



**Journal for Critical
Animal Studies**

VOLUME 15, ISSUE 6

December 2018

ISSN 1948-352X

Journal for Critical Animal Studies

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Issue Introduction: Nonhuman Animals as Agents of Resistance

Amber E. George

I have never understood why humans seem surprised to hear, whether in a news story or elsewhere, about nonhumans escaping confinement. It seems almost obvious that a nonhuman would want liberation. Despite this obviousness to what seems common sense, popular culture is saturated with zoo-break narratives that serve to reinforce the binary of us versus them. When a nonhuman escapes, humans must *hunt* down the nonhuman escapee to restore the human's sense of order. Once successfully hunted, a nonhuman is either returned to confinement, immediately shot and killed, or thereafter euthanized. None of these solutions are unacceptable for those who believe in nonhuman liberation.

Furthermore, news articles often refer to cases of animals seeking their own liberation from zoos, slaughterhouses, and other types of enclosures as “jail breaks” and “joy rides.” These often-sensationalized stories refer to the protagonists as antagonists using terms such as “escape-artists” and “ingenious masterminds.” Escaped animals go on “killing sprees” and are often described using language that suggests criminality. The discourse is clear; nonhumans are the criminals for attempting freedom despite committing no crime. The risk taken to achieve liberation only scratch the surface of the bravery, cunningness, and overall desperation felt for freedom.

The so-called criminal behavior exhibited by the escapees is a powerful response to a fight or flight reaction, AKA, survival. Whether one is human or nonhuman, a violent response to these pressures is to be expected. Let's face it; we all want to eat or avoid being eaten. The competing factors of humans wanting to keep nonhumans in captivity and nonhumans wanting to be free creates intense competition. Fierce competition should be met with compromise in the form of promoting liberation. The authors of this issue, Michael Allen and Erica von Essen, suggest this very solution. In their article, “Animal Resisters: On the Right of Resistance and Human Duties of Non-Return and Abolition,” they argue that animals are agents of resistance, and as such, humans are responsible for the abolition of

captivity and promotion of non-return policies. Humans, as agents of change, should recognize nonhuman's status as active resisters to captivity and therefore abolish incarceration.

Animal Resisters: On the Right of Resistance and Human Duties of Non-Return and Abolition

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Abstract

We argue that animal resistance to systemic oppression is a joint animal/human project. Escaping from slaughterhouse or marketplace, animals are primary agents of change appropriately described as resisting oppression and injustice. Nevertheless, animal resistance fundamentally depends on reasonable human persons positioning animal escapes from slaughterhouses and markets *as acts of resistance*. Such persons articulate publicly the normative entailments of these acts in terms of well-being interests and rights. Indeed, articulating these entailments commits them to acknowledge positive as well as negative duties (to not return to their captors) towards animal escapees. Given the intersectionality of oppressions affecting both animals and humans in these institutions, positive duties to ensure the abolition of exploitative meat production are vital stages in an inter-species co-liberation project. We say co-liberation for at least two reasons. (1) Acts of resistance are not exclusively human acts. Instead, as we show, it is philosophically coherent to speak of acts of resistance by animals. (2) As in the case of escapes from slaughterhouse and market, resistance-acts by animals depend on human agency to not only provide descriptions revealing their normative contents and entailments, but also motivate sustained political action to abolish oppressive institutions, explaining and justifying the grounds of justification for abolition. Reasonable human persons must do the higher cognitive work of describing, explaining and justifying. However, they must acknowledge animals also engage in forms of agency qualifying them as agents and resisters. As such, animals are co-contributors to a total reduction in oppression, across species lines.

Keywords: *Direct Action; Resistance; Primary and Corporate Agency;*

Introduction

When they escape imminent slaughter at the hands of humans, non-human animals (henceforth animals) become celebrities, feted in the media for their cunning and initiative. Moreover, the public resolutely opposes sending them back to the slaughterhouse. The public today sees these successful animal resistors and escapees as *deserving* to live out their natural lives with “a free pass” in animal sanctuaries (Colling, 2014, p. 80). However, animal escape stories have *not* motivated widespread public criticism and condemnation of the industrial meat production system. Even animal support societies such as Animal Care that work with sanctuaries in finding escapees a home do not oppose the killing of *other* animals for food. We argue that animal escape reveals a fundamental moral contradiction when humans insist that successful escapees from slaughterhouses deserve to live, while legions of non-escapees continue to suffer their grisly fate in the Eternal Treblinka (Patterson, 2002). We take seriously the idea that animal escapees themselves reveal this contradiction to humans, regardless of whether it is their intention to do so. Indeed, such escapees challenge humans to think about their obligations to other species with whom they are interrelated through the food production system in a more consistent and justifiable way: treating escapees and non-escapees equally.

To this extent, our goal is to make the case for humans regarding animals as direct- action resistors to systemic oppression and injustice, breaking the laws that condemn them to slaughter to fulfil human dietary preferences. Indeed, the literature on critical animal studies makes much of the role of *humans* as direct action resistors to the oppression of animals in industrial meat production (c.f. Best, 2014; Pellow, 2014). Nevertheless, surprisingly little work has been done in this area to address direct, extra-legal action by animals to their systemic oppression in industrial meat production (Hribal, 2013). This article attempts to compensate for this deficit in the current CAS literature by offering a conceptual analysis of animal resistance and its normative implications for humans.

That said, however, the task of providing such a critique is by no means simple. The concept of liberation has often been applied to animals (Singer, 1975). However, the assumption is that animals are liberated –

freed from oppression and harm – by humans acting on their behalf. Only humans have the requisite cognitive capabilities to conceive of a project of liberation for animals and strategize forms of resistance calculated to reduce their oppression. Consequently, our task must begin with an account of animal agency that explains how animals operating on a lower cognitive level can function as agents of resistance. It must then engage with the concept of resistance, adapting this to an appropriate account of animal agency in resisting oppression and explain its relationship to human agency.

In this respect, we appeal to one of the major themes of critical animal studies: the intersectionality of oppressions. Indeed, a familiar theme of critical animal studies as well as eco-feminism is that humans cannot overcome the forms of oppression to which they are subjected without also overcoming the oppression of animals. All oppressions are linked in hierarchal systems of domination based on race, genders, but also species (Gruen, 2007). Hence, liberation must be ‘total,’ dismantling the entire hierarchal system (Best, 2014; Pellow, 2014). One of our primary concerns in this article is to show that animals themselves can be agents of resistance and, as such, co-contributors to a project of total liberation. Nevertheless, this is only possible if humans acknowledge the normative significance of their actions – as when they escape the oppression of slaughterhouses and markets – as acts of resistance. In other words, they must be able to conceive of these actions not only as acts of resistance, but also as placing them under binding obligation of justice to the animal resisters. Humans must see animal escapees as conferring on them dual obligations of non-return and abolition. This leads us to the concept of a right of resistance already acknowledged in the political philosophy literature for the case of runaway human slaves (Blunt, 2015). Human runaway slaves confer on the rest of us obligations not to return them to servitude and to work towards abolishing the institutions of oppression.

Based on our discussion of animal agency and our adapting the concept of resistance to animals, we contend the same right of resistance transfers to animal escapees. This, in turn, provides us with a foundation on which to criticize the contradiction in our present responses to slaughterhouse and marketplace escapees. That is, the contradiction entailed by our willingness to recognize the injustice of returning them to their doom in the slaughterhouse, but not also addressing the moral imperative of abolishing the systemic oppression of animals in industrial meat

production. If, as we argue, animals exercise a right of resistance analogous to runaway human slaves, then the animals confer on us both a duty of non-return and abolition. To this extent, the animals directly contribute to the total liberation project. Indeed, if all oppressions are linked (Pellow, 2014), then the dual obligations conferred on us by the animals necessarily contribute to liberating all of us from the global system of oppression affecting animals and human alike (Best, Nocella, Kahn, Gigliotti, & Kemmerer, 2007). Of course, this contribution depends on uptake from humans, acknowledging the duties conferred on them by animal escapees and resisters. Nevertheless, the dependency of animal resisters on human uptake should not diminish their contribution. Again, if all oppressions are linked, then the goal of total liberation is unlikely to be realized unless or until humans acknowledge the role of animals themselves in contributing to dismantling the global system of domination and oppression.

We proceed in the following steps. First, we offer some methodological remarks to clarify our approach to arguing for animal resistance. Second, we discuss animal escape cases as instances of resistance to slaughterhouse and marketplace. Third, we discuss the philosophical literature on resistance, adapting the concept of resistance to animal escapees. Fourth, we elaborate on the concept of reasonable human persons describing animal escapes as acts of resistance to oppression, as opposed non-normative acts of simply ‘taking a walk.’ Finally, we argue that animal liberation depends on the functionally differentiated roles of both animal and human agents, as co-contributors to a joint total liberation project.

Methodological Approach and Theoretical Framework

Our methodology is normative and philosophical. Indeed, this is necessarily so given that the concept of resistance to oppression, along with its cognates such as liberation from oppression, are inherently normative, appealing to notions of injustice and justice. We base our philosophical argumentation on three primary sources: research on animal resistance; media coverage of animal escapees, and recent literature on advances made in understanding animal cognition.

Its most general sense, resistance is a mode of opposition to institutions and relations one considers oppressive and unjust so that one wants to effect changes in them to reduce oppression and injustice for oneself and others (Blunt, 2017; Caney, 2015; McGary, 1989, Gottlieb, 1983). Nevertheless,

resistance also appeals to notions of agency or the power to produce effects that can change one's life, and the lives of those with whom one is inter-related, within a system of social institutions. Here, agency is normally assumed to entail (1) higher cognitive capabilities to plan and strategize about the changes one would want to make in one's life and the lives of others. These are essentially *rational* capabilities for determining instrumental means to one's pre-conceived future ends. However, it also entails (2) higher capabilities to cognize oneself as an individual with an undetermined future, and as related to others as a member of the same group with shared interests and concerns; or related to other individuals and other groups with quite different interests concerns. That is, it entails the capability to cognize the futures of all individuals and groups as similarly open and indeterminate.

Absent this capability to conceptualize open futures, one might well think it meaningless to plan and strategize change. If this is meaningless, then the concept of resistance to institutions and relations one would want to see changed is equally meaningless. Further, agency entails higher cognitive capabilities to make defensible judgments before other individual and groups about what is fair and unfair, just and unjust in individual and group relations. This latter capability is not simply not a matter of rationality, determining the instrumental means to those preconceived ends, those changes one wants to see. It is also a capability for *reasonableness* (Rawls, 1971). In contrast with rationality, reasonableness entails a capability for making judgments of fairness based on consideration of reciprocity of mutuality. Agents are reasonable when they base their judgments of fairness on reciprocal concern for the basic well-being interests of others as grounding the notion of fundamental right or entitlement (Cochrane, 2009; Feinberg, 1974). For agents to be resisters, they must be both rational and reasonable. They must both plan and strategize their resistance and communicate with one another about what they should do to reduce oppression and increase justice or fairness.

That said, however, we immediately run into a difficulty applying the concept of resistance to animals. It is commonly assumed that animals are neither rational nor reasonable in the above senses. They lack the higher cognitive capabilities requisite for agency let alone resistance. That is, they can no more rationally plan or strategize for alternate futures than they can conceptualize themselves as members of groups, or conceptualize themselves, other individuals or groups as the oppressed victims of unjust

institutions and relations. Further, they cannot reasonably deliberate the entailments of justice for institutional change. Indeed, this would appear to disqualify animals as resisters. One response to this difficulty is to argue that animal cognition is sufficient for agency and resistance.

The scientific literature on animal cognition lends at least some support to the proposition that animals have capabilities for planning and strategy. Indeed, most researchers conclude that only humans can formulate abstract concepts (Vonk, 2016). Nevertheless, it is unclear whether strategizing necessarily relies on higher capabilities for abstraction. For example, scrub jays will re-cache food after observing other jays stealing food. As re-caching does not depend on the presence of the potential thief, scrub jays “. . . must relate information about their previous experience as a thief to the possibility of future stealing by another bird, and modify their caching strategy accordingly” (Clayton, Bussey, & Dickinson, 2003). Such behavior demonstrates capabilities for asynchronous timing over relatively short intervals, anticipating future events over a timescale of at least hours.

Other researches explore the concept of ‘cognitive maps’ as attributed to animals. Cognitive mapping is “a process composed of a series of psychological transformations by which an individual acquires, codes, stores, recalls, and decodes information about the relative locations and attributes of phenomena in his everyday spatial environment” (Stea, 2017). For example, chimps often take short cuts between locations based on recognizing familiar landmarks from a new angle. That said, however, granting some capabilities for strategizing below the level of higher abstractions, however, we might still ask whether animals are capable of reasonableness based on a sense of justice or fairness. Some studies show that highly social animals do have a sense of fairness. For example, monkeys trained to hand a small rock to researchers to get a piece of food in return act insulted if they see another monkey getting a more delicious reward for doing the same job (Brosnan & De Waal, 2003). One might interpret acting insulted as a form of resistance to a situation perceived and unfair, unjust by the monkeys getting a less delicious reward. Nevertheless, as manifest through jealousy, it is unclear whether such an elemental sense of justice is sufficient to motivate reflection on institutional change. Again, that would require capabilities for higher abstractions so that the monkeys conceptualized the system of rewards as unfair, and unfair to all recipients of lesser rewards.

To this extent, we opt against basing our argument on the animal cognition literature. Instead of arguing that animals have powers of higher abstraction, we argue that it is intelligible to speak of their agency and resistance even in the absence of such powers. In this respect, we appeal in the following section to a much simpler conception of agency, Action Network Theory. Here, agency is simply the capability to produce effects, initiating cases processes of change. This account of agency does not depend fundamentally on capabilities for higher abstractions, planning, strategizing, deliberating the mutual terms of justice. Animals are capable of agency on this account. They can undertake direct actions outside the boundaries of law, as when animals escape slaughterhouses or markets. Animals may undertake such extra-legal actions without their conceptualizing the principle of law or, for that matter, its failures from the standpoint of mutual justice. Nevertheless, actions of this sort might still fulfil key definitional conditions for resistance: initiating processes that ultimately lead to a reduction of oppression and injustice (Gottlieb, 1983; McGary, 1989).

To be sure, such processes necessarily entail uptake from humans interpreting and describing the direct actions of animals normatively as resistance to oppression and challenging simple non-normative descriptions of them as ‘taking a walk.’ Animal direct actions are thus acts of resistance under descriptions highlighting their normative significance for the animals, even though the animals themselves this significance of their acts. Indeed, normative significance for the animals is defined by objective well-being interests grounding rights, *regardless of their level of cognition* concerning their own interests (Feinberg, 1974; Cochrane, 2009) in living out their natural lives free from the risks of slaughter for human consumption or use. Consequently, such descriptions are provided by reasonable *human* persons grasping the normative significance of the actions undertaken by animals, communicating this to other reasonable persons, and undertaking planning and strategizing for direct actions of their own contesting the institutions of industrial meat production. Of course, reasonable persons also have the option unavailable to animals of contesting these institutions within the boundaries of law, campaigning through legally established channels for legislative reform. Nevertheless, our approach focuses on direct action resistance by animals and humans.

We emphasize, though, that direct actions by reasonable persons are not undertaken only on behalf of animals. On the contrary, the institutions of

industrial meat production are often as oppressive to those humans working within them (see e.g. Carr & Chen, 2002; Fiber-Ostrow & Lovell, 2016) as they are to the animals prepared for slaughter. This has some interesting implications for our analysis. If slaughterhouses are oppressive for both animals and humans, and direct-action resistance by animals can initiate processes leading, say, to the abolition of these key institutions of industrial meat production, then the result is a reduction of oppression and injustice for animals and humans. Further, if indeed animals contribute to these processes in the ways we discuss in this article, then animals contribute to processes of human liberation as well as their own liberation through the uptake and assistance of reasonable human persons. In these respects, our article contributes to several goals of critical animal studies, particularly goals 4 and 7. It advances “a holistic understanding of the commonality of oppressions . . . viewed as parts of a larger, interlocking system of domination.” It also champions “a politics of total liberation which grasps the need for, and the inseparability of, human, nonhuman animal . . . in one comprehensive, though diverse, struggle; to quote Martin Luther King Jr.: *“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere”* (Best et al., 2007). In the next section, we make the opening move in our argument for animals as resisters, below the level of capabilities for higher abstraction and cognition, thus avoiding the potential objection that they are incapable agency at this level automatically disqualifying them as resisters.

Animal Escapes and Animal Resistance

In a compelling discussion of animal agency and resistance, Carter and Charles’ (2013) primary case study concerns the so-called Tamworth Two, Butch and Sundance. These two Tamworth pigs escaped transport to a UK slaughterhouse, in which they would have met their certain death as mere units of industrial meat production (Bokonyi, 1969; Clutton-Brock, 1994; Russell, 2002). However, Butch and Sundance are not a unique case. On the contrary, we note many similar cases of animal resistance as escape or self-liberation, such as the Saint Louis Six, the Brooklyn Bull, Queenie the NYC chicken, in the US, as well as Mike Jr the steer in Canada, or the Nysa cow in Poland. As slaughter-house runaways or escapees, they all achieved a celebrity status. For example, BBC film, *The Legend of the Tamworth Two*, celebrated Butch and Sundance’s escape and their subsequent lives as renegade heroes in an animal shelter. As for Nysa the cow, after smashing her way through a metal fence, she swam to an island

in the middle of a Lake, and successfully defended it against firefighters charged with recapturing her. Admired for her “fortitude and will,” she became the subject of a local political decision to leave her alone, as a “hero cow” who had earned her freedom.

Carter and Charles (2013) claim such exercises of animal agency “can readily be interpreted as resistance, that is, as an unwillingness to accept one’s immediate conditions” (p. 328). In this respect, they appeal to agency at a low level of cognitive sophistication, avoiding controversial attributions of conscious planning and strategizing. Butch and Sundance, along with Queenie, Mike, and so on, were clearly unwilling to accept their immediate conditions, regardless of whether or to what extent they may have planned or strategized their escapes. Indeed, they appeal to Action Network Theory (ANT) to account for the agency of animal escapees. For discussing animal agency and resistance, they stipulate that an agent is any actor (animal or human) capable of producing effects and instigating changes *within a relational field or network* of other actors. To this extent, Butch, Sundance, and so on, qualify as agents to the extent their actions produced effects, instigating changes in their relation to others. Indeed, according to ANT, agency is always enacted in relation to other agents and what they want to do” (p. 330). This means that the acts of a particular agent are singular – the acts of that agent – but agency is always plural insofar as it emerges from a “relational field” that is not necessarily of the agent’s choosing but an “involuntaristic placing into common life chances” (Carter & Charles, 2011, p. 11).

Carter and Charles (2013) first use the example of a woman born in Iran to illustrate the relational character of agency concerning human relations to other humans. In their example, this woman did not choose the field of patriarchal relations into which she was born. Nevertheless, these relations are, at least, partly determinative of her possibilities for choice and action. Moreover, they are oppressive to her as a woman to the extent that the dominant patriarchy of Iranian society arbitrarily restricts her life chances as a woman. Suppose, however, she escapes patriarchal oppression in Iran by moving to Sweden, as a country priding itself on its commitment to gender equality and guaranteeing the equal life chances of men and women. Of course, moving from Iran might be a conscious choice that entailed considerable planning and strategy on her part. However, in doing so, she opens entirely new possibilities for action choices by entering different relational field among gender-egalitarian Swedes. Consequently,

she effects a profound change in her “agential conditions” (ibid) at the level of primary or individual agency, reducing her own experience of oppression in her new homeland. Nevertheless, by moving to Sweden, she does nothing to change the lives of the group of oppressed Iranian women. Their experience of oppression is unchanged. Nevertheless, she could engage in acts of *corporate agency*, indeed acting in solidarity with all oppressed women in Iran by publicly criticizing the patriarchal Iranian regime, as a liberated woman in Sweden.

How does this relational analysis apply to animal escapees such as Butch and Sun- dance? They were involuntarily placed in a speciesistic relational field with humans who oppressively restricted their action choices as animals raised for slaughter. Escaping transport to the abattoir, however, they radically changed the relational field in which they could act as primary or individual agents. They were no longer potential pork chops but instead became Butch and Sundance, the celebrity renegade pigs. Indeed, by running away, they substantively redefined their possibilities for agency in a new relational field with humans. Moreover, they effectively reduced their own experience of oppression in the industrial meat production system (as well as saving their own lives). Nevertheless, important dis-analogies exist between the case of Butch and Sundance and that of the Iranian woman. For one thing, the Iranian woman likely planned to liberate herself by changing relational fields. However, it is quite implausible to suppose Butch and Sundance planned to save themselves by achieving celebrity as abattoir runaways. Even so, they still qualify under ANT as primary agents, producing effects and initiating changes in their life chances, below the level of higher cognition. For another thing, Butch and Sun- dance do not qualify as corporate agents. They could not act in solidarity with the group of Tamworth pigs by publicly criticizing and campaigning against the abattoir regime. Instead, they must rely on human corporate agents to do so.

These are important differences because the primary agency of animal escapees can only result in their liberation from oppression based on how human corporate agents respond to them. For example, Queenie NYC the chicken set in motion with her escape public investigations into the market from which she had broken out, leading to the subsequent liberation also of 150 of her chicken peers (Colling, 2014). Nevertheless, while she was the catalyst for this change, Queenie herself remained dependent on

humans to alleviate the suffering of her peers left behind in the marketplace. We elaborate on this point in the subsequent sections to this article. In sum, Carter and Charles (2013) specify the type of agency exercised by animal escapees, its limitations as primary and not corporate, as well as the reliance of animals on humans to help reduce oppression overall. Nevertheless, they give scant attention to the concept of resistance itself in terms of its analytical value for the liberation project, indeed failing to provide detailed explanation of its application to animals. We turn, then, to a closer examination of resistance, asking whether we can apply this concept to animal escapees as primary agents.

Does the Concept of Resistance Apply to Animals?

In the philosophical literature, Gottlieb (1983) defines resistance in terms of the agent's belief that he or she suffers oppression and the intentions associated with this belief:

Agent S is oppressed and S believes that he or she is oppressed. S intentionally does A and, S's intention in doing A involves two sorts of beliefs: (1) S believes that a part of him can be threatened, dominated or destroyed by the oppressive relationship, and (2) S also has beliefs about how the oppressor is exercising the assault or domination, and either S believes that his doing A would directly reduce oppression or S believed that his intentionally doing A would set in motion those things that would reduce oppression, and S's belief and desires caused S to do A.

This definition might disqualify Butch and Sundance, or Queenie, as resisters. Did Butch and Sundance *possess any concept of themselves as oppressed* by humans on their way to the slaughterhouse, or in the market? Perhaps they *just ran away*, without formulating any conception of oppression or of their human handlers as oppressors. Colling (2014) shows that the media raised this question, speculating on the intent of animal escapees from slaughter: are they "taking a stand against industrial production? Trying to get a little fresh air? Or simply trying to avoid [a] gruesome fate?" In this respect, some scholars contend animal resistance says more about human desire for liberation than those of the animals themselves (Pearson, 2015). Hence, animal 'resisters' might lack the concept of their own oppression. Indeed, Gottlieb's (1983) definition assumes that genuine resisters must be corporate agents, demonstrating high levels of cognition and strategic intentionality.

Lack of such higher order capabilities might seem fatal for applying the concept of resistance to animals. Animal resisters might well feel threatened, sense that their lives are at risk, and that running away from the humans in their present relational field will reduce this threat. Moreover, they might well *intend* to reduce this risk by running away. In other words, running away might well be an intentional act based on a perception of danger rather than a merely arbitrary or random act – ‘just running away.’ Nevertheless, they did not *intend* to run away from those whom they believed to be oppressors or what they believed to be a system or regime of oppression. The capability to formulate beliefs about oppression and oppressors entails capabilities for identifying with a peer group; capabilities Carter and Charles (2013) argue may be beyond the scope of animal agency. Not only does it entail individuals identifying with group, but also some conception of injustice done to the group and the intention of others to do this injustice. We take a similar view. Indeed, as derived from political philosophy, oppression is clearly a corporate concept. In Marxism, the corporate character of oppression is a matter of raising the consciousness or awareness of oppressed groups that they are oppressed. However, this approach is of little use in the context of discussing the oppression of peer groups of animals such as slaughterhouse pigs and market chickens.

To this extent, we appeal to a much simpler concept of oppression as coercion and harm to the well-being interests of an agent, but without presupposing any raised consciousness or awareness. Cudd (2005) argues oppression is a kind of social injustice that “happens to one only as the member of a group” (Cudd, 2005, p. 21). However, coercion and harm alone are insufficient for a condition of oppression to exist. For example, I might act in a threatening way towards an individual animal, but that does not make my act one of oppression. It is just threatening –coercive and harmful – to that individual. Hence, slaughterhouse workers (and humans generally) oppress the peer group of animals bred for slaughter. That is, they do not simply threaten individual animals by coercing them into slaughter pens, but rather act within complex social structures, discourses and practices of violence that are systemic and encompassing (Colling, 2014; Morgan & Cole, 2011). This is the group condition of oppression (Cudd, 2005): Indeed, such an approach is consistent with Marxism to the extent the latter does not deny that oppressed groups unaware of their oppression are oppressed. Nevertheless, unlike Marxism, neither does it

focus on the necessity of raising the consciousness or awareness of the oppressed as the condition for their liberation. Again, separate from the question of consciousness or awareness, oppression entails the existence of a privileged social group. In the present context of discussion, this is the privileged groups of human meat consumers, benefitting from the coercive harms inflicted on the oppressed group of slaughterhouse and market animals.

On our analysis, Butch and Sundance or Queenie do not grasp these corporate dimensions of their own oppression, even though they are individual victims of an oppressive system subjecting them to coercion and harm. To this extent, we cannot define their mode of resistance in terms of any *beliefs*, on their part, about oppressions and oppressors. Consequently, we need to say that they were victims of systemic oppression, that they individually resisted oppression, but that they did not formulate any corporate-level beliefs about oppressors and oppression. In other words, escapees resist by individually removing themselves from a system of coercive and harmful relations into which the privileged oppressor group of human meat eaters placed them involuntarily as members of an oppressed group. The escapees do not require higher order cognitions or a raised level of group-consciousness to resist in this elemental sense. In this latter respect, we find McGary (1989) alternative definition of resistance quite helpful.

A condition of oppression exists against agent S and the group in which S is a member, and S has a general concept of this oppression. S's action A is intentional under S's description of A which may or may not be the same description under which S's action A reduces oppression, and S's action A under an appropriate description is one that could reduce the oppression directed at the group of which S is a member, and the causal process that S sets in motion with his action A is one that reasonable persons, who are similarly oppressed and are *aware of their oppression* (our italics) could act to set in motion if they wanted to reduce oppression.

Indeed, despite inserting the clause 'and S has a general concept of oppression' in his definition, McGary (1989) subsequently acknowledges that this need not always be the case. Indeed, it does not apply to "young children who have not yet formed a clear notion of a general conception of oppression" (p. 369). Indeed, lacking any 'clear notion of oppression,' they need not be 'aware of their oppression' as he originally stated in his

definition. Adding this caveat and relaxing the requirement for a ‘clear notion’ or ‘awareness’ of oppression permits us to apply the definition of resistance to animals as primary but not corporate agents. We add the same is true for severely cognitively challenged humans who cannot form any such a conception. Nevertheless, they are victims of systemic oppression as a group, when public decision-makers ignore their interests (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011; Wong, 2010).

Granting that Butch and Sundance cannot form a general conception of oppression, McGary’s (1989) definition takes a fruitful direction when he focuses on alternative descriptions of S’s action. To be sure, as non-linguistic agents, Butch and Sundance cannot describe their own action as intentional. Nevertheless, we can place Butch and Sundance’s action, running away, under a description as *both* intentional *and* de facto reducing their oppression as individuals. Indeed, such a dual description stands independently of Butch and Sundance themselves having any general concept of oppression. That said, however, one might object it is quite inappropriate to describe them as intending to reduce corporate-level or group oppression by running away. Even in the case of collective resistance/escape, as in the escape of 100 rhesus monkeys from a laboratory (Hribal, 2013), resistance is arguably collective in number only and not in shared consciousness. In this case, individual animals may communicate non-linguistically with one another to coordinate a group action. Indeed, one might interpret this as a kind ‘low grade’ corporate agency whereby individuals act together as members of a group or collectivity.

Nevertheless, Carter and Charles (2013) perceive animals resisting oppression as analogous to a child with very limited linguistic capabilities freeing herself from oppression (also see Colling, 2014). A child might reduce her own oppression by running away from an adult abuser, while doing nothing to reduce oppression directed against all other abused children. Likewise, Butch and Sundance *reduce their own oppression as individual members* of the group of oppressed Tamworth pigs, even if they themselves do nothing to *reduce oppression directed against this group*. Nevertheless, like the abused child, they *could* also ‘set in motion’ causal processes that ultimately reduce systemic group oppression for Tamworth pigs, as we will now argue. That is, they could set in motion these processes, supposing that reasonable human persons are motivated to advocate for them. Of course, the analogy between abused human children

and slaughterhouse pigs is limited, if for no other reason than most children have capabilities to expand their present mental horizons that pigs do not. Abused children may become adult advocates for children: at no point in their lifespan, however, do Tamworth pigs become advocates for other Tamworth pigs. Consequently, successful animal resistance relies on reasonable persons aware of the coercive harms done to animals in slaughterhouses advocating to reduce their oppression.

Animal Resistance and Reasonable Human Persons

We turn, then, to McGary's (1989) rather cryptic notion in his definition of resistance of the reasonable person. Consistent with our opening methodological remarks, we interpret this notion through the Rawlsian (1971) conception of reasonableness as the capacity for a sense of justice. Hence, a reasonable person is one who can place the actions of animal escapes *under an appropriate description* as reducing oppression. That is, such a person can fully conceptualize the group oppression of slaughterhouse animals and – 'if they wanted' – act to set in motion processes reducing the group oppression of these animals. Indeed, corporate-level action by reasonable persons would entail raising the consciousness or awareness of other reasonable persons concerning of animals in slaughterhouse and market conditions as well as planning and strategizing public resistance campaigns to abolish the systemic oppression of animals. Hence, the importance of reasonable persons to the project of animal resistance is that they can do what the escapees themselves cannot do: build upon individual acts of resistance and escape by articulating group oppression and strategizing its reduction or abolition. Nevertheless, a critic might object that the concept of the reasonable person with a sense of justice does not apply in the case of animal resistance. It does not apply insofar as reasonableness pertains to a public consensus on shared political values, such as fairness among participants in the system of social cooperation. On this objection, however, animals cannot participate in such a consensus or social contract. They cannot participate in it because they are not themselves reasonable corporate-level actors, cognizing group oppression and strategizing public campaigns. Consequently, the concept of reasonableness is inapplicable to animal escapees.

Responding to this objection, we first refer back to our methodological statement at the beginning of this article. Suppose we adhere strictly to the

principles of ANT and deny animal escapees have any capabilities for higher cognitions and abstractions concerning groups and injustices done to groups. Even granting this supposition, reasonable human persons can still appropriately describe such animals as escaping group oppression. After all, their participation in the presently speciesistic scheme of social cooperation is coerced and harmful; indeed, it is positively lethal to them. Consequently, it would be unreasonable for reasonable persons to expect any participant in social cooperation to continue participating *on those terms*. No human participant in social cooperation would be willing to participate in a scheme of cooperation based on her slaughter for dietary consumption. Indeed, that would clearly violate the standard of mutuality or reciprocity defining reasonableness. In other words, no reasonable person would be willing to accept their own slaughter for the dietary consumption and pleasure of others provided the others are willing to do the same. However, neither is it at all plausible for such persons to suppose any non-reasonable actor, as primary rather than corporate agent, would agree to such a cooperative scheme. Consequently, no reasonable person could expect any others in the scheme of social cooperation – operating below the level of corporate agency – to agree to it either.

Nevertheless, and again consistent with our methodological statement, we acknowledge the scientific literature affirming animals do have some sense of fairness (Wascher, 2017). To this extent, many animals may have an elemental, if inarticulate, grasp of the normative foundations of public consensus on fairness among social participants. Not only are they participants in social cooperation with humans, but all reasonable human persons owe them moral consideration based on a common membership in society (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011; Smith, 2012). Indeed, in the case of Butch and Sundance, their escapes clearly ought to motivate reasonable human persons to take up their cause as primary resisters of oppression to the extent it would be quite unreasonable to send them back to their doom. However, this poses an obvious question about consistency in applying the reasonableness standard to escapees: if we judge it unreasonable to send Butch and Sundance back to the slaughterhouse, why should we think it reasonable to leave their fellow members of the oppressed group of Tamworth pigs to their doom as pork chops in-waiting?

We next ask what reasonable persons owe to animal resisters, who cannot conceptualize their oppression and oppressors, but who can nevertheless motivate reasonable persons to set in motion processes

reducing oppression tout court. Indeed, by asking the question of what such persons owe animal resisters, we move the discussion beyond McGary's (1989) conditional formulation concerning what they would do 'if they wanted' to reduce oppression and facilitate liberation. Indeed, we now consider instead what they are obliged to do considering as resistance as a human and animal right.

The Right to Resistance and its Corresponding Duties

We now appeal to recent discussions of the definition of the *right* to resistance and the *justification* for this right in political theory (Blunt, 2017; Caney, 2015). Our claim is that slaughterhouse escapees, like Butch and Sundance or Queenie, are direct action resisters whose moral standing is analogous to runaway human slaves (for a comparison of human and animal slavery, see Spiegel, 1997). No reasonable persons would return runaway human slaves to their masters or deny that they have moral responsibilities to help abolish the institutions of slavery. Runaway human slaves exercise a right of resistance imposing on others moral obligations of non-return and assistance in ending the moral abomination of slavery. We contend reasonable human persons should see animal escapees as likewise exercising a right of resistance and imposing obligations of non-return and abolition. To this extent, we adapt Caney's (2015) definition of a right of resistance to the case of runaway or escapee animals. Viz., resistance is a right of an animal primary agent to

1. act in ways contrary to some oppressive human authority imposed upon it,
2. whereby this act could set in motion causal processes reducing its own oppression and the oppression of the group of which it is a member,
3. so that it, or the other members of the same oppressed group, are better able to enjoy what they are entitled to as a matter of justice.

Nevertheless, the idea that animals have a right of resistance first presupposes that animals have rights. Here, we appeal here to an interest theory of animal and human rights (Feinberg, 1974; Raz, 1979). All agents have interests in their own well-being. However, this need not be tied to the fulfilment of an agent's plans and strategies. Interests may be sentience

based: interests in experiencing pleasure and not experiencing pain. Moreover, an agent may have interests of which it is unaware (Cochrane, 2009). A pre-school child is unaware of having an interest in learning how to read insofar as her future well-being in society will depend on this capability. A domestic cat is unaware of having an interest in consumer campaigns to increase the nutritional quality of industrially produced ‘cat food’ insofar as many current products expose it to increased health risks. Consistent with our earlier appeal to ANT, agents can have interests in relation to other agents regardless of intentionality and strategy. Consequently, on the interest theory of rights, a rights-bearer has an interest (of which it may or may not be aware) that grounds the performance of a duty by others, which is *pro tanto* enforceable. As grounding the performance of a duty by others within the agent’s relational field, a right is thus an entitlement to the fulfilment of the interest in question. Indeed, the duty it confers on others might be a negative duty not to deprive the rights bearer of the fulfilment of this interest or a positive duty to assist in ensuring its fulfilment.

To this extent, Butch and Sundance or Queenie had an objective interest in running away. This allows us to talk quite intelligibly about their having a right of resistance as defined by Caney (2015). The institutions created by humans – slaughterhouses and markets– are oppressive. They are oppressive in the sense that they create relations violating the basic rights or entitlements of the animals routinely slaughtered or sold without regard for their well-being interests (Cudd, 2005). Here, we note that human slaughterhouse workers might also be oppressed by the industrial system of meat production (Carr & Chen, 2002). They might be oppressed in the sense that they are exploited economically. However, they might also be oppressed in the sense that their well-being interests are violated by exposure to the demoralizing effects of their participation in the mass slaughter of animals, regardless of whether, or to what extent, they are aware of these effects or their own oppression. That said, however, we contend this properly confers both negative or positive duties on others as reasonable persons in McGary’s sense. That is, it confers such duties on any persons, appealing to Caney’s (2015) definition of resistance and the interest theory of rights, based on their normatively appropriate descriptions of slaughterhouse animals and workers as victims of oppression. As concerns animal escapees, it confers on McGaryite (1989) reasonable persons *a negative duty* against returning animal escapees to

slaughterhouse or market. It also confers on them a *positive duty* of working towards alternative modes of economic production that do not involve slaughtering and selling animals or, for that matter, demoralizing human workers by compelling economically participation in violating the rights of slaughterhouse and market animals.

Consequently, we contend that it is fully intelligible to talk about such animals escaping slaughterhouse or market exercising a Caneyan right of resistance by running away. Moreover, by running away, an animal escapee (also a resister on Caney's definition) 'could set in motion causal processes reducing its own oppression and the oppression of the group of which it is a member.' Indeed, based on our above discussion of the potential for slaughterhouses to oppress human workers, we now take this analysis a step further by saying the animal escapee/resistor could also set in motion processes reducing oppression of groups of which it is not a member. In other words, the animal's act of escape and resistance could set in motion a process of total liberation (Best, 2014). Again, consistent with our previous claims concerning ANT it is sufficient for animal agency and resistance to say that the escapee/resistor can produce effects and initiate changes, regardless of questions about intentionality and strategy. It can do so to the extent its act of escape and resistance places it into a new relational field with those persons who now see it as renegade hero deserving a free pass (Colling, 2014), as in our cases of Butch and Sundance or Queenie. Such persons acknowledge that animal escapee/resistors confer on them a negative duty of non-return. However, they typically do not also acknowledge a positive duty of assistance towards the oppressed group of slaughterhouse animals, or, for that matter, other oppressed groups, such as line workers, in industrial meat production.

This willingness to acknowledge negative duties to the escapee/resistor, but not positive duties to reduce systemic oppression highlights in a different way from before the contradiction with which we began this article. In the language of reasonable persons, we contend those persons responding to animal escapee/resistors are insufficiently reasonable when they fail to acknowledge the positive as well as the negative duty conferred upon them. However, both kinds of duties necessarily entail capabilities for corporate agency in the sense developed by Carter and Charles (2013). Indeed, appealing to ANT, we have argued so far in this section that animal escapees are agents and resistors capable of setting in motion causal processes reducing oppression. Nevertheless, as resistors, animal escapees

themselves are primary and not corporate agents. As such, they might not be aware or conscious of themselves as oppressed or as members of an oppressed group. They might not even be aware or conscious of having well-being interests grounding their right not to be oppressed. Further, they may not even be aware or conscious of conferring any duties, negative or positive, on others. In these respects, they may be unaware or unconscious of the *political significance* of their acts of escape/resistance. Awareness or consciousness on all these levels requires corporate capabilities for agency humans normally possess but animals might lack.

Consequently, the animals in question fundamentally depend on human corporate agents to conceptualize the political significance of their primary acts of escape and resistance and, as such, *follow through* on the processes of reducing oppression set in motion by the animals. Following through on these animal-initiated processes not only requires corporate level awareness or consciousness of groups and their oppression. It also requires human capabilities to articulate this linguistically to *all other* reasonable persons as well as articulate the rights and entitlements of members of oppressed groups. That is, it requires these capabilities insofar as processes of reducing oppression are necessarily critical and evaluative. Ultimately, reducing group-oppression entails doing more than honoring negative duty of non-return for animal escapees. It requires critique of the system motivating systemic change. Reasonable persons must be persuaded they also have a binding positive duty to undertake political action, abolishing the institutions responsible for oppressing animals and workers alike.

In this respect, we distinguish between the *liberty* – or injustice evading – and *claim* – or justice seeking – functions (Blunt, 2017) of resistance. Indeed, we argue these functions establish the negative and positive duties of reasonable persons to escapees. As the primary political agents of their own emancipation, animal escapees perform this liberty function. That is, they do so by running away, even if they do not conceptualize themselves *evading injustice* as individual victims of oppression, members of an oppressed group, or, for that matter, interrelated with other oppressed groups in a total system of oppression. Lacking powers of corporate agency and linguistic communication, they cannot render *explicit* in open critical public communication their circumstances as victims of oppression and injustice. In other words, they cannot articulate a *justice-seeking* claim. Nevertheless, such a claim is implicit to their circumstance appropriately

described as one oppression and injustice, violating well-being interests grounding rights. Here, we note that animal escapees differ from runaway slaves who may combine liberty and claim functions of resistance. Indeed, the animal liberation literature in philosophy frequently appeals to an analogy between animals and slaves, emphasizing that both are the victims of captivity, exploitation and injustice (Best, 2014; Francione & Charlton, 2015; Singer, 1975).

Hence, Frederick Douglass (2012) exemplifies the combination of liberty and claim functions. Indeed, escaping servitude, Douglass become an articulate public critic of slavery. In animals, the claim as opposed to liberty function of animal resistance absolutely depends on human linguistic mediation. As corporate and linguistic agents, reasonable persons are thus positively duty bound to render explicit and give public deliberative uptake for their implicit justice-seeking claims – that is implicit to their primary injustice- evading acts of escape/resistance. Such persons positively owe this much to escapees like Butch and Sundance or Queenie, in addition to their negative duty of non-return. They owe it to them to honor this this additional positive duty given (1) their incapacity to per- form *both* liberty and claim functions and (2) an appropriate description of them as victims of oppression and injustice. Of course, other descriptions of their self-liberatory actions are possible, such as they just randomly ran away, or mindlessly went for a walk. Under these latter descriptions, the act of running away has no normative content, grounding a right of resistance, corresponding duties of non-interference and assistance.

However, our point is that the appropriateness of competing descriptions – ‘they randomly ran off’/‘running away’ entails an implicit claim to justice – are matters for critical evaluation by reasonable persons. Nevertheless, critically evaluating the appropriateness of alternative descriptions, reasonable persons do not need to know definitively whether animal escapees are aware or conscious of their oppression, the oppression of the group of which they are members, and so on, or whether they planned and strategized their escape. Instead, we have argued philosophically that it is sufficient to demonstrate for reasonable persons how animals escaping from slaughterhouses and markets may be described, in a normatively appropriate manner, as resisters. Further, we have pointed out that reasonable persons already acknowledge the normative appropriateness of

such a description by reference to the cases of Butch and Sundance or Queenie. That is, they already acknowledge the injustice-evading function of animal escapees by honoring a negative duty of non-return. By parity of reasoning from the interest theory of animal and human rights (Feinberg, 1974; Cochrane, 2009), however, they ought also to acknowledge positive duties of working towards abolishing systemically, totally oppressive institutions: that is, institutions oppressive to both animals and humans (Carr & Chen, 2002; Fiber-Ostrow & Lovell, 2016). They ought to do so as reasonable persons, above all, concerned not with rational strategic advantage in pursuit of their own interests at the expense of all others, but fairness in relations with others (animal or human), seeking justice defined by rights and entitlements to well-being.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we stress that, properly speaking, animal resistance to systemic oppression is a joint animal/human project and should be studied as such in future research. In this project, animals are the primary agents of change appropriately described as resisting oppression and injustice. Nevertheless, humans also play a vital secondary role in animal liberation, under such a description, rendering explicit in public communication their inarticulate claims to justice for all victims of oppression. Indeed, most discussions of resistance in the context of animal rights and liberation prioritize the direct actions undertaken by human activists, rescuing animals from slaughterhouses or laboratories, sabotaging property, etc. For example, as Colling (2014) argues, even “if a cow is occasionally able to strike back against those stealing her milk and calves, there needs to be people willing to burn down the slaughterhouse to which she would eventually be sent” (p. 36). For our part, we do not contest Colling (2014) on the propriety of human direct actions resisting the oppression of animals and humans. As concerns human direct actions, we emphasize the need for humans to explain and justify them reasonably considering basic well-being interests grounding both animal and human rights. These direct actions obviously entail corporate level capacities for conceptualizing individuals, groups, and systemic oppression as well as abstract moral reasoning and the communication of the conclusion of such reasoning to other corporate and linguistic agents. As concerns direct actions by animals themselves, we argue that these are direct in the sense they do not appeal to any higher powers of abstract cognition but produce causal effects,

setting in motion processes that change a system of institutionally mediated relations between animals and humans. To this extent, their function is ostensive, pointing to abstract relations and associated conceptions of injustice and justice that reasonable persons must articulate and critique.

Consequently, animal resistance fundamentally depends on such persons offering appropriate descriptions of animal escapes from slaughterhouses and markets *as acts of resistance*. This then commits reasonable persons to acknowledge negative duties of non-return and positive duties of working towards abolishing the systemically exploitative institutions of industrial meat production. Given the intersectionality of oppression and exploitation affecting both animals and humans in these institutions, positive duties to ensure their abolition are vital stages in an inter-species co-liberation project. We say co-liberation for at least two reasons. (1) Acts of resistance are not exclusively human acts. Instead, we have argued throughout this article by way of Actor-Network-Theory and advances in animal cognition research, that it is philosophically coherent to speak of acts of resistance by animals. (2) As in the case of escapes from slaughterhouse and market, resistance-acts by animals depend on human agency to provide descriptions revealing their normative contents and entailments as well as motivate sustained political action to abolish oppressive institutions and explain the grounds of justification for abolition. Although the higher cognitive work of describing, articulating and justifying is done by reasonable human persons, animals also engage in forms of agency qualifying them as agents and resisters potentially contributing to a total reduction in oppression across species lines.

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JCAS Editorial Objectives

The *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* is open to all scholars and activists. The journal was established to foster academic study of critical animal issues in contemporary society. While animal studies is increasingly becoming a field of importance in the academy, much work being done under this moniker takes a reformist or depoliticized approach that fails to mount a more serious critique of underlying issues of political economy and speciesist philosophy. JCAS is an interdisciplinary journal with an emphasis on animal liberation philosophy and policy issues. The journal was designed to build up the common activist's knowledge of animal liberation while at the same time appealing to academic specialists. We encourage and actively pursue a diversity of viewpoints of contributors from the frontlines of activism to academics. We have created the journal to facilitate communication between the many diverse perspectives of the animal liberation movement. Thus, we especially encourage submissions that seek to create new syntheses between differing disputing parties and to explore paradigms not currently examined.

Suggested Topics

Papers are welcomed in any area of animal liberation philosophy from any discipline, and presenters are encouraged to share theses or dissertation chapters. Since a major goal of the Institute for Critical Animal Studies is to foster philosophical, critical, and analytical thinking about animal liberation, papers that contribute to this project will be given priority (especially papers that address critical theory, political philosophy, social movement analysis, tactical analysis, feminism, activism and academia, Continental philosophy, or post-colonial perspectives). We especially encourage contributions that engage animal liberation in disciplines and debates that have received little previous attention.

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Each paper submitted is initially reviewed for general suitability for publication; suitable submissions will be read by at least two members of the journal's editorial board.

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