly ‘those scales are going to tip [and] veganism becomes the dominant ideology’ (Plant Based News 2017). Like many others in animal advocacy, thus, Joy ignores capitalism as a social structure and as the very system destroying the conditions of animal life on earth. The word ‘consumer’ appears 51 times in Joy’s book, for example, but the word ‘capitalism’ doesn’t appear once. In reality, however, the term ‘consumer’ is an ideological category. (Before there were ‘consumers’, there were *citizens*. And ‘citizen’ is a far more politically robust term, denoting a political subject within a shared polity, rather than merely an isolated consuming unit.) When we emphasize animal issues as a problem of *consumption*, rather than as one of class relations and commodity fetishism, we thus obscure the fact that *production* is prior to consumption under capitalist relations. Commodities are not produced in order to satisfy the needs of consumers; they are produced because capital requires commodities and consumers. Nonetheless, there is a widespread perception that the ‘consumer’ is in control, and that their needs, preferences, and ‘votes’ are what ‘cause’ goods and services to magically appear. In reality, commodities aren’t called into being by consumers; capital creates ‘consumers’ as well as their desires. To suggest that consumers are the ones calling the shots, therefore, is to mystify what is really going on.

We find a better treatment of ideology of meat, in this connection, in the work of Carol J. Adams. Adams situates human violence against animals in the material context of patriarchy, showing how the meat system functions semiotically, culturally, politically, and economically within the wider system of male domination. Though Adams does not write extensively about capitalism, her intersectionalist approach takes up capitalist production in its sweep – as in her analysis of the labour process of the ‘disassembly line’ of the modern slaughterhouse, which she places in the context of monopoly capital.¹⁰ Stache and Bernhold also offer an excel-

¹⁰ ‘Ford dismembered the meaning of work, introducing productivity without the sense of

lent treatment of ideology – and from a Gramscian perspective, no less – in their article, ‘The Bourgeois Meat Hegemony’ (2021; see also Stache 2023). The authors show how the capitalist state colludes with monopoly capital to foster a ‘politico-ideological’ regime of meat consumption. By the way, here I would like to recommend your own pathbreaking new book, *Animals and Capital* (Wadiwel 2023), which provides a carefully drawn and comprehensive analysis of animals and labour from a Marxist perspective.

DW *So we need a more complete perspective where we take into account production under capitalism as a driving force for the proliferation of commodities, including animal-based foods. However, does this mean that veganism has no place within movements towards change for animals?*

JS Just to be clear, I am not saying that vegan consumerism doesn’t have some role to play in antispeciesist praxis. Clearly, we do need palatable alternatives to meat, eggs, and dairy, to help wean people off of animal products. However, using phrases like ‘consumer choice’ inevitably reinforces the logic of the commodity system. So, yes, we should promote veganism. But changing people’s diets isn’t enough. We need a more political conception.¹¹

DW *Okay, with this background in place, can we try to unpack how speciesism might operate as an ‘ideology,’ particularly in relation to capitalism?*

JS Consider Eagleton’s first definition of ideology, as a ‘process of production of meanings, signs and values in social life.’ That aptly captures the ideological nature of speciesism. Our culture – our institutions, sciences, modes of thought and experience, aesthetics, and so on – is so closely bound up with our domination of other beings that we might describe speciesism as the bedrock of our identity as human beings. Speciesism is an existential project, a way of defining ourselves as beings, of giving meaning and purpose to our existence and identity, as well as a form of ‘bad faith,’ in the Sartrean sense (Sorenson 2014, 29–44). In

being productive. Fragmentation of the human body in late capitalism allows the dismembered part to represent the whole. Because the slaughterhouse model is not evident to assembly line workers, they do not realize that as whole beings they too have experienced the impact of the structure of the absent referent in a patriarchal culture’ (Adams 1990, 80–81). Adams draws here on Harry Braverman’s critique of monopoly capitalism. See also ‘The Sexual Politics of Meat with Carol Adams’ (Bloomsbury 2020).

¹¹ See Jones (2016).

the same way that men under patriarchy constitute their identity on the basis of the negation of women and the feminine – or the way the West has constituted itself through its negation of the ‘other’ of the East, in Orientalism – our self-understanding as ‘human’ is built on the negation of the concept of ‘the animal’ (Derrida 2004, 113–126). However, speciesism as ideology reflects speciesism as a mode of material production. Marx and Engels describe the relationship between base and superstructure – i.e. the realm of material economic production and the ‘superstructural’ realm of ideas, culture, politics, and so on – as dialectical. While the substructure or base has primacy over the superstructure, the two condition one another. Thus, while speciesism is a mode of producing human material life (base), it has erected around itself an elaborate system of beliefs, norms, and practices (superstructure). Because speciesism is intertwined with capitalist production, its specific articulations are mediated by capital; and, as capitalism is a dynamic historical process, rooted in continuous upheaval, we find that cultural norms and beliefs about animals are changing all the time, too, corresponding to changes in the forces and relation of production.

While the reduction of animals to the status of property, hence for accumulation and exchange, has been a fact of human life for many thousands of years, the advent of capitalist relations in early modern Europe further diminished the status of animals by enmeshing them within a system of production based on endless accumulation. In the sixteenth century, Thomas Müntzer wrote that it was ‘intolerable’ that ‘all creatures have been made into property, the fish in the water, the birds in the air, the plants on the earth – all living things must also become free.’ In other words, all animals – even ‘wild’ ones – were being turned into commodities (Müntzer 1524, in Marx 1992, 239). (To be clear, Müntzer was not suggesting that animals should be free of human domination, but rather that their exploitation should be ‘organic,’ direct, and communal.)

As the new relations of production took hold, new ideological justifications sprang up to justify them. European conceptions of nature and of nonhuman animals began to shift from an ‘organicism’ or holistic metaphysics that portrayed Nature as alive with meaning and purpose to a ‘mechanistic’ one that reduced nature to the status of mere ‘stuff’ to be controlled (Merchant 1989). As Marx observes: ‘Descartes with his definition of animals as mere machines saw with the eyes of the manufacturing period, while in the Middle Ages, animals were man’s assistants’ (Marx 1887, 333). Cartesianism to this day remains the dominant onto-

logical paradigm of the modern sciences, with nonhuman animals still treated as machines. At the same time, changes in the composition of capital have led to the development of new forces of production or technologies that have in turn changed the way animals are viewed. Owing to the importance of the biotechnology sector as a catchment for surplus capital, we now thus find scientists and entrepreneurs viewing nonhuman animals as ‘factories’ for the bioengineering of new commodities – as fungible sequences of DNA or RNA to be edited at will by computer (Weisberg 2015, 39–54). Animals now take on the abstract and protean appearance of finance capital.

Human beings everywhere view animals today as private property – either as commodities in production – chickens and pigs raised for slaughter, mice bred and sold as laboratory subjects, companion animals purchased at the store and viewed under law as the private property of the ‘owner,’ etc. – or as commodities *in potentia* or ‘in waiting’: raw ‘stock’ sitting in reserve for capitalist appropriation – the fishes in the sea, macaques ‘awaiting’ capture for export from Asia to European research laboratories, etc. So pervasive is this way of viewing other natural beings that even the leading environmental protection organizations conceive of nature and animals in quantitative terms. According to the authors of the 2018 *Living Planet Report*, by the World Wildlife Fund and London Zoological Society, the *reason* the living earth is worth preserving is because it provides ‘services’ to the world economy that are worth up to ‘\$125 trillion a year.’ The deaths of billions of honeybees from Bee Colony Collapse Syndrome matter, the authors write, because ‘pollination increases the global value of crop production by \$235–577 billion per year’ – and that in turn ‘keeps prices down for consumers by ensuring stable supplies’ (World Wildlife Fund 2018, 47). And so on. What remains outside the bounds of permissible environmentalist thought is the notion that other animals have value in themselves, rather than as backstops to the global economy or cogs in the machinery of ecosystems.

All of this suggests that mapping the ideology of speciesism – its ways of legitimating human dominion, aestheticizing human violence, etc. – requires a ‘mapping’ of the terrain of the capitalist superstructure and of the myriad ways it mediates our relations with animals. Powerful economic interests drive the meat economy – corporations like Tyson Foods, WH Group, and Maruha Nichiro (the world’s largest seafood company). However, because commodity fetishism obscures the social *origins and conditions* of production, the public remains largely unaware of the true nature

of the animal economy as a system of extreme suffering, violence, and ecocide. Companies selling animal products manipulate language and imagery to obscure the violence endemic to their enterprises. Flesh, ova, milk, leather, and so on, are meanwhile depicted as 'natural' commodities and associated with status and health. As Carol Adams, Josephine Donovan, and other ecofeminists have pointed out, the consumption of flesh is meanwhile associated with masculinity and the control of men over women – and 'feminine' nature. These cultural mediations are not incidental to the reproduction of 'bourgeois meat hegemony,' but a core component of that system.

DW *Here you seem to be explicitly treating speciesism, or perhaps anthropocentrism, as a structural problem that to some degree can be distinguished from capitalism. This differs from at least some left theory, particularly some variants of green Marxism, which have tended to suggest that addressing capitalism alone is enough to reform our relations with animals or mend the 'rift' between humans and nature that was created through capitalist agriculture. Are you suggesting that we need to take account of both capitalism and speciesism as separate structuring relations?*

JS Yes. There is no question that capitalism mediates all of our relations with other animals today. However, capitalism isn't the only problem. Ecological Marxists who reduce the problems of animal agriculture and other forms of animal exploitation to capitalism alone are missing the bigger picture. Speciesism is a mode of production in its own right, and indeed the more 'primordial' and deeply rooted of the systems. Today, capitalism and speciesism are so deeply woven together that it's virtually impossible to disentangle them, even in theory. However, though the two overlap they do not coincide. If they did, then overthrowing capitalism would of course also overthrow human supremacy. But human supremacy antedates capitalism by thousands of years. Like patriarchy (its ancient, co-constitutive system), speciesism is a universal and protean feature of the human condition. It is humans *qua* humans who have subordinated all life on earth to a planetary regime of cruelty and extermination. The ideologies of speciesism thus cannot be reduced to the mediations of capital alone: human supremacy is a system of signs and practices in its own right.

DW *Can you say more about this? Does this have implications for our understanding both of ideology and of hegemony?*

JS Given the primacy of speciesism not merely as a way of producing human existence, but as a *political* relation, a relation of *domination* by one group of subjects over others, our ideas about other animals reflect the interests or perceived interests of our *own* species, the dominant ‘class’ of beings of the earth. Human supremacy is a fact; and so too is the *idea* of human supremacy – i.e. the notion that only human life has inestimable value, and correspondingly that nonhuman life is worthless in itself (i.e. apart from its utility for human beings, as food, as fodder for scientific experimentation, aesthetic appreciation, as necessary components of a thriving ecosystem, etc.). We know from ethnozoology that different cultures at different times and in different places have entertained quite different conceptions of the roles and ‘being’ of nonhuman animals. Aboriginal cosmogenesis stories of animals, for example, bear little if any resemblance to the view of animals taken by contemporary wildlife management authorities (as ‘resources’ to be ‘managed,’ etc.). Nonetheless, certainly in the modern epoch, our ideas about animals have come to form a coherent ideological *system*. This system is complexly mediated through other structures of oppression and domination – e.g. patriarchy and race hierarchy – and hence through a panoply of cultural/semiotic systems.¹²

This is not to say that *Homo sapiens* is ‘ontologically’ prone to violence against other beings. It is to say, though, that much of our sense of who we are as a species has gotten bound up with a universal contempt for other life forms. As Wilhelm Reich observed in *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1993, 334):

Man is fundamentally an animal. [...] [Yet] man developed the peculiar idea that he was not an animal; *he* was a ‘man,’ and he had long since divested himself of the ‘vicious’ and the ‘brutal.’ Man takes great pains to disassociate himself from the vicious animal and to prove that he ‘is better’ by pointing to his culture and his civilization, which distinguish him from the animal. His entire attitude, his ‘theories of value,’ moral philosophies, his ‘monkey trials,’ all bear witness to the fact that he does not want to be reminded that he is fundamentally an animal, that he has incomparably more in common with ‘the animal’ than he has with that which he thinks and dreams himself to be. [...] His viciousness, his inability to live peacefully with his own kind, his wars, bear witness to the fact that man

¹² See, for example, Ko and Ko (2017), and Kim (2015).

is distinguished from the other animals only by a boundless sadism and the mechanical trinity of an authoritarian view of life, mechanistic science, and the machine. If one looks back over long stretches of the results of human civilization, one finds that man's claims are not only false, but are peculiarly contrived to make him forget that he is an animal.

Having 'developed the peculiar idea that he was not an animal,' Reich wrote, the human being took 'great pains to disassociate himself from the vicious animal and to prove that he 'is better' by pointing to his culture and his civilization, which distinguish him from the animal' (Reich 1993, 334). The irony of this, Reich continued, is that in contrast to *Homo sapiens*, 'animals are not mechanical or sadistic; and their societies [...] are incomparably more peaceful than man's societies' (p. 334).¹³

As Reich suggests, speciesism is not reducible to class relations, and it isn't merely a system of economic exchange. It is a mode of existence characterized by irrationality, death fetishism, and paranoia. Even now, with the planet's ecology in free-fall and the worse zoonotic pandemic upon us in a century, at a time when we therefore have every possible incentive to cease killing other beings, the vast majority of people view the prospect of a plant-based diet as objectionable and even outrageous – as literally *unthinkable*. Reich's account is also spot on in noting an 'inverse' relation between animality and technology. It is no coincidence that at the very moment when our species, through capitalist development and explosive population growth, is engaged in the total biological extermination of other life forms (the so-called 'extinction crisis' is in reality a crisis of *extermination*), we find people in advanced capitalist culture in thrall to virtual reality and the internet, and developing relations of cathexis with their digital devices. High-technology is political, rooted in masculine paranoia and aggression, in imperialism and the military industrial complex. The mania in popular culture for 'intelligent' machines – a 'superstructural,' isomorphic expression of corporate and military in-

¹³ Reich was almost certainly moved to this insight by a similar observation made by Freud in 'A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-Analysis' (1917): 'In the course of his development towards culture man acquired a dominating position over his fellow-creatures in the animal kingdom. Not content with this supremacy, however, he began to place a gulf between his nature and theirs. He denied the possession of reason to them, and to himself he attributed an immortal soul, and made claims to a divine descent which permitted him to annihilate the bond of community between him and the animal kingdom' (Freud 1955, in Patterson 2002, 2).

vestments in robotization and artificial intelligence – is but the logical, ‘psychic’ complement to shrinking biodiversity. Wherever we now turn, we see only ever ourselves. Love of the machine is the flipside of our hatred of ‘the animal.’

I’m suggesting, along with Reich, that there is a deep irrationality built into human dominion, and that this cannot be reduced to the machinations of capital alone. This irrationality is closely tied to the gender system. As the radical feminist Nancy Hartsock observes, death fetishism is simply built in to the dynamics of patriarchy. The myth is that relations between men and women are based on ‘sexual reciprocity.’ In reality, however, we find ‘not only relations of domination and submission, but also dynamics of hostility, revenge, and fascination with death.’ What the cult of masculinity seeks is ‘the death of the other as a separate being, the denial of one’s own body in order to deny one’s mortality, and the recasting of even reproduction as death’ (Hartsock 1983, 176–177). Since speciesism is in part an expression of the gendered division of labour, we find these same dynamics (a pathological and violent relation to ‘the other’) operating in the way we relate to other animals. We have in fact organized the totality of human material and psychic life, around violence against other species.

DW *So from this standpoint, we need to develop not only a critique of capitalism, but something of an ideological critique of the hegemony associated with the human domination of animals?*

JS Yes, our praxis seeks to *disocclude* the structures of human domination. As a movement of counter-hegemony, animal liberationism exercises an ‘educative’ function, providing the people with insight into the nature of power. I see one of our main responsibilities as engaged intellectuals, thus, to be ideology critique. We need to explode the myth that we can exploit and kill other sensitive beings in an ‘ethical’ way. The challenge, of course, is that speciesism, like capitalism, is a ‘total’ way of life, one that implicates all of us. As Marco Maurizi shows in his recent book, *Beyond Nature: Animal Liberation, Marxism and Critical Theory* (2021), capitalist domination and human domination are intertwined in ways that can only be solved through a new kind of socialist praxis, one that includes critique of animal exploitation at its core. Drawing on the insights of the early Frankfurt School, Maurizi provides a useful roadmap to the structural and ideological complexities of this new system. As Max Horkheimer wrote in 1934, in a passage cited by Maurizi (2021, 132):

Below the spaces where the coolies of the earth perish by the millions, the indescribable, unimaginable suffering of the animals, the animal hell in society, would have to be depicted, the sweat, blood, despair of the animals. [...] The basement of that house is a slaughterhouse, its roof is a cathedral, but from the windows of the upper floors, it affords a really beautiful view of the starry heavens.

DW *What, finally, can the animal liberation movement learn from Gramsci's philosophy of praxis? And how could animal liberationism fit in with a wider left-socialist project?*

JS First, we need to understand just what it is we as a movement are trying to do, and to make that objective known to the rest of society. Speciesism is a hegemonic cultural, semiotic, economic and 'spiritual' system that undergirds and conditions all aspects of human existence. *Contra* the claim of animal welfarists, the true goal of animal liberation isn't to 'reduce animal suffering' but to establish a new form of human civilization. Capitalist civilization is based on the brutal exploitation of billions of humans and the brutal exploitation and killing of other animals. So, we are seeking the negation not only of speciesism, but of capitalism, of patriarchy, of racism, and so on. And this negation is at the same time a bid for a new form of society.

In my experience, however, the public really has no understanding of either the extent or the brutality of the speciesist system, nor of the relationship between our quotidian extermination of animals for food and the destruction of free ('wild') animals across the earth – the 'war' on animals you describe in your own important book.¹⁴ The public does not see animal liberationism as a *political movement*, and consequently they haven't been exposed to the breadth of our critique. As with other structures of power and inequality, the public has only a fragmented and reified view of society. That too is a function of capitalism – occlusion of the whole. Our job, as I see it, is to illuminate this totality and to make the case for a post-speciesist world.

Gramsci described politics as a struggle over meaning, and hence, effectively, over what Hannah Arendt called 'the space of appearances' (Arendt 1990, 33). Social movements, therefore, must assume a determinate phenomenal *form* if they are to be 'seen' within this space. Unfortunately, most people today associate animal rights either with PETA

¹⁴ See Wadiwel (2015).

– the most visible ‘shape’ of animal advocacy in the public sphere – or with ‘lifestyle’ veganism.¹⁵ What we need are visible organizations and institutions committed to building coalitions with other movements and campaigns. Animal liberationism must come to be viewed as a coherent philosophy of life – not merely as a set of single-issue campaigns. We have to universalize our conception of the world. At the moment, however, we are more positioned as a disorganized ‘sect’ than as a ‘church’ – i.e. as an inward-oriented community of like-minded believers, rather than as an outward-oriented movement seeking to broaden the scope of its ambitions. Gramsci compared socialism to a second Reformation. We likewise should see ourselves as the nucleus of a new society – the germ of a future civilizational order, a new way of being human.

Unfortunately, however, animal advocates are forced to contend with the near-universal acceptance of speciesist beliefs and practices in human culture. The difficulty for an animal liberationist praxis is that, in contrast to past social movements, we need to appeal to members of the oppressor class themselves to relinquish their dominion. And that’s a challenge without precedent in the history of social struggle. A related challenge is that existing models of praxis, including Marx’s, rest on conceptions of agency and collective action that don’t necessarily apply to our relations with nonhuman beings. Socialism, feminism, the LGBTQ movement, and others, conform to a Hegelian politics of recognition – i.e. they affirm the ability of an oppressed subject to achieve self-consciousness, and hence freedom, through collective struggle. Gramsci’s conception of counter-hegemony, too, derives from Hegel, requiring class solidarity and the coalescence of diverse groups in society around a shared moral and social vision. Nonhuman animals, however, cannot achieve revolutionary transformation of human society on their own, and they cannot even be the *main* agents of their own liberation. Though individual animals, and even, at times, small groups of animals, do resist human oppression, they are unable to strategize or to coordinate their actions through time. Draft horses can’t call a general strike across New England, hammerheads and Bluefin Tuna can’t take the fishing industry to the International Criminal Court. Nor can chickens call upon free species of birds to attack human cities and towns in solidarity with their cause – as occurs in Alfred Hitchcock’s film, *The Birds* (1963).

¹⁵ For a discussion of why establishing a phenomenal or apprehensible *form* is so important for counter-hegemonic movements, see Sanbonmatsu (2004, 160–179).

As important as it is to overturn class hierarchy and dismantle the system of commodity fetishism, it is not true, as many Marxists believe, that overturning capitalism will end our estrangement from Nature and from other animals. The trouble is that human beings *as such* constitute an oppressive class, with the mass killing of animals treated throughout the world as a normal, immutable, and benignant feature of the human condition. Animal liberation therefore cuts against the interests (or at least the perceived interests) of the very historical subjects who are supposed to effect change. The daunting challenge we face is to somehow convince the majority of our fellow humans to eliminate their own prerogatives and privileges – sport fishing and eating chicken wings, taking children to the zoo, animal experimentation, and so on.

Unfortunately, it is hard to think of a case in which an oppressive class decided on its own initiative to overturn its own mode of life. It is impossible to imagine a feminist movement led by men, or an anti-racist struggle initiated by and directed by whites, or capitalists leading the charge for socialism. Nonetheless, we need to envision modes of praxis to bring humanity to a consensus on the need to dismantle the speciesist system.

DW *So, where then does all of this leave our movement, particularly in the context of Gramsci's conception of moral and intellectual leadership?*

JS Marx held that the working class contained within itself the kernel of a new society. As it is human labour that produces society, and therefore social reality as such, the working class is in the unique position of being able to usher in a universal form of civilizational development, one based on genuinely free activity. Could we say something similar about animals? That their oppression too contains the 'germ' of a new civilization? The oppression of nonhumans by humans is the most fundamental condition of our existence; to challenge that condition, therefore, is to assert the possibility of a new form of life. However, the analogy is inexact. If workers tomorrow woke up and decided to declare a general strike, refusing to labour, the capitalist system could be overthrown in an hour, because the reproduction of capital depends entirely upon the value added to the commodity by the labourer. Furthermore, workers constitute 99 percent of the human population. So, for the working class to accept the legitimacy of socialism would be but one short step away from overthrowing capitalist relations and initiating a new mode of existence. In contrast to the situation of the working class, however, other species lack the capacity of self-realization in the political and universal sense. Nonhuman

animals form a 'strategic' collective subject in the sense that human economy, culture, identity, psychology, etc., *are* dependent upon animals – on animal bodies, animal labour, animal habitats, etc. In the same way that capitalism cannot function without the exploitation of workers, human society in its current form cannot function without the exploitation of nonhumans. But while animals represent a 'universal' class of subjects whose liberation could also liberate humanity, we lack a 'material' basis for building a social movement powerful enough to impose its own values on the rest of society. Unlike the working class, the animal rights movement has no social base to speak of. Animal advocates represent a very small minority of the human population, and, unlike workers, they don't collectively play a strategic role in the reproduction of daily life. It appears, then, that we lack a plausible account of how animal liberation is to be achieved.

However, the situation is not hopeless. The contradictions of speciesism are producing new avenues for strategic praxis by undermining the bioecological conditions of life, including human life. And here Gramsci's thought is useful in helping us to identify more or less promising lines of action within the present 'organic' and conjunctural crises of society. Both the COVID-19 pandemic and the wider ecological crisis offer us favourable terrain for action. Since animal agriculture and fishing are the driving forces of our planet's ecological collapse, we can use that to argue for the abolition of the animal economy. At the same time, however, 'moral and intellectual leadership' is more than egoism or prudentialism. We therefore mustn't shy away from the ethical and existential dimensions of the crisis. Specifically, we need to develop a movement organized around defence of (1) the principle of life itself, and (2) of the collective and individual right to life, not only for human beings but for all animals. We need to conceive of animal liberation as a philosophy of existence. Furthermore, our politics needs to be grounded in an explicit philosophy of love and compassion. One of the problems with utilitarian framing of the problem of dominion is that it slights empathy and can offer no defence of the 'spiritual' goods we gain in relating to other species out of friendship and respect.

The problem with animal welfarism, in this connection, is that it's fundamentally incompatible with the long-term goal of animal liberation. We cannot advance the cause of animal rights through incremental improvements in animals' conditions of enslavement or extermination. The notion that we can exploit and enact violence against other beings 'ethi-

cally,' in a way that 'respects' them, has been one of the chief ideological conceits of human dominion for thousands of years. Insofar, then, as animal welfarists advocate only reforms of the existing system, they remain within its ideological terms. The notion that it is more 'pragmatic' to seek reforms rather than to seek the overthrow of speciesism as such rests on a profound misapprehension of the nature of political life. If we allow our horizons to be bound to the *existing* reality, the world 'as it is,' then we embrace our own defeat. Gramsci, Benedetto Fontana reminds us, held that while the liberal reformer seeks 'the preservation within certain juridical boundaries of the existing structure of power,' the true political agent 'acts upon the existing reality in order to transcend it and establish a new structure' (Fontana 1993, 88). Challenging specific injustices to animals isn't enough; our goal must be to constitute a new social order, one based in socioeconomic equality and compassion for all sentient beings – human and nonhuman alike.

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Miscellanea




Review

Teya Brooks Pribac, *Enter the Animal: Cross Species Perspectives on Grief and Spirituality*

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This is a courageous book. Even today humans are still portrayed in numerous discourses as being a class or three ‘above’ nonhuman animals. It is a widespread and recurring theme, a seemingly unending crusade to ensure that the banner of human exceptionalism is held high. But Pribac convincingly argues the case for the existence of grief and spirituality in nonhuman animals, two things which have long had the ‘humans only’ sign firmly nailed to their door. It seems like an attack on the citadel. It is to be welcomed.

She draws on a wealth of academic work but does not shy away from individual stories and records of court cases as well as her own lived experiences because this is very much about everyday, moment-by-moment being. She builds the technical case meticulously, at the same time ensuring that the non-specialist reader understands the terms used and the contexts of discussions. The book is clear, insightful, and measured and while it is not possible to do it justice here, I will briefly describe a few of the highlights. There is a long-held belief that while nonhuman animals might have some basic perceptions such as pain, a neocortex resembling that of humans is needed to produce feelings, emotions and experiences. But the book describes how deep feelings, emotions and a sense of self and moment-to-moment existence arises from subcortical areas of the brain. And importantly, given the theme of the enquiry, the fact that humans share these brain structures with many nonhuman animal species, carries enormous ethical implications.

These shared brain structures are extremely important in our daily lives but very vulnerable during the young animal’s development. This is where the importance of caregiving styles, and how they can affect

young animals, is emphasised. The importance of a close, caring, physically and mentally present Other, a parent, a sibling or even a member of another species, is important for what might be described as the other-than-cognitive, experiential development of the individual. This relationship is intimately mediated via such things as tactile sensations, sounds and smells rather than cognitive abstractions. It is critical in helping to develop the experiencing self and the self's view of the world. The form it takes has deep and long-lasting effects for good or ill. However, captive animals can hardly ever build the close caring relationships which they need. Pribac points out the example of how pigs normally build nests to be with their young but there is no chance of that when flesh production is the priority.

Using attachment theory (broadly termed) the author describes how different styles of caregiving can have profound effects depending upon whether the carer is attuned and caring, distant, anxious and unpredictable, or disorganised. Whatever the case, attachment is vital in order to thrive but if there is attachment there can also be loss of that attachment through death or some other form of loss. We are reminded that this applies not only to human animals but nonhuman animals as well, and what the author is discussing are deeply sentient and experiencing beings who have close relationships which are very important to them. Given this, and the fact that on some levels grief is essentially an organismic response to loss, it would be very hard to imagine that nonhuman animals do not grieve when they experience loss.

She discusses how grief can arise from such things as the loss of a carer, the loss of children or siblings but also loss of normal behaviour patterns, loss of freedom and loss of place. And again we are aware of the multiple forms of trauma we impose on nonhuman animals whom we use in farming and laboratories, for bearing loads and producing power, for entertainment, and also the killing of free living animals in hunting and 'pest eradication' and our catastrophic degradation of their environment, their homes, which causes unimaginable suffering.

It is often claimed that animals do not experience grief because we observe no signs of it but leaving aside that there are often signs for those who are sufficiently attuned, Pribac points out that grief and the display of grief are two very different things. Displays of grief might not be possible in the dysfunctional situations many nonhuman animals find themselves coerced into enduring.

In a deeply moving parallel, she discusses the women of Alto do

Cruzeiro (Crucifix Hill), an impoverished settlement in Brazil, where there was a very high rate of pregnancies along with high infant and child mortality rates. The desperate conditions in which these women lived meant that harsh survival strategies evolved, including deliberate non-attachment to infants, favouring the stronger child over the weaker, the more active over the less active and suppressing any outward signs of grief on the death of a baby or young child. Non-attachment was a practice, at least outwardly, until such time it was believed that the child was going to survive past their early years. The lack of an external display of grief does not mean the women did not grieve – they surely did – but that the unforgiving circumstances in which they found themselves would not allow for many of their normal social practices, including those related to the expression of grief. They were desperately trying to survive. The animals who are our captives, and in law our property to use as we see fit, can hardly be said to be able to behave in their normal socially and genetically inherited ways and so outward signs of grieving are easily missed or even completely absent as they struggle to survive in grossly aberrant conditions. But we should not mistake this for any lack of grief.

On a more uplifting note, Pribac also describes how there is a strong case to believe that animals experience times of awe, heightened existence, wonder, unity or what we as humans might describe as spiritual experiences. It is an incredible and wonderful idea, taking us deeper into a world of which we have, for so long, been dismissive.

There are many points in the book where it seems important to stop and not only consider what is on the page but the wider implications of what is being said, sometimes leading to inspiring vistas, at others taking us into a bleak and abusive world.

Readers with interests including ethology, psychology, ethics, phenomenology, sociology, law, veterinary science and critical animal studies as well as general readers will find much to interest them here: new perspectives and a vision of a greater world with many signposts for possible further research.


Review

Josephine Donovan, *Animals, Mind and Matter: The Inside Story*

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It is relatively easy to situate the latest book by the literary theorist and ecofeminist in the continuity of her work. After her initial research on feminism and local colour literature, and her subsequent adoption of ecofeminist principles along with the animal liberation movement and veganism, she began to develop a so-called aesthetics of care (derived from the ethics of care), which she thoroughly defined and elaborated in her 2016 work *The Aesthetics of Care: Animal Ethics, Ecosympathy, and Literary Criticism*, about which I wrote for the literary portal *LUD Literatura* in an attempt to migrate her theory into the Slovenian space of literary studies (Krivec 2016). In the mid-1990s, together with Carol J. Adams, she began exploring alternative approaches to the animal question beyond the mere notion of rights. The latter have been debated for some time, but the basic conundrum, with which Donovan would probably agree, was once articulated in a very simple and clear way by another ecofeminist and vegan, pattrice jones: ‘The property-based legal system that currently divides the world into countries, with borders policed by armed guards and internal laws enforced by armed police, is inherently violent. Within this reality, “rights” can be an important tactic for achieving real relief from the suffering of people and animals. But true peace and freedom will require us to rebuild our communities from the ground up’ (Radaljac 2019).

There is, of course, an artificial divide that stands in the way of the actual implementation of care towards fellow beings – and this seems to be the crux of her critique in the book under review. And this is why the author looks more closely at the possibilities of human-animal communication, animal subjectivity, critiquing Cartesianism and its Enlightenment, scientism, new materialism, etc. She introduces everything from the findings of quantum physics to the notion of animal dignity, partic-

ipatory epistemology, cosmic sympathy, panpsychism, ethical mimesis, emergence aesthetics, etc. in order to propose the possibility of a new way of looking at the problem.

In short, Donovan is not content with simply expanding the moral community to include non-humans, but rather defends and argues for the possibility of a total transformation of our relationship with other animals by questioning the place they are assigned in our society. It is important to note that the need to transform our attitudes is independent of particular cases, which can be understood as sometimes more and sometimes less ethical.

First of all, she introduces the possibility of real communication between humans and other animals, criticising above all the idea of scientism that has repeatedly made this dialogue impossible. It starts with Descartes and his understanding of non-humans as a kind of machines, but there is also a scientific view that excludes the possibility of subjectivity in animals. Although we are repeatedly confronted with the relativisation of what animals communicate to us, she argues that it is nothing short of necessary to introduce the notion of subjectivity into our relationship with them. It is not difficult to understand when an animal is sad, happy, angry ... unless, of course, one is talking about species whose world is difficult to grasp because of their biological distance from us. A scientific approach that constantly questions such observations could just as well study relationships between people in a similar way, but it usually does not do so, which is already an indication of the internalisation of speciesism.

At this point I need to draw attention on two notions. First, of course, there will always be a kind of barrier between me and the other, which will make it impossible for me to know 'what it means to be that person.' This is an insight that the American philosopher Thomas Nagel, in his 1974 essay 'What Is It Like to Be a Bat?', has argued most prominently in recent decades. But this is not to say that there is not a wide range of possibilities for dialogue.

And second, when I talk about scientism, I actually *do* mean scientism, not science. What I have in mind is kind of a culturalised approach to these questions, which at best paints a clichéd picture of a mathematised science rather than an actual science that can easily take subjectivity into account by introducing a method suited to it. I myself more or less agree with the definition of scientism in *The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*: 'the view that the inductive methods characteristic of the

natural sciences are the only source of genuine factual knowledge and, in particular, that they alone can provide true knowledge about man and society' (Quinton 1999, 775). The distinction between scientism and science does not seem to be emphasised enough in Donovan's book.

In the end, however, Donovan is not interested in centring a critique around approaches that explicitly view the world and its inhabitants as entities of primarily instrumental value. As a result, she directs her critique at approaches that are perhaps even more perfidious, such as the so-called new materialism and its two main proponents: Karen Barad and, above all, Donna Haraway. Although both root their thought in the philosophy of Bruno Latour, in which Donovan at least recognises the potential for the emergence of compassion and ethical treatment of animals, the new materialism, despite its declarative posthumanist stance, turns out to be a thought that only deepens anthropocentrism. The latter is expressed above all in the strange conclusions that follow from this 'renewed' world view. For example, Haraway calls for a kind of trans-species solidarity, emphasises our interconnectedness with other living beings and the need to surpass anthropocentrism and speciesism, but in the end not only does she not practise veganism, she regards it as 'meaningless' and advocates animal experimentation and (industrial) animal husbandry, which, for example in her book *When Species Meet*, she says is 'entangled labour [with] humans and animals together in science and in many other fields, including animal husbandry up to the table' (Haraway 2008, 80).

What Haraway, according to Donovan, misses here is the introduction of an explicitly anti-fascist *standpoint theory*, a notion based on Hegel's study of the master-slave dialectic and later developed by György Lukács, but which became particularly prominent during the second wave of feminism. For Lukács, in short, this notion explains the specific point of view of the oppressed proletariat, who can actually see the class struggle from its point of view. If we introduce this kind of animal perspective into Haraway's theory, the possibility that vivisection is some kind of 'a common struggle between man and animal' simply becomes impossible, since it is not reasonable to assume that this is an animal perspective of what is going on.

Of course, this is a case of the *use* of animals, which is in itself inadmissible and (if we instrumentalise animals for the sake of argument) ultimately largely unnecessary, but another concept may come in handy: (animal) dignity, perhaps particularly applicable to the use of animals in circuses and similar environments where they are forced to imitate typi-

cal human activities. But even a genetically modified mouse that is more likely to get cancer (e.g. the so-called *OncoMouse*, also known as the *Harvard mouse*, the pride and goldmine of this American university) is in these cases not in line with their core identity of a (more or less) healthy mouse, and since they are thus reduced to 'a thing,' they are also deprived of dignity. To put it another way, the human being imposes their *telos* on another animal in order to increase mice's instrumental value for their own purposes, thereby erasing mice's own *telos* (this Aristotelian notion is also important for Donovan) and turning it into a human artefact.

This is a case of a very much direct opposition to a speciesist theory, but Donovan in fact defends more-than-rights of animals by introducing a new conception of their place in the world. Here Donovan turns to animism and panpsychism. I have mentioned these two approaches in the same sentence because they share many similarities, or rather, modern panpsychism advocates aspects that are very similar to animistic beliefs, since it is about attributing a spiritual component to all beings as well as to all objects. In this respect, both practices are also close to deep ecology, and all three, despite their many positive aspects, deserve to be critically challenged (Donovan's critique is directed in particular at the representative of deep ecology, Aldo Leopold). This is because, in practice, their limits can be similar to those of the aforementioned new materialism and, in the final consequence, maintain the status quo, since they lead to a paradox: they replace the current notion, in which each entity has at most an instrumental value, with one in which each entity has an intrinsic value, thus replacing everything, while the relative 'values' remain the same, as well as our actions in the world.

This is why Donovan separates mere understanding of the world on the one hand and ethics on the other. The complete equivalence of stone, chimpanzee, toaster, doormat, pepper, human being, etc. is ethically untenable, which is why Donovan at one point proposes the ethical consideration of entities with which it is possible to establish communication, and at another point introduces the static/mobile binary. The very mobility of an animal presupposes their desire to avoid pain, whereas this cannot be said of a static plant.

From my point of view there are some issues with this kind of reasoning. First of all, I am not quite sure why Donovan introduces animism, panpsychism and deep ecology at all, when in the end all three concepts are rather relativised with an addendum that brings the whole point quite close to the ethics of care. The main objection to my reservation may be

a need for implementing a kind of partial respect for the rights of non-animals whenever possible, which Donovan, for example, advocates and which I myself would solve with a simple formula: a notion of rights for animals and notion of welfare for plants and other beings. On the other hand, the idea of putting notions of communication and mobility at the centre of ethics also seems somehow too narrow and at the same time ... too broad. At least, this is so if we consider that we know of animals that do not move by themselves (e.g. sponges and many other sea creatures), and that on the other hand there are moving plants, not only those that move some of their parts, but also those that 'move' in their entirety (e.g. the so-called glacier mice or *jökla-mýs*, as they are called in Iceland). The possibility of communicating with other animals also seems too subjective and limited to species close to us, since we are familiar for example, with more than a million species of insects, with which our communication is very limited, but should be ethically considered too.

Much more interesting, although also rather abstract, is the introduction of the concepts of non-locality and cosmic sympathy. The first concept, derived from quantum physics, refers to a specific relationship between two objects that have no visible physical connection but influence each other (similarly exciting is the concept of superposition, which states that the same particle can be in several places at the same time). The concept of cosmic sympathy assumes that care is an integral part of the cosmos, which is reflected in the term itself.

These two examples are crucial mainly because they show (with very real physical/mathematical problems!) that the scientific view of the world and the whole universe is flawed, but they also presuppose the validity of a teleological worldview (Donovan's defence of the latter is based on Kant's philosophy), whereas they do not really play a direct role in the ethics of care itself – the only exception being the consideration of teleology.

This is also why Donovan proposes (especially as an alternative to the new materialism) a so-called participatory epistemology, which would replace the relation 'subject : object' with a relation 'subject : subject,' referring to Nagel, who advocates a scientific revolution of the Einsteinian gravity, one that will take the mind into account. In the context of art, the so-called ethical mimesis (a concept derived from Adorno's philosophy), which transforms the dualism of 'subject : object' into a dialogue, can help us to do this. Another parallel process is the so-called emergence aesthetics, in which the spiritual dimension of nature comes to light through

the process of emergence – this happens when all the smallest particles of matter connect (in the right way), symbolising another dimension of compassion.

Donovan tells the story of the transition from the legacy of the Enlightenment to a state that seeks to introduce more-than-rights. Even if she sometimes falls into an oversimplified understanding of some areas that are not part of her core interests (such as quantum physics, which has recently become popular in the (post)humanities), and even if she proposes an understanding of the world that may not really need to be implemented for goals she advocates, it is a work that manages to introduce some controversial topics in a convincing way, without abandoning its starting points, which seem to be a mixture of materialism and an ethic of care. The fact that the author manages to bring the above into the field of literary studies, thereby making a significant shift in that area, is an added bonus.

Notes

This review is a revised and extended version of the review that was first published in Slovene on *Animot*; see Krivec (2023).

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Recenzija

Sašo Jerše in Mateja Gaber (ur.), *Človek, žival: poglavja o njih soočanjih*

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Neodvisna raziskovalka

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Impozantna, vendar za branje in preučevanje precej neprikladna knjiga (30 × 21 cm, 399 strani, v trdi vezavi, z ilustracijami, ki so delo Jureta Brgleza) je nastala kot slovenski proizvod projekta Evropska noč raziskovalcev v letih 2022 in 2023 (Humanistika, to si ti!). Iz uredniškega uvoda izvemo, da se je ljubljanska Filozofska fakulteta vključila v projekt s svojo znanstvenoraziskovalno idejo o sobivanju človeka in živali. Sijajna zamisel, bi v navalu navdušenja vzkliknili, če ne bi nekoliko grenkega priokusa prispevalo dejstvo, da se ni uresničila dvajset ali vsaj deset let prej. V tem primeru bi morda še danes upravičeno govorili o prodornosti in izvirnosti slovenske humanistike v evropskem merilu. Tako pa gre zgolj za še eno publikacijo znotraj zdaj že osrednjega toka humanističnih oz. interdisciplinarnih študij, ki preplavljajo akademski svet. In četudi se omejimo samo na slovenski prostor, ni mogoče reči, da delo z enaintridesetimi prispevki različnih strokovnih provenienc orje kakršno koli ledino. Kljub temu je po svoje dragoceno in vredno bralske pozornosti, med drugim tudi zaradi svoje interdisciplinarnosti, ki v večini primerov sicer ni razvidna na ravni posameznih prispevkov, pač pa na ravni publikacije kot celote. Prav zato tej ne bi škodil nekoliko izčrpnější uvod, iz katerega bi se bralstvo poučilo, da v knjigi ne gre samo za kritiko antropocentrizma in vprašanje sobivanja ali soočanja človeka ter živali, ampak za to, kaj ima, če ima, knjiga opraviti s področjem kritične animalistike, v čem je, če je, kritična ost celotnega projekta in kaj lahko pričakujemo od zbranih besedil. Ta namreč, z vidika celote, proizvajajo določena protislovja, tako med seboj kot tudi glede na splošno naravnost kritičnih živalskih študij.

Besedna zveza »kritične živalske študije« ali, krajše, »kritična animalistika« označuje akademsko disciplino, posvečeno etični in drugim vrstam refleksije razmerij med človekom ter vsem, kar ni človek. Utemeljuje

se v čezvrstni interseksionalnosti, vedah o okolju in kritični analizi prevladujočih družbenih sistemov ter njihovih produktov, zlasti kulturnih. Oznaka »kritična« – izvor kaže iskati v frankfurtski šoli in njeni kritični teoriji družbe – pomeni, da naj bi njenim pripadnicam/-kom ne šlo le za akademsko raziskovanje, ampak za političen angažma in aktivizem. Uvrstiti bi jo bilo mogoče med kulturne študije, v neposredno bližino ekofeminizma, če njene ambicije ne bi presegale tega okvira na ontološki ravni. Kritična animalistika namreč raziskuje nekaj, kar nedvomno obstaja, ima konkretno eksistenco, a je nespoznavno. Zato ji upravičeno pripada poseben status. In to je tudi razlog, da so zanjo zanimivi proizvodi vseh umetniških zvrsti, še posebej tisti, ki nosijo v sebi kal subverzivnosti. Njena metodologija je zelo kompleksna, saj uporablja različne metodološke pristope, med njimi tudi tiste, utemeljene v biosemiotiki oz. zoosemiotiki kot njeni poddisciplini, ki se praviloma navezuje na najnovejša odkritja v naravoslovnih znanostih. Poleg tega po eni strani črpa uvide iz Foucaultove teorije in novega materializma, po drugi strani pa – tudi zaradi neskončnih možnosti, ki jih odpira digitalizacija – tiplje v smeri mističnega.

Če torej pri branju tekstov, objavljenih v *Človek, žival* zavzamemo stališče tako kompleksno pojmovane kritične animalistike, opazimo, da se mnogim med njimi pozna, da so se njihovi/-e avtorji/-ice, sicer nesporni/-e ljubitelji/-ce živali ter strokovnjaki/-nje na svojih področjih, lotili/-e živalske tematike prvič in po vsej verjetnosti zavoľjo projekta. Seveda je med njimi nekaj izjem (Pribac, Grušovnik, Vičar, Gulič Pirnat in še katera). To nikakor ne pomeni, da so prispevki drugih sodelujočih za kritično animalistiko in tudi sicer nezanimivi. Prav nasprotno, v njih lahko vsi/-e zainteresirani/-e naletimo na pomembne informacije, denimo: da živalski motivi igrajo bistveno vlogo v Platanovem dialogu *Gorgija*, kjer se med Sokratom in Kaliklesom odvija polemika o večnem vprašanju, zakaj sploh ravnati etično oz. pravično (Blaž Zabel); da je imel Plinij starejši izrazito pozitiven odnos do vseh naravnih entitet, še posebej do živali, kar je razvidno iz osme, devete, desete in enajste knjige njegovega izčrpno predstavljenega in izjemno obsežnega *Naravoslovja* (*Naturalis historia*) v 37 knjigah (prvo stoletje po Kr.) (Matej Hriberšek); da je imel sokol dokaj osrednjo, a praviloma zgolj figurativno vlogo v nemški poeziji visokega srednjega veka (Mateja Gaber); da je na Dunaju 19. stoletja živela, na Slovenskem bolj malo znana, pisateljica Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach in pisala zanimive zgodbe z živalsko tematiko, v katerih je že mogoče opaziti nastavke za problematizacijo tedaj še globoko ukoreni-

njene in vsesplošne antropocentrične naravnosti (Irena Samide); da je v prvih desetletjih 19. stoletja nemški filozof Karl C. F. Krause (1781–1832) pod vplivom Shellingove filozofije narave pisal o potrebi po zakonski zaščiti živali in njihovi enakopravnosti glede na človeka (Jerca Legan); da je imela v rimskem pravu žival položaj stvari in bila izenačena s sužnji, ko pa je šlo kaj narobe, je moral zanjo odgovarjati njen lastnik (Mirko Kambič); da je Slovenec Marko Gerbec (1658–1718) avtor najstarejšega znanega dela z veterinarsko vsebino, *Chronologia medico-practica* (izšlo 1713 v Frankfurtu na Maini), kar v svojem zgoščenem pregledu razvoja živinozdravstva od prazgodovine do obdobja goveje kuge v 18. stoletju predstavi veterinar Andrej Pengov; da so prvo operacijo na kravi izvedli v neolitski dobi, kar nam, med drugim, posreduje mikrobiolog Tim Prezelj, ki za nastanek in razvoj zoonoz krivi udomačevanje živali ter v svojem prispevku edini komentira nam vsem dobro znano dejstvo, da so živali vsaj od antike pa do današnjih dni predmet znanstvenih poskusov, ki koristijo predvsem človeku. S tem v zvezi se mu zdi potrebno omeniti, da ne zadostuje, da živali, udeleženske znanstvenih poskusov, nekateri avtorji omenjajo samo v zahvali, po njegovem bi morale biti navedene kot soavtorice. Ob tem pa, žal, ne problematizira laboratorijskih praks in ne pomisli, da bi morale naravoslovne znanosti popolnoma opustiti poskuse na živalih.

Zgodovinsko perspektivo zavzame tudi zgodovinarica Marija Mojca Peternelj, ki v svojem prispevku »Odnos tiska do živali v 19. in v začetku 19. stoletja« ugotavlja, da so časopisi že v 19. stoletju v svojih člankih in oglasih, povezanih z živalmi, začeli kazati določeno empatijo, ko so vestno poročali o čedalje številnejših društvih za zaščito živali in proti mučenju, ki so se tedaj ustanovljala po vsej Evropi, na Slovenskem pa naj bi prvo tako društvo nastalo v Gorici, in to šele leta 1902. Tu je treba dodati, da je bilo v Trstu, ki jo bilo tedaj bolj slovensko mesto kot danes, že leta 1852 ustanovljeno tovrstno društvo pod imenom Tržaško društvo proti mučenju živali (o tem nas izčrpno seznanja Daša Ličen v knjigi *Meščanstvo v zalivu: društveno življenje v habsburškem Trstu*, 2023).

Lingvisti, povečini germanisti (Darko Čuden, Andreja Retelj, Urška Valenčič Arh), se z različnih zornih kotov podajajo po sledih, ki so jih živali skozi čas pustile v jeziku in kulturi, Milena Mileva Blažić, specialistka za mladinsko književnost, pa komentira tematizacije lika lisice v mladinski literaturi od Ezopovih basni do rezijanske pravljice »Tri botre lisičice«; posebnost njenega prikaza je navezava na pojavljanje lisice v vezeninah, na tapiserijah in v ilustracijah. Na ljudsko izročilo se osre-

dotočata tudi Romunski etnologinji Florin Cioban in Ioana Jieanu v svojem članku »Maska (koza) in koledovanje v romunskih običajih«, kjer nazorno prikažeta, kako izjemno zanimiv star romunski običaj, ki mu pravijo koledovanje s kozo, pri čemer dejansko živo kozo nadomešča njena maska, poteka v skladu s strukturo dramske igre – skozi konflikt, zaplet in razplet.

O praksi sodelovanja med človekom – vodnikom in njegovim psom pri reševanju izpod ruševin ter plazov in njeni zgodovini, ki seže do samostana Veliki Sveti Bernard sredi 17. stoletja, izčrpno informira prispevek zgodovinarja Dušana Nečaka, znanega voditelja reševalnih psov (»Išči, pokaži – reševalni psi«). A ve se, da psi niso samo reševalci, saj imajo še vrsto drugih vlog (npr. družabniško, spremljevalno, policijsko, lovsko, terapevtsko). Njihovo integracijo v človeško življenje, celo na delovnem mestu, na podlagi določenega vzorca udeležencev/-k opazujeta psihologinji Eva Boštjančič in Maša Černilec, svoje izsledke pa predstavita pod naslovom »Človek in pes na delovnem mestu – pogled na človekove psihološke potrebe, motivacijo in vedenje.« Bibliotekarka Katarina Švab pa v prispevku »Knjižnice kot javni prostor v sobivanju z živalmi« raziskuje vlogo živali, povečini psov in mačk, v knjižnicah, kjer naj bi ta bitja prispevala k dobremu počutju obiskovalcev/-k in imela spodbuden vpliv zlasti na otroke.

Čeravno besedila niso razvrščena v vsebinske sklope, utegne pozorno branje odkriti neke vrste strukturo. Uokvirjata jih, kakor smo opozorjeni v uredniškem uvodu, literarna teksta, ki tematizirata živali. Na začetku objavljenemu odlomku (1. dejanje., 3. prizor) iz tragikomedije *Lipicanci gredo v Strassbourg* Borisa A. Novaka (uprizorjena v MGL v sezoni 2006/2007) sledi izčrpen komentar komada kot celote – komentar, ki bi deloval prepričljiveje, če bi prišel izpod peresa koga drugega, ne pa samega avtorja. Na koncu, tik pred zaključno besedo sourednika, lahko preberemo pesem Maje Klarendić »Gojeno življenje,« ki jo sklepa dvoistišje: »Ker ali je res vredno / spominjati se gojenega življenja?« (Jerše in Gaber 2023, 355). Pesem sicer odlikuje jasna sporočilnost, nad katero se kaže zamisliti, a žal umanjka afekt, ki bi nam omogočil nujno poetično nadgradnjo tega razmisleka. Obe literarni besedili ne odpirata le vprašanj, povezanih s tematizacijo živali v literaturi in umetnosti nasploh, ampak tudi tista, ki zadevajo dejansko življenje nečloveških živalih včeraj, danes, jutri.

Če se še za trenutek zadržimo pri literarni tematizaciji živali, ne moremo mimo prispevka »Pisati ptice – k opolnomočenju živali v sodob-

nem nemškem romanu,« kjer avtorica Neva Šlibar dregne v samo srž problema, ko utemeljeno opozori na sicer že znano dejstvo treh ovir (antropocentrizem, antropomorfizem in nepoznavanje živalskih načinov recepcije), ki se neogibno pojavijo vselej, ko gre za poskuse mimetičnega prikazovanja živalskega pogleda na svet. Sklepamo torej lahko, da je za takšno prikazovanje boljše zavzeti nemimetično gledišče, se pravi tisto, na katerega največkrat naletimo v moderni liriki. Žal se v publikaciji nihče ni posvetil temu fenomenu.

Verjetno ni naključje, da se avtorica prispevka »Pisati ptice« ob štirih sodobnih nemških romanih, ki jih predstavi, najbolj posveti ravno romanu švicarske pisateljice Gertrude Lautenegger, *Matutin*. Ob analizi dobimo vtis, da je romaneskna naracija zasnovana tako, da ob ohranjanju spomina na kruto usodo ptic, povezano s starim ptičjim stolpom, postopoma spodnaša zakonitosti zvestega posnemanja realnosti, dokler se na koncu ne sklene »s čarobno ›metamorfozo‹ stolpa v ptico« (Jerše in Gaber 2023, 263).

In ker smo že pri metamorfozi, je treba opozoriti, da izraz ne označuje le biokemijskih procesov, ampak je, predvsem po zaslugi Deleuza in Guattarija, postal eden izmed osrednjih konceptov kritične animalistike. Zato ilustracija na knjižni platnici, kjer je upodobljen stiliziran pajek z žensko glavo, dobro služi svojemu namenu. Tako niti ni naključje, da na rabo metamorfoze kot koncepta naletimo prav v članku Uršule Berlot Pompe (»Živali in živalskost v sodobni umetnosti«), edinem v publikaciji, ki analizira vrsto produktov najsodobnejše umetnosti. Avtorica nanje aplicira koncepte metamorfoze in hibridizacije ter z njima tesno povezan koncept postajati žival. S to aplikacijo, ki ne sledi liniji argumenta, pač pa montaži raznorodnih dejstev, se neogibno zgodi določena banalizacija (ni mišljeno v pejorativnem smislu) Deleuzove in Guattarijeve teorije, tj. proces, ki rezultira v neke vrste recepcijsko estetiko. Izbrani artefakti (filmi, video, skulpture, instalacije, performansi itd.), ki jih avtorica predstavi, naj bi vzpostavljali enakovreden dialoški odnos med živaljo in človekom ter tako aludirali na možnost nastanka novih oblik sobivanja, ki bi temeljile na prilagajanju ljudi potrebam vseh nečloveških entitet (Jerše in Gaber 2023, 280). Človek potemtakem ne bi več izkoriščal premoči, ki jo ima nad njimi.

Moč kot premoč na eni strani ter enakovreden dialoški odnos na drugi strani, vse to je stvar etike, ki se kaže ravno v tem, kakšen status živalim ne le pripisujemo, ampak tudi v praksi omogočamo. Zato je tako pomembno razpravljati o pravni zaščiti živali, o tem, da bi namesto statusa lastnine

imele status pravne osebe. Tu so razlike med državami precejšnje, kakor lahko razberemo iz prispevka Priscile Gulič Pirnat, ki raziskuje razmerje med etiko in pravno zaščito živali, se argumentirano zavzema za obravnavo živali kot pravne subjektivnosti in za večjo prilagodljivost pravnega sistema, ko gre za vprašanja, ki se nanašajo na nečloveške entitete. V Sloveniji smo sicer uvedli novo moralno kategorijo čutečnost živali, kar pomeni, da živalim pripisujemo inherentno vrednost, a to, opozarja avtorica, zaenkrat deluje zgolj na simbolni ravni. Pravni/-e strokovnjaki/-nje, ki se ukvarjajo s pravicami živali, so si edini/-e v tem, da ljudje živalim ne smemo povzročati *nepotrebne* (moj kurziv) trpljenja. Nekaj podobnega beremo tudi v Unescovi deklaraciji o pravicah živali iz leta 1978 in še marsikje. Toda zanimivo bi bilo izvedeti, kaj pravzaprav pomeni »nepotrebno trpljenje« in, seveda, kako se loči od »potrebne trpljenja«, o katerem uradno nihče ne govori. Zanimivo bi bilo s strogo pravnškega vidika in z vidika medicinske etike vedeti to, kar je vsakomur jasno iz prakse: kakšna je razlika med veterinarskimi posegi, ki so za žival gotovo boleči, a ji s tem podaljšajo življenje in olajšajo bolečine, in posegi, s katerimi nas seznanja prispevek »Zgodbe z druge strani« veterinarke Alenke Seliškar, ki v prvi osebi ubeseduje kastracijo pujskov brez anestezije in analgezije, načrtno selektivno parjenje za ekstremni izgled, kar sčasoma povzroči telesne deformacije živali, da o maceraciji piščancev raje ne govorimo. V nebo vpijoč je podatek, da maceracija v Sloveniji še ni prepovedana. Te »zgodbe z drugi strani« ne potrebujejo ne sklepa ne komentarja, zbudajo grozo in sočutje, a brez katarze. Prej nasprotno, gre za travme, ki jim ni videti konca.

Za eno teh travm lahko proglasimo brahikefalijo (krajšanje in širjenje glave, za nekatere pse, npr. francoske buldoge, skrajno škodljivo posledico načrtovanega selektivnega parjenja), ki jo prepričljivo kritizira tudi veterinarica Jana Branković. Razlog za pojavljanje tovrstnih praks išče v naraščajočem individualizmu in potrošništvu človeške družbe ter potrebah mesne industrije. Prav tako ali še kritičnejša je Irena Golinar Oven, tudi veterinarica, ki obupne pogoje, zlasti prenaseljenost, v katerih se nahajajo rejne živali, krivi za prenašanje okužb in širjenje virusa prašičje kuge.

Glede na takšno stanje stvari so nekateri/-e sociologi/-nje in filozofi/-nje, ki se posvečajo etiki živali, začeli/-e o živalih razmišljati kot sodržavljankah. O tem sta ameriška teoretika Sue Donaldson in Will Kymlicka napisala revolucionarno in vizionarsko knjigo *Zoopolis* (2011), kjer govorita o živalih kot zatirani skupini, ki bi ji moral biti dodeljen status sodr-

žavljanek. Na to delo se opre in ga v svojem prispevku »Živali kot sodržavljan: razvoj sociologije živali« tudi podrobno predstavi sociolog Roman Kuhar. Tako kakor mnogi teoretiki, na katere se sklicuje, tudi on meni, da je bil v odnosu človek – žival ključni moment udomačitev živali v prazgodovini in vse, kar je iz tega sledilo. Temu seveda ne kaže oporekati. Danes, ugotavlja, Kuhar, imamo številna društva za zaščito živali in številne zakone, sprejete za njihovo dobrobit, a mesna predelovalna industrija kljub temu narašča, prostoživeče živali pa pospešeno izumirajo. To je res svojevrsten paradoks, zlasti če upoštevamo čedalje modnejše in razširjenejše prakticiranje veganstva, s katerim se, mimogrede rečeno, v *Človek, žival* nihče ne ukvarja.

Glede na vse to in še vrsto drugih problemov se zdi smiselno, da Kuhar išče rešitev v *Zoopolisu*, kjer skušata avtorja s svojo teorijo državljanstva preseči tako veganske pristope k zaščiti živali kot tudi pristop »velferistov«, ki spodbujajo humanejše ravnanje z živalmi in izboljševanje njihovih življenjskih pogojev, a se ne zavzemajo za ukinitvev mesne industrije. Predlagata razdelitev živali v tri kategorije: domače, s statusom sodržavljanstva, divje, s suverenostjo na njihovih teritorijih, in mejne, ki bi jim bil dodeljen status *denizenstva*, tj. omejenih pravic, kakršne so dodeljene tujcem, ki se začasno zadržijo na nekem ozemlju. Predvsem pa sta Sue Donaldson in Kymlicka povsem jasna glede spoznanja, da živali na svetu niso zato, da bi služile ljudem, saj njihovo ubijanje ni več pogoj za preživetje človeške vrste, tako kot je bilo včasih. Sadržavljanstvo predpostavlja spoštovanje predstav, ki jih imajo same živali o tem, kaj je zanje dobro in kaj ne. S tem sta teoretika, hote ali ne, ubesedila nevralgično točko kritične animalistike, ki pa je Kuhar ne komentira in se do teorije dokončno ne opredeli, pač pa nazorno predstavi izsledke Ruth Abbey in Tina Steina, dveh kritikov *Zoopolisa*, ki teoriji sodržavljanstva živali očitata revolucionarnost in neuresničljivost, kar naj bi bilo posledica dejstva, da Sue Donaldson in Kymlicka nista upoštevala razlike med moralnim statusom živali in ljudi.

O možnosti sodržavljanstva živali, kakor je tematizirano v delu *Zoopolis*, naklonjeno razmišlja tudi filozof Igor Pribac, ki se je na Slovenskem med prvimi ukvarjal z živalskim vprašanjem in etiko živali. V svojem prispevku »Sodržavljanica muca?« med drugim pojasni tudi, kdaj in kako je mogoče, da moralni pacienti postanejo moralni akterji. Pred tem pa, sicer na kratko, a jasno in jedrnato predstavi pomembnejše mejnike v zgodovini pojmovanja živali od Aristotela do Charlesa Darwina. Pri tem žal izpusti Michela de Montaigneja, a zelo dobro osvetli »Benthamov za-

suk,« ki pomeni neke vrste mejnik v pojmovanju razmerij med ljudmi in živalmi. S tem je radikalno izzval humanistično tradicijo in ustvaril podlago čezvrstni moralni skupnosti vseh čutečih bitij, »saj«, kakor ga povzema avtor prispevka, »sposobnost občutenja osebku zagotavlja načelni status upravičenca do imetja interesov, ki jih morajo moralni akterji pripoznati« (Donaldson in Kymlicka 2011, 312). In Pribac ob tem upravičeno opozarja, sklicujoč se na Petra Singerja in Paolo Cavalieri, da ni odločilno samo občutenje ugodja in bolečine, saj interesi živali niso več vezani samo na fizično bolečino, temveč »se bistveno razširijo tudi preko spominov in pričakovanj, ki jih generira njihovo nalaganje v sebstvo« (str. 314).

To sebstvo je natanko tisto, kar naj bi upoštevalo sleherno razpravljanje o nečloveški živali. Zato je razumljivo, da se okoli tega koncepta suče tudi argumentacija v prispevku »Kritična animalistična pedagogika – medpresečno izobraževanje za etiko živali« (Tomaž Grušovnik, Reingard Spannring, Branislava Vičar), ki o kritični animalistiki spregovori z vidika pedagogike. Ta pa je, kakor je splošno znano, v bistveno večji meri praksa kot teorija, čeravno gre tudi za teorijo. Zato je še toliko pomembnejša trditev, ki zadeva jedro kritične teorije, da je na delu *praksis* in hkrati tudi reflektirano delovanje, usmerjeno v spreminjanje družbe; družbe, ki se vselej nahaja v primežu ideologij. Naloga kritične animalistične pedagogike je prav v razgaljanju teh teorij in opozarjanju na dejstvo dolge tradicije zlorabe živali v normalizaciji izkoriščevalskih praks, še zlasti v sklopu šolstva, kjer živali niso obravnavane kot subjekti, pač pa kot predstavnice vrst. Avtorja in avtorica prispevka opozarjajo, sklicujoč se na delo Francesca de Giorgia (2016), da se specističnemu pogledu na živali lahko izognemo samo, če jih obravnavamo kot »lastnice lastnega izkustva«. Prav tu, v tej zadnji besedni zvezi je kleč! Izhaja iz že omenjene kontradikcije, zaznavne samo, če knjigo *Človek, žival* jemljemo celostno.

Na eni strani se namreč soočamo s teksti, ki na različne načine in z različnih perspektiv dokazujejo, da so živali subjekti, če že ne moralni akterji, pa vsekakor moralni pacienti, da vsaka žival, ne glede na vrsto, ki ji pripada, sama zase najboljše ve, kaj je zanj dobro in kaj ne. Na drugi strani pa imamo tekste, ki prav tako gradijo na pozitivnem odnosu do živali, a jih obravnavajo bolj v luči človeških kot živalskih potreb. Raziskujejo, kaj in kako živali pomenijo glede na človeka, kako in koliko so koristne pripadnice človeške družbe. S temi članki ni nič narobe; kot že omenjeno, prinašajo zanimive informacije in uvide. To, kar manjka, je neke vrste sklepni komentar, ki bi problematiziral prav to protislovje; ki

bi ugotavljal, kako in katere živali uživajo v igrivih ali kakšnih drugih interakcijah s človekom in katere sploh ne; kakšne so v tem pogledu razlike med njimi, četudi govorimo samo o domačih živalih. Kaj je, če je, denimo, bistvena razlika med psom, ki lovi žogico ali ostri svoj voh pri iskanju po sledi, in lipicancem, ki ga dresirajo, zato da pleše po taktu dunajskega valčka in izvaja vsakovrstne umetnije. Namesto tega v sklepni besedi sourednika Saša Jeršeta beremo o »velikem finalu projekta Evropska noč raziskovalcev« (Kje so raziskovalke?), ki naj bi se odvijal v ritmu preludija k »Te Deum« Marca-Antonia Charpentierja, in o tem, da je za sleherno spoznanje treba tvegati in se »pustiti zapeljati onkraj zamisljivega« (Jerše in Gaber 2023, 359). Nedvomno! Toda natanko za to smo pri tem projektu oz. njegovem knjižnem udejanjenju nekoliko prikrajšani.

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Conference Report

The Factual Animal: Audiovisual Representations of Real Other-than-Human Animals

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The international conference ‘The Factual Animal: Audiovisual Representations of Real Other-than-Human Animals’ was held from November 29th to December 1st, 2023, at the Faculty of Philology, Translation and Communication of Universitat de València, in Spain. Co-organised by the CULIVIAN (‘Animals in Literary and Visual Cultures’) research group at Universitat de València, the Department of English and German, and the Department of French and Italian, the event brought together a wide range of researchers, scholars and activists interested in the field of (Critical) Animal Studies.

The conference focused on the representation of *real* other-than-human animals in visual and audiovisual mediums (documentaries, movies, social media, photography, etc.), but also in other forms of cultural devices that *frame* animals in specific ways (zoos, museums, and other spaces of animal exhibition). Discussions covered an extensive variety of topics, ranging from animals as entertainment to audiovisual activism to engagement of viewers with animals in media. Due to the large number of participants, the talks were run in concurrent sessions, organised according to topics.

Likewise, keynote speakers from various fields added very diverse perspectives to the discussions. Randy Malamud, taking the expression *busy as a bee* as a starting point, reflected on the presence of animals in our everyday language. World-renowned photojournalist Jo-Anne McArthur further enriched the discourse by introducing the audience to the world of animal photojournalism and visual storytelling. Claire Parkinson tackled the topic of so-called ‘dangerous dogs,’ particularly pertinent amidst the ongoing ban on these animals in the United Kingdom. With an excellent presentation, Brett Mills explored the portrayal of animals in au-

diovisual media, notably shedding light on the case of the horse Sallie Garner. Lastly, Paula Casal extensively examined the issue of animal captivity, focusing on great apes, elephants, and dolphins.

It is worth noting that this conference went well beyond conventional talks and offered a wide array of activities for the participants to engage in. On the first day, after McArthur's talk, assistants were able to visit the exhibition 'Hidden: Animals in the Anthropocene,' by We Animals Media photographers, at the Centre Cultural La Nau, as well as enjoy a welcome reception and a vegan cocktail. The vegan dinner held on the second day of the conference also provided a space for networking and building professional and personal connections among attendees. Leaving animal products off the plate was a gesture by the organisation which perfectly aligned with the anti-speciesist aim of the conference.

Likewise, book presentations brought into focus recent scholarly contributions to the field – *Hidden: Animals in the Anthropocene*, by Jo-Anne McArthur, the upcoming *The Climate Crisis and Other Animals*, by Richard Twine, and Claire Parkinson's and Lara Herring's (eds.) *Animal Activism On and Off Screen* should be mentioned. I would like to highlight the collaborative workshop on animal film and education, organised by Patrycja Chuszcz, Bianca Friedman, Michał Matuszewski, and Friederike Zenker. It provided an exchange of ideas and perspectives to encourage interdisciplinary approaches and debates to bring animal issues into the classroom. These activities blended academic discussions with hands-on experiences, ensuring interactive participation for all involved.


Overall, the talks and activities of 'The Factual Animal' offered high quality discussions on how we see and represent other animals. This, in turn, fostered a community committed to advocating for more ethical, inclusive, and thoughtful portrayals and engagements with other-than-human animals in media and cultural spaces.

Conference Report

The 8th International Animal Futures Conference and 8th Biennial Conference of the European Association for Critical Animal Studies (EACAS)

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The joint 8th International Animal Futures conference and the 8th Biennial Conference of the European Association for Critical Animal Studies (EACAS) was held in Tallinn, Estonia, and online, from June 16 to 18, 2023. The event was organised by the animal advocacy organisation Loomus, the Estonian Vegan Society, and EACAS, and featured many international speakers and papers reflecting on the conference's topic: 'Animal Advocacy against the Grain? Traditions and Transformations in and around the Movement.' The title, formulated as a question and an invitation for discussion, inspired activists and scholars from various fields, from historians to sociologists.

The Animal Futures conference, which has become global thanks to its online sessions, is distinguished by its ambition to involve both scholars and activists. Throughout the years, the scholars who have presented at the conference have predominantly been from the fields of social sciences and humanities. However, as the conference has demonstrated, the line between a scholar and activist is blurred, as many researchers are also active in different animal advocacy organisations. The 35 presentations held at the 2023 edition were divided into ten panels, which addressed various animal rights issues. The organisers aimed to give the conference a horizontal structure by not inviting keynote speakers, nor distinguishing between presenters by time allocated for their presentations. The subtitle of the conference referred to the traditions around and within the animal rights movement, but the definition of traditions was deliberately

left open. The speakers related mainly in three ways: intersectional approaches, critique of speciesism, and strategies for disseminating animal rights messages.

In the framework of critical animal studies, as well as in the context of the animal rights movement, intersectionality means recognising that animal welfare issues are interconnected with other social issues such as racism, sexism, and classism, but also non-human animals in social hierarchies. For example, the Gender Studies panel focused on veganism, men and masculinity with presentations from Cameron Dunnett and Richard Twine, while in the Privileges and Critical Perspectives panel, 'veganisms' were introduced as possible indigenous decolonial practices by both Martina Davidson, focusing on Latin America, and Denisa Krásná, focusing on North America.

Also in the Privileges and Critical Perspectives panel, Emily Major discussed the conflicts that arise between introduced and native species and the role of humans in causing and resolving these complex situations. Heldi Marleen Lang based her presentation on Peter Singer's work to explain the ethical blindness of researchers towards animal testing, and introduced the panel on animal testing, which included presentations on humane-washing in animal experimentation and the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on animal advocacy. 'Humane-washing' is the practice where companies or organisations attempt to improve their reputation regarding animal welfare by portraying themselves as humane or sustainable, but in reality, they do not significantly change their standard practices. The conference also opened up a space to discuss animal-futures-related alternatives and utopias in the session under the same name. Here, topics on robotisation as the ultimate step in distancing from animal suffering (presented by Maša Blaznik and Tomaž Grušovnik), veganism and vegetarianism in behavioural science literature (Gelareh Salehi), cultured meat farms (Simcha Nyssen) and the utopian discourses on plant-based alternative brands (Júlia Castellano) were discussed.

While Karl Hein, Daniel Breeze, Ronnie Lee, and Mark Dunick started the conference with historical lessons from Estonia, Great Britain, and New Zealand, and Alexandra Isfahani-Hammond, Cansu Özge Özmen, and Christopher Jain Miller discussed the notion of compassion and possibilities for veganism in different religions, the second day mostly focused on ways of shaping society through political lobbying and media. Farištamo Eller, Olatz Aranceta Reboredo, and María Ruiz Carreras all addressed very concrete paradoxes of lobbying against compassion that

are the result of manipulation of public opinion by the specific interest groups – be it the cruel slaughter of lampreys in Estonia, harm in the animal-based entertainment industry in Spain, or the European dairy industry. As one possible solution to enable the political agency of animals, Paulina Siemienieć proposed an alternative option focusing on care relations rather than citizenship.

The Aesthetic Strategies session was opened by Vesna Liponik discussing tropological violence and the ways out, including aesthetics. Katja Guenther used pumas in Los Angeles as a case study for charismatic megafauna, and Claire Parkinson, too, advocated for charisma instead of gore in influencing people to think differently about animals – a ‘soft approach’ through audiovisual fiction. This ignited an open discussion on the tension between fiction and documentation: which one works better in getting the message across? Cultivating audiences through audiovisual means was also the main topic of the Animals on Screen session, which juxtaposed Laura Saarenmaa’s discourse analysis on meat advertising in Finland in the 1980s, Brett Mills’s examination of the presentation of animals in the BBC’s early output, and Bianca Friedman’s investigation on the representation of nonhuman animal stars’ agency.

Despite the age of social media, TV, film, art, and literature were in the limelight at the 2023 conference. Throughout the event, emphasis was also put on the education system as an important place in which to create social change. The role of education and various educational institutions in shaping the relationship between humans and animals has been conceptualised by critical animal pedagogy, which strives for the liberation of animals through education. As an example, Jonna Håkansson and Malin Gustafsson pointed to a training project based on critical animal pedagogy in Swedish schools, where students were encouraged to ask critical questions about the exploitation of animals in everyday life.

Cultural Practices, the final session of the conference, was a mix of different themes, featuring Tim Reysoo’s discussion on human privilege, based on his critical reading of Gloria Wekker’s book *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race*; Vivek Mukherjee’s critique on the human right to culture versus animals’ right to live, based on a shocking case of re-legalising the Jallikattu bull racing in the state of Tamil Nadu in India; Paul Chen’s hopeful revisitation of modern Chinese veganism through a hundred-year-old local plant-based cookbook, claiming that veganism in China is not (merely) a result of Western influence; Daina Pupkevičiūtė’s reminder that collateral damage in war is not just about

people, but may result in the extinction of whole species; and S.A. Bachman's and Neda Moridpour's inspiring examples of artistic interventions that have made an impact. This seemingly eclectic combination served as a reminder that animal rights can never be taken for granted. When moving towards a more animal-friendly world, it is important to work with animal rights in mind, as well as to have an open mind and an attentive eye towards other social and environmental topics and ways of creating a better future. As the name of the Animal Futures conference suggests, the conference focuses on the future of animals, but provides an opportunity to learn from the past and the present to create a better future for ourselves and those around us in a rapidly changing more-than-human society.

The post-conference networking tour included an interspecies urban walk in Lasnamäe, a residential district in Tallinn, led by Hildegard Reimann, who defended her master's thesis in ethnology on the possibility of perceiving the perspective of other species through multispecies urban walks at the University of Tartu in January 2024. In the winter of 2024, we are also looking forward to the 9th International Animal Futures conference, which has been announced as taking place in Tallinn and online from 17 to 18 May, 2024, under the title: '(Re)visioning Animal Advocacy: Strategies, Dilemmas and Directions.' Learn more at <https://loomus.ee/konverents/>.


Critical Response

Thinking Animals: International Conference

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It only happened to me twice – that I left a debate, just standing up and leaving the room, not being able to bear the conversation any longer. It happened first during a political debate on an ecology and someone said – after hours of discussing non-human ethics – that we’re not going to talk about *food*.

It happened again at the international conference *Thinking Animals*, held by the Institute of Ethnomusicology, ZRC SAZU, under the organization of Marjetka Golež Kaučič.

What became clear during the aforementioned debate, the fact that more-than-human animals are beings with inherent value and that we should at least try to protect their right to not be killed, is not something that all participants of the conference hold as true.

There was, at the end, the very carnistic, speciesist debate that got us – metaphorically – out of our closed room (the ivory tower as it is sometimes called) and right into the middle of the carnistic, speciesist, anthropocentric society we live in anyway.

The conference was not unlike other similar international conferences in a sense that it did bring together researchers from different parts of the world to share their knowledge about more-than-human animals and human relations to them. We did learn a lot about different fields and how human interactions with more-than-humans are manifested in those areas and what that tells us – as a whole – about subtle ways that what Barbara Noske calls the animal-industrial complex could be understood in a more direct way as the practices, organizations, and overall industry that turns more-than-human animals into food and other commodities, or in a broader sense as all ways and practices in which more-than-human animals are exploited by (systemic) human activities.

The conference covered a broad spectrum of different fields such as

more-than-human animals in literature, ecology, pedagogy, history, local communities, different mythologies and as more-than-human creators in music. It was informative and showcased how much more-than-humans are involved in human societies and how speciesism and carnism are inherent parts of different systems of oppression and how they are expressed in different societal fields; how literature shapes our impressions of more-than-humans and how the school system is often the one that teaches us from a very young age that more-than-humans don't have inherent value or that they are just metaphors for something human, just tools that help us understand ourselves. It was important that the conference gave us the possibility to understand how different societies see nature, more-than-human animals and even plants, or how more-than-humans can be understood as creators of music or how they are political agents and have been for centuries, even though we, as humans, don't normally understand them in that way.

But on the other hand this was – for a person who is vegan, an activist and proponent of multispecies, more-than-human societies, that are based on total liberation, which is often the position of people attending similar international conferences – a very sobering experience. There we were, people who try to research human/more-than-human relationships as broad systems of oppression, still not able to agree that killing more-than-humans is ethically not acceptable.

This is, probably, the most obvious difference between animal studies and *critical* animal studies; the fact that animal studies can – and do – research human and non-human interactions, sometimes even in the light of systemic patterns, but only critical animal studies (by definition) demand any societal change and take more-than-humans seriously in a way that their perspectives matter – not only as information for humans about humans, but on their own. Only from the critical animal studies point of view does it become clear that more-than-humans are agents in a human dominated world, trying in their own ways to fight oppression – war, really, according to Dinesh Wadiwel – and are not just passive victims of wrongdoings of humanity.

What was most painful to watch at the *Thinking Animals* conference was the fact that faced with speciesist and carnistic ways in the argumentation of some of the contributors, a lot of those who do indeed engage in the critical animal studies field just fell silent. It was this awful feeling of being, once again, defeated, by the same ideologies we were supposed to question in those few days that the conference lasted. I, myself, and two

colleagues tried – we really did try – to question the same positions that are so prevalent in the society at large, but there were not enough of us (once again) and it was very apparent that more-than-humans don't really matter. What mattered was an academic gathering, humans, talking to each other about how much we care, when in reality, we don't – or do, but just about everything else but the rights and lives of other beings; the ongoing human-human wars can show us how little we care about each other too.

So this is why this is more of a call to empathy than praise for everyone who contributed something to this conference and it is more of a way to say 'sorry' to those that I believe we failed again.

One of the main points of critical animal studies is that we have to let activism be part of our academic work and that we all must sustain from exploiting more-than-humans as much as is possible. It was deeply saddening that it is apparently not possible, not even for people interested in those relations, to at least not eat corpses of the killed or consume their bodily fluids and/or other products of their bodies or, indeed, try not to justify the killing of more-than-humans. But if there is no autonomy over one's body, there is no autonomy over one's life. If one's perspectives and interests don't matter and it is always someone else who decides for a group of beings – be it human or more-than-human – than we can't really say that there is a liberation movement; the conference showed very clearly that we are not, in fact, trying to be allies to more-than-humans, that we only try to analyse in a very human – academic – context the existing relations.

The fact that even those who did previously fight for more-than-humans from a critical standpoint stayed mostly silent in this (un)safe academic environment, is something that can tell us about how strong the systems of oppressions are.

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