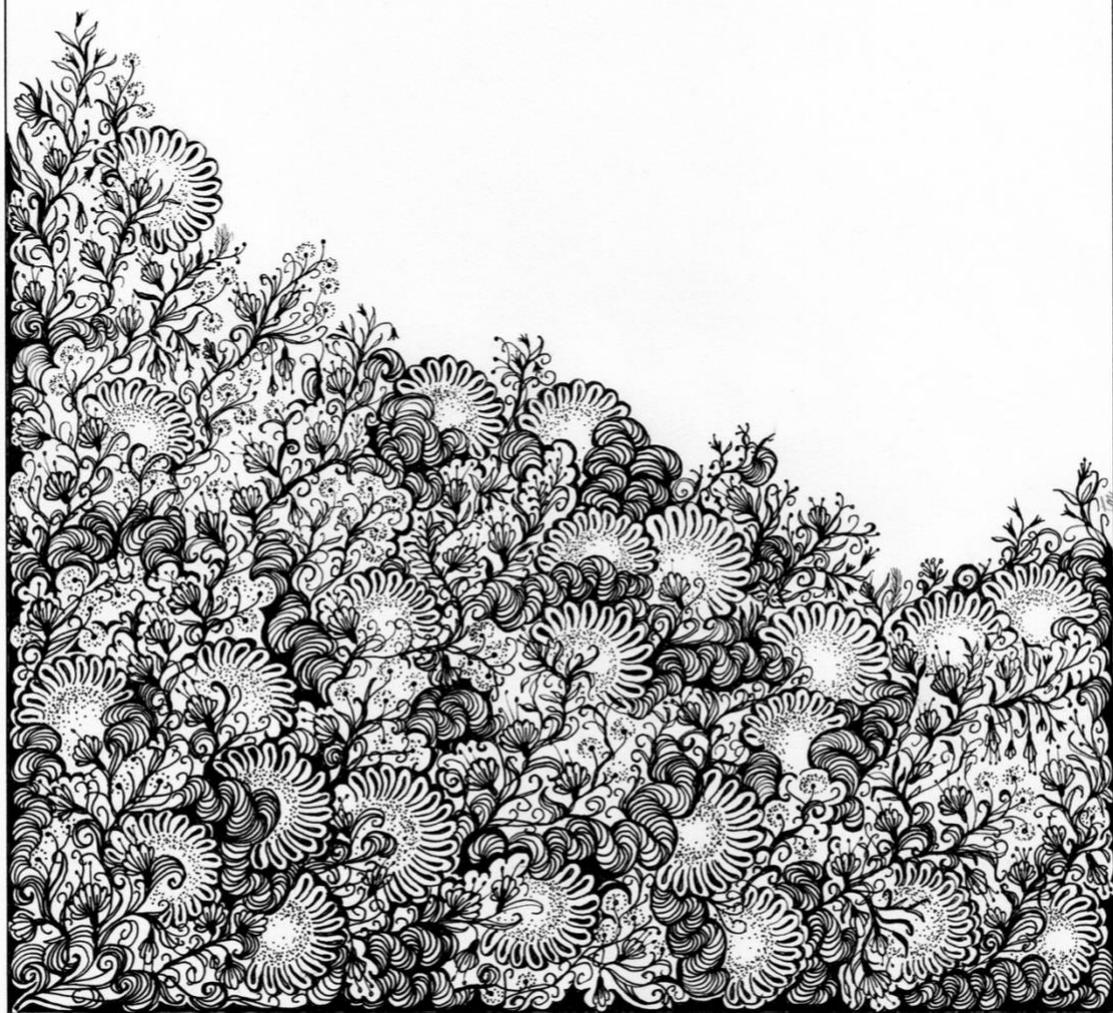


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The cover art reflects upon the interdisciplinarity and intersectionality of critical animal studies. Moreover, the delicate flowers and vines suggest the fragility of ecological relationships. I drew this cover spanning between two seasons—winter and spring. Influenced by my daily hikes in Portland, Oregon’s Forest Park, the cover reflects a gentle transition between the seasons. Smith’s fairy bells and other spring flowers surround a single trillium with the emergence of a few forest snails. Despite the complex interconnections, wildlife species are declining not only locally, but globally. As such, the white space suggests disappearing habitats alongside animal extinction. The white space nonetheless invites readers to co-create an alternative future.

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## Issue Introduction:

Amber E. George

For as long as media has existed, nonhuman animals have been used to denote imagery for various entities. We all know that being called a “filthy pig” or a “yellow bellied pig” is derogatory in popular culture. The article in this issue, “Death to Pigs: Animal Imagery and Naming in the Counterculture and Black Power Movements” by Thomas Aiello explores how pig imagery helped establish an important social justice movement against American racism while also perpetuated speciesism. As this issue will demonstrate, words can inspire inclusion while at the same time erase equity in favor of making room for oppressive tendencies.

Aiello’s article goes beyond language to show how a social justice movement such as those for Black Power, could appropriate such imagery to do good while still providing an anti-pig platform. While the fruits of their movement are noble, the historical ramifications of speciesist imagery continue. In attempting to create an anti-racists world we must be mindful of the anti-animal language and imagery often used for such a purpose.

The history outlined by Aiello is definitely relevant to the present day treatment of pigs in political parties and social justice movements. On May 21, 2021, The Revolutionary Action Party (RAP), a prison-abolitionist group, held a “pig roast” to protest the Omaha Police Officers’ Association’s (OPOA) controversial mailers targeting District 3 City Council Candidate Cammy Watkins. The campaign flyer said Watkins, a Black woman, would destroy Omaha if elected (Beur, 2021).

RAP speakers urged Omaha police to end neighborhood violence. The protesters carried severed pig heads wearing police hats as they marched to the Omaha Police Department. When asked why they used pigs heads, they claimed allegiance to the Black Panther Party’s description of, “A low natured beast that has no regard for law, justice, or the rights of the people; a creature that bites the hand that feeds it; a foul depraved traducer, usually found masquerading as the victim of an unprovoked attack” (*Black Panther*, 1968, p. 12).

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While the Mayor of Omaha, Jean Stothert, condemned the gathering as “hateful and divisive,” she made no mention of the injustices experienced by the pigs themselves. Governor Ricketts tweeted, “This is disgusting and vile. Our men and women in blue who put their lives on the line deserve our respect and support” (Buer, 2021). It’s ironic and tragic that a group seeking to “empower and instill a revolutionary consciousness” in Omaha communities abuses its human supremacy in such unfathomable ways.

The second essay in this issue, “Representation of Dogs in Canadian Police Social Media Communications,” written by Kevin Walby and Crystal Gumieny, also explores imagery associated with nonhuman animals in law enforcement. Some Canadian police departments use dogs to further their own political goals, such as publicizing the cuteness of the canines on the force in order to boost their social credibility. This emphasis on cuteness in the public domain contrasts sharply with law enforcement’s lengthy history of cruelty and weaponization of canines. In either case, Walby and Gumieny make it clear that exploiting dogs to advance the social presence of police forces requires serious analysis.

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# Death to Pigs: Animal Imagery and Naming in the Counterculture and Black Power Movements

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## Abstract

The black radical use of “pig” as an epithet for police was ubiquitous in the 1960s and 1970s. The behavior of law enforcement against groups like the Black Panthers included dozens of murders and assassinations and even more gratuitous prison sentences, but the “pig” appellation used by the Panthers and other groups only associated such bad behavior with a nonhuman animal who demonstrated none of those problematic qualities and who was killed by the millions every day. The use of “pig” as a charge against authority put the protagonists of an ugly racial story in the role of antagonists in a simultaneous and intersectional species story. The charge played out in the countercultural student movement and the Black Power wave of the civil rights movement. It spread throughout the nation in fiction, music, and art, but its most complete representation came in the illustrations of Emory Douglas, Minister of Culture for the Black Panther Party. Pig imagery served as a successful crib for a wider and more complex critique of American policing and imperialism, but in making that crib it belittled pigs themselves, only making a vulnerable nonhuman animal all the more vulnerable.

*Keywords:* pigs, Black Panthers, Emory Douglas

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“What happens,” asked political scientist Charles V. Hamilton, “when a Black Panther is shot and he knows that his own good credit rating is good at Macy’s, but has no value to the policeman who sees a black man when he sees him?” (Hamilton, 1970, p. 45)

It was the question at the heart of the Black radical use of “pig” as an epithet for police. If the policeman could not see value in Black life, then Black commentators would interpret no value in police life. It was, however, a simple equation that seemed justifiably retributive when only the humans on both sides were taken into account. When the pigs themselves complicated that equation, the method of retributive attacks seemed less justifiable. The behavior of law enforcement against groups like the Black Panthers was unconscionable, including dozens of murders and assassinations and even more gratuitous prison sentences, but the “pig” appellation used by the Panthers and other groups only associated such bad behavior with a nonhuman animal who demonstrated none of those problematic qualities and who was killed by the millions every day. The use of “pig” as a charge against authority put the protagonists of an ugly racial story in the role of antagonists in a simultaneous and intersectional species story.

That charge played out through the late 1960s and early 1970s in the countercultural student movement and the Black Power wave of the civil rights movement. It spread throughout the nation in fiction, music, and art, but its most complete representation came in the illustrations of Emory Douglas, Minister of Culture for the Black Panther Party. While Douglas’s revolutionary art continued into the twenty-first century, and occasionally continued to feature pig caricature, the bulk of his use of pigs coincided with his time with the Panthers from 1968 to 1972, and this paper analyzes all such published uses during that time period. Douglas’s work was not solely concerned with animal anthropomorphizations, as his principal focus was on promoting and analyzing the travails of the Black experience, but they were a prominent part of the language of his art, just as they were a prominent part of the rhetoric of the age. Pig imagery served as a successful crib for a wider and more complex critique of U.S. American policing and imperialism, but in making that crib it belittled pigs themselves, only making a vulnerable nonhuman animal all the more vulnerable.

The genesis of such imagery in the late 1960s is often attributed to the Black Panther Party, founded in Oakland, California in October 1966 by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale (Van Deburg, 1992; Joseph, 2007; Austin,

2008), but while they certainly popularized the insult and helped it spread to radical political organizations and student protest groups across the nation, it was not new. The role of pigs as food in ancient cultures and their relatively easy domestication gave humans easy access to them. Pigs' lack of sweat glands and their need to use sources like mud as cooling apparatuses gave them a human reputation for being dirty. As early as 1546, pigs were being used as derogatory terms for boorish men, and the epithet continued through the centuries (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2006). Images during the French Revolution, for example, depicted Louis XVI as a pig (See Figure 1) (Mizelle, 2011, pp. 26-34, 132).



Figure 1. *L'entrée-Franche. Je me suis ruiné pour l'engrossir - la fin du compte je ne sait qu'en faire*, by Anonymous, 1791 (The British Museum, 1990).

Beginning in 1811, the term first appeared in print as an insulting stand-in for police officers. The *Lexicon Balatronicum* was “a dictionary of buckish slang, university wit, and pickpocket eloquence” compiled by England’s Francis Grose. It was an urban dictionary of sorts that listed a pig as “a police officer” (Grose, 1811). The term continued across the centuries and across the ocean, in regular use as synonymous with the police through the Progressive era (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2006).

Pigs are, explain Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, “a site of competing, conflicting and contradictory definitions.” They became exemplars of poverty, filth, and vice, meaning that disassociation from pigs in an age of social mobility could become a signpost of proper middle-classness (Stallybrass & White, 1986, p. 49). At the same time, they stood as

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symbols of gluttony, whether for food or for sexual conquest. It is no coincidence that at the same time Black activists were referring to policemen as “pigs” in the 1960s, feminists coined the term “male chauvinist pig” (Mizelle, 2011, pp. 122-123; Adams, 2015, p. 161).

The concept of such epithets are Cartesian at their heart. As Keith Thomas has explained of early modern England, the division between human and beast proposed by thinkers like Descartes was a project of defining the human self against the other, an other that of necessity had to be animalized (Thomas, 1983, pp. 30-41). He isn’t alone. Barbara Noske, Harriet Ritvo, Roy Willis, and Richard Tapper have all made much the same point (Noske, 1989; Willis, 1974; Ritvo, 1987; Tapper, 1988). “In each constructed world of nature,” explains Mary Douglas, “the contrast between man and not-man provides an analogy for the contrast between the member of the human community and the outsider” (Douglas, 1975, p. 289).

In his study of the visuality of mental disability, John Derby describes an animality-patriarchy that dispossessed those seen as having a variety of deficiencies of mind. In paintings, illustrations, and photographs, animality was “a prominent dehumanizing theme in the representation of madness” (Derby, 2014, p. 20). In that case, as described by Foucault, such representations were in aid of binding mental illness and a corresponding lack of reason to the unreason of beasts (Foucault, 1988). It was an attempt by the powerful to demean the already powerless. The use of pig imagery against police officers and other authority figures provided a different kind of animality-patriarchy, one that used animality to push back against the patriarchy itself. Though it was an inversion of the original human-directed antagonism, however, calling police officers “pigs” did the same work against nonhuman animals as when the human-powerful used such imagery against the human-powerless.

Steve Baker has produced the most systematic analysis of animal imagery as human insult. Such actions, he argues, “will call on common knowledge and received ideas,” but will also “offer unexpected insights into embedded but unstated cultural assumptions regarding the object-status of animals, and into how such assumptions are deployed either to bolster our own sense of identity or to undermine that of others” (Baker, 1993, p. 91). The art of Emory Douglas and the police-pig narrative of the late 1960s and early 1970s demonstrates that the line between the two forms was far more malleable in the American rhetoric of the age. After all, as Baker explains,

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“the casting of a hated or despised human into the role or image of an animal” is not only common, but an “effective means of stereotyping them, of objectifying them, and of rendering them inferior” (Baker, 1993, p. 113).

When that animal is a pig, the objectification and inferiority claim are of a specific trajectory. “The object of man’s peculiar cultural disdain for the pig,” Milo Kearney has argued, “is less the beast itself than man’s own speckled soul” (Mizelle, 2011, p. 122; Kearney, 1991, p. 322; Dawson, 1999). Kate Soper agrees: “The vilification of the pig can be attributed to the need to assuage the guilt of killing and eating such a commensal associate” (1995, p. 88). Some of that vilification in the second half of the twentieth century can be laid at the feet of George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, first published in 1945, in which a group of farmed animals rebel against a human farmer, only to see their rebellion usurped by a porcine cabal under the leadership of a pig named Napoleon (Orwell, 1945; Lynskey, 2019, pp. 123-126). “By controlling the animals’ daily lives and bodies,” argues Andrew Byers, “the pigs come to transform the bodies and lives of all the animals on *Animal Farm*, creating loyal and obedient slave laborers, ensuring their own dominance” (Byers, 2018). They are, in other words, symbols of repressive authority as were members of American law enforcement for so many in the decades following the book’s publication.

That Victorian legacy would carry through to Orwell and beyond. One anti-Vietnam protest in Times Square in August 1966, months before the founding of the Black Panthers, witnessed counterprotesters calling those who marched “Communist pigs” in an inversion of what would become a far more common trope (Robinson, 1966, p. 1, 3). After Mississippi police killed a Jackson State student during a May 1967 uprising, flyers distributed at a protest in response defended the right to protest and the need to protect Black citizens, but also denounced the war in Vietnam. Benjamin Brown, the shooting victim, was killed by “the same pigs we’ve been dying for in Vietnam,” the flyer read, “and the same pigs that some of us are foolish enough to love.” A quote from the flyer in the *New York Times* was the first such use of “pigs” in that context in the paper (Roberts, 1967, p. 21).

Civil rights efforts, however, could also use pigs in different, but still demonstrably detrimental, ways. One of them, well-intentioned as it may have been, was Fannie Lou Hamer’s work at Mississippi’s Freedom Farms Cooperative. Founded in 1967, the cooperative was designed to aid impoverished residents of Mississippi’s Sunflower County. Malnutrition was

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common in the county and led to some of the highest disease rates in the nation. Historian Monica White has argued that “white elites used hunger as a weapon, starving anyone who sought the right to participate in the political process into compliance” (White, 2017, p. 21). Black residents of the county were made all the more vulnerable by their lack of education and dependence on white landowners for agricultural work. Ninety percent of Black Sunflower residents had only six years or less of public schooling (White, 2017, p. 21; McCutcheon, 2019, p. 208). Hamer was originally from Sunflower County, in more ways than one. She was the child of sharecroppers, who worked the fields herself. She, too, had only a sixth-grade education. She was involuntarily sterilized, like so many Black women in the South. Still, in 1962, she attended a meeting of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and volunteered to be a field organizer for a voter registration drive. In response, she was told by her employer to either rescind her voter registration or be fired. She refused, and that firing led to a life of racial activism in Mississippi, including the Freedom Farms Cooperative in 1967 (White, 2017, p. 22; McCutcheon, 2019, pp. 209-210).

Among the activities of the cooperative was a Bank of Pigs, started with a donation of fifty pigs by the National Council of Negro Women. Members of the community built facilities for the pigs. Families took sows to a facility that housed boars for breeding. Of the litter of piglets born of that breeding, families placed two of the children in the Bank of Pigs. By 1973, 865 families were part of the “pig bank” of the Freedom Farms Cooperative (Mizelle, 2011, p. 130; McCutcheon, 2019, p. 210; White, 2017, p. 28). The effort was a reversal of the general understanding of “pigs” that dominated the late 1960s and early 1970s. Here pigs were seen as a vehicle of salvation. The program, for example, was Heifer International’s first domestic effort. But it was also a project for a version of racial justice, the “Freedom Hogs,” as they came to be known, being the authors of racial equalitarianism rather than the purveyors of segregationist violence. Hamer’s “idea” had been to feed poor people and “make life better for ourselves and for the whites too.” The pigs helped “us toward real freedom,” she once said, whether they “knew it or not” (Stibbe, 2003, p. 384; Hedgepeth, 1978, p. 54). The pigs helped them toward real freedom by sacrificing their own, or by having that sacrifice forced upon them. Harm to pigs was less semiotic in the Freedom Farm Cooperatives. It was immediate, real. It was visceral. Pigs were

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forcefully bred then killed so that their corpses could be consumed by the residents of Sunflower County.

Semiotic referents, however, would be the norm. During his effort to boycott the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, for example, sociologist Harry Edwards often referred to the police as “pigs in blue.” Ronald Reagan, the governor of California, was “a petrified pig, unfit to govern” (Hano, 1968, p. SM41). Edwards was, in such efforts, tying all conservative leadership to the systemic problems of law enforcement, systemic problems that were symbolized by the image of the pig.

The racial line, however, was negotiable in such representations. In response to unrest at Columbia University, students hurled insults at the police. “How does it feel being beasts and inhuman pigs who club down college students?” they asked. The largely white group of students saved their most vitriolic words for the Black police officers. “Hi dumb blackie. You helped beat up Black students earlier this morning, didn’t you? Well, you’ve still got to go back to your ghetto community” (Slack, 1968, p. 42). While pig nomenclature was destructive to the lives of pigs when it came from the mouth of any human, it became even more problematic in the human context when white activists used it against Black officials, who had—and whose families had—experienced a variety of animal associations throughout U.S. history.

The story that dominated the summer of 1968, however, was that of the presidential nominating conventions. On August 23, 1968, Abbie Hoffman’s Youth International Party, the Yippies, announced at the Civic Center Plaza that they were running a 145-pound black-and-white pig named “Pigasus” as a candidate for president at the 1968 Democratic National Convention (Mizelle, 2011, p. 127; Kusch, 2008, p. 60; “7 Yippies,” 1968, p. 6). Abe Peck, Yippie editor of the Chicago underground magazine *The Seed*, promised reporters prior to the convention that Pigasus would be the group’s candidate. “After we nominate him we will roast him and eat him,” he said. “For years the Democrats have been nominating a pig and then letting the pig devour them. We plan to reverse the process” (Lukas, 1968, p. 64). Another Yippie leader announced that the group had telegraphed Lyndon Johnson requesting Secret Service protection for Pigasus. While five of the human Yippies were taken to jail, the pig was captured by police and taken to the Chicago Humane Society (Kusch, 2008, p. 60).

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Two days later, the Yippies handed out flyers in Lincoln Park. “VOTE PIG IN 68,” they read. There followed a list of demands that included an end to the war in Vietnam, the legalization of marijuana, the abolition of money, and others. “Political Pigs, your days are numbered,” they closed. “We are the Second American Revolution. We shall win. Yippie!” (Mailer, 1968, pp. 137-138). On the night before the convention, protesters marched in Lincoln Park. When police refused to allow a flatbed truck so that protesters could stage bands, the assembled began hurling insults at them. “Who’s fuckin’ your wife this afternoon, pig?” screamed one protester. Tensions continued to rise. Chants of “pig, pig, fascist pig,” and “pigs eat shit, pigs eat shit” rang out from the crowd. While the incident did not end in violence, as did so many of the protests over the following week, the repeated emphasis on pig nomenclature, combined with the Yippies’ Pigasus stunt, ensured that much of the convention narrative would center around epithets that diminished the lives of pigs (Kusch, 2008, p. 63).

Throughout the convention, Yippie protesters chanted “Pig! Pig! Pig!” at the riot police there to contain them (Buckley, 1968, p. 131; Kusch, 2008, p. 91). After the arrest of Tom Hayden, leader of Students for a Democratic Society, protesters surrounded police headquarters where they met a wall of officers. “It’s wall-to-wall pig,” said one protester, before the group locked arms and chanted, “Pig, pig, oink, oink, sooie, sooie!” (Kusch, 2008, p. 71) Police officer Eddie Kelso remembered the trauma of the event and his inability to sleep. “I actually dreamed of pigs, and school-yard chants, and I was being taunted in the school-yard, I was a kid and I had on a cop uniform, and the taunts went on, ‘Pig! Pig! Pig!’” Eventually, he looked down at his hand “and it held a gun, and I pointed it and began to shoot; kids were screaming, ‘The pig is shooting!’ and then I was awake, shaking, soaked.” Even in dreams, pig semiotics created trauma, conjured images of unjustified death (Kusch, 2008, p. 93).

Irving Howe, editor of *Dissent* magazine, called the antics of Yippies and others in the countercultural protest frenzy “a form of middle-class frivolity; a politics of the kindergarten.” English writer David Caute was frustrated by the group’s “irritable desire to inflict on an ostensibly sane society a form of chaos which, as a way of life, is superficial and nihilistic.” It was, for Howe, a “confrontation politics” fundamentally different from that of Martin Luther King a generation prior, one that threatened to derail more

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serious arguments against the Vietnam War and racial inequality (Howe, 1968, p. SM27, SM139).

As journalist Andrew Kopkind explained in 1968, “The history of the last three years is the chronicle of the ‘center’s’ disintegration, of the failure of the methods of political liberalism to cope with systemic disorders” (1968, p. SM59). Chants of “Pig! Pig!” were common throughout the presidential campaign, including at protests of George Wallace rallies (Bigart, 1968, p. 32). It was, in its way, an inversion of common tropes of the totem. Totemism, as Emile Durkheim and so many others have explained, is the effort of various groups to use animal icons or representation to represent them (Durkheim, 1912). Calling police and other authority figures pigs is kind of a reverse totemism, using an animal representation to define a different group's identity.

That emphasis on identity and difference in the cause of radicalism was often distressing to many. Earl Raab, executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco, for example, worried about increasing antisemitism among Black Power activists, who often pointed to Jews as financiers for much of what they interpreted as a corrupt and racist monetary system. With Jews associated with power-brokering authority, the same authority that generated insults built around pig symbolism, Raab pointed out that “Jew pig” had been normalized in much of radical culture, “a common variant of the standard expressivist metaphor.” Raab described an expressive politics of the new radicalism, the core of its rhetoric “a hyperbolic, hyper-symbolic language.” The constant refrain of “pig” as an epithet was “the definitive heart of the language, as in ‘racist pig’ or ‘fascist pig’” (Raab, 1969, p. 29).

That willingness to play with divisive language to create symbols also caused rifts within groups with ostensibly similar motives. The Black Panther Party and US, for example, were two groups founded in California after the assassination of Malcolm X, both ostensibly attempting to fill a power vacuum on the left wing of the broader Black rights movement. The Black Panthers were founded in Oakland in 1966 by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, but developed a Southern California chapter two years later under the leadership of Alprentice “Bunchy” Carter. US, meanwhile, had been a Southern California operation from the start, headed by Hakim Jamal and Maulana Karenga. The two groups, however, were not allies, and their rivalry was only fueled by the FBI, whose COINTELPRO operation fanned the

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flames of their division by sending letters and cartoons to each group, purporting to be scurrilous material from the rival faction. It was a rivalry that ultimately spilled over into violence on the campus of UCLA in January 1969 when an argument between representatives of the two groups at a meeting of the school's Black Student Union led to the murder of both Bunchy Carter and another Panther, John Huggins (Brown, 2003, pp. 92-97; Churchill & Vander Wall, 1999, pp. 77-81). While two brothers, members of US, were arrested for the crime and sentenced to prison, the Panthers announced publicly that the slayings were "political assassinations." A Black Panther spokesman denied that the killings were the result of a "black power struggle." The incident was, instead, "a political assassination by the US organization, ordered by the pig power structure," which was fitting, because members of US were "pork chop nationalists" with no ideology "except opportunism" (Caldwell, 1969, p. 20). The language used in the press conference was telling. Of course, both groups used pig metaphors to deride law enforcement and other governmental representatives, but here in response to the killings, the Panthers turned those metaphors on a rival group, its "pork chop nationalism" a phony rhetoric, a proxy for authoritarian ends. It was yet new work for the pig metaphor to take on in the wake of the killings, to the detriment of US, but also to the detriment of the image of the symbol being employed.

When asked in 1969 to differentiate between himself and Eldridge Cleaver, Julian Bond, a veteran of the classical civil rights movement then serving in the Georgia legislature, said, "I wouldn't call him a pig. That's the difference between the two of us" ("A Surprising Talk," 1969, p. SM115). It was a brief but loaded statement, Bond making a case in microcosm that the militant Black Power movement had devolved to clichéd ad hominem attacks rather than substantive policy proposals. Thus it was that among many in the Black mainstream evolutionary line of traditional civil rights activism, "pig" had become a symbol less of authority itself and instead a symbol of substanceless dogma, a weapon whose edges had dulled through repetitive use among those in the Black Power and countercultural protest movements.

To that end, in a letter to the editor of the *Chicago Defender*, a correspondent in 1970 urged readers, "Let's take the 'pig' out of policemen." It was a call to judge individual police officers without assuming their racism or corruption, but in practice it used the term "pig" to specifically represent

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their racism and corruption, tying semiotic pigness to the worst parts of the problems in policing (Beane, 1970, p. 15).

As Meredith Roman has argued, the Panthers' effort was an inversion of the reality explained by Franz Fanon (2016, p. 12): "The terms the settler uses when he mentions the native are zoological terms," Fanon wrote in his *The Wretched of the Earth*. "He speaks of the yellow man's reptilian motions, of the stink of the native quarter, of breeding swarms, of foulness, of spawn, of gesticulations. When the settler seeks to describe the native fully in exact terms he constantly refers to the bestiary" (1963, p. 41). In taking the colonizer's effort and turning it around on them, Roman describes, "the party challenged the moral superiority that the police, supported by the mainstream press, had long claimed for themselves in their dealings with Black people" (2016, p. 12). It was, against the critique of Bond and others, a postcolonial revisioning.

It was the Panthers who did the most to explain the use of the term and its role as a method of criticizing white authority. The group's name itself featured an animal representative that symbolized Black ferocity in the face of white supremacist policy. The black panther had been a symbol of the Lowndes County Freedom Party in 1965 in Alabama, which required political parties to have visual symbols because of a low rate of literacy in the state. "The black panther is a vicious animal," explained John Hulett, one of the party's founders. "He never bothers anything, but when you start pushing him, he moves backward, backward, and backward, and then he comes out and destroys everything that's in front of him" (Jeffries, 2010, p. 153, 217). The panther then, because of their reputation for their defensive aggression and because of their color, became a powerful and respected symbol. Pigs, however, became for the Black Power movement and for so many others the opposite of the virulent and virile panther. Usually directed at men, "pig" designated anyone nationally or internationally who violated human rights. They were people concerned about protecting property over and against the lives of humans. "What Is a Pig?" asked one 1968 *Black Panther* article. "A low natured beast that has no regard for law, justice, or the rights of the people; a creature that bites the hand that feeds it; a foul depraved traducer, usually found masquerading as the victim of an unprovoked attack" (*Black Panther*, 1968, p. 12). And as Roman has demonstrated, the term was designed to take power from intimidating figures



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rhetoric created a demeaning as recompense for being demeaned, with pigs as collateral damage in what amounted to a verbal war.

During New York's first Afro-American Day parade, wherein more than 150 groups marched through Harlem in 1969, many screamed "kill the pigs" when they passed police officers along the parade route. No one was arrested for the threats, as by 1969 the terminology had largely become normalized through its constant use (Montgomery, 1969, p. 25). When squatters attempted to stop the building of a state office building in Harlem that year, police threats—and arrests—just days after the parade, prompted chants of "power to the people" and "off the pigs" (Johnson, 1969, p. 41). Early in 1970, when a group of sixteen Black Panthers were put on trial for a series of planned bombings in New York, the defendants protested that their families and supporters could not be at the proceedings. They shouted at the judge, calling him a "fascist pig," and demanded that the "press pigs" be removed from the gallery to make room for Panther family members (Asbury, 1970, p. 20; Oelsner, 1970, p. 166). It was yet another modification of the "pig" epithet, this time directed at those who had made the group nationally influential. It was a term that continued to transform as it moved farther from its modern genesis point, but remained consistent in its detriment to both the term's intended human targets and to the millions of pigs killed every day because their lives were not taken seriously by humans.

The permissiveness toward porcine violence was inherent in such terms, but it could also lead to retributive violence toward the police. In response to the controversy surrounding the trial, a group calling itself Revolutionary Women firebombed the home of First Deputy Police Commissioner John F. Walsh. Revolutionary Women claimed responsibility for the bombing in a letter to United Press International. "We women have attacked pig Walsh's house as a counterattack to the imprisonment of the Panther 21," the letter stated. "The law of this land is sexism and racism. The liberation of ourselves and our sisters will come as we step outside this law" (Narvaez, 1970, p. 56). Revolutionary Women was not a long-standing rights group, and seems to have been an appellation used specifically for the Walsh attack. The letter announcing its existence, however, was a statement of liberation through violence, but one that did not consider the liberation of pigs themselves. Quite the opposite, the fire-bombing was a direct attack on "the pig Walsh," violence toward a pig, though this one a metaphorical pig. The attack, then, used a victim of unthinkable systemic abuse, bondage, and

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killing as the semiotic victim of an actual attack in the name of freeing a small group of humans from temporary bondage. It was a fool's errand, regardless, but one that seemed particularly preposterous when all of the named victims were included in the analysis.

Meanwhile, the more established Weather Underground took responsibility for firebombing the home of the judge in the case. Within the group, however, there was a feeling of general disappointment over the action. "The feeling developed that because this action had not done anything to hurt the pigs materially it wasn't very important," claimed the Weathermen's Bernardine Dohrn (1971, p. 37). It marked a shift in the group's strategy specifically because it didn't hurt pigs. And even though the rhetorical intent was not directed at nonhuman animals, the continued diminution of those entities associated with the word "pig" could not but necessarily diminish whatever constituted pigness in the minds of readers and listeners.

In October 1969, the Weathermen sponsored their "Days of Rage" in Chicago, seeking revenge for the Democratic National Convention violence of the previous year. "We are coming back to turn pig city into the people's city," said a spokesperson. Its first act in Chicago was exploding a police statue commemorating the Haymarket Riots of 1886. For the group, it was a "pig statue honoring the murders of Chicago strikers." Their warning was clear: "PIG AMERIKA—BEWARE: THERE IS AN ARMY GROWING RIGHT IN YOUR GUTS, AND IT'S GOING TO HELP BRING YOU DOWN." For the next year, the Weathermen made continual references to the "pig statue" they destroyed (Sommer & Forley, 2008, p. 17, 19-20).

That kind of violent rhetoric was given even more succor by voices of more established revolutionaries like Eldridge Cleaver, a radical racial theorist and leader of the Black Panther Party. "Far from being racist, we are on the front line of combatting racism," Cleaver said of the Panthers while hiding from warrants in Algeria. "We have black people who are our deadly enemies. A black pig, a white pig, a yellow pig, a pink pig—a dead pig is the best pig of all. We encourage people to kill them, because the police constitute an army" (Cleaver, 1970, p. 112). It was a statement of human unity in the cause of killing police officers, and one that in the process belittled the lives of non-symbolic actual pigs. Cleaver, of course, had little use for such finer points in his exaggerated rhetoric, but for readers, the shock

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of understanding a call for the murder of police in what was framed as a war subsumed the other obvious takeaway from “a dead pig is the best pig of all.”

It was common language for Cleaver. During Huey Newton’s murder trial in 1968, he lamented that Newton would “be judged by ‘pigs’ who befoul the very name of justice” (Jamal, 1968, p. B5). In a Chicago rally the following year protesting Newton’s manslaughter conviction, policemen were “pigs,” they represented the “capitalistic pig-power structure.” The mayor of Chicago in that paradigm was “Pig Daley.” It was a saturation that reinforced the notion that everything interpreted as negative was, in one way or another, pig (“Cops Called ‘Pigs,’” 1969, p. 1).

Newton was not the only Black Panther that went on trial in the 1960s and 1970s, of course. Oakland Panther leader David Hilliard was tried for attempted murder after an infamous April 1968 shootout with police that killed Panther Bobby Hutton. At his trial, Hilliard was asked if he referred to the police as pigs and what that reference meant. Hilliard did use the term, he told the court; it meant “killer, brutalizer, homicide agents,” a definition rife with connotations about the racial disparities in policing and their consequences, but one that was completely disconnected with the actual nonhuman animal who was neither brutal nor homicidal (*Chicago Defender*, 1971, p. 2).

To that end, there was real if small pushback against such depictions. New York *Amsterdam News* columnist Gertrude Wilson wrote around the time of the Hilliard trial, “There has always been something that seemed wrong to me about people who, for instance, call policemen pigs. The way they say it is a real insult to the poor pig. The way policemen react to it is even a worse insult to pigs.” After rehearsing facts about the intelligence and friendliness of pigs, Wilson concluded that “policemen should be flattered” to be associated with such an animal (Wilson, 1971, p. 15). Her article was in response to a more in-depth study of the virtues of pigs in the January 1971 *New Yorker*. William Whitworth admitted to being an admirer of pigs “in the abstract,” and lamented that “the animal’s reputation has gone from low to even lower, until now the word ‘pig’ is widely used as a term of abuse connoting not only filth but rapaciousness and brutality.” He responded by traveling to a farm to learn about pigs in a way decidedly not abstract. He discovered that despite the negative connotations foisted upon the animal, pigs were in fact worthy of his admiration. Whitworth ended his account by

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quoting the farmer who hosted him: “There’s no *telling* what a pig can do” (Whitworth, 1971, p. 64, 69).

Even in such corrective efforts, of course, an inherent speciesism drove the human admiration for pigs, as their intelligence was judged by a decidedly human standard and their docility eliminated them as a threat to human life or resources. And so the narrative that used “pig” as a representative insult was self-sustaining and powerful, able to withstand such challenges. When the American Council of Education began a survey of campus unrest across the country, for example, SDS issued a directive for its members not to respond to the questions of the “surveyor pigs.” After all, such collected information would only be used against them. There was “no friendly, or innocent, or ‘objective’ discussion with The Man” (Brooks, 1969, p. SM14). The statement was emblematic on multiple fronts. First, the “pig” designation was used in relation to humans, in this case educational surveyors, who posed no direct threat to the students. Unlike elected officials, representatives of regulatory agencies, or members of various branches of law enforcement, surveyors, many of whom were students themselves, were simply collecting information for larger entities that themselves may or may not have been fitting representatives of such epithets. It is yet another demonstration of the way such animal symbols can move in society, attaching to groups not originally intended. Second, the statement is emblematic of the curious transubstantiation of such terms representing humans and nonhuman animals. The surveyor-pigs, like other representatives of pigness, were portrayed in plural, lower-case. Meanwhile, the same groups designated as pigs were also designated as The Man, portrayed in singular, upper-case. They were terms that could be used interchangeably, and in their use, they not only denigrated their particular semiotic targets, but also pigs. Placed in the same linguistic situation, the nonhuman animal term is pluralized, lower-case, generic, while its human counterpart term is singular, upper-case, specific. The Man is an intimidating presence; pigs are afterthoughts to be derided. Even in such violent epithets, all directed at humans by humans, an inherent speciesism still diminished pigs by comparison.

It was in its way a similar inversion that showed up in contrasts like “power to the people” and “off the pigs.” People were posed as the ideal, pigs a group to be killed. It was a symbolism that did its intentional work in belittling governors over and against the governed, but it did its unintentional

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work in propping up humanity as the standard of rights and legitimacy, thereby making any discussion of the rights of pigs anathema to those in the very political camp most likely to give those rights a fair hearing.

An even more overt inversion occurred in August 1969, when members of Charles Manson's "family" went on a killing spree in Los Angeles, California. Theirs was a crib, a caricature of the countercultural ethos, one largely in service to the cult of personality surrounding Manson himself. On August 9, members of the family killed five people at the home of director Roman Polanski, including Sharon Tate, Polanski's pregnant wife, and Abigail Folger, heir to the Folger's Coffee fortune. Manson told his family members to "leave a sign—something witchy," so one of the murderers, Susan Atkins, wrote "PIG" on the house's front door with Tate's blood. The next night, members of the family killed Leno LaBianca and Rosemary LaBianca. In a similar act of exhibitionism, another of the killers, Patricia Krenwinkel used Rosemary's blood to write "DEATH TO PIGS" on the LaBiancas' living room wall. In another place, the killers wrote "POLITICAL PIGGY" (Bugliosi & Gentry, 1974, pp. 42-43; Nielsen, 1984, p. 326; Guinn, 2013, pp. 268-272). "'Pig' was a word used to describe the establishment," Atkins later explained. "But you must understand that all words had no meanings to us" (Bugliosi & Gentry, 1974, p. 184).

Manson found inspiration for his crimes in several songs of the Beatles. He justified the killings using the song "Piggies" from the Beatles' 1968 *White Album*. "Have you seen the little piggies crawling in the dirt?" went the lyric. "Have you seen the bigger piggies in their starched white shirts? You will find the bigger piggies stirring up the dirt always have clean shirts to play around in." The song concluded that "what they need's a damn good whacking" (Harrison, 1968). The song puts to music the chants of protesters over the previous years, using the pig metaphor to represent the powerful and suggesting that whacking them was a common good. Manson took the whacking line as a sign that the time had come to use his family to extract a bloody revenge on the piggies (Doggett, 2007, pp. 305, 394; Guinn, 2013, p. 194; Nielsen, 1984, p. 326; Mizelle, 2011, p. 159).

The art that did the most work to create such consequences was that of the Black Panther Party's Minister of Culture. Emory Douglas was an artist trained at City College of San Francisco (Moyer, 2007, p. 44; Daniel, 2014). In 1967, a year after the founding of the Black Panthers, Douglas met Huey Newton and Bobby Seale and agreed to design the *Black Panther*

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newspaper, which originally existed in its first two issues as a collection of meager typewritten pages (Baltrip-Balagás, 2006, pp. 86-88). He would shape the periodical over the next twelve years and with it the image of the Panthers themselves, spreading that image to a larger and larger audience. By 1970, the *Black Panther* had a weekly circulation of 139,000 (Gaiter, 2005). “Although the use of the term *pig* to label the police is oft attributed to Newton and Seale,” explains Carrie Moyer, “the image that the word conjures up is all Douglas’s own.” For Moyer, Douglas’s pigs “are crudely compelling as they totter about on their hind legs, surrounded by flies. Whether drunk with power or simply clueless, the beasts are drawn with a glee befitting a 22-year-old who has just been anointed First Revolutionary Artist by the Black Panther Party” (Moyer, 2007, p. 44).

“*Before* we coined and popularized the term ‘pig’ (in reference to ‘police who occupy our community like a foreign troop occupies territory’),” remembered Bobby Seale, “Emory was the key in our urgent need to counter the ‘Support Your Local Police’ campaign” that had been promulgated by the city government of Oakland. “Emory took a drawing of a four-legged, snout-nosed hog and drew on it a police cap, a star-shaped badge, and a police utility belt complete with revolver.” Seale, Huey Newton, Eldridge Cleaver, Bobby Hutton, and others were all impressed. He mocked up a page for the *Black Panther* newspaper, and Cleaver and others “wrote up the definition of a pig,” Seale explained, “which became synonymous with Emory’s image of the police (or a politician giving orders) brutalizing people and violating peaceful protesters’ constitutional rights” (Seale, 2007, pp. 12-13).

Moyer explains that pig imagery spread to a variety of different figures of authority. “Pigs come in many guises,” she argues. “While the growing opposition to the war in Southeast Asia was central in the white alternative press, the *Black Panther* took coverage a step further, using the image of the pig to situate the daily humiliations suffered by its readers within the larger matrix of national and international politics” (Moyer, 2007, p. 44). As Collette Gaiter has explained, Douglas constructed “a visual mythology of power for people who felt powerless and victimized.” He was, in that sense, “the Norman Rockwell of the ghetto, concentrating on the poor and oppressed.” While police-related pig imagery existed before him, Douglas’s art would make it the dominant insult for law enforcement and “the entire capitalist military/industrial complex” over the following decade (Gaiter, 2005).

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That pig imagery was unique in many ways, despite the common rhetoric that it generated. Joe Louis Moore, for example, has compared Douglas's work with other artists of the Black Arts Movement like Samella Lewis and Ruth Waddy, both of whom use their art as advocacy for Black America but do not include pig images as depictions of law enforcement and governmental authority (Moore, 1996, pp. 269-271). It is significant that both Lewis and Waddy are women, as part of such "pig" codings was decidedly masculine.

Huey Newton argued that the Black population was loathe to read long political diatribes and thus acknowledged the need to emphasize visual imagery to synthesize the party's message and widely disseminate it. As Erika Doss has explained, "The pictorial, the visual, became an essential component of Panther ideology." It provided a "dramatic redefinition of black identity" and an "assault on previously held assumptions of the passivity and powerlessness of black men" (Doss, 1999, pp. 48). In doing so, it was necessary to draw a contrast to reassert the humanity of those Black men, and one of the easiest cribs for such assertions was to animalize those who sought to usurp that humanity. By creating pig imagery to represent the police, the Panthers situated their Black victims as superior humans who had seen their role unjustly inverted through an inappropriate abuse of power. The inherent assumption of such imagery was that pigs (the nonhuman animals) were inferior to humans, and thus pigs (the police officers) ceded all moral authority to the human communities they policed.

Such assumptions can be seen in Douglas's own situated ideology. "Art has always been a manifestation of politics and society," he said. "There is no separation between the individual and the political, because politics is about people, whatever your alliances or principles" (Douglas, 2008, p. 41). It was a politics devoid entirely of nonhumans, thereby making representations of nonhumans symbolic of abject difference, of an existence outside the norms of both politics and personhood. "Because of the bitterness and suffering of poor people and Black people in particular, Black artists in America should strive to create images that will stimulate awareness of the wretched conditions that makes us the victims of America's racism," Douglas explained in a justification of his use of pig imagery in his art. "We cannot stimulate awareness of these conditions, for example, by painting landscapes that have no relationship to our survival" (Douglass, 1977, p. 55).

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He was even more direct about that dichotomy in a 1968 position paper. “Revolutionary Art is learned in the ghetto from the pig cops on the beat, demagogue politicians and avaricious businessmen. Not in the schools of fine art,” he argued. “The Revolutionary Artist hears the people's screams when they are being attacked by the pigs. They share their curses when they feel like killing the pigs, but are unequipped. He watches and hears the sounds of foot steps of Black People trampling the ghetto streets and translates them into pictures” (Douglas, 1968). When later asked specifically about this emphasis on pigs, the artist explained that it came from a discussion about the role of the police between Newton, Seale, and Cleaver. “They began to define what a police was, and those kinds of words came into the statement,” Douglas remembered. “Huey brought over an idea and told me he wanted me to do this pig drawing, which I did on four hooves.” The imagery only grew from that original germ (Douglas, 2017, p. 51).

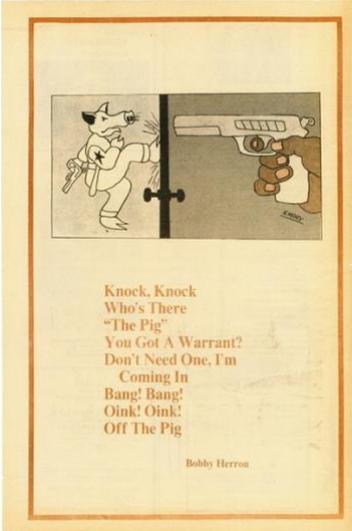
In its reclamation of Black masculinity, Douglas’s artistic critique included race, class, and gender, the three points of differentiation most examined when dealing with Black Power activism (Léger, 2011). Theorists like Slavoj Žižek have argued that such differentiation points are not measured with the same scales, that class is often given short shrift in analyses of the kinds of otherings presented by race, class, and gender (Žižek, 2004; Žižek, 2008). The real disappearing other, however, the dispossessed figure given the shortest of shrift, is the one that hides in plain sight, that of species, and while Douglas’s art, for example, provides a social critique that pillories societal race, class, and gender norms, it opens itself to such a critique along species lines by instigating its particular fights by using nonhuman animals, and pigs in particular, as the foils for its criticisms.



Figure 2. Emory Douglas, “What Is A Pig?” In: Douglas, E. (2007) *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. Rizzoli, and the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, [www.politicalgraphics.org](http://www.politicalgraphics.org).

“What is a pig?” asks one of Douglas’s images (see Figure 2). “A low natured beast that has no regard for law, justice, or the rights of people; a creature that bites the hand that feeds it; a foul, depraved traducer, usually found masquerading as the victim of an unprovoked attack.” It was an oft-repeated Panther definition. The injured pig in the poster is unkempt and surrounded by flies. The inference is that the pig is a figure of unjust authority, an enemy of minority rights and justice, injured because of “battle fatigue,” as groups like the Black Panthers are having an impact and cracking the edifice of power that the pig represents. It is impossible to come away from such an image, however, without a disdain for pigs themselves, whatever they might represent. The pig’s clothing bears no marks or symbols signifying that he is a stand-in for the police or other figure of authority. The image is anthropomorphized, but the accompanying caption includes nothing that couldn’t be said of a nonhuman animal. Thus the image works as a critique of authority if a viewer comes to it with requisite contextual knowledge of the pitched battle between the Black Panthers and the police in Oakland, but for others without such context it simply acts as a denouncement of pigs themselves. And even for those with an understanding of American racial codings, it would be impossible not to leave the image without negative connotations related to nonhuman animals.

Other of Douglas’s images do much the same work while including more specificity about the human targets of his disdain. Perhaps the most common of his pig representations are members of the police (see Figures 3).

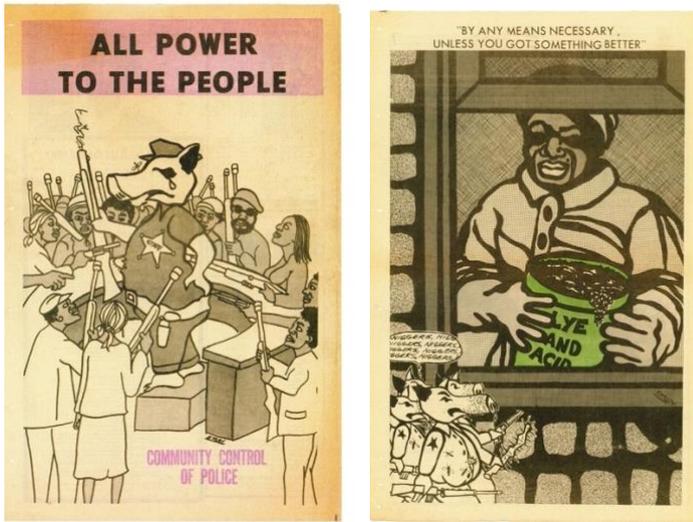


Figures 3. Pigs as police. In: Douglas, E. (2007) *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. Rizzoli, and the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, [www.politicalgraphics.org](http://www.politicalgraphics.org).

They are depicted as violent and intrusive, but also as feckless and incompetent. They are thus to be resisted and despised, but also to be seen as fundamentally inferior, unable to complete decidedly human tasks. Such formations obviously do their work against the police, but the process of dehumanization combined with clear inferiority claims do similar work

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against pigs. Incompetence, of course, does not just encourage disdain or pity for human manifestations of pigness, it also encourages active resistance.



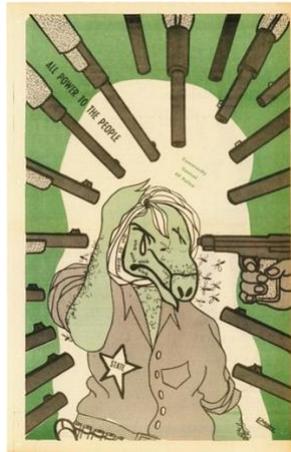
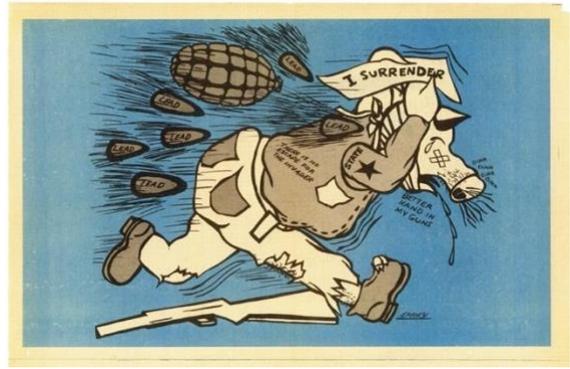
Figures 4. Pigs as police. In: Douglas, E. (2007) *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. Rizzoli, and the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, [www.politicalgraphics.org](http://www.politicalgraphics.org).

Pigs-as-police in one image use ugly racial invective to intimidate a working-class Black human, who responds with lye and acid, presumably to kill them, to do “by any means necessary, unless you got something better.” In the other image, a pig-as-police-officer stands on a pedestal seeking to intimidate a group of Black humans, but the humans all have guns trained on the pig. “All power to the people,” the poster says. “Community control of police.” The “people” in this formulation are humans, the “police” the nonhumans. One has “all power,” the other is under “community control” (see Figures 4).



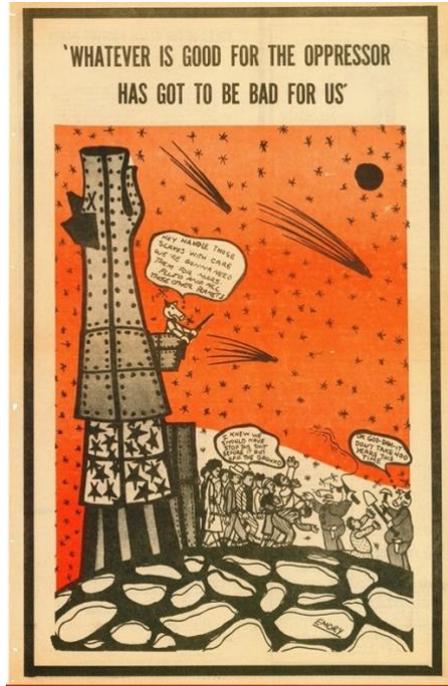
Figure 5. Justice for Bobby Hutton. In: Douglas, E. (2007) *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. Rizzoli, and the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, [www.politicalgraphics.org](http://www.politicalgraphics.org).

The messages depicted in pig-as-police imagery are also combined in some of Douglas's work (see Figure 5). This image repeats the definition of pigs, refers to them as fascists, and references in particular the April 6, 1968 murder of Black Panther Bobby Hutton by Oakland police and the lack of accountability for that attack. The poster depicts pig policemen as firing guns drunkenly. Flies buzz around them. Meanwhile, the mayor and chief of police, also depicted as pigs, agree not to prosecute those cops who actually murder members of the Black community. It is a demonstration that pigness does not translate solely to law enforcement and those immediately involved in the brutality of Black lives and bodies. Those representatives of authority seen to guide the hands (or hooves) of policemen are also depicted as pigs. Pigs are, in effect, representatives of the state.



Figures 6. Pigs as the state, pigs as victims. In: Douglas, E. (2007) *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. Rizzoli, and the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, [www.politicalgraphics.org](http://www.politicalgraphics.org).

These images elaborate on Douglas's broader police themes (see Figures 6). "Community Control of Police" shows a pig depiction of the state being blown apart. "I Surrender" shows another pig depiction of the state running away in fear from the bullets and grenade of, the viewer is to assume, the Black Panthers. Finally, another image trumpeting "All power to the people" shows a panoply of guns trained on yet another pig depiction of the state. Pigs are not only representations of an unresponsive government, but representations of nonhumans who are justified subjects of normalized violence. And that kind of violence was inherently necessary in Douglas's estimation, because left to their own devices, the pigs-as-state would spread beyond the bounds of the city, the country, or even the world (see Figures 7).



Figures 7. Pigs in space. In: Douglas, E. (2007) *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. Rizzoli, and the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, [www.politicalgraphics.org](http://www.politicalgraphics.org).

In “Whatever Is Good for the Oppressor Has Got To Be Bad for Us,” representatives of the pig state have taken a pig rocket to the moon and brought with them a group of Black human slaves to help colonize it. The pig leader warns his compatriots to “handle those slaves with care” because “we’re going to need them for Mars, Pluto and all those other planets.” In “Whites Only,” the pigs have finally conquered the moon and have managed to segregate it. To that end, there are also in Douglas’s work pig representatives of the president of the United States for the first three years of the Panthers’ existence (see Figures 8).



Figures 8. Pigs as a stand-in for Lyndon Johnson. In: Douglas, E. (2007) *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. Rizzoli, and the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, [www.politicalgraphics.org](http://www.politicalgraphics.org).

Two of the Lyndon Johnson images feature toilets, making scatological references to the president that also jibe with assumptions about pigs made apparent by slogans such as “happy as a pig in shit.” In one of the images, Johnson is being flushed down the toilet; in the other, he is defecating in an outhouse on a toilet crafted from an American flag. The third image, even more disturbing, features four lynched pigs, representing the political leaders assumed to be responsible for the worst abuses of the American fight in Vietnam: Johnson, Rusk, McNamara, and Robert Kennedy. The poster features a quote from Douglas himself, arguing that landscape art “is only good when it shows the oppressor hanging from a tree by his mother f--kin neck.” The stark imagery and the quote that accompanies it are an inversion of the common early-century imagery of Black lynching victims so common in the United States (see Figure 9).

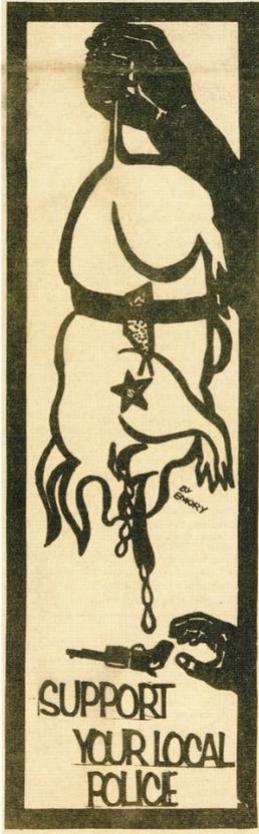


Figure 9. Support your local police. In: Douglas, E. (2007) *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. Rizzoli, and the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, [www.politicalgraphics.org](http://www.politicalgraphics.org).

Douglas also depicted politicians other than Lyndon Johnson, who left office in January 1969 (see Figure 10).

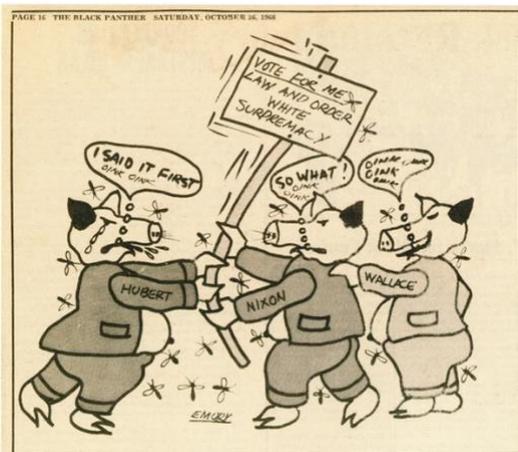
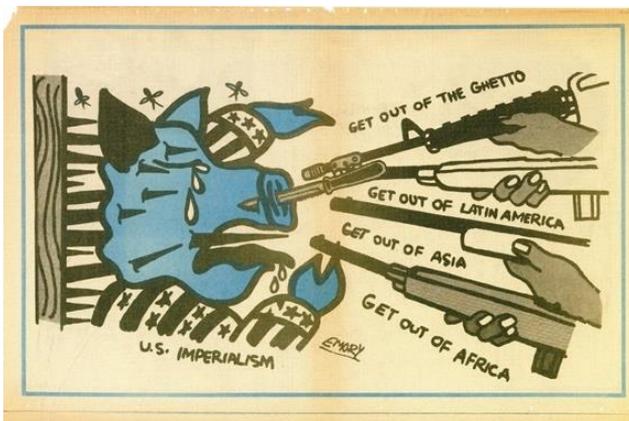


Figure 10. The 1968 presidential election. In: Douglas, E. (2007) *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. Rizzoli, and the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, [www.politicalgraphics.org](http://www.politicalgraphics.org).

This image portrays the 1968 election to replace Johnson, wherein Democrat Hubert Humphrey and Republican Richard Nixon fight over the mantle of white supremacy while arch white supremacist candidate George Wallace looks on. In attaching such values to pigs, the image belittles such prejudices and portrays them as less than human, but at the same time it props up the assumption that “less than human” is an existing category and not its own form of supremacy. Human supremacy in aid of belittling white supremacy was effective for many because of cognitive dissonance and basic human assumptions about species superiority, but it was disastrous for the pigs themselves, who became the receptacles of all such negative connotations.

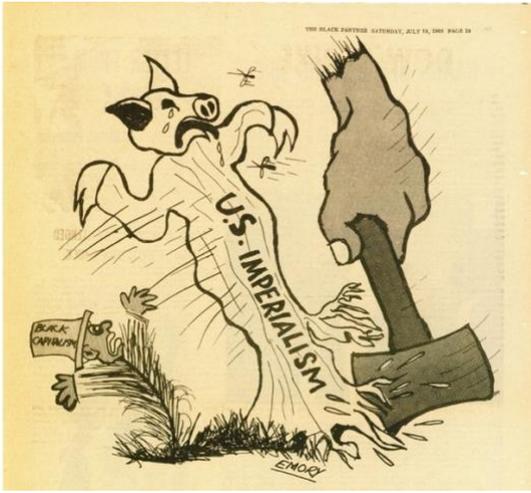
And many of those negative connotations related, as did some of the Johnson imagery, to the dangers of both domestic and international imperialism.



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Figures 11. Pigs as imperialists. In: Douglas, E. (2007) *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. Rizzoli, and the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, [www.politicalgraphics.org](http://www.politicalgraphics.org).

The images of pigs as imperialists are also common in Douglas's art. Two of these images portray the same message: "Get out of the ghetto. Get out of Latin America. Get out of Asia. Get out of Africa" (see Figures 11). Such posters do the work of tying foreign imperialism to domestic white supremacy, interpreting the domestic police force that patrolled Black neighborhoods as similar to the military force that invaded a variety of nations in the Global South. Another image presents an axe chopping down the pig-tree of American imperialism, which places the weed of Black capitalism in danger (see Figures 12). It is a visual renunciation of the Black middle class as dependent upon white supremacy for its success, a renunciation made for decades by Black radical movements. It is, however, significant that in this new visual reformulation, even the image of a tree is coded as a pig to demonstrate its association with the imperial project. The final image, a cover for the Black Panthers' periodical, presents the United States as a mother sow suckling her children who represent other European colonial nations (see Figures 12). Douglas also includes Japan and the apartheid states of Rhodesia and South Africa. The most prominent of the piglets, however, the one actually suckling at the teat of the U.S., is Israel. It is no surprise, then, that Douglas's takedown of imperial thinking would also include a takedown of Zionism as another version of segregationist apartheid.



Figures 12. Pigs as imperialists. In: Douglas, E. (2007) *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. Rizzoli, and the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, [www.politicalgraphics.org](http://www.politicalgraphics.org).

In “Israel: Zionist Puppet State of Imperialism,” a group of pigs representing the United States, Britain, West Germany, and France, overfeed a pig representing world Zionism a bottle of money to support its efforts. It was a demonstration of the view of Douglas and the Panthers that military occupations and support for Israel were part and parcel of the same project, a manifestation of the Black nationalist position that saw American mistreatment of its Black population as working in concert with imperialism. There was, however, an added element that played on fears of a Jewish cabal for domination and a stereotype of a Jewish hunger for money. That kind of problematic representation, both the message against imperialism and the Jewish stereotyping, covers the problematic representation that hides in plain sight in this and other Panther imagery, that of pigs as stand-ins for all problematic figures and problematic behavior. And it is that porcine stereotype that left the highest of body counts, whether compared to American police actions against Black Power organizations, European colonial efforts, African apartheid states, or Israeli occupation.

In this image, for example,

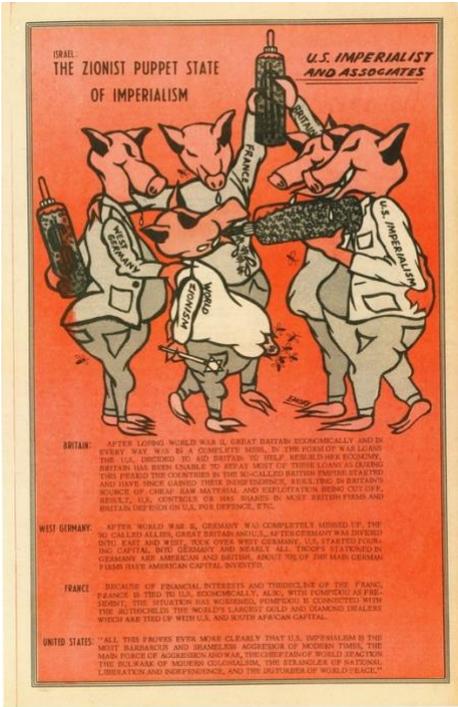


Figure 13. Pigs as stand-ins for Zionism. In: Douglas, E. (2007) *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. Rizzoli, and the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, [www.politicalgraphics.org](http://www.politicalgraphics.org).

Douglas draws a direct line between local police and American soldiers, with a National Guard that worked in areas both foreign and domestic in between them (see Figure 13). That kind of comparison and the emphasis on occupation ensured that the military would also be pilloried as pigs (see Figure 14).

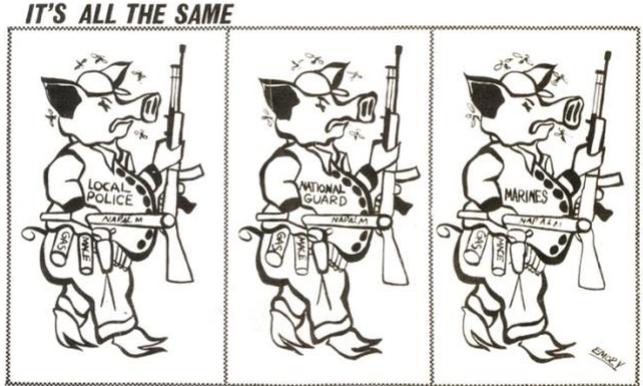


Figure 14. It's All the Same. In: Douglas, E. (2007) *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. Rizzoli, and the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, [www.politicalgraphics.org](http://www.politicalgraphics.org).

The images are by now familiar, but use pigs to represent soldiers rather than policemen as the target of their ire. In each, the pig-soldiers are either injured or being attacked (see Figures 15). It was a common theme in Douglas's art.



Figures 15. Pigs as military. In: Douglas, E. (2007) *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. Rizzoli, and the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, [www.politicalgraphics.org](http://www.politicalgraphics.org).

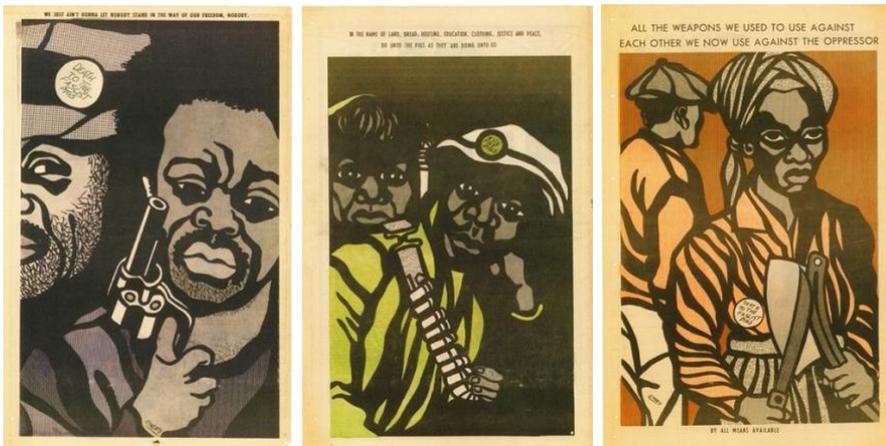
The real violence that happened against pigs everyday, however, was systematic killing on a scale that dwarfed any human body counts. Still, the real violence that affected everyone in inner-city Black communities was driven by the poverty imposed on those neighborhoods through white supremacy, redlining, and sparse job opportunities. Because of that,

Douglas's work also shows images of Black life that include a similar if tangential diminution of pigs in violent words if not imagery. Many, like these, show portraits of Black resistance with subjects wearing buttons that feature slogans celebrating the death of pigs, normalizing that desire for death, further associating pigs with legitimate and justified killing (see Figure 16).



Figure 16. Seize the time. In: Douglas, E. (2007) *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. Rizzoli, and the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, [www.politicalgraphics.org](http://www.politicalgraphics.org).

Other Douglas posters featured such justifications as frames for images that otherwise do not involve pigs as animals or pigs as police (see Figures 17).





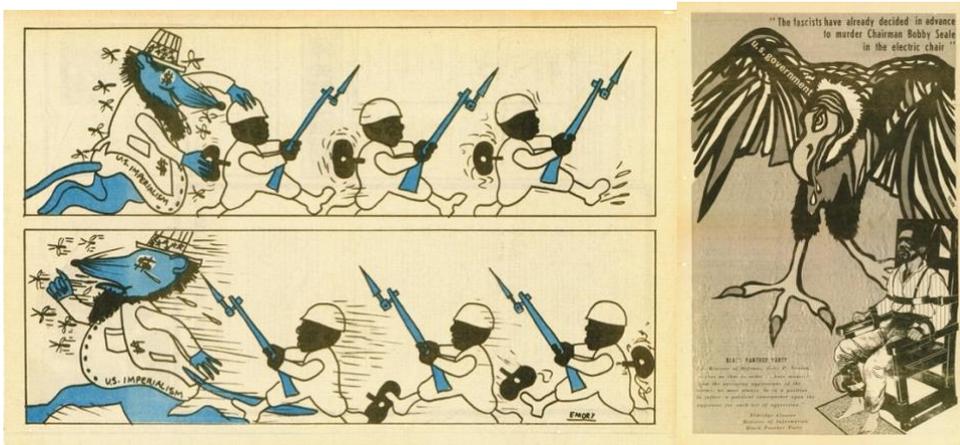
Figures 17. Pigs on buttons. In: Douglas, E. (2007) *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. Rizzoli, and the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, [www.politicalgraphics.org](http://www.politicalgraphics.org).

Such depictions also placed pig rhetoric within the broader imagery that surrounded Black urban residents in their everyday lives (see Figure 18).



Figure 18. Woman in slum housing. In: Douglas, E. (2007) *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. Rizzoli, and the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, [www.politicalgraphics.org](http://www.politicalgraphics.org).

In this image, a woman in slum housing fights large rats in her tenement apartment, depicting the problematic poverty faced by so many of those who the Black Panthers claimed to represent. Pinned on the door behind her is the familiar image of pigs-as-police running from an attack and the ubiquitous slogan, “Death to pigs.” That kind of poster also demonstrates one final element of animal representation in Douglas’s art, that of other animals who are not pigs. In these images, the United States government and United States imperialism writ large are represented by a vulture and a rat, respectively (see Figures 19).



Figures 19. Other animals as representative of government. In: Douglas, E. (2007) *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. Rizzoli, and the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, [www.politicalgraphics.org](http://www.politicalgraphics.org).

The pictures were evidence that nonhuman symbols could be used to represent a variety of different human ills in a variety of different forms. The one commonality in these images and those that lament pigs-as-police is that nonhuman animals are always representations of violence and negativity; human animals are always representations of protagonists, whether victims or defenders.

Douglas’s artwork found common cause in the rhetoric of the era, coming both from the Black Power movement, and the Black Panthers in particular, and the countercultural student movement, only reinforcing the notion that pigs were part of the problem, that their deaths were to be encouraged. And nowhere was that rhetoric more normalized than in the language of the Black Panthers.

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The Panthers understood that images of authority figures as pigs did semiotic work with an immediacy that political screeds could never match. To that end, they often printed thousands of copies of Douglas's posters and distributed them throughout urban Black neighborhoods. "The community was the museum for our artwork," said Douglas (Doss, 1999, p. 257). While the images would remain, as would the crib of "pig" as a representative of the police, the vogue of the term and the image would begin to fade in the 1970s. One of the leading progenitors of Black Power, the inventor and popularizer of the phrase itself, for example, was Stokely Carmichael. He first announced his ideology in June 1966 in Mississippi while participating in the March Against Fear as president of SNCC, turning the group to embody a Black Power aesthetic. Carmichael spent the rest of the decade deriding law enforcement and chanting about "pigs" (Carson, 1981; Murphree, 2006). By 1971, however, he had moved beyond such rhetoric. In a speech that year, Carmichael told his audience, "You will be disappointed if you came to hear me say, 'Off the pigs' and 'Kill the honkies.' We have moved beyond that level. The time of entertainment is over" (Waldron, 1971, p. 61).

Demonstrating the point, beginning in 1970, Detroit police and Wayne County sheriffs held an annual "Pig Bowl," a charity football game between police officers and sheriff's deputies that played earlier "pig" laments for laughs, making a joke of the epithet and taking away its power to demean law enforcement (Pig Bowl II, 1971, p. 3). When Jim Zurcher took over as Chief of Police of Palo Alto, California in 1971, he tried to diffuse some of the tension in the college town by referring to himself as the "Super Pig" and working with the leaders of protests to make everyone in the process feel heard ("Jim Zurcher," 1999).

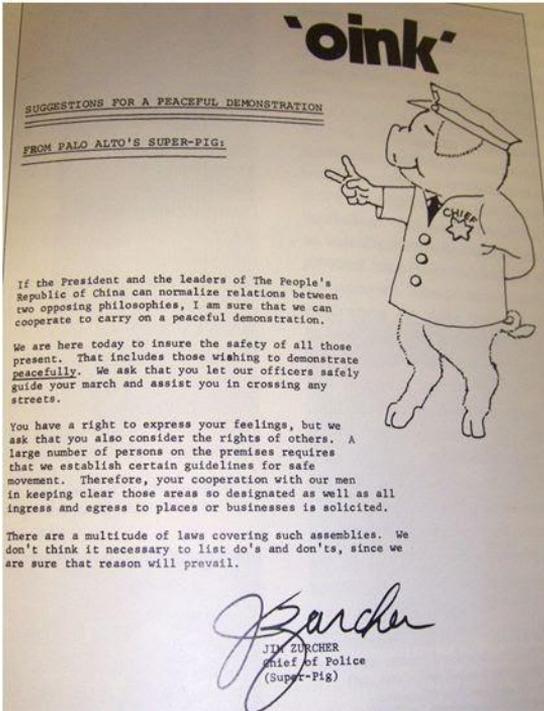


Figure 20. Jim Zurcher: chief “super pig.” (1999). Palo Alto history, <http://www.paloaltohistory.org/jim-zurcher.php>

Such naming did not strip the name of its power to demean pigs themselves, they who were always afterthoughts in human critiques of authority. The police in Augusta were willing to make fun of themselves for a charitable cause using pigs as the vehicle for humor. All the while, the corpses of pigs on the plates of those who participated gave lie to the nonchalant humor of the event. It was an example of the legacy of animal imagery and naming in the era of Black Power. Even after the epithets of a given moment are reclaimed by their targets and fed back to those in the original angry group, there remains at base an understanding that the humans on both sides of a given divide are still subjects. The nonhuman animals, the epithetical terms themselves, are nothing more than objects, which left them on the plates of student protesters against the police in the mid-twentieth century and on the plates of student supporters of them in the twenty-first. Because the pigs in such namings are the only group that consistently lose.

While the pig imagery used in those namings has a history that is centuries old, it came to full flower in the United States in the countercultural movement of the 1960s. The use of pigs to symbolize reactionary authority became a regular part of the revolutionary lexicon of the American student

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movement and the late civil rights movement. Groups like the Yippies and SDS made such rhetoric central to their critique of power, while pretenders like the Manson family cribbed porcine symbolism for its own nefarious ends. All such uses found their most sustained example in the pioneering art of Emory Douglas. The human critique those images presented was powerful, but their consequences also extended to the nonhuman animals used to represent social problems.

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# Representations of Dogs in Canadian Police Social Media Communications

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## Abstract

This paper explores the visual politics of police social media use and the visualization of police dogs by 13 major Canadian police forces. Examining public police social media representations of police dogs is important as it reveals insights into how police frame and communicate force and, indeed, police violence. For decades, public police have used police dogs as a weapon in the United States and Canada. However, as we demonstrate, the images of police dogs on social media are most often framed to portray cute, cuddly, friendly dogs, and reveal a community-oriented approach. We examine these data using thematic and semiotic analysis to reveal what these communications mean for understanding police social media use and social media communications regarding animals. We find that these social media communications are designed to create affective appeals to the community and boost the legitimacy of public police as an institution and thus comprise a form of fantastical authenticity.

Keywords: social media; police; dogs; representations; community; communication

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## Introduction

Public police are now avid users of social media. Public police now use memes, positive imagery, and other social media communication techniques to appeal to the public and to boost police legitimacy (Wood, 2020). One of the strategies used in this regard by public police is the posting of pictures and videos of police dogs. This paper explores the visual politics of police social media use and the visualization or picturing of police dogs by 13 major Canadian police forces. The police dog has been used as a weapon in policing for decades (Wall, 2016). In the United States, police dogs have been used as a weapon against African American persons since at least the civil rights movement in attempts to quell social movement organizing and mobilizations. Wall (2014) also argues that dogs have a long history in the United States as weapons used by slave catchers, slave patrols, and plantation owners. Canines are still used as a form of violence and terror by white settlers and authorities.

However, literature on animals and society has also shown that humans have a special relationship with dogs (Walby & Doyle, 2009). Dogs are a companion species that humans rely on for compassion, meaning, and friendship. It is this dual meaning of the dog in our world that allows police the cultural resources to post pictures of police dogs. Social media allows police departments to showcase police canines as cute, fun-loving, and community-oriented animals though dogs are still often used as weapons within policing. Examining these social media posts, we discovered the presentational strategies used by police on social media vary when posting about dogs. We examine social media data using thematic and semiotic analysis to reveal what these communications mean for understanding police social media use and social media communications regarding animals. We argue that social media posts are a form of fantastical authenticity, blurring the line between “fact and fiction, trust and deception, [and] authenticity and fantasy” (Hurley, 2019, p. 13).

First, we review literature on social media use by police and on social media communications regarding animals. Second, we provide a note on our research design and methods. Third, we offer our analysis. We examine the images and associated text of police dogs communicated by Canadian police services. Finally, we reflect on what these findings mean for literature on police use of social media, police legitimacy, social media, communications regarding animals, and social media use.

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## **Literature Review and Conceptual Framing: Dogs and Police, Online**

There is ample literature on social media communication regarding animals. For example, Riddle and McKay (2020) examined how people post pictures of their pets online and how these postings shape public understandings of certain animals thought to be aggressive. Mkono and Holder (2019) examine how tourist sites and tourist operators post pictures of animals to attract customers and consumers. Gerber and colleagues (2011) explore the ways social media communications about animals mediate understandings of risk and harm, while Spee et al. (2019) look at social media postings regarding exotic pets in the Middle East and how such communications are meant to convey tokens of status and symbols of power. Dynel (2016) investigates how animals are used in social media memes, including how jokes and comedy overlap with social media postings of animals. Similarly, Caple (2019) considers the relation between the format and content of dog pictures on Instagram and political preferences in the United States. Finally, Lenzi et al. (2020) examine issues that can emerge when people take selfies with wild animals.

We also draw from literature on animals as weapons including police dogs as weapons. Cusack (2017) writes about the history of animals as weapons and examines some of the inhumane practices of humans by turning animals into weaponry during the war and in policing. Morron (2013) examined the military animal industrial complex, and the use of animals in the war, which spans across multiple continents and centuries. Morron found that animals have been used as weapons of war and as weapons of social control in many cultural contexts. Wall (2016) provides a history of police dogs in the United States and indexes the use of police dogs against African American persons as a marker of white supremacy in government and social control. Wall (2014) argues that the use of police dogs is a form of legal terror, specifically by terrorizing African American persons in multiple police contexts, and that the police dog has antecedents in the dog of the slave catcher and slave patrols. Plantation owners used dogs during the time of slavery to enforce an order of white supremacy that subjugated Black slaves (also see Wilson, 2022; Saucier, 2017; Spruill, 2016). There is criminological literature on police dogs as well. Dorriety (2005) explores the roles police service dogs play in policing, from drug detection to weapons detection, to SWAT teams to search and rescue to protest policing.

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Iris Braverman (2013) examines the use of police dogs as a form of surveillance technology and examines the use of police dogs in the war on drugs. Braverman also looks at the history of canine training in the United States and the breeding of canines to become drug dogs and other types of police canines. Sloane (1955) likened the use of police dogs to the use of dogs in war. She noted some of the similarities in the types of dogs used, the practices of breeding dogs of war and police dogs, and continuities in canine training. Finally, Campbell and et al. (1998) assess the use of police dogs in the Los Angeles Police Department and find that police dogs were used for multiple deployments and used varying levels of force against Black and Latino Americans. These literatures help us to understand the history of police dogs and provide a foundation for the assertion that police dogs are, in fact, used as police weapons.

To understand police deployment of dogs in social media imagery, we also draw from literature on police use of social media. Wood (2020) examines how police now use memes to engage with the public. Wood argues that police use memes and social media to boost legitimacy and to convince members of the public that they are trustworthy. Schneider (2016) looks at the presentational strategies of police on Twitter, arguing that police can oscillate between more friendly or more forceful imagery. Similarly, O'Connor (2017) examines how police use Twitter communications to manage their image in the community and to build links with community members. Hu and colleagues (2019, 2018) explore how police use social media images to curate visions of police work. Likewise, Dai and colleagues (2017) find that local police use Twitter and Facebook differently, depending on the size of the police force and on the community that is the target of the communication.

Crump (2011) provided one of the first typologies of police social media use, arguing that some police use social media for law enforcement purposes while other police use social media for broader projects of legitimation and to create a sense of transparency. Bullock (2018) examines how police represent order, power, and the rule of law in their social media communications and how they use very different approaches to curating and crafting such ideas. Finally, Ellis (2020) explores how social media has become a part of public police decision-making. Public police now consider social media reception when deciding on all matters of police practice and

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policy (see Walby & Joshua, 2021; Duncan & Walby, 2022; Walby & Gumienny, 2020).

Our study examines whether police social media depictions of police dogs curate these images to reveal the actualities of canine violence when used by police or whether these images are softened and managed to lessen the force, violence, and terror police dogs have exacted on many communities, especially African American and Indigenous communities. Social media posts involving police dogs are significant because although online postings are often very friendly and community-oriented, police dogs must be understood as part of the use of force that police use on citizens. For this reason, we argue these posts take on the form of what Hurley (2019) calls fantastical authenticity that blurs fact and fiction to boost the legitimacy and status of the user. These communications represent a form of fantastical authenticity because they are stretching or skewing the realities of policing by focusing on cute, playful, helpful dogs instead of the myriad issues and problems (such as racism, corruption, brutality, and lack of accountability) the police face all across North America.

### **Note on Methods**

As Highfield and Leever (2016) note, it is important to understand the visual politics of selfies, memes, emojis, and GIFs, since visual social media are used a great deal for communication today and have real effects. Digital media research methods are developing rapidly (Hutchison, 2016), and we draw from this methodological field. Online ethnography and social media ethnography are becoming a more accepted research practice. While we have collected all social media communications for these sites and we have followed the retweeting, the comments, and other associated communications, we stop short of claiming that we are conducting a social media ethnography. Instead, we offer a thematic analysis of police social media communications regarding police dogs to better understand the messaging in these media communications. There are challenges in conducting social media research (Verdegem, 2011), from the sheer volume of messages and communications to interpreting meanings for audiences. As such, there are some limits to this study. First, we have not interviewed the creators of the images. Nor have we interviewed the audiences of the images or the canine handlers and trainers in Canadian policing.

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To determine which social media platforms would be analyzed, a preliminary search was conducted on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to generate a sample size that accounted for a national distribution of police department accounts, including provincial police. To locate police department social media pages, keyword searches were conducted on the three platforms by manually entering keywords into social media platform search engines. Keyword searches utilized standard terms such as “police,” “department,” “canine,” and “unit.” Changes were made to the keyword searches to include specific municipalities (e.g., “Montreal Police Department” vs. “Sûreté du Québec”). This process entailed entering keywords into social media platform search engines. A search would often result in multiple account profiles. The top results were verified for authenticity, a feature on Facebook and Instagram that places a verified badge on a page or profile, confirming the authenticity of the public figure, company, or brand. The authenticated police department and canine unit accounts were manually examined for images and text representing police canines.

Facebook and Instagram emerged as the predominant sources for communications about police canines and offered the most extensive geographic distribution of police departments. While most departments had an active Twitter account, posts were often cross-linked. Additionally, unlike Facebook and Instagram, no active police canine accounts could be located. Police pages were examined for posts that prompted communications about the work and representation of canines within law enforcement. Every police department examined had shared posts, whether on Facebook or Instagram, related to their canines. Posts representing police canines included philanthropic work, training, achievements, end of watch, and memorial posts.

We analyzed a total of 36 accounts across Facebook and Instagram over an 18-month period, beginning in January 2019 and ending in July 2020. Police department accounts represent eight provinces, 11 cities, and 13 departments. Four police departments (Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, and Winnipeg) created Facebook and Instagram pages, specifically for their canine units. Police departments actively use their Facebook and Instagram accounts to update the public on issues such as arrests, missing persons, and other daily activities – generating thousands of posts between both platforms. Using inductive coding, posts about police canines were analyzed for words,

hashtags (words or phrases preceded by the pound sign (#), which is known as the hashtag, commonly used on social media websites and applications to identify messages on a specific topic), and images that depicted various representations of canines within police work. Canine communications consisted of words like “dog,” “K9,” “PSD,” and words that depicted actions such as “tracked” and “searched,” as well as images that portrayed dogs involved in community events, training, and just being dogs. However, not all depictions of police canines fit squarely into coding categories because departments often showcase their canines in various ways to the public. A total of 913 posts met our sampling criteria, with Instagram accounting for 70% of canine representations. On average, we observed seven interactions (posting, sharing, or creating stories) per week. Most police departments cross-post on social media, linking their Instagram or Facebook accounts to one another. Taking into account cross-posting, 532 social media posts remained in our sample to ensure no duplicate posts were represented. Because Instagram emerged as the prominent source of police canine representation throughout sampling (with Instagram having more posts of police canines shared than Facebook) when encountered with cross-posting, the Instagram post was analyzed as part of our sample.

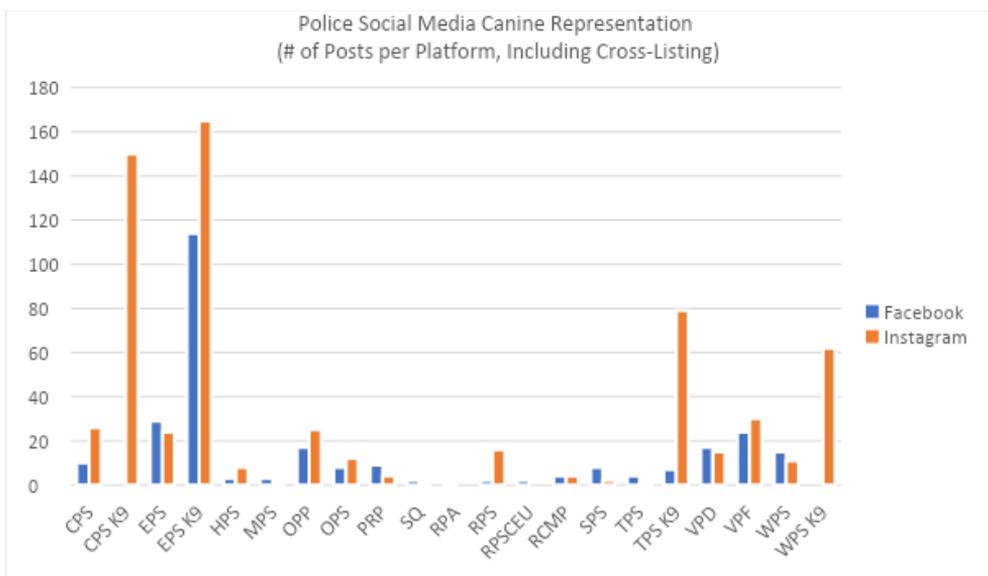


Figure 1: Canine Representations on Police Social Media

Once we collated all images in our sample, social media posts were analyzed for common themes. To determine themes, the images and captions

in the sample were analyzed for similarities such as picture characteristics (e.g., was the dog pictured in uniform or in a costume), words used in the captions (e.g., “tracked,” “celebrate,” and “training”), and the event being advertised (e.g., anti-bullying awareness, police investigation, and holidays like Christmas). Based on this classification of posts, a total of 13 themes emerged: community, end of watch, memorial post, mental health awareness, threat/danger, masculinity, prowess/athleticism, militarism/patriotism, historical policing, distraction, birthday, retirement, and holiday. Five themes (distraction, prowess/athleticism, community, threat/danger, and militarism/patriotism) were predominantly utilized to depict police canines throughout Facebook and Instagram posts. We examine these themes below, focusing on the normalization of police dogs and the creation of affective relations between police dogs and communities.

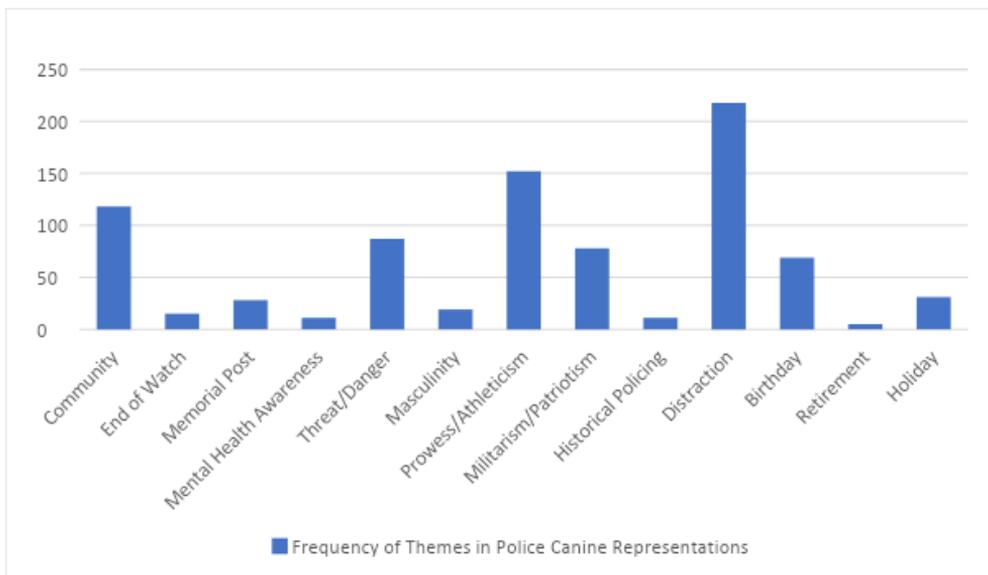


Figure 2: Frequency of Themes

## Thematic Analysis

### *Community*

Police involvement in the community is a main focus of police social media communication. Philanthropy has become a key part of policing and is often demonstrated through their participation in partnerships, events, or interacting with the public in day-to-day activities. A total of 22% of Facebook and Instagram posts involved police service dogs (PSD) participating in the community. A majority of community posts of police

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canines centered on the police department sales of their police canine unit calendars. Police canine calendars, which feature PSDs and their handlers, are sold for an average of \$15-\$20, with proceeds being donated to national and local charities. Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) also reserves funds for the [Winnipeg Police Canine Memorial](#) (WPS K9 Instagram, July 10, 2019). Canine calendars also serve as a means for police departments to honor fallen canines, such as [Winnipeg's PSD Banner](#), who passed away unexpectedly in December 2019 and is featured in the Winnipeg Police Service [2021 Canine Unit Calendar](#) (WPS K9 Instagram, December 5 2019). Some departments took the canine calendar as an opportunity to have some fun with their dogs. For example, the front cover of the [2020](#) Vancouver police canine calendar featured four dogs lounging poolside in chairs while wearing swimming attire and sunglasses; one of the dogs is even featured laying on an inflatable flamingo in the pool (VPD Foundation Instagram, September 12, 2019). During the 18-month period, eleven out of twenty-one police departments sold police canine unit calendars. This tally includes posts from departments, associations, foundations, and canine units as each social media account was treated as its own entity.

The remaining posts were often philanthropic or events that engaged the community. Canines from many departments participated in meet and greet type events; these were predominately seen in a school setting. School-aged children were often pictured crowded around a canine, and his handler, with several tiny hands, extended, presumptively to pet the dog. OPP's [visit](#) to Mnjikaning Kendaaswin Elementary School perfectly illustrates this type of interaction (OPP Facebook, November 2019). Students can be seen kneeling around [PSD Bella](#), who lays beside her handler Mike, receiving attention from students. Retired canine, [Dexter](#), is pictured with a wagging tail as a young boy and girl pet him (OPP Facebook, November 4, 2019).

Notably, not all community events depicted this style of post. For example, Winnipeg Police Canine, Bailey, visited Camp Assiniboia's kids, a caption described. However, instead of a picture of Bailey and the kids, WPS shared wonderful [artwork](#), which showed Bailey and his handler, sent by one grateful attendee thanking them for their visit (WPS K9 Instagram, February 15, 2019). Peel Region Police (PRP) shared a [video](#) that highlighted the importance of getting involved in the community and developing trust between the public and police (PRP Instagram, September 5, 2019). Partnering with the Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region, the

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canine unit put on an interactive demonstration in which the kids, as an officer is quoted saying, “[were] quite interested in the dogs themselves... and playing police officer.”

Police canine posts that focused on community expressed, in these instances, that police canines are friendly and not a police “tool” for inflicting violence. This idea appears throughout many police department canine calendars. Looking beyond the appealing photos of canines posed smiling, canines are often presented in a light-hearted, positive manner, often not wearing their uniforms or tactical vests.

### *End of Watch*

When police dogs die, they are honored and memorialized on police social media (also see Walby et al., 2018). Whether their deaths are related to the line of duty or otherwise, PSDs are honored as any officer of the force would be. Fallen PSDs are honored on police social media at a rate of 2%. End of watch posts served to notify the public of the PSDs death and their dedication to the service, often outlining their career with the force. Posts often featured a photo of the fallen canine, posed bearing their badge or uniform. For example, the Calgary Police Canine Instagram used professional photos, presumably taken for police canine calendars, to honor their fallen. In one post, the unit mourns the passing of retired explosive detection dog, Sarka, using a [photo](#) of the German Shepard laying on a hay bale with her head held high looking off into the prairie sunset, proudly showing off her badge (CPS K9 Instagram, October 28, 2019). Canines honored in end of watch posts by police social media often followed this scheme.

Generally, end of watch posts received the most engagement by followers who expressed their condolences to the canine’s handler, immediate family, and the police canine unit. Comments often contained several emojis, commonly using the red heart, tear-faced, and a broken red heart, conveying the evident feeling of sadness surrounding the passing of the PSD. In addition to the admiration the PSD received in the picture caption from their unit; some followers expressed their respect for the canine with [comments](#) such as, “thank you for your service” “[canine] was the best,” and “job well done” (TPS K9 Instagram, November 21, 2019). End of Watch posts conveyed that the four-legged members of any police unit are highly respected and valued members of the force by both the public and their department.

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End of watch posts place police canines in a favorable light, conveying respect for the work of the fallen. There is a parallel here in terms of how police social media posts regarding human officers who die are honored and memorialized online (Walby & Wilkinson, 2022). Posts categorized under this theme signify a respected practice within police forces to honor fallen members.

### *Memorial Post*

Like End of Watch posts, police social media memorialized their fallen PSD members. Memorial posts occurred more often than End of Watch, accounting for 5% of police social media posts analyzed. These posts are utilized as a means to commemorate the service and sacrifice of loyal canines who have given their lives to ensure their handlers, fellow officers, and citizens stay safe. Departments honored police dogs' service and sacrifice, regardless of when their passing was (e.g., EPS [PSD Titus](#), who died in the line of duty 30 years ago) (EPS Instagram, August 27, 2019). Like their human counterparts, fallen canines were respected in the same capacity.

Regardless of which department made the post, memorial posts all followed similar basic structuring. Departments often captioned memorial posts with lines like "Today we take a moment to remember," "Gone but never forgotten," or "[Number of years] ago." Captions describe the PSDs career and the events leading to their death. Police departments' memorial posts often honored those canines who died in the line of duty, whereas End of Watch posts featured both line of duty and natural cause deaths. For example, Edmonton Police Service (EPS) dedicated a #throwbackthursday to Quanto, whose death inspired Quanto's Law. This is an act that ensures lawbreakers are held accountable when they harm or assault service animals, like [Quanto](#), who succumbed to stab wounds after attempting to take down a suspect in downtown Edmonton (EPS Instagram, October 10, 2019). Some departments, like Vancouver Police Department, kept their memorial posts shorter. Encouraging followers to read more about a particular animal's story, like [Pax](#), who was "killed in the line of duty 43 [years] ago today while pursuing a suspect with his partner", through links in their bios (VPD Instagram, July 30, 2020).

One [post](#) from WPS featured two pictures of police canines side by side, both canines pictured in their police vests (WPS K9, May 22, 2019). Wika (the canine on the left) wears a harness with a custom pouch to carry

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some of her “Daddy’s [Judge’s] ashes.” The incredible request, the caption went on to express, was thanks to “Jim and his crew at K9 Storm”. PSD Judge was one of WPS’s most successful police dogs, with over 500 captures during his career. Judge’s legacy has lived on within the WPS canine unit as he has fathered many WPS canine recruits, including Wicka. WPS was the only department that had established a [canine memorial fund](#) dedicated to help plan, build, and maintain a Canine Memorial located at the Canine Unit’s kennels (WPS K9, July 19, 2019). Although other departments did not have specific canine memorial funds, EPS, for example, had other types of memorials, such as the [Schreiner Memorial Golf Tournament](#) (EPS K9 Facebook, August 21, 2019). Randy Schreiner, a former EPS handler, and his canine are pictured on the Edmonton Police Department Dog Unit winner’s plaque. Memorial posts often contained an underlying inference of tragedy or violence.

### *Mental Health Awareness*

Mental health awareness has come to the forefront of life today, including in public policy, job training, and more. Animals, particularly dogs, have become vital in managing mental health and have taken on policing and victim services roles. Research has shown some dog breeds have been purposefully bred to assist persons with disabilities, aiding in the wellbeing of humans through promoting feelings of happiness and decreasing anxiety (Spruin & Mozova, 2018).

Although not a prominent theme (2%) in our data collection, many police services engaged in promoting mental health awareness on social media through canine representations. Police departments often engaged in mental health awareness by promoting campaigns such as Bell Let’s Talk, a 2010 initiative to begin a conversation about mental health in Canada and the urgent need for action (Bell Canada, 2021). Other campaigns frequently supported by police departments include [World Suicide Prevention](#) Day and [Pink Shirt](#) (Anti-Bullying) Day (CPS Instagram, September 10, 2019; RCMP Facebook February 26, 2020). Canines promoting mental health awareness campaigns, such as Pink Shirt Day, were often pictured in pink shirts or attire associated with the campaign. Vancouver Police even went as far as creating an amusing [video](#) for the Pink Shirt Day, which featured PSD Brando (with an officer’s help) providing followers with an important message about bullying (VPD Instagram, February 27, 2019).

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In addition to engaging in mental health campaigns, mental health awareness often included the work of victims' services. For example, the Calgary Police Service [shared](#) canines, Hawk and Webber, who provide support through Calgary Police Service Victim Assistance Unit and Psychological Services, attended at Calgary's First Responder Suicide Awareness Conference (CPS Instagram, September 19 2019). In another [instance](#), the Regina Police Service discussed the work of Sgt. Froh and PSD Merlot who started working together in 2015, providing emotional support to victims and witnesses (RPS Instagram, June 16 2020). [Lucca](#), VPD's Victims Services certified Justice Facility Dog, was praised for his calming presence when working with victims during difficult times (VPD Instagram, April 25, 2020). Lucca's work includes "assisting multiple victims and witnesses during their testimony related to homicides, sexual offences and other serious crimes."

Followers often expressed their gratitude and curiosity. In a video shared by Calgary Police, the footage shows the canine unit and HAWCS locating a suicidal individual. The caption explains that CPS responded to 1,337 suicide attempts in 2018, with 153 being fatal. In addition to several commenters praising CPS for all of their hard work, one comment explained how a suicide call responded to by the CPS was a friend of the author, who went on to thank CPS for the safe return of their friend. Another CPS [post](#) had commenters inquiring about the role of canines in victim services (CPS Instagram, September 19, 2019).

Given events in 2020 regarding police violence and accountability, this group of posts can be categorized as a means to boost the legitimacy and image of the police. Recent statistics on deaths by police officers in the United States indicate that since 2015, a quarter of all persons killed by police had a known mental illness. Therefore, while police canine representations highlight the importance of mental health, these communications often blur the fact that departments lack the appropriate resources and understanding to manage situations when confronted with a mental health crisis and, instead, present followers with cute set-ups of PSDs (see VPD's Anti-Bulling video as mentioned above).

### *Threat/Danger*

Social media representations of police canines highlight the role PSDs play within law enforcement. Posts related to threat/danger accounted for 16% of

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police social media canine representations. However, these posts demonstrated the success of canines in policing. Canine crime-fighting consisted of tracking and arresting suspects and discovering drugs and other paraphernalia. Photos related to crime-fighting generally featured the arresting canine along with a brief description of current events as a caption, speaking highly of the dog. Posts in this category were often cross-posted as Prowess/Athleticism and Militarism/Patriotism.

EPS frequently posted about their canines' police work, which accounted for 10% of canine representations in the threat/danger category. PSDs were often praised by EPS for drug arrests and suspect apprehension. One PSD, Amok, a German Shepard, was featured several times throughout EPS's page for arrests. Amok is seen in one [photo](#), following an arrest of a suspect on a BMX bike, standing in the back of a police cruiser with his tongue out (EPS K9 Instagram, May 15, 2019). Another [photo](#) features Amok laying down in front of a police cruiser, receiving several comments for being a "good boy" and helping out police in locating cocaine during a traffic stop (EPS Facebook, February 15, 2019). In all of Amok's photos, he is seen either wearing his badge or police vest. EPS often used a different photo of Amok when making these posts. On one occasion, it appears EPS did re-use a photo of Amok, although there are slight variations between the two, such as [quality](#), [angle](#), and background displays (EPS K9 Instagram, July 31, 2019; EPS K9 Instagram, June 16, 2019).

Other departments such as Ottawa Police Service took a different approach in displaying canine arrests. Unlike EPS, Ottawa posts did not share common characteristics or consistency in the type of canine photos displayed. One [photo](#) features PSD Yro, who helped officers locate a break and enter suspect, posed in his uniform, presumably a professionally done photograph. This same [photo](#) of Yro was also used when he tracked down a stolen vehicle suspect after a police pursuit (OPD Instagram, September 13, 2019). In contrast, [PSD Frigo](#)'s successful tracking of a carjacking suspect featured his snow-covered face – likely a photograph taken by his handler while off duty because no police-related attire is worn by the canine (OPD Instagram, February 15, 2020). Other posts that feature canine arrest do not name a particular canine. Instead, the photograph, which is captioned with the arrest details, features a generic photograph of a canine at work. [For example](#), a canine can be seen at work, leashed to a handler while sniffing the ground, while another photograph [shows](#) a canine standing in an

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unmarked car (OPD Instagram, July 6, 2020; OPD Instagram, February 3, 2020). Regardless of whether the photograph depicted police canines or the crime, the comments overwhelmingly praised the work of police canines.

Representations of canines in the category of threat/danger presented the duties of canines in viewer-friendly light, featuring a variety of canine photos both in and out of uniform. The photos used to depict actions such as the tracking and apprehension of suspects, involving the infliction of terror, force, and aggression, were minimized through playful or cute photos of police canines. Comments on these types of posts often reflected these same ideas, expressing love, affection, and admiration for the featured canine and his work.

### *Prowess/Athleticism*

Police canine representations categorized as prowess/athleticism consisted of photos and videos of canine recruits, training exercises, and daily activities related to police work. This category made up 28% of our sample. Posts classified in this theme reflected the skillful work, strength, and agility required of police canines. Through this category of posts, followers were informed of PSDs' various duties, whether this was through [training exercises](#), [suspect apprehensions](#), or [locating missing persons](#) (EPS K9 Instagram, January 17, 2019; HPS September 23, 2019; OPP Instagram, January 26, 2020). Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) provided the most in-depth description of dogs and their duties, and some posts went as far as explaining why a breed was suited for an area of police work. OPP often captioned photos of their canines with facts about dogs in policing, like [Boden](#), a Malinois, "who have great scent receptors and can be trained for a wide variety of purposes" (OPP Instagram, April 27, 2020). Other captions went on to explain a particular canine's duty, such as [Jake](#), "a dual-purpose General Service Dog cross-trained to locate illicit drugs," or [Jax](#) with his 220 million scent receptors, which located \$250K in cash (OPP Instagram, August 26, 2019; OPP Instagram, January 27, 2020).

Other department pages provided followers with plenty of insight into new and seasoned canine unit members' training. Edmonton Police Service (EPS) was a prominent account that closely followed the training of many of their canines, like PSD Bender and Beny, who started an 8-week drug detection training. EPS frequently provided updates to followers, sharing videos of the eager PSDs running through training courses and often pictured

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with their noses stuck in a box or some other object. Training photos and videos either took place in a warehouse-type setting, an open field, obstacle course, or vehicles. While training posts often highlight police canines' exceptional abilities, prowess/athleticism does not mean all work and no play. One post followed RCMPs PSD Deny and his handler in search of a [quarry](#), where the four-photo compilation revealed Deny's great find, a large stick (RCMP Instagram, December 13, 2019).

Posts coded as prowess/athleticism often cross-posted with militarism/patriotism or threat/danger. These canine representations often shared similar characteristics, such as tactical defense, combat, safety, and crime-fighting. Service de Police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM) shared a photo on [Facebook](#) of a police canine training for bomb detection (SPVM Facebook, August 26, 2019). The photo shows a German Shepard leaping towards an imitation bomb with his handler on his knees, who appears to be encouraging the canine.

Out of the thirteen themes, prowess/athleticism appeared to be the most prominent communication by police departments. EPS invited followers to follow the journey of their canine recruits, sharing to their feed photos and videos of all aspects of police dog training. In some instances, training included the chasing and apprehension of fleeing decoy suspects. Visuals captured and shared by police departments included canines leaping into the air, scaling barriers, and biting officers in bite suits. When it came to the training of canine police recruits, police departments did not attempt to alter aggressive behavior and even praise it. However, there is a disjuncture between this content and most of the other social media content police share. By sharing appealing online content such as puppy training, police attempt to create a fantastically authentic (Hurley, 2019) version of police that could enhance public views of policing among those who view this content and are persuaded by the imagery.

### *Militarism/Patriotism*

When it came to the training of police canines, departments often drew from and patterned themselves around a military-like model, utilizing drill equipment, operational tactics, mindsets, or similar military-like culture to train canine recruits. Accounting for 14% of police canine representations, militarism/patriotism posts frequently appeared with those that reflect prowess/athleticism. The use of police canines in policing has expanded

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since their inception by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in 1937, with police social media posts reflecting this progression. Canines are utilized with other police units, such as SWAT and HAWC.

Posts that displayed characteristics of militarism/patriotism frequently discussed the evolution and strength of the canine unit, equipment and uniforms, and behavior training. Canine training was predominantly exhibited by CPS and EPS, which involved the participation and partnering with other agencies. EPS frequently shared videos of the work PSDs were doing with agencies like Grassroots K9, a training academy designed to meet the increasing demand for expert dog training. In one [video](#), a vested canine can be seen attached to a bungee cord running after a “fleeing suspect” (EPS K9 Instagram, June 6, 2019). EPS praised Grassroots K9 for the “hell of a work out” the PSDs received.

Another agency EPS closely worked with was Alabama K9, a premier police sales, training, detection, and patrol services company. EPS often recruited canines from this [facility](#), shedding light on some of the newest recruits’ journey into policing (EPS K9 Instagram, March 15, 2019). PSDs Bama, Frodo, and Gando were trained through what EPS coined Dog Master Training Course (DMTC) in 2019. Research was unable to locate what DMTC was or meant. However, one post indicates that DMTC is a [20-week program](#) that introduces canine recruits to the work of policing (EPS Instagram, April 8., 2019). This is further supported through instances in which EPS shared videos and photos of the recruit’s progress. In week two of training, Bama can be seen learning to track (EPS K9 Instagram, April 24, 2019).

While a majority of posts classified as militarism/patriotism dealt with police canine training, another characteristic was the prominence of the police uniform and equipment. For example, an uncaptioned picture from the Facebook account of [Sûreté du Québec](#) shows a police canine, proudly wearing his vest, pictured sitting on top of a police cruiser (SQ Facebook, June 12 2020). At the same time, a uniformed officer stands beside him. Other examples include upgrades to uniforms [such as](#) PSD Evan and “his new Multicam black Street Fighter harness,” while other canines flashed new [muzzles](#) or elaborating on the [custom](#) made vests, harnesses and equipment “that keep [their] dogs safe and secure [while on duty]” (EPS K9 Instagram, July 23, 2019; EPS K9 Instagram, May 5, 2019; WPS K9 Instagram, March 27, 2019).

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Police departments were open when sharing with followers the work and training of police canines. Posts classified as militarism/patriotism displayed instances of police canine strength, equipment, uniforms, and behavior. Like the military, policing involves the preparation of members and its organization to handle high-risk situations. Posts that depict militarism/patriotism reveal how departments prepare their officers and canines for conflict, from high-risk training to technologically advanced uniforms and equipment. The militarism, violence, and racism of police forces is damaging to effective community policing, as the police defund and abolition movement makes clear (Dobchuk-Land & Walby, 2022). From a citizen standpoint, the mere presence of a weapon often triggers distrust and antagonism (Benjamin Jr. et al., 2018). Rebuilding trust between civilians and law enforcement is a core challenge facing police departments today.

### *Masculinity*

Posts that expressed masculinity were always cross-posted with other themes, commonly that of Threat/Danger, Prowess/Athleticism, and Militarism/Patriotism. Masculinity is a social construct associated with tough, aggressive, brawny behaviors and roles attributed most often to men (Silvestri, 2017; Prokos & Padavic, 2002). In this study, masculinity refers to police canine representations that reflect characteristics of strength, toughness, meanness, combat, and tactical preparedness. Posts classified as masculine surrounded activities such as training, arrests, and canine performance. This theme made up 3% of our sample.

Police departments often looked for these characteristics early on in their canines, recruiting breeds that were more likely to perform specialized skills. The ability of a police canine to perform a particular set of skills is integral to policing. As one post from the [Vancouver Police Foundation](#) outlines, canines are trained in various disciplines such as tracking, criminal apprehension, evidence recovery, narcotics, firearms, and explosives detection (VPD Foundation Instagram, September 9, 2018). In some instances, police departments imported specific breeds as an addition to their force, like one of [OPP's](#) newest recruit from Poland (OPP Instagram, May 20 2020). Twelve months old, the OPP recruit is pictured standing tall and proud. The canine had “already performed well in a battery of tests.” The post went on further to state that the canine unit would further assess him for obedience, tracking, and grip work. Other departments, such as EPS and

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VPD, often imported recruits from specialized breeding facilities specifically seeking European quality working dogs like Malinois, German Shepherds, and Labrador Retrievers. Like OPP, VPD even welcomed recruits from Slovakia and the Czech Republic, who will be “prevent[ing] crime and keep the city safe” soon with their handlers.

Masculinity was further defined by several videos from EPS highlighting the underpinning of police canine work, demonstrating both the physical and mental abilities required of any PSD. Policing requires a set of skills that are integral to any canine job, many of which exhibit masculine characteristics. Videos shared by EPS show canines learning new behaviors such as [searching](#), [tracking](#), and [article indication](#) (EPS K9 Instagram, April 11, 2019; EPS K9 Instagram, April 18, 2019; EPS K9 Instagram, April 16 2019). After undergoing training and [validations](#), the preparation for canines and their handlers never ceases (EPS Instagram, September 5, 2019). Canine Units require yearly validations of their ability to perform police work and continue to evolve new skills every day (Wilfrid Laurier University, 2016).

A majority of masculinity posts are centered on the police canine recruiting selection process, which often attracts public attention. Regardless of their purpose to grow up as police dogs, puppies provoke an automatic “awe” response from viewers. Police departments feed off this response and frequently engage the public with their recruits (e.g., name the newest recruits, canine calendars, and canine social media pages). Police canines benefit police departments. However, masculinity posts can blur the real intent behind recruiting police canines. While posts about the newest recruit appear harmless, most department introductions revealed a message. Recruits are selected for their ability to track, hunt, and apprehend.

### *Historical Policing*

Historical representation of police canine was not a prevalent theme on department social media pages, making up only 2% of police canine representation. Posts that focused on historical policing frequently described the canine unit’s inception and how it [compares](#) to the force today (EPS Instagram, July 18, 2019; OPP Instagram, February 21, 2019). The OPP often posted about the history of its canine unit, promoting the OPP Museum in Orillia or their Canine Calendar. These posts archived photos of the canine unit, caption the photo with the hashtag [#ThrowbackThursday](#) or [#FlashbackFriday](#), and some fast facts about the OPP canine unit (OPP

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Instagram, November 21, 2019; OPP Instagram, July 12, 2019). It was common for OPP historical policing posts to showcase the roles and duties of police canines in public safety and crime prevention; [one post](#) featured PSD Thor, a German Shepherd, and his handler Gary, “at a training demonstration in 1969 (OPP Instagram, July 9, 2020).

Other departments, such as EPS, often regrammed posts from other police-related social media accounts, like Archives of EPS. Much like Twitter’s retweet feature, regramming allows a user on Instagram to share another account’s content to their own page. Regramming requires the use of a secondary app. Like modern-day canine representations, archived photos showed all aspects of being a police canine. [For example](#), PSD Sarge was EPS’s first police dog and pictured at his 1960s training graduation (EPS Instagram, June 18, 2020). EPS also utilized the hashtag #throwbackthursday when sharing posts related to police canines’ history. Followers often commented on these posts in admiration of police canines, frequently using “heart” and “heart-eyed” emojis. Notably, police departments could be seen engaged with followers in the comments section. Departments often replied to questions asked by followers. These questions usually consisted of clarifying which canine was pictured or facts about a particular unit (e.g., Sarge was the first police dog in Edmonton, a comment from EPS explained).

Historical policing plays a critical role in police canine representations. Archive photos have become popular on social media, with many accounts (organizational or individual) sharing such content. Some organizations dedicate an entire account to sharing archived photos (e.g., Edmonton Police Archives). Posts on historical policing centralized on the evolution of police canine units. The role and expectations of policing have drastically changed since their inception, like the introduction of police canines. The use of canines in policing lead to the development of many modern programs seen today, such as canine recruiting, kids programming, and mascots, among others. While there is no doubt that the use of canines and their relationship with handlers and the force is authentic, strategic image management shows police dogs as positive forces and omits the violence and harm of policing. While it is difficult for archived photos to be fantastical, police departments know police canines are often a beloved aspect of policing and are effective at conveying social media communications that encourage positive interactions with the public.

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### *Distraction*

The predominant theme of police social media representations was distraction, accounting for 40% of posts. Generally, posts coded as distraction were cross-posted with the themes of birthday, retirement, and holidays. For example, Hamilton shared a photo of [PSD Chase](#), “[who] wants to add learning to drive [car emoji] to his New Year’s Resolution. We believe old dogs [dog emoji] can learn new tricks! #HamOnt #policedogs #k9” (HPS Instagram, January 8, 2019).

Many police canine posts were classified as “distraction posts” throughout our analysis of police social media. It became clear that the use of dogs on police social media is often a tool wielded by police public relations units to humanize police departments. This idea of humanizing police through the use of dogs is emphasized by the fact that many police departments have created social media pages solely dedicated to showcasing their dogs.

Communications about police canines included photos and captions which showcased PSD, on and off duty, often engaging in non-police related activities such as enjoying themselves in the snow or laying around chewing on a toy. Posts classified as a distraction created a response of awe or amusement, often with comments from followers such as “so adorable,” “handsome,” and various emojis such as heart, heart eyes, and fire. Sometimes, departments engaged with the community through distraction posts by introducing new puppy recruits. This tool appears to be successful as distraction posts received the most engagement by the public. However, the large public engagement is not surprising because when departments post “cute” dog photos, it is expected to receive a larger response as dogs trigger a positive emotional response. Several studies have examined the psychological response between human and dog interactions. The interaction between dogs and humans leads to a decrease in cortisol levels and an increase in oxytocin (Beetz, et al., 2012; Handlin et al., 2012). Interactions with dogs have also been associated with reduced feelings of loneliness, trust, empathy, and a positive mood (Beetz et al., 2012).

Distraction posts helped showcase police dogs beyond the line of duty and present them in a relatable and familiar way to the public. In one instance, an Edmonton police officer and his canine working the night shift were featured in a Facebook post with several [selfies](#) from the duo; most often, the canine was seen [licking his handler’s](#) face (EPS K9 Facebook, January 1,

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2019). It was not unusual for a distraction post to be without a caption; however, given the purpose and intent of this theme, distraction posts often speak for themselves. Police canine representations classified as distraction posts were meant to provide the public with an opportunity to engage in light-hearted fun with the “puppies” (comments by police social media followers often refer to police canines as puppies). Unlike other themes, distraction posts focused on positive moments in police canine units and policing, only sharing photos of canines featured in milestone events (birthdays and retirements), activities leading up to the holidays (dogs pictured in bunny ears, Santa hats, and winter accessories), and canines enjoying the elements (noses covered in snow, sunbathing, and laying in piles of leaves). Most importantly, distraction posts shared with the public show police canines both at work and play, sharing experiences of these canines on the job and at home – spending their off-duty time as a family companion.

The first sub-theme that emerged in distraction posts was police canine birthdays. Accounting for 12% of the total distraction posts, canine birthday wishes were prominent throughout police social media communications. Departments varied in how they shared photos of their birthday pups; however, both the [young](#), old, active and [retired](#) PSDs were all given the spotlight on their special day (EPS Instagram, January 2, 2019; EPS Instagram, October 29, 2019). Birthday greetings often featured a sillier picture of the canine, many pictured in [birthday hats](#) and sashes (EPS Facebook, June 17, 2019; VPD Foundation Facebook, June 21, 2019). In some instances, the birthday canine worked a shift and was pictured smiling in uniform. If the working PSD were lucky, he or she would have a [“catch”](#) on their birthday (EPS K9 Facebook, July 10, 2020). These posts were cross-posted with the threat/danger theme because they featured the canines’ crime-fighting work. Other departments simply wished the canine a happy birthday, sharing a birthday photo of the dog, regardless if it was recent or old. The photo shared tended to be either a [professional](#) or a [cellphone](#) quality photo (VPD Facebook, February 20, 2019; RPS Instagram, July 2, 2019). Birthday captions were consistent between departments giving the canine a generic birthday wish (e.g., Happy Birthday to PSD [canine’s name]) and often included the PSD’s age. Some birthday wishes from departments included a line about showering the canine in [belly rubs](#), [treats](#), and [birthday wishes](#) (CPS Instagram, March 27, 2019; PRP Facebook, August 3, 2020; EPS Instagram, July 9, 2019).

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Besides birthdays, another occasion that calls for a celebration is a PSD's retirement. Accounting for 1% of distraction posts, retirement posts served as a means for the department to briefly [highlight](#) the retiring PSD's career and for them and the public to send their best wishes (TPS K9 Facebook, January 29, 2019). This theme included department [updates](#) on retired canines such as Edmonton's PSD Kane, who has hung up his police badge and taken on "babysitting duties" (EPS K9 Facebook, July 30, 2020). Whether the retirement post was saying farewell to a fellow member or providing followers with an update on a retiree, these posts received numerous comments from the public sending their congratulations or thanking the dog for their service. One [Calgary Police Service](#) post received 462 comments wishing PSD Mack a happy retirement (CPS Instagram, April 11, 2019).

Lastly, distraction posts were categorized into a sub-theme of holiday. From wishing followers a Merry Christmas to a Happy Halloween, holiday posts accounted for 5% of distraction-related police canine representations. It was common for police departments to share holiday posts in multiples (a function on social media platforms that allows the user to share more than one photo in a post), allowing departments to share several of their PSDs holiday spirits at once. Canines captured in holiday posts often wore themed attire such as [Santa hats](#), [bunny ears](#), and [Canada day gear](#) (EPS K9 Instagram, December 24, 2019; RPS Instagram, April 23, 2019; CPS Facebook, July 1, 2019). While police departments shared photos of their canine for every calendar holiday, even [Valentine's](#), Christmas was by far was the most shared holiday across all departments, with some even sharing multiple posts throughout the holiday season (CPS Instagram, February 14, 2019). In one instance, [Hamilton Police](#) shared a video captioned, "On the third day of [#Christmas](#) ... HPS gave to thee ... Three [dog emoji] training [music note emoji]," which featured three canines running alongside their handlers in Santa hats (HPS Instagram, December 15, 2019). While holiday posts often provided followers with a photo full of cuteness, these photos showed dogs enjoying the holidays both on and off duty.

Distraction posts were the most shared communications regarding police canines. Given the ample engagement on these types of communications, especially each police department's canine-specific accounts, it can be inferred that some followers engage with police accounts for the sole purpose of enjoying photos shared by departments of their police

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canines. Given the varied settings in which distraction posts were communicated, distraction communications had the ability to diminish and blur the context of the police canine representations and policing more broadly. Distraction posts tended to be light-hearted communications, featuring playful moments in policing, which police departments used as an opportunity to engage and connect with the community. The distraction posts are a camouflage for the many social problems and complaints facing the police institution.

### **Implications**

Our research examines representations of canines curated by police departments and how these depictions of canines influence perceptions of police. We show that police use social media representations of canines to help to bolster and enhance the image of policing. As Bullock (2018) explains in their study of the construction of police presentation strategies on social media explains, police social media accounts are manipulated, focusing on police-orientated aims. This is exemplified through the positive representations of police dogs, particularly when one considers how many “distraction” posts there are. Here, we see police departments posting about dogs’ birthdays, retirements, and celebrating holidays, and while these types of posts help to humanize departments these are limited and framed depictions. In one Peel Regional Police social media post about police dogs, an officer describes how the department turned to using their canines on social media to help mute negativity from the public regarding gun violence and police misconduct. Canines, as the officer describes, help “to show a more positive part of policing, highlighting the amazing work officers and their four-legged partners [do]” (O’Neill, 2021). In these ways, police social media use curates a fantastical impression (Hurley, 2019), focusing only on the good.

Beyond social media representations, there has been an uptick in instances where police canine handlers have been discovered using cruelty towards their canines in recent years. The welfare of police dogs is a serious policy issue. Many animal activism groups ask whether the use of police canines is animal cruelty. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has advocated that agencies employ humane treatment and training methods for handlers and their canines. Dogs do not sign up willingly for

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their placements. Whether they end up in a family home or working as police canines, all deserve an environment that will care for them.

All dog breeds have characteristics that enable them to have a joint working and social relationships with humans (Overall, 2011). It is important to understand how dogs learn and communicate – including the efficacy and consequences of handler interactions on canine behavior (Haverbeke et al., 2007). If police will continue to use dogs as instruments of social control, canine training should put the welfare of the canines first. Handlers who subject their canines to aversive stimuli, such as pulling on the leash, hanging the dog by the collar, scolding, and hitting, did not perform as well in exercises and were more distracted (Hiby et al., 2004). Police canine training should put the welfare of the canines above their performance, employing methods such as positive reinforcement (Overall, 2011).

Beyond the welfare of police dogs, research shows that dogs used as weapons are damaging to and terrifying for the community (Wilson, 2022; Saucier, 2017; Wall, 2014). The use of police dogs as weapons and the violence of aggressive dogs applied to already marginalized communities belies the fantastical representations of police dogs we see on police social media. When it comes to canines in policing, we find police dog social media representations are often used as a rhetorical tool to humanize police. This finding contributes to literature on police social media communications focusing on police rhetoric and metaphors used to boost legitimacy and trustworthiness (see Walby & Alabi, 2022) by curating mainly positive content that distracts or covers over the many problems that plague contemporary police.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

In this paper, we have explored how police dogs are represented on police social media messages on Facebook and Instagram. Our analysis shows how public police attempt to boost their legitimacy and status (also see Wood, 2020). Examining police social media use is important as more police turn to social media as the primary way of communicating with the public. Assessing police social media representations of police dogs is important as it reveals insight into how police frame and construct the use of force and police violence, as public police have used police dogs as a weapon in the United States and Canada for decades. Yet, the images of police dogs on social media are cute, cuddly, friendly, and community-oriented. This is a

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radical disjuncture for anyone who has ever come face to face with a police dog on the street or knows about the history of police dogs as weapons. This discrepancy between the actuality of canine use and the representation of canines on social media points to attempts by public police to manage their image and boost legitimacy using framed, skewed imagery.

Our research reflects previous findings in literature on public police and social media use. Police attempt to manage their image and create forms of popular culture that appeal to young persons (Wood, 2020). Public police curate images and messages to appeal to the public again for the purposes of boosting legitimacy (O'Connor, 2017; Schneider, 2016). Public police social media communications should be viewed as political insofar as police social media use has become a primary means of framing public understanding of police work and social control (Ellis, 2020). Bullock (2018) notes that public police construct presentations of self on social media and that these presentations represent a view of the world from a police perspective and that the legitimacy of police stands to be boosted by such representations. Occasionally, animals are displayed on social media to boost a sense of status or importance. Animals on social media help generate interest as followers tend to interact and engage with police social media representation of canines.

Our findings reveal that animals represented on social media tended to center around instances of tactical skills, training, and lighthearted fun, often demonstrated through cute and silly photos of canines. These representations, we contend, are curated to boost the legitimacy of police as an institution. These representations convey what Hurley (2019) calls fantastical authenticity. No doubt there is some authentic dimension of dog-human relations and police work communicated, but some of the affective images in these communications are also fantastical. We do not doubt that canine handlers love their dogs, and we believe that canines in many settings are companion species. However, in settings of social control, dogs can just as easily be deployed as weapons. The issue of police dogs and representations of their use requires further research from a comparative perspective and across cultural contexts.

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**Book Review: Meijer, E. (2019). *Animal languages* (L. Watkinson, Trans.; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). The MIT Press. (Original work published 2016). Hardcover \$18.99. ISBN: 978-0262044035. 288 pp.**

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With this paper, I present a review of Eva Meijer's *Animal Languages*. First and foremost, the text is groundbreaking by elevating animals into the philosophical realm and subverts the very speciesist hierarchy in philosophy. To begin, I provide a brief overview of the text, after which I analyze the operational and pragmatic soundness of the book's argument. I conclude by assessing Meijer's recommendations and find the work fruitful as it operates as a catalyst for future research into animal languages.

*Keywords:* animals, language, communication, hierarchy

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As a three-year-old, sitting in the basement of the church parsonage, I listened to the minister's wife deliver the Sunday school lesson. The thesis of the lesson was that God is love. Maybe I was ahead of my time or just totally missed the message, but when we were tasked with making a booklet of pictures depicting God is love, I drew pictures of my dog Cedric and titled it "Dog is God Spelled Backwards, Think About It." To this day my parents repeat this adage to me as it became a mantra of my youth. Some folks mark periods of their life through houses, relationships, or jobs but I mark mine through my pet companions. Like Eva Meijer, author of *Animal Languages*, I place great importance upon and value my opportunities to share companionship with animals. The tragic idea that only humans can possess language has always created dissonance with my own beliefs.

In *Animal Languages*, translated to English by Laura Watkinson, Meijer utilizes a multi-part philosophical argument and logical reasoning to examine animal language and communication. Meijer claims not to provide a comprehensive account of all animal languages, as she believes very little is still known about the types and languages of different species. Meijer aims to show the abundance of animal languages around humans and to explore how gaining knowledge about animal languages can alter the way humans think about animals. Meijer establishes the need for her claim by noting that in her own study of philosophy there was an absence of animals in the Western philosophical tradition. In general, thinking has been reserved as an activity for humans, about human beings. Additionally, the philosophy of language has devoted little attention to animals. Animal intelligence is usually measured in relation to human intelligence and not independently. Furthermore Meijer draws upon her own experience with animals to necessitate her claim: she proposes that most animals are willing to talk.

Meijer justifies her claim in the seven chapters of her text, as each chapter explores a different aspect of animal communication. Meijer studies experiments that have attempted to teach animals to speak in human language, and investigates animal languages in the living world. She further advances her claim by examining conversations between domesticated animals and humans, and the role of the body in thinking. Meijer scrutinizes the structure of animal language and the relationship between play and language. Finally, she assesses language in politics.

The text is littered with animal examples to further illustrate her ruminations. Meijer states that parrots are capable of learning a large number

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of human words, and uses the example of psychologist Irene Pepperberg teaching Alex, the parrot, human words. Alex learned 150 words over the course of this experiment. She also uses examples of chimpanzees, gorillas, whales, and dolphins learning vocabulary to support her reasoning. She relies on the ideologies of linguistic philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein to support her conclusions. Wittgenstein does not believe it is possible to give a definition of language, and believes the concept of language is related to the concept of game. Meijer tells us that Wittgenstein's concepts of language games are appropriate for thinking about communication with animals.

Meijer posits that there are different expressions of language by animals in context of their social function. To illustrate this, she notes animal alarm calls, greetings, identity, food and grooming. Meijer provides a distinction between communication and language in that most people believe animals are only capable of communication. Meijer then looks at animal domestication and uses examples of Chaser, a border collie, learning words tied to objects. Chaser's trainer/companion wrote names on objects for Chaser to remember them and when she heard a word she was able to locate the object associated with it. What is unique in this instance is that Chaser demonstrated linguistic proficiency without being forced to repeat words, thereby not taking a teaching approach of human language. This is also evidence of animal comprehension and thinking.

Meijer concludes with some recommendations. She warns that in philosophy there is little thinking with animals. She leaves the readers with a call to action that in order to discover the needs of animals, humans must do more than study them. Humans must talk with animals. Talking with animals challenges the hierarchy between humans and other animals and subverts oppressive power structures. By talking with animals, a new way of thinking about language can develop.

In my own experience, as both a human who cohabitates with two dogs and two cats, and as a facilitator of dog playgroups at a local animal shelter, I agree with Meijer that there is an abundance of animal language and it is vital to challenge the hierarchy between humans and other animals through thinking about language. In the text, Meijer notes that in domestication of dogs, when teaching a non-human animal a word, that the world of the animal and the human becomes larger. This does not mean that dogs and humans understand the word in the same way.

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To illustrate this she uses the example of philosopher and dog trainer Vicki Hearne and Salty, a pointer. Hearne taught Salty to fetch a dumbbell. Meijer notes that Salty made jokes with this language game by bringing a trash can lid instead of the dumbbell. I propose that this is not necessarily a form of language or communication and question the validity of Salty's "joke." Instead, I think this is attributed to supporting the aforementioned hierarchy. Humans are ascribing their own meaning to animal communication, thereby removing animal agency.

In my role as a playgroup facilitator at an animal shelter, I have a strict set of rules to follow. The purpose of playgroups is to allow shelter dogs, who are mostly separated for the majority of the day, to socialize with one another and learn how to interact animal to animal. These are all relatively domesticated dogs in the sense that they have once lived with a human. In my role I do not pet dogs, talk to dogs, nor try to extrapolate meaning from their vocalizations. My role is to back the dogs up if they communicate to another dog that they do not want to interact or that they are frightened. This is a space that centers the agency of the dog and is not a space for humans to ascribe meaning to animal communication.

During one playgroup session, Slash, an older dog who is very independent in playgroup, was continually disciplined (in the form of a water spray bottle) by a volunteer. Each time a new dog entered the playgroup, the volunteer immediately grabbed Slash's leash as though he would react negatively to the new dog, even though he never communicated this through vocalization or the body. The volunteer repeatedly noted every time a new dog joined the group that Slash, who would utter a short bark, was upset to have his peaceful playgroup disrupted. Meanwhile, Slash would be casually walking around the playgroup site, alert, sniffing, and oblivious to other dogs. This volunteer ascribed her own meaning and imposed her own feelings on Slash, much like Hearne believing Salty was making a joke.

Another dog, Dylan, barks each time a new dog enters the space and, again, the volunteer ascribed her own meaning to his vocalization. She alerted me to let me know that Dylan was stressed and could no longer be a part of playgroup. Rather than allow Dylan to communicate with the other dogs or strategically listen to his barking and read his body, she ascribed her own meaning to Dylan's bark. Much like this volunteer's experience with Slash and Dylan, I fear Hearne is ascribing her own meaning to Salty's

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communication. This is problematic as it only reproduces a speciesist power system.

By structuring her argument in seven parts, the organization is thoroughly sound and Meijer is able to justify her claim in terms of providing a comprehensive account of animal languages. Despite this soundness I find critique with Meijer's use of language and exactness.

Confoundingly, Meijer fails to establish an exact definition and delineation of communication and language. It is not until chapter two that Meijer attempts to define these terms. She uses the theory of other philosophers and biologists like Con Slobodchikoff and linguist Charles Hockett, but does not nail down her definition of language and communication in how it informs her argument. After presenting Hockett's criteria for language, the reader is left confused as Meijer further discusses language in terms of the body.

Additionally, at certain points in the text communication and language are used interchangeably, and according to chapter two language is an open system whereas communication is a closed system. Meijer relies on linguists and animal researchers for definitions and theory, but it is not necessarily coherent in that meaning from one area of study cannot transfer to the other. Meijer unfailingly uses examples of researchers and animals to support her argument but the examples do not remain consistent throughout the text. We see examples of bird language, primates, dolphins, whales, domesticated animals, prairie dogs, and more, but without consistency throughout the argument this makes it less syntactically sound. Additionally, communication practices among whales cannot necessarily extend to domesticated animals.

Pragmatically, the reasons and breadth Meijer articulates to provide support do showcase the multitude of animal languages. However, the numerous examples, topics, and justifications are too broad to be thoroughly investigated throughout the course of the text. Meijer makes her positionality clear in the preface of the text by sharing her relationships with domesticated animals in her life, and by finding pause with the lack of importance given to animals in her own study of philosophy. While she provides this positionality, she shares neither her theoretical background nor her ontological commitments as a researcher, which give pause to some of her research throughout the text. There is little attribution nor data to support some of the claims made throughout.

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At times, the examples given seem anecdotal rather than research based, which is perplexing since she does state in the introduction that she is using empirical research to explore philosophical questions. Language like “seem” and “appear” is littered throughout the text, which further delegitimizes her argument. When discussing British naturalist Len Howard and the Bird Cottage, she discusses how birds reacted to inflections and variations in Howard’s voice and that the birds appeared to understand Howard. This account is representative of the text. Many anecdotes are provided without attribution, theory, or data to support them. In some cases, the justifications Meijer provides are categorically incorrect. When discussing greetings between prairie dogs she notes that they French kiss when they meet one another to recognize if they are meeting a friend or foe. Rather, prairie dogs greet one another by touching noses and locking teeth when greeting. This is a small point but it does destabilize the overall operative soundness of the text. I also take issue with the voice used when discussing animals. If we are to subvert a hierarchy that disempowers animals, then using passive voice when describing animals is a misstep. Rather they should be positioned as agents in their own language and story.

Despite my critique concerning pragmatics, language, and soundness of the text, this is a fruitful text. As Meijer states at the onset, there are many animal languages and very little is known about them. This text is the catalyst for future research into animal languages. First and foremost, the text is groundbreaking by bringing animals into the philosophical realm and subverts the very speciesist hierarchy in philosophy. Meijer sets the groundwork for further exploration, particularly when it comes to exploring the ideas of Paulo Freire in the animal world, predominantly when it comes to domestication. Meijer references biologist Donna Haraway who articulates that dogs actively participate in the process of domestication. This raises the question if dogs have reached Freire’s concept of “conscientization” or are they merely participating in their own oppression? Meijer’s recommendations open a pathway to a continued conversation between human and nonhuman animals to challenge the hierarchy and develop a new way of thinking about language.

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**Book Review: Nocella II, A. J., & Socha, K. (2022). *Radical animal studies: Beyond respectability politics, opportunism, and cooptation*. Peter Lang. \$40.95 paperback (isbn: 9781433191572). 104 pages.**

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I begin this review by giving full disclosure. I received this book for review by Anthony J. Nocella II, the book's first editor after asking the publisher for a review copy but was unable to get one. I then asked Anthony because the book was a bit expensive to buy myself (especially for its length). Thus, Anthony offered me the book free of charge and politely asked me to write a review of it. I'm happy to do so as that was my intent. Thus, I was not only given a complimentary copy by one of the editors but I know Anthony personally. Nevertheless, I resolved to write this review as impartially as possible while being clear about my connections.

*Keywords:* radical animal studies, direct action, anarchism, activism

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While this book is part of the Radical Animal Studies and Total Liberation book series (see <https://www.peterlang.com/series/7024> for a list of titles and further information on each book), this book is meant to introduce the term and concept of *radical animal studies* (RAS) to and within critical animal studies (CAS). The editors are clear that RAS is considered as a subset of CAS and is therefore complementary to it (p. 5). This appears to be done to inform readers that RAS is not a departure from CAS in either theory or method. Rather, RAS could be viewed as more of a doubling-down on the radical tendencies of CAS, particularly principles 7 and 9 of CAS's ten principles (see Best et al., 2007). As the editors summarize, principle 7 has to do with total liberation, which refers to an always combined praxis towards non/human liberation (p. 3; see also Pellow, 2014); Principle 9 is a statement of support for revolutionary activists and activism, including illegal means. Part of this entails education as to the history of radical activism of social movements in order to learn how to best apply their lessons in the present (p. 3). So, essentially, RAS is highlighting and emphasizing the radical core of CAS. This is probably to help guard CAS from co-opters who wish to make CAS mostly or completely academic, a trend CAS forcefully resists. This is often attempted by those who are anti-revolutionaries, anti-anarchist, and/or anti-direct action. This book on RAS, then, can be viewed as a re-affirmation of CAS's founding principles.

To this end, the book begins (after an introduction by the editors) with a chapter by co-editor Kim Socha. Kim's chapter is exemplary even beyond this book as a piece of reflective writing that is at once partly self-critical and self-affirming. They are self-affirming in their overall moral stance towards liberation and activism, but self-critical in terms of their own ego and impulsiveness. Kim details some experiences from a year in which they were heavily involved in radical activism and lessons learned from it. Kim's chapter comes off as very mature and sober-minded. While being both self-critical and self-affirmative, Kim is neither self-deprecating to the point of nihilism nor self-affirmative to the point of being naive or hubristic. Indeed, it appears to be the point of the chapter to point out that Kim has had some successes but also some failures and that they can be used to be more effective in the future. This chapter is particularly important for younger activist-scholars who can learn from Kim's mistakes instead of perhaps learning similar lessons the hard way. This can save a lot of time, effort, and money, and end up being more beneficial towards those whom radical

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activists wish to help liberate. This is certainly one of the standout chapters of this collection.

The second chapter is by Will Boisseau and, similar to Kim's, takes critiques of radical activism seriously. This time the critiques come from "outside" the radical community. The critiques Will considers are those from other leftist individuals, activist or otherwise. Again this showcases reflexivity and humility. It is not always easy to accept critique. But Will's mission is to use such critiques to help build a better—more radical, more inclusive, more effective—revolutionary movement in solidarity with other revolutionaries. Will leaves us with five lessons or suggestions for radical activists: highlight the intersections of systems of oppression, emphasize class politics, adopt an invitational approach, practice solidarity without demands, be unapologetic and radical, and remember that actions speak louder than words (pp. 33-34).

The third chapter by Erika Cudworth and Richard J. White is almost a direct (if partial) extension of Will's chapter and advice. Erika and Richard propose that the use of humor in activism may be a highly effective strategy in gaining public support while not compromising on radical praxis. The authors note how both statistics and logical reasoning often fail to bring "outsiders" into the activist fold. But humor, they contend, may be an antidote. This thinking is reminiscent of Steven DeVries's (2016) assertion that fiction may be a superior vehicle for public education than nonfiction because

It is one thing to follow the logical premises of a deductive ethical argument... [such as] why the industrialized production of meat may have ethical deficiencies. But it is quite another to read of industrialized slaughter and imagine the blood and gore as described on the page... (p. 30)

Due to the "immediacy of such images" they may induce more of an affective reaction. Fiction can tell the story of real(istic) instances of abuse and oppression but with the "edge" taken off through the realization that the written words do not depict actual or literal wrongdoings (Poirier et al., 2019). This may be a mechanism for how humor could work in effectively raising public consciousness to socially sanctioned harm. Using humor as a tactic also has some historical precedent in late nineteenth century anarchist communes (Brigstocke, 2018).

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The fourth chapter is an argument concerning liberation theology and its tendency, at least in more popular writings, to lean towards a reformist politics. The authors, Kyle and Piper, urge liberation and animal theologians to support, embrace, and utilize radical direct action techniques. Kyle and Piper argue that such a stance is well-known historically and contemporarily in religious activism. Importantly, they point out how Christianity has often sanctioned violence of non/humans and upheld numerous oppressive hierarchies in the name of Christ but that it need not—and should not—do so. Like Will’s chapter, Kyle and Piper end with four suggestions for radical animal theologians.

The final chapter by Michael Loadenthal traces transnational, anarchist-inspired radical activism during the first half of the second decade of the twenty first century, roughly 2010 through 2014. Through numerous examples, Michael illustrates how insurrectionaries have used various tactics to strategically attack targets that are aimed at bringing down *systems* of oppression and not merely focusing on particular manifestations of systems, e.g., particular McDonald’s locations.

With these chapters considered, this is quite a provocative book. Each chapter challenges entire organizations to look more deeply about their history, think more critically about their tactics, and as a result, to act more radically. While authors critique individuals and groups, they also are responding to critiques made towards themselves, others similar to them, or organizations they support and have been a part of.

What is particularly interesting is to compare Kyle and Piper’s chapter on radical animal theology to another recent chapter on liberation theology by Sarah Tomasello (2022). These chapters came out in books that were published within about a month of each other, so neither had the opportunity to read and respond to or work with the other. Sarah’s point in her chapter is to argue that liberation theology should integrate animal liberation into its praxis, and that this integration logically follows from liberation theology’s own philosophy. Thus, Sarah’s chapter goes into more history and theory of liberation theology and directly connects it to human movements and social justice causes. Sarah also presents a wider range of actions liberation theologians can take, including taking direct action. Kyle and Piper focus almost exclusively on explaining and arguing for direction action. Sarah’s chapter is more of a bridge-building effort, while Kyle and Piper’s chapter is more “internal” to animal theology. But this is not to say

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that both chapters do not have clear echoes of each in them. All together they are quite complimentary.

Perhaps even more interesting is to put both chapters in conversation with an earlier book by Kim Socha (2014), *Animal Liberation and Atheism*. Kim argues that animal liberation should be completely free from religious influence on the basis that all religion is inherently (and thus necessarily, by their own construction) hierarchical. There is always a god or gods that are supposed to be taken as unquestionably more important than any other being. Thus, if one can accept this dualism, it is all too easy to accept other ones. This includes a risk of disinterest in Earthly affairs since the spiritual afterlife is considered highly desired and all that really matters. Thus, it is curious that there is no mention of this (at least potential) tension in the introduction given that Kim wrote a book where they took a pretty hard line on the subject. Granted Kim's book was written before Kim's year of radical activism written about in their chapter in the present volume and is eight years old now, so views may have changed. Regardless, I think further commentary on this would have been a valuable addition to the introduction, which, as far as I'm concerned, is somewhat short.

Also along this line is a chapter in another recent book edited by Anthony and Amber E. George. The chapter is titled "On the Dharma of Critical Animal Studies: Animal Spirituality and Total Liberation" by Michael Allen and Erica Von Essen (2022). Michael and Erica focus on Eastern religions' spiritual beliefs and their potential to influence CAS through the use of spirituality and mysticism as alternative forms of knowledge and speculation about the realities of nonhuman others. It's a fantastic idea. I must admit that I struggle with recognizing any form of religion as legitimate but Michael and Erica have a point about how to take inspiration from religion and use it for secular ends, without necessarily being religious oneself. Thus, it can be worth staying with the trouble of religion and animal liberation. The chapters by Sarah (2022), Michael and Erica (2022) and Kyle and Piper from RAS, along with Kim's (2014) earlier book are all excellent for sizing up these relationships for oneself.

By way of conclusion, I'll end with a couple critiques and a final evaluation of the book. One small issue I have is that I do not really understand the impetus for essentially coining a new compound term—radical animal studies. If the point of RAS is to emphasize CAS's principles 7 and 9, why does it need its own name, especially given the title of the book

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series this book is a part of? I understand what the editors are intending to do but isn't all CAS considered radical animal studies? Grouping two principles together under a new title also raises the question of why not the other principles? Are others going to be grouped together under different titles? To me, this could imply, to some, that CAS is accepting of non-radical scholarship and activism because RAS is the radical part, especially when RAS is described as a "subset" of CAS. This would be an erroneous conclusion but I believe it is possible for some to make. Admittedly, this is a very small quibble but many already co-opt, misinterpret and misuse CAS so the concern seems appropriate and open to extension to RAS. Yet, this has to do with critiquing what was left out, not the actual content of the book. Elaboration on the tensions between religion and total liberation, on the other hand, seems like a more substantial concern.

Erika and Richard's chapter is just a little long for its intellectual "punch." Their argument that humor can be an effective approach to activism is somewhat straightforward and is made in about one third of the chapter. A bit of this chapter is background information and covers familiar terrain. Such information is helpful to newcomers but is rather old hat for those familiar with animal liberation literature. Much of this chapter feels like extra material to read through before the reader gets to the good stuff. Turning to Michael's chapter, unfortunately I do not really see the point of it. It is largely a listing of various direct action strikes by anarchist and radical identified groups in several countries during the previous decade. It does comprise a historical recounting of radical activism and in this sense this can be interesting and obviously appropriate to RAS, but there is not much analysis or tying these actions together. The commentary at the very end of the chapter, about how the trend is moving away from attacks on animal exploitation industries is dwindling, is the most interesting part, yet very underdeveloped. Overall, Kyle and Piper's, Kim's, and Will's chapters are all excellent, mature meditations on and within a field that is definitely maturing—in a good way—essentially looking to become more radical and more effective).

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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 the 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.

## **Review Process**

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.

## **Manuscript Requirements**

The manuscript should be in MS Word format and follow APA guidelines. All submissions should be double-spaced and in 12 point Times New Roman. Good quality electronic copies of all figures and tables should also be provided. All manuscripts should conform to American English grammar spelling.

As a guide, we ask that regular essays and reviews be between 2000-8000 words and have no endnotes. In exceptional circumstances, JCAS will consider

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publishing extended essays. Authors should supply a brief abstract of the paper (of no more than 250 words). A brief autobiographical note should be supplied which includes full names, affiliation email address, and full contact details.

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