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Issue Introduction: Media Studies and CAS

Amber E. George

The articles in this issue explore how humans treat nonhuman animals and vegans through the lens of critical media studies. The essays investigate our duty in promoting CAS's purpose through discursive, philosophical, and sociological perspectives. A key entrance point for changing the attitudes and cultural norms underlying speciesism is through the media. Furthermore, if we want to change the cultural environment that permits nonhuman creatures to be eaten, abused, and slaughtered, we must question the most powerful creator of cultural norms – media.

Those involved with any social justice movement are often perceived as being on the fringe of society. Going against the established status quo, breaking social conventions, and generally generating social discomfort can result in significant loss of privilege. The result is mainstream media works to “Other” and marginalize the cause, dissenters, and message that diverges from the social order. Dissenters are labeled extremists, enemies, and violent even though their message is one of peace and the abolition of violence.

The reality is that nonhuman animals are repeatedly exploited in media, and also ignored in media analyses. The articles in this issue provide nuanced, critical examinations of nonhuman animals in media genres including newspaper, literature, and social media platforms. There is an abundance of intersectional theory weaved through these articles which makes these analyses useful for both media and critical animal studies scholar-activists.

As Annie Bernatchez contends in her article, “Animal Justice Citizen Activism in Canada: Paradox in the Politics of Sight,” Canada’s Animal Justice Citizen Activists (AJCAs) assist media in broadcasting violence farm brutality and engage in visible forms of civil disobedience. Perhaps the best way to counter nonhuman animal violence is to criticize mainstream media and ag-gag legislation for discouraging public discussions about animal violence and animal justice.

Norm George Riley’s essay “PC-ravaged clowns or plant-powered pioneers?” UK Newspaper Portrayals of Veganism in 2020” explores how UK newspapers portray vegans as hostile, non-ethnic minorities set to undermine the much loved hegemonic omnivorous

culture. Riley contends that the misinformation surrounding veganism and vegans is a hinderance to nonhuman animal liberation and justice for the entire cause.

Iana Fishova's article, "Reverse Speciesism, Subjectivity, and Becoming the Other in Carol Emshwiller's Novel *The Mount*," suggests that alternative realities found in science fiction might help us imagine a future where human animals are subjugated to speciesism, and animals prevail. If we can envision a future where nonhuman animals are the victors, nonhuman animals may be able to escape the current violence-laden reality.

There are also two book reviews in this issue, the first by Nathan Poirier covering the work of Marquis Bey - *Them Goon Rules: Fugitive Essays on Radical Black Feminism* (2019) and *Cistem Failure: Essays on Blackness and Cisgender* (2022). And another book review written by Ermanno Castanò explores Carlo Salzani's work, *Agamben and the Animal* (2022). Both explore important research valuable to CAS scholars and activists. And finally, the issue ends with a salient poem written by Lynne Goldsmith entitled "Animal: Living Soul."

Animal Justice Citizen Activism in Canada: Paradox in the Politics of Sight

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Abstract

Animal Justice Citizen Activists (AJCAs) enact a politics of sight to shed light on animal violence and to reach the broader public by facilitating the media's access to the targeted farms and engaging in visible forms of civil disobedience. This paper examines mainstream media representations of farm occupations in four Canadian provinces and political representations in two provinces where ag-gag laws have been passed. The analysis shows that the media-state nexus converges around the tactics of demonization and negative framing, undermining AJCAs' politics of sight. This suggests a paradox in the politics of sight: AJCAs efforts to make the suffering of animals visible are invisibilized through the derogation of the politics of sight. The article contends that mainstream media and ag-gag legislation discourage public discussions about animal violence and justice.

Keywords: activism, animal rights, citizenship, farm occupation, politics of sight, social justice

On April 28, 2019, Canada experienced its first farm occupation with the Meat the Victims (MTV) campaign, followed by Liberation Lockdown and Direct Action Everywhere's (DxE) Rose's Law campaigns in 2019 and 2020. Farm occupation is an overt form of a peaceful civil disobedience tactic that strives to draw public attention to animal violence on industrialized farms and to contribute to dismantling speciesism. To do so, concerned citizens enter a farm, live-stream, and gather photographic and video evidence to bear witness to the pitiful conditions in which the animals find themselves. The documentary evidence is shared on social media channels. Activists also sit in solidarity with the animals until the police are called. They sometimes rescue animals by providing them with care and safe homes. Additionally, Animal Justice Citizen Activists (AJCAs) invite the mainstream media to visit the farms during the occupation to publicize the animals' dire situations beyond activist circles. (Un)Surprisingly, as we will see below, this new form of protest has almost immediately been met with ag-gag laws.

The animal violence that AJCAs endeavor to make visible is what the animal-industrial complex (AIC) desperately wants to remain invisible. The AIC is a robust "partly opaque and multiple set of networks and relationships between the corporate (agricultural) sector, governments, and public and private science" (Twine, 2012, p. 23). In a compelling argument against carnism, Joy (2010) reminds us that the AIC's systemic violence and invisibility are a prerequisite for its profits. Equally, its ongoing profitability is secured by AIC actors operating in the political shadows on behalf of the food sector (Sorenson, 2014). Consequently, farm occupations are organized efforts to shine the light of publicity on the AIC practice; by enacting a politics of sight (POS), activists endeavor to make visible, hidden animal violence to produce socio-political transformation (Pachirat, 2011, p. 236). More specifically, using media to expose animal suffering on industrialized farms is a tactic to stand up against the normalization of animal violence for human food guided by the underlying ethical principle that *if people perceive the reality of food production, they will change their food habits*.

How is animal violence kept hidden behind the AIC walls? In the 1990s, ag-gag laws emerged in the United States seeking to criminalize open and secret investigations of sites where animal exploitation was taking place; though, in many states, these laws have been overturned due to their infringement of the First Amendment (Drake, 2021). Generally, ag-gag laws are characterized by the goal of protecting the AIC from direct and

reputational damage through the prohibition of gathering video and photographic evidence without the property owner's consent, entering a premise under false pretense, or misrepresentation for undercover work (Shea, 2015, p. 337). In Australia, "interference" with agricultural businesses is also prohibited (Gelber & O'Sullivan, 2021), and special attention is focused on the biosecurity risks activists may cause (Whitfort, 2019) while trespassing on the sites where animals are exploited.

In Canada, ag-gag laws arrived in 2019. At the time of data collection, only two provinces had passed ag-gag legislation. Four months after a protest action took place on a turkey farm in Alberta, the province passed Bill-27, *Trespass Statutes (Protecting Law-Abiding Property Owner) Amendment Act* (SA 2019, C23), in December 2019. Elements of the legislation include retroactivity to January of 2018, emphasizing the criminality of entering "private land" and working under false pretense. Furthermore, due to this Act, property owners do not "owe a duty of care" and are not liable for damage, injury, or even death of trespassers. As the Alberta ag-gag law title states, it is oriented towards "protecting property owners," showing no regard for the lives of animals.

Alberta would have inspired the Ontario Bill-156, *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act*, 2020 (SO 2020, C 9). The legislation prohibits anyone from documenting animal violence on private property (i.e., farms, slaughterhouses, and in transport vehicles), providing false or misleading information, or being hired under false pretenses. In addition, it authorizes the property owner to arrest anyone without a warrant with "reasonable force" while not being liable for loss, damage, and injuries that may be caused in doing so. Police officers are also authorized to arrest without a warrant based on a presumption of property interference, i.e., someone can be detained even if not on the property. Paradoxically, Ontario seeks to protect, as the bill's name suggests, "farm animals from trespass and interference to prevent contamination of food supply," as if animals on farms were safe in the hand of those who see their bodies as a source of profit. Thus, in both instances, the laws seek to prevent activists from making animal violence visible by significantly raising the cost of enacting a POS, in a speciesist manner, with financial penalties starting at \$15,000.

Canadian law professor Jodi Lazare's analysis of the case law in Alberta and Ontario, concludes that both ag-gag laws are designed to render invisible the AIC's horrific practices and constitute an infringement on the

freedom of expression, a right guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (2020, p. 104). This is consistent with other scholars and lawyers who have identified ag-gag laws as attacks on civil liberties (Drake, 2021; Gelber & O’Sullivan, 2021; Labchuk, 2020). As Sorenson (2016) argues, “[a]g-gag laws would not only affect activists but would stifle journalists investigating agribusiness, including those who are less concerned with animals than about public health” (p. 184), thus protecting AIC corporate profits instead of nonhuman animals. Ag-gag laws are a way to maintain ignorance about animal suffering and the surreptitious legal activities of the AIC (Broad, 2016; Fiber-Ostrow & Lovell, 2016; Wrock, 2016). This is precisely what a POS seeks to overcome by documenting violence against animals and encouraging the mainstream media to tour the farms hoping that the images will reach a wider public with sympathetic coverage and responses.

Boykoff (2007), a social justice movements scholar, argues that mainstream media, influenced by governments, tend to negatively frame protests by deprecating activists’ messages and actions, demonizing justice activists, or ignoring them altogether. Protesters are frequently portrayed as enemies, extremists, or terrorists and commonly framed as disruptive, freaks, ignorant, violent, and communicating confused grievances. Under these circumstances, Boykoff claims that the “media spotlight” is sometimes more harmful than helpful (p. 246). Moreover, as Sorenson (2016, p. 165) argues, images of institutionalized animal abuses are often shunned by media because they are “too graphic and disturbing” or, if they do publicize images, they are typically characterized as being exceptional, drawing attention away from the underlying violence of the AIC. Paradoxically, public awareness of ag-gag laws reduces trust in animal exploitation on farms (Robbins et al., 2016). A similar effect is known for undercover investigations (Schulze et al., 2021). Therefore, it is pertinent to examine the media-state representations of farm occupation and gauge if a POS has the desired effect on speciesism.

Although visual representations of animal suffering may be a successful strategy (Fernández, 2019, 2021; Laine & Vinnari, 2017), the interpretation of distant suffering and the moral responsibility to act in accordance cannot be reduced to just “seeing” as human rights scholars argue (Hill, 2019; Tait, 2011). Evans’ (2016, p. 47) analysis of the *New York Times* coverage of animal activism campaigns shows that reformist or welfarist

actions are presented more positively than more radical abolitionist ones. This is consistent with Sorenson's (2009) claim that radical tactics are more likely to be misrepresented and used to arouse public fear deliberately. In addition, Evans' study shows that the quality of media framing is more likely to result from a group's identity or reputation than from the concrete actions undertaken (2016, p. 54). Consequently, mainstream media would be more likely to applaud or belittle a POS based on AJCAs' reputation rather than the motivation underlying farm occupations.

This empirical article examines Canadian media-state representations of farm occupation in media coverage and legislative debates of ag-gag laws. This article contributes to critical and social movement studies and Canadian AJCAs who wish to adapt their POS. The first part outlines the data and method. The second part identifies critical themes in the media-state narrative. The last section discusses the POS paradox: despite the nonviolent tactics of concerned citizens, the media-state nexus frames AJCAs in terms of threat, building a narrative of fear and, above all, obfuscating animal violence.

Data and Method

This paper's empirical findings and analysis draw on a sample of texts from mainstream media coverage of four farm occupations in Canada: British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec, and Ontario. I performed a general online search (keywords: activist, protest, farm, name of the province) to build a corpus of news stories that ordinary curious people would get access to with a simple Google search. An additional investigation of local and national news sites archives created the corpus with a total of 48 news items collected from April 2019 to August 2020. Only French news stories were collected for the province of Quebec, which has the most French speakers. In addition, coverage by independent media, agriculture journals, and press releases was collected. I also watched live-streamed videos and post-action publications on AJCA's social media accounts to get a sense of the immersive experience of farm occupation.

The second part of the analysis focuses on ag-gag laws passed in two Canadian provinces at the time of data collection. I collected four Hansards items (introduction of Bill-27 and debates, exchanges, and interventions) from the online archive of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. I also collected seventeen Hansards items (introduction of Bill-156 and debates,

conversations, and interventions) from the online archive of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Although the findings and analyses draw on the two corpora described above, I also draw on in-depth interviews from fieldwork. I used Boykoff's typology of media frames, discussed above, used to discredit justice movements to perform an initial thematic analysis of the media and legislative corpus. Boykoff's categories were the analytical starting point, enabling the identification of key themes in the media-state representation of farm occupations.

In this article, farmers, veterinarians, agricultural unions and associations, and lobbyists are collapsed together under the rubric of Animal Exploiter Authorities (AEA) as they have the socially legitimate epistemic power to influence public opinion and governments. They (in)directly participate in animal violence and regulate exploitation standards.

Media Representations and the Politics of Sight

The analysis of media coverage shows a general tendency towards representing AJCAs' POS negatively. I identified two main tendencies that overall lead towards the suppression of AJCA actions. First, the mainstream media in the corpus gravitate towards not covering farm occupation or emphasizing AEA voices, though there are some instances of reporters questioning the epistemological power of AEA. Second, the mainstream media are more likely to frame AJCA actions as violent, disruptive, and ignorant while mistaking anti-speciesism for veganism and AJCAs with those of underground activities. As a result, the POS enacted by AJCAs is categorized as criminal and poses a risk to farm biosecurity. Moreover, when the mainstream media in the corpus cover farm occupations, they usually favor the economic interests behind animal exploitation instead of promoting a public debate centering on animal violence, which is the goal of the AJCAs' farm occupations.

Devaluing the Vision of AJCAs

Disregarding the Occupation

The most extreme form of disavowal of the POS is ignoring attempts to make violence against animals visible. Not covering farm occupation deprecates AJCA's work and limits potential public support. However, this denial only occurred in Ontario, where most mainstream media disregarded a duck farm occupation. AJCAs documented, via live-streamed video, horrific animal

abuse: ducks walking on a bare wire mesh covered in feces, some with their bills and wings stuck in the wire mesh floor. While some ducks were injured, others were dead. As the violence occurring on this farm was made visible on social media, the conspicuous contrast between AJCAs' footage and the farm's claim about animal welfare prompted Animal Justice—a Canadian Animal Law firm—to file a complaint of false advertising and of illegally misleading consumers with the Competition Bureau of Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

Disregarding the Evidence

When documented evidence of animal abuse in the standard practice of on-farm animal exploitation is disregarded by authoritative organizations such as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), the impact of the media attention secured via the enactment of a POS is curtailed. The British Columbia protest took place four days after undercover footage revealing appalling animal abuse was released by PETA. The media coverage reported that the local SPCA investigated the evidence of animal abuse from the publicly released footage. However, because the undercover investigator in the PETA video obtained the footage illegally, the SPCA did not press charges due to the impossibility of talking with the investigator. Consequently, the SPCA also disputed what was subsequently documented during the protest by participating AJCAs and the five media platforms allowed to tour the farm operation.

In Alberta, the media were allowed to film inside a turkey farm due to the farm's occupation. In a video filmed onsite by a support activist, the owner is seen holding a conscious and injured turkey by the legs and throwing the turkey in a homemade incinerator, clearly illustrating the normalization of animal violence and the trivialization of animal suffering. After the protest, a reporter from CTV news outlines the SPCA statement:

[w]e require recent information from an eyewitness in order to open an investigation. Social media posts or video posted online without corroborating information from a witness does not give us reasonable and probable grounds to go onto private property to investigate the circumstances of the animals. (Hunt, 2019)

Once again, it is the SPCA's disavowal of the evidence of animal abuse that is reported in the media rather than the gruesome images documented by

AJCA's. This illustrates how animal welfare authorities have the power to redefine "witnessing" to undermine the form of witnessing in which the POS is grounded.

Reinterpreting the Evidence

As with the SPCA, AEAs are in a position to define the scope and legality of animal violence on farms. Consequently, their presence in most media reporting can reinterpret the evidence of animal abuse. In the Quebec action, the live-streamed video shows a repulsive reality: pregnant sows confined in crates not much bigger than their bodies, pigs coughing, and piglets knee-deep in feces. Although there was clear evidence of abuse, in a news report, an AEA actor disregarded the evidence of cruelty and framed the protest action as an object of scorn and condemnation instead (Tremblay, 2019). In the Alberta action, some turkeys were injured, some sick, and others dead. Nonetheless, an AEA actor claimed that "[t]hose birds were in great condition. They were clean. They were dry. The bedding looks good. You can tell they were happy" (Alberta Trade Magazine, Western Producer, 2019). Such claims draw on the epistemological authority AEAs have to create a hierarchy of evidence where the footage obtained by AJCA's is discredited and judged inadmissible in the court of public opinion by undermining the quality and objectivity of AJCA's live-streamed videos. This is, of course, further reinforced by the speciesist culture of contemporary and mainstream Canadian society.

British Columbia media also used AEA voices to explain away the released undercover footage, undermining the value of the evidence produced via the protest action. An AEA actor claims that "[t]he video was taken by a trespasser at night, it has been edited and lacks context and understanding, but some of the scenes are of concern" (Lehn, 2020). When a reporter interviewed the farm owner, he insisted that "[s]ome of those pictures could not have even been from our farm. We are not sure" (Kane, 2019). Five months later, he claimed otherwise: it "was shot in secret by someone trespassing at night, and suggested that some of the images may have been staged" (CBC, 2020). When a reporter from an independent media, The Intercept, contacted the owner for further explanation, no details were given about which part of the footage was staged and what "would explain the many corpses and illnesses" (Brown, 2019).

A key AEA actor used by the British Columbia media is the farm veterinarian. According to one such veterinarian, the footage might have come from the “hospital area” of the farm, a section to which media was refused access. However, when interviewed by a reporter, he contradicted himself while seemingly defending his contribution to animal abuse: “[a]fter watching the [undercover] video, he said he spoke with the operators about removing some animals from their pens sooner” (Kane, 2019), and said to another one, “[t]here were some animals that might have been removed from the pen a little earlier” (Brown, 2019). He finally admitted that “the video shows ‘the worst light of the farm,’ but added the pigs shown in the video suffering from injuries and illness are confined to the farm’s hospital area, and those animals are being treated” (Boyton, 2019). His comments following the release of the undercover footage might explain why a section of the farm was off limits to media, and what one independent reporter who was on the bus with AJCAs noticed when comparing the undercover and media footage, the place appears the same “but lacked the cobwebs, corpses, and severely ill-looking animals” (Brown, 2019).

In addition to having their evidentiary claims undermined, AJCAs are frequently portrayed as endangering animals. Most media coverage highlights farm owners’ claims that AJCA protests cause stress, injure animals, and breach biosecurity measures. In the Quebec protest, less than a month after the occupation, the farm owner claimed that the pigs were infected by a “rotavirus” (Cameron, 2020). This disease is common among herds and quickly spreads through contaminated feces, a fecal-oral transmission mainly causing diarrhea. As documented on AJCAs’ live-streamed videos and social media posts, some pigs were knee-deep in feces indicating that the disease was probably in the herd long before AJCAs entered the farm. In one media report, the farm owner also claimed that the higher mortality rate was due to the protest: “[t]he noise and stress experienced by the sows had caused them to stand up suddenly. When they lay back down, they killed their piglets” (Cameron, 2020, personal translation). This dubious statement highlights the extent to which AEA actors will go to deflect public criticism of their activities.

AJCA as Threats

Criminality

In most media coverage of the Alberta protest, trespassing on private property (i.e., farm buildings) was stressed and likened to breaking into a private home. In this way, AJCA protest is yoked to public fear of high criminality rates in rural Alberta (e.g., thefts on farms). For instance, a reporter quotes the executive director of Alberta Pork:

most farmers also live where they work, making the issue one of basic personal security [...] protesters are “criminals” who should be charged. “Not only is someone stealing from you, now they’re standing on your property, putting you on the news, calling you a bad person – and your family has to go through all that.” (Stephenson, 2019)

Linking theft and harassment to the AJCA protest is a way of backgrounding AJCA claims, igniting public fear, and invoking the need for extraordinary legislative measures. Moreover, not only does farm occupation become conflated with rural criminality, AJCA protests are depoliticized by their association with vandalism. Following the Quebec occupation, two restaurants were vandalized in the province’s metropole. AJCA did not claim those acts as opposed to vandalism, but one media source subtly linked the vandalism to the farm occupation (Cameron, 2020).

It is expected that AJCAs are framed as violent protesters who intimidate, harass, and threaten farmers; the latter, rather than the animals, are represented as being the victims of violence. For instance, the Quebec farm owner stated that she felt criminalized and victimized by an ideology. She claimed that there was no good reason for her farm to be targeted. She added that her family and farm workers were fearful during the night of the occupation. However, a personal informant said the police were called just before 8 a.m. when the workers entered the farm. Nevertheless, the Quebec Minister of agriculture claimed that farmers were anxious and scared as they “feel attack[ed]” under their own “roof” (Perreault, 2020). It is essential to highlight that farmers do not live in buildings where animals are exploited, and AJCA has never been known to have entered a farmer’s house.

Public sympathy directed towards farmers and away from animals is often cultivated. As the British Columbia Mayor, quoted in Olsen (2020), said: “he wanted to see charges laid, saying the children of the farm’s owners were ‘terrified’ by the incidents.” Moreover, a police spokesperson linked AJCA protests with undercover activism exaggerating farmers’ fear: “[i]t’s the extremists who, more covertly, they go at night and let animals out, or

they take pictures of the conditions inside farms” (Brown, 2019). Ironically, farmers often communicate their willingness to engage in violence, as reported in the Albertan agriculture journal, the *Western Producer* (2019): “there’s a lot of us that are very fed up with this. And I and many others are worried that someone will snap at some point and take drastic measures against protesters.”

Biosecurity

Media demonization of AJCAs also includes labeling them as biosecurity threats. Yet, in every farm occupation, AJCAs wear biohazard suits. However, AEA actors still claim in all media reports that AJCA, “put the livestock at this farm at serious health risk,” as in the case of Lypka’s coverage (2019). In Quebec and British Columbia, AEA claims about “terrorism” and “agroterrorism” were conveyed by two reporters (Brown, 2019; Perreault, 2020). For example, the British Columbia farm veterinarian stated that a breach in biosecurity was worse than what was revealed in the undercover footage (Brown, 2019). In the same province and referring to the AJCA trial, Lehn (2020) reports that activists are “waiting to hear if ‘break and enter to commit an indictable offence’ will be determined to be ‘break and enter to commit terrorism.’” Trespassing on a farm to expose animal violence somehow implies terrorism. For AEA, biosecurity is key to discrediting farm occupation, as contact with animals is claimed to threaten their health, while AJCAs document evidence of diseases.

Legislative Representations of the Politics of Sight

The analysis of the ag-gag law corpus shows similarities with the mainstream media’s tendency to devalue AJCAs’ concerns and to portray a POS as criminal. This section shows provincial governments’ propensity to legislatively suppress AJCAs’ POS. With examples from the corpus, I illustrate a tendency to demonize and negatively frame AJCAs while supporting animal agriculture interests through ag-gag laws. First, Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) are inclined to leave unnoticed the purpose of a POS by emphasizing AJCA’s lack of knowledge about farming practices. Second, it is stressed that a POS threatens nonhuman animals, humans, the food system, and the economy. Even rural criminality is used to discredit AJCAs’ POS in one province. Labelling AJCAs a threat is a means to propagate fear. This justifies securing the hidden side of animal

exploitation behind a legislative wall, keeping it out of public sight. Such a narrative of fear echoes counterterrorism framing and depoliticizes the legitimate concerns raised by a POS, leaving animal violence unseen and undebated.

Erasure of the AJCA's Vision

A key strategy for undermining AJCAs' POS is positioning them as ignorant of farming activities. Some MLAs emphasize farmers' "special knowledge" regarding animal welfare ruled by AEA's standards. Farmers whose farms are occupied are framed as victims of illegal occupations and "slander through false narratives." This focused attention on ignorance serves, ironically, to position AJCAs as the sources of potential harm for animals and society, as the Progressive Conservative member (PCM) claims, they "may not be aware of or follow rules that are designed to ensure animal welfare and food safety" (Pettapiece, 2019, p. 6796), insinuating breaches in biosecurity, not the issue raised by AJCAs.

In addition to imperiling human and nonhuman animal security and the safety of the food supply, AJCAs are frequently portrayed as disconnected from reality. For instance, as when a PCM claims that factory farming is only found in the United States: "we have factory farming, but the reality is that over 97% of Canada's farmers have small farms, and they're family-owned farms, and they've been in business for generations. Factory farming does not exist in Canada" (Ghamari, 2019, p. 6818). However, as Sorenson and Matsuoka (2021) explain, "family and factory farms are not mutually exclusive. The term family farm simply designates those owned by their operators and relatives, specifying nothing about size or practices" (p. 155). All the modalities above of framing the ignorance of AJCAs serve to strip legitimacy from their POS.

AJCA as a Threat

Economic Threat

The provincial economy is a pervasive theme among MLAs' discussions. The agriculture sector contributes billions of dollars to the economy and provided more than 100,000 jobs in 2020 on about 77,000 reported farms in 2016 (Government of Canada, 2021). In the Alberta Legislature, farm occupations are portrayed as holding the economy "hostage," damaging the province's reputation nationally and internationally. In Ontario, a PCM

draws attention to the impact of AJCAs' protest on the farming industry's profits: "trespassing [is] disruptive to regular business operations, and that impacts not only individuals but our entire economy. People's lives, incomes, and families depend on business operations to continue safely and uninterrupted" (Barrett, 2019, p. 6799).

Hyperbolically, some MLAs equate domestic food production to national sovereignty, which is put at risk by AJCAs' protests. Thus, securing animal exploitation becomes an essential justification for ag-gag laws a PCM claims, "this legislation is needed to protect and support our thriving agriculture industry" (McDonell, 2020, p. 7023). Consequently, the threat to the agricultural economy, when not the nation's sovereignty, provides a persuasive justificatory umbrella to locate the needs of profits over the respect of animals' lives.

Rural Criminality

Chiming with the mainstream media narrative, farm occupations are conflated with rural crimes. An Alberta MLA identifies rural crimes, such as stealing tools and breaking and entering into a private residence, as a significant social issue. AJCAs' POS is folded into the modus operandi of rural crime; for the United Conservative Party member, "[t]he strategy of criminals when they're doing these crimes is to send people out to trespass. They case properties, they record what's there to be stolen, and they leave" (Sigurdson, 2019, p. 2576). What is categorized as rural crimes by the MLA is different from AJCAs' POS. However, conflating rural crimes with AJCAs' actions accentuates a sense of insecurity among animal exploiters who are framed as victims.

Threat to Security

The term private property in ag-gag laws conflates the meaning of commercial and residential property: farm and home, two different entities often located on the same land. For instance, Toby Barrett romantically frames farming as an ancient agricultural model, as opposed to the industrial model to which AJCAs are attempting to draw attention: "[t]hey live together on farms with their children, with seniors. The workplace is truly the home; the home is truly the workplace" (2020, p. 7631). MLAs repeatedly claim that farmers live where they work, implicitly considering a farm where nonhuman animals live as a human home, as in this example: "[f]or so many

farmers, these farms are their homes; they live and work in the same place. Just as I would not want someone entering my home without my consent” (Ghamari, 2019, p. 6818). This framing entirely ignores that AJCAs target buildings where animals are kept for exploitation and where farmers are unlikely to live. Conflating the meaning of farm and home also accentuates a sense of insecurity requiring a response.

While security in Alberta is constructed around private residential property, MLAs equate security with biosecurity in Ontario. A breach in biosecurity by trespassers can endanger farmers, employees, families, nonhuman animals, and the food supply. Conversely, MLAs draw attention to potential risks for AJCAs from farmers who are entitled to defend themselves against the “criminal offence.” For example, a New Democratic Party member claims he “got one really interesting tweet. It said, ‘I need some training because my reaction would be to take my tractor and turn over their cars’” (Vanthof, 2020, p. 7637). Ag-gag laws also provide a sense of protection to animal exploiters. The death of activist Regan Russell at an Ontario slaughterhouse two days after Bill-156 passed is a troubling example of how an escalated discourse of security and fear can lead to tragic consequences.

Concluding Discussion

The first farm occupation occurred in the Canadian province of British Columbia, but Alberta, followed by Ontario, has led the charge toward ag-gag legislation. Abandoning covert strategies, AJCAs have turned towards an overt POS, organizing to make animal violence on farms visible while seeking mainstream media coverage. Despite its open and peaceful nature, the analysis shows a media-state representation that converges on demonizing AJCAs and negatively framing farm occupations, attempting to stoke fear among the public rather than opening up a space for the public to “see” and debate animal exploitation practices. Under these circumstances, graphic violence against animals remains, for most, invisible.

Examining the mainstream media and provincial governments’ representations of farm occupations reveals similar rhetorical strategies that depoliticize the POS. Though the framing of AJCAs as freaks with muddled grievances (e.g., veganism, animal rights, and speciesism) was less present in the corpus analyzed here, an ignorance frame continues to distort AJCAs’ motivations while simultaneously backgrounding the issue of animal

violence. By either disregarding a farm occupation or reinterpreting evidence of animal violence, the message conveyed is that AJCAs do not understand “animal farming” practices, animal welfare, or biosecurity measures. When AEA excludes AJCAs’ documentation from a speciesist hierarchy of evidence, it undermines credibility, without which a POS cannot work. The reality of animal violence is subverted and presented counterfactually—as if animals had agreed to their lifelong bodily exploitation and eventual killing. Framing AJCAs and their actions in this way damage their reputations invalidates their motivations, and undermines the efficacy of a POS, contributing to maintaining the politico-cultural status quo of disregard for animal lives.

AIC actors often intervene in the media and vilify animal activists as a socio-economic threat (Sorenson, 2016, 2019) while also framing activists as irresponsible and negligent (Laine & Vinnari, 2017). Accentuating AEA voices secures what Mitchell (2011) calls moral disengagement towards animals ensnared on farms, maintaining a psychological and physical distance between civil society and AIC violent practices. The frame of economic disruption not only deprecates AJCAs’ visions and goals but unites most mainstream media and MLA representations in presenting AJCAs as a threat to the economy, human and nonhuman animal safety, private property rights, and biosecurity. Ironically, Jason, an undercover investigator, and respondent from my doctoral fieldwork, who worked in many Canadian farms, insists that farmworkers represent a higher biosecurity risk than any AJCA. For example, he noted that on a “broiler chicken farm,” an unsanitized tractor would be used to clean manure in different locations, and farmers typically visit other farms without wearing biosecurity suits.

Framing farm occupations as violent acts and associating them with underground activities is likely to confuse an uninformed speciesist audience. When MLAs conflate farm occupation with rural crimes, they fuel fear and foster a narrative where animal exploiters are the victims. Such form of victimization and criminalization of activists is identified by Sorenson (2019) as an AIC propaganda strategy. Journalists reporting AEA voices and MLA using a violence frame subtly or explicitly associate AJCAs with imagined fear associated with clandestine activities and, ironically, endangerment of animal welfare and safety. Not only does this blur the line between activism, extremism, and terrorism by rendering a peaceful POS as a provincial and national security threat, but it also dehumanizes AJCAs. It depoliticizes the

bearing witness that they undertake. This is where the paradox of a POS is revealed: AJCAs overtly expose animal agriculture, but the mainstream media and especially politicians are nonetheless building a narrative of fear around farm occupation. They draw on rhetorical threats to justify ag-gag laws and deter public support without addressing the core issue raised by AJCAs, animal violence in the farming industry, and speciesism.

More alarming is that examining the institutionalized representations of farm occupations points to a powerful network of influence or what Sorenson (2014) calls a corporate shadow while investigating AIC actors in making AEA-oriented laws. The analysis of MLA debates shows that AEAs are well established in the Canadian political arena, suggesting a possible explanation for why media and legislative representations of the POS echo one another. Although AEA lobbies were not visibly involved in consultation for ag-gag laws, MLAs often express affinity with animal businesses, supports their “farmer friends,” participate in recreational killing like fishing and hunting, or are personally involved in animal exploitation. For example, an Ontario MLA proudly admitted he drove a slaughter truck while the PCM Hon. Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and originator of Bill-156, and his nephew, the Chief Opposition Whip, John Vanthof, both avowed coming from a farming family and having a “vested interest” in “animal farming.” Another MLA’s statement supporting ag-gag laws shows the links between AEA and political power:

[p]rior to being elected, I was an international trade lawyer, so I actually represented a number of farms, including some dairy farms, on a lot of trade matters. So, even though I’m not a farmer myself, it’s an industry that I have been intimately familiar with. (Ghamari, 2019, p. 6821)

MLAs’ networks are intertwined with the AEA’s, which raises concerns about the political motivation driving ag-gag laws. One may wonder if it is ethical for family members in the legislative arena to debate legislation for which they seem to have a personal interest in protecting. Consequently, speciesism is bolstered by those with the epistemic and political power to do so. As a result, it narrows the scope of credibility for those who resist the most normalized form of systemic oppression.

As demonstrated in the analysis of the MLA debates, it is clear that ag-gag laws are built on the agriculture sector’s concerns and their frustration

over trespassing and “other interruptions” and the lack of legal convictions. For instance, one PCM captures the AEA’s distress and concern: “this legislation has been developed in response to the real concerns of Ontario farmers and business operators. Given the urgency of the circumstances expressed by the agriculture sector” (Barrett, 2019, p. 6799). The cardinal position of AEA in MLA debates is legible through multiple and repetitive supportive quotes. In Ontario, for instance, often quoted AEAs were the Ontario chicken farmers, dairy farmers, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, ROMA, Food and Beverage Ontario, Ontario Pork chair, and the Ontario Livestock Transporters’ Alliance. Such pervasive networks and lobbying raise the question of the extent to which provincial legislatures are captured by the agriculture sector and how powerful AEA interests overshadow the interests of other citizens—and nonhuman animals. If Robbins et al. (2016) show that a majority of citizens disapprove of ag-gag laws, as it seems to reduce trust in farming practices, what would they think of AIC corporate actor’s shadows hovering over political legislative decisions?

To draw on Deckha’s (2018) words, animal suffering is overshadowed by legal invisibilization. While Dawn (2004) claims that the media is crucial for generating discussion about animal violence, the analysis presented here suggests that the narrative of fear that is used to represent farm occupations is likely to prevent potential sympathizers from engaging in and supporting actions that make visible animal violence on farms and critically reflecting about speciesism; not to exclude the high cost of participation imposed by ag-gag laws. Legal invisibilization of animal violence maintains a social structure of denialism of animal suffering. Sorenson and Matsuoka (2021) explain that institutionalized denialism is a discursive tactic that disavows animals as victims, vilifies animal activists, and negates human moral duties towards nonhuman lives. For Anita Krajnc (2017), originator of Toronto Pig Save and the Save Movement, bearing witness to violently exploited animals is a civil and moral obligation; it “brings the individuality of the animals into the foreground” and *compassion is not a crime* (p. 480). While critical animal studies agree with Krajnc, bearing witness is usually met with greater public sympathy when exposed to human-to-human violence. Bearing witness to human violence against nonhuman animals does not seem to achieve the same empathetic reaction, leading to indifference and misunderstanding (Bernatchez & López, under review). Consequently, at this

stage of the POS, it is uncertain if the strategy is effective or counterproductive, and more research is needed. However, this article demonstrates that the broad public does not truly “see” animal violence occurring in the AIC behind the scenes and is unlikely to reflect on their speciesist participation in animal suffering.

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Reverse Speciesism, Subjectivity, and Becoming the Other in Carol Emshwiller's Novel *The Mount*

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Abstract

The concepts of speciesism, subjectivity, and becoming the Other are perfectly illustrated in sf literature that speculates on social and ethical problems, creates alternative worlds, overcomes anthropocentric perceptions, projects the experience of the Other, and represents reverse speciesism against humans. In this paper, I analyze Carol Emshwiller's novel *The Mount* in which I focus on the master–slave relationship between two species, speciesist discrimination and oppression that is based on a hierarchy of senses, the concept of companionship, bodily regulations against humans, the concept of freedom, and the experience of becoming the Other. I argue that the Hoots' exploitation is justified by essentialist arguments and ostensible kindness and that both Charley and Little Master undergo a mutual becoming the Other in which the master puts himself in the shoes of the Other and learns how to live without exploiting the Other. The sf novel perfectly represents the life and experience of riding mounts, humans' speciesist justification for the exploitation of other species, the need for reconsidering anthropocentric metaphysics of subjectivity, and possible ways to embrace and ethically become the Other.

Keywords: speciesism, science fiction, subjectivity, becoming the Other, mount, exploitation

In the metafictional novella *The Lives of Animals*, written by South African novelist J.M. Coetzee in 1999, the main character, Elizabeth Costello, is giving a lecture on philosophy, literature, and animal cruelty, where she notes that “The question that truly occupies him [ape], as it occupies the rat and the cat and every other animal trapped in the hell of the laboratory or the zoo, is: Where is *home*, and how do I *get* there?” (1999, p. 30). What might be going through the minds of animals in slaughterhouses, factory farms, circuses, the entertainment industry, and labs? If animals could find the answer to why they are where they are and why it happens to them, perhaps they would conclude that it happens because of species discrimination or, in other words, speciesism. The notion of subjectivity, particularly the anthropocentric metaphysics of subjectivity, is responsible for creating the human-animal boundary, where only humans are placed in the realm of ethics because of their “unique” possession of humanlike languages and consciousness. The concept of “becoming the Other” or “becoming animal,” devised by philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, expresses ethical connections between diverse entities and demonstrates the moral responsibility of acknowledging the subjectivity of the Other.

In this paper, I analyze these philosophical notions in the science fiction novel *The Mount*, that Carol Emshwiller wrote in 2002. I focus on the concepts of reverse speciesism, master–slave relationship, “kindness,” pets and companionship, regulations of subaltern bodies and languages, childhood and animals, subjectivity, and becoming the Other and look at the system of oppression and exploitation against humans based on the reversed speciesist hierarchy, the forms of subduing the Other, subaltern attempts to find their subjectivity, freedom, and independence from masters, and the realization of becoming the Other between different species. Science fiction (sf) literature, more than any other genre, conveys meanings of otherness, becoming the Other, alterity, transformative subjectivities, interconnections, communication between diverse entities, and representations of minorities. Sf performs new formations of “social imagination” with diverse connections among various entities and “a different conceptualization of social existence, inclusive of physical and material existence” (De Lauretis, 1980, p. 161). Sf has evolved as a human dream to reconstruct a world with other species and entities, to imagine alternative lives with dystopian or utopian conceptions, and to find connections with other organic or non-organic creatures. According to Sherryl Vint, who works in the field of human–animal studies

and science fiction, sf's conceptions of otherness and from these perspectives presents new possible ways of human–animal relations and proposes interspecies solidarity based on the novel's focus on the possibilities of minorities' resistance and liberation with equal becoming the Other and acknowledging diverse subjectivities.

Reverse Speciesism and Subjectivity

Before writing the novel, Emshwiller had taken a class in the psychology of prey animals and then wanted to explore the possibility of a prey animal riding a predator (*Fantastic Metropolis*, 2002). Emshwiller's intention did not include only the critique of speciesism; the author wanted “the mounts to stand for any oppressed group” (ibid.). This paper focuses mainly on animal oppression, and the analysis of the novel is formed through an anti-speciesist and vegan lens.

In the 1970s, psychologist and animal rights advocate Ricard Ryder coined the term "speciesism," which was popularized by moral philosopher Peter Singer in his book *Animal Liberation* (2002). According to Singer, “speciesism” is “a prejudice or attitude of bias in favor of the interests of members of one's own species and against those of members of other species” (2002, p. 6). Singer and other moral philosophers said that an animal's welfare and subjective existence are based on whether or not they are used or killed for human purposes. According to the speciesist hierarchy, which reinforces species boundaries, humans are defined as subjects as ends in themselves and animals as objects as means to humans' ends. Speciesism demarcates these boundaries between humans and animals by creating a dual system of ethics in politics, science, culture, philosophy, and other forms of human activity. It establishes the concepts of “we” and “they,” proposing that “we” can treat “them” the way we cannot treat “us” because “their” species is different from “ours” and that humans should distinctly highlight this line. Philosopher Matthew Calarco, who works at the intersection of continental philosophy and animal/environmental philosophy, establishes that the human–animal distinction should no longer exist and prosper because of its hierarchical force that maintains who has the right to express their embodied form of living and who is the object to be subdued for others (2008, p. 63).

Practices of reversed discrimination against humans are widely illustrated in science fiction stories and novels. The Martians, who need human blood to survive, take over the world in *The War of the Worlds*

(1897), a book by H.G. Wells. In Michel Faber's novel *Under the Skin* (2008), the aliens capture human male hitchhikers, make meat out of them, and send this "delicacy" to their planet for the rich. In science fiction novels, the replacement of the species hierarchy, in which humans are conquered and ruled over by aliens, is shown as human anxiety and fear of being killed, tortured, or enslaved, all of which are things that humans repeatedly do to other species on Earth. This reverse position of speciesism that humans may experience only in imaginary worlds is shown in *The Mount* in which humans are enslaved and mistreated for the needs of aliens.

In *The Mount*, people are placed in the position of subaltern species, similar to the position of mounts, horses, and companion animals. The title of the book shows that it is about how a subjugated species, in this case humans, are used as mounts. The aliens, the Hoots, who conquered humans, possess capacities superior to those of humans and exploit them. They have big ears and eyes, strong hands, and well-developed senses that allow them to conquer the Earth (or a specific area), enslave humans, and use them as riding mounts. Hoots are herbivores and exploit humans only as a means of transport. They cannot get around by themselves because of the weak muscles in their legs, and they use humans when they need to move. The main character and the first-person narrator is an eleven-year-old human boy, Charley, who was brought up as a mount for Hoots. All his life, the boy knew that humans' existence was only to serve Hoots and to be a proper mount for the masters. He loves being a mount, running in races, winning trophies, and doing his job for Hoots, which is his life's purpose. He is the mount of the future ruler of Hoots, Little Master, who is also a child. However, Charley feels some limitations and unfairness for himself and other humans. Still, he cannot understand the problem because of his lack of knowledge about other possible ways of human existence. Once he encounters the "uncivilized" wild human mounts, who live freely without Hoots and masters, Charley starts to understand that human existence and the meaning of life can differ from what he was taught.

Hoots developed a system of oppression based on their understanding of dependency and kindness. They convince themselves and humans that this master-slave relationship is good for humans because "we're not against you, we're for" (Emshwiller, 2002, p. 1). Moreover, their explanation goes further to the meaning of humans' and Hoots' existences when "we're built for you and you for us" (ibid.). Hoots protect their system of exploitation by

using an essentialist speciesist belief that some species are born for others, that without masters, a subaltern group will not survive, and that their existence depends on their masters' needs and wishes: "without us you'd not exist" (ibid., p. 2). This dependency works only for the good of those who are superior in a hierarchy of beings. While for a subordinate group, it is the way to be tamed and enslaved by thinking that they exist only to serve their masters. Hoots can speak with humans in the same language and persuade humans and themselves of the righteous nature of their relationship. The meaning and purpose of human mounts' lives depend entirely on serving Hoots: "We *were* made for exactly this, for carrying hosts" (ibid., p. 54). Hoots imposed this servile occupation on humans and made them believe that their life's purpose is to be animate means of transport for their superior masters who determine their mounts' entire existence, separate their families, and decide whom they can love and breed with. Charley constantly questions himself about what he was born for "what it means to be a human being" and what freedom and the meaning of his life is (ibid., p. 160).

The concept of freedom is one of the most prominent in the novel. Charley encounters two kinds of humans: the Tame, who are proper human mounts for Hoots, and the Wild, who escaped from the stalls and started to live in the forest without Hoots' control. The place where Charley was living and training with his Little Master is suddenly conquered by the Wild, who kill all the Hoots and destroy their settlement. Charley manages to save Little Master and find a way for them to live together while they ponder their new situation. Charley misses his former comfortable conditions, tasty food, and civilized way of life. When he and Little Master get to the settlement of the Wild humans, Charley feels that he is somewhere between the worlds in that both are not his choice, but he has to decide which of them to defend. Freedom in his life with Hoots was limited by the walls of his stall: "you are free – free in your stalls for a part of every day" (ibid., p. 3). For Hoots, it is important to create this imaginary image of freedom for their slaves, partly for themselves and partly for humans.

With the Wild humans, Charley also understands that their meaning of freedom is not close to his because there are no hierarchies between them, everybody is equal and free, decisions are made by voting, and everybody has an equal vote, but they have to live in uncomfortable conditions, get themselves tasteless food, and wean themselves from the life where everything is decided for you. Charley realizes he does not belong to this new

free world yet but cannot return to his former dependent life under Hoots' control. This free spirit with the Wild humans affects Charley's relationship with Little Master; if in the beginning Charley obeys Little Master implicitly and does what his master wants, then in the forest Charley realizes his freedom and independence and understands that Little Master is just a helpless baby: "You're just a baby and you know it. You need me a lot more than I need you" (ibid., p. 71). The master–slave relationship is based on the masters' actual need for the Other not only physically to survive but also to determine their boundaries and identity as a master against a subaltern group (Plumwood, 2003). More-than-human animals do not need humans, except for pets and domesticated animals that cannot live independently without human help because of breeding. While humans built the whole system of other species' oppression in food, science, medicine, clothes, entertainment, and other industries and are dependent on this system, they are not ready to give it up. Charley acknowledges that he does not need his Little Master at all. However, they are very close and supportive of each other, and instead of distancing themselves, they try to reconsider their unequal relations and find new forms for their friendship.

The master–slave model is an important and tragic part of Black history, Black resistance, and the abolition movement. Emshwiller was worried that readers would understand *The Mount* as a representation of only race relations and Black slavery and wanted a broader perspective on oppression in the novel (*Fantastic Metropolis*, 2002). It is important not to simply compare Black oppression to more-than-human oppression, as is often done in animal rights discourse and animal welfare campaigns. Scholar activists Aph Ko and Syl Ko state that these oppressions are not the same, but that they all come from "systemic white human violence" (2017). European white domination created the human/animal, civilized/wild, and tamed/wild dualisms "along racial lines" by making it clear that only white people are real humans (ibid.). The novel shows how the dominance and oppression of alien masters are based on species-based dualisms. It also shows how dualisms are created within different groups of slaves, such as the Wild and the Tame or Seattle and "nothing," and how "proper" humanity and "abnormal" humanity are defined.

Apart from the mutual interdependence of aliens and humans, Hoots established the maxim of "kindness" in their relationship with humans, in which Hoots bring "health and happiness" to humans, and human mounts are

“recipients of our kindness” (Emshwiller, 2002, p. 2). This principle of kindness makes an actual master–slave relationship look like something that was chosen both by Hoots and humans. Matthew Chrulew, in “An art of both caring and locking” that there is a master–slave relationship in which pets have to obey humans and do whatever their masters want them to do, while humans control the pets’ lives and can put animals down whenever they want. Hoots want “to make them love us” to keep humans benign and themselves superior simultaneously (ibid., p. 2). It brings to mind an ambiguous concept of companionship between humans and animals that was analyzed by post-humanist philosopher Donna Haraway in her works *The Companion Species Manifesto* (2003) and *When Species Meet* (2007).

Zipporah Weisberg, a scholar in critical animal studies, argues that Haraway’s ethics of companion species is established on the instrumentality of animals and domination of humans (2009). For instance, Haraway supports dog training as “total control in the interest of fulfilling human intentions” and asserts that laboratory animals are free to cooperate in experiments (2007, p. 44, p. 73). Haraway’s understanding of companionship between humans and animals is derived from “the anthropocentric logic of mastery” where “humans are the *users* and nonhumans are the *used*” (Weisberg, 2009, p. 28). In the same manner of the “ethical” explanation, Hoots perceive their companionship with human mounts as follows: “we are two of one single kind, companions about to take a companionable outing. Surely as much fun for you as for me” (Emshwiller, 2002, p. 4). Companion animals and pets, as animal rights scholar Gary Francione claims it, lawfully are “nothing more than commodities” without any fundamental innate value (2007, 9). Human mounts are not free because of their commodified status for the masters and inequality in their relationship; they unwillingly participate in the instrumental dominion, and Hoots, under the guise of kindness and care, force humans to obey and serve them. I do not argue that the whole concept of companionship is fallacious since it is possible to realize an amicable relationship between species and “connect with and respect alterity without reducing it to an image of self” (Vint, 2010, p. 225). There are also many examples of interspecies cooperation and membership (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011), as well as scientific evidence based on cognitive ethology that social connections between different species exist without dominance and subjugation (De Waal & Ferrari, 2010). Cooperation

and solidarity can replace the master–slave model by transforming the feeling of kindness and abuse into the action of kindness and total abolition.

The ambiguity and relativity of Hoot kindness are shown by their behavior and ways of interacting with humans. Human mounts live in stalls without any doors or privacy, they are taught to be silent and obedient, and they are not allowed to love whom they want but only to mate with those who are chosen for them. More-than-human animals in our world can be diagnosed with zoochosis as a form of psychosis caused by captivity and confinement (Taylor, 2017). Incarceration of humans and more-than-human animals is a form of social violence that damages its subjects and others around them (Abrell, 2021). In the novel, there is also a specific group of human mounts who are totally outside of this guise of kindness and care, guards' mounts, who tried to escape from their masters to get freedom but were caught and afterward considered “worthless” beings (Emshwiller, 2002, p. 99). Hoots force the guards' mounts to have spikes in their mouths all day, which brings unbearable pain and torture and makes it difficult for them to speak afterward. Most of the time guards' mounts are in solitary confinement without any possibility of being with their own kind; it helps Hoots keep them in awe and drive rebellious mounts to insanity. The Hoots' rule of kindness as “the best policy” can exist only “behind the wires” with human mounts' obedience and with some exceptions towards those who want to be free (*ibid.*, p. 129).

When a system of oppression and exploitation functions, there are always exceptions in exercising power, in which masters choose who is worthy and who is worthless, but all the members of a subordinate group are considered inferior. This division allows masters to control and keep a tight rein on their slaves. Similarly, human mounts undergo physical and psychological suffering in their stalls. Hoots use leather straps to control human mounts and even can use prickers on mounts' toes – “how and if these are used, and when, depends, of course, on *you* (*ibid.*, p. 2). These “leather straps” show that more-than-human animals in the novel are subjugated similarly as in our world and exploited as objects of Hoots' usage, however, they are not active subjects and characters in the novel and only appear as ‘absent referents’ (Adams, 2015). In that way, Hoots shift the full responsibility of abuse and violence against human mounts to the human mounts themselves. Similarly, any punishment of a domesticated animal and

pet by humans is regarded as something that animals can avoid if they behave according to human expectations and wishes.

The societal expectations of disabled humans and more-than-human animals create the connection between normality/abnormality and discipline/punishment that are imposed on them (Nocella, 2012). There are different punitive forms against those who do not comply with and obey the regulations of neurotypical society (Houston and Frith, 2000). Humanlike “normal” consciousness, behavior, and languages define the borders of “normality,” while in the novel, Hootlike superior senses demarcate the lines between Hoots and humans. Speciesism, as well as other forms of discrimination and bias, is part of what Karen Warren calls “value-hierarchical thinking”: a superior group justifies and sustains the subordination of an inferior group because of unique characteristics and features that superiors possess and inferiors do not have, or they experience divergent forms of these features (Warren, 1987).

Hoots could not have been such perfect masters without a stable belief system that justifies and explains the enslavement and subjugation of other species. Hoots base their speciesism on the superiority of their skills and capacities of their senses: “they say you cannot even smell the sun” and “I’m sorry for your kind and your dull senses” (Emshwiller, 2002, p. 6, p. 8). For Hoots, there is a normal and logical hierarchy of senses in which they are on top and others, such as human beings, are somewhere below as creatures that are “poor in world” (Heidegger) and cannot possess power or their own subjectivity because of their “dull senses.” The concept of senses is an important part of Aristotle’s theory on the sense-perception of sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste that are included in the perceptive faculty of the soul and therefore, represent not only physical abilities but also the transcendental part of humans’ existence (1986). The soul is declared a unique possession of humans because of humanlike consciousness and languages. In the novel, Hoots chose their senses as a characteristic of the only carriers of superiority and power. Anthropocentric speciesism exists only as a form of justification for torture and violence against other species, and the grounds for it are always chosen by “superiors.”

In *The Mount*, humans are in the position of the worthier species; they are domesticated animals, still “*sillies*,” but their bodies are more valuable than their personality (ibid., p. 9). Hoots enjoy watching mounts’ muscles and admire their bodies when there is “the shine of you with sweat!” (ibid.,

pp. 7-8). For the masters of pets and riding mounts, their bodies are sources of exploitation that are alive but objectified and commodified; similarly, human mounts' leg muscles should be strong and look beautiful, and their noses have to be in an appropriate form, otherwise "it can be fixed" (ibid., p. 11). In *Politics*, Aristotle defines the nature of the slave as "the being whose work is the use of the body," while free human beings work in accordance to their soul and logos (1254b-18). The subjugation of the Other – human slaves, more-than-human animals, or fictional humans in the novel – is not only based on the usage and work of their bodies but also divides the different nature of labor done by dominant and subaltern groups. The body is the essence of restriction and subjugation of the Other; subaltern beings are never free to use their bodies, but it is a master who possesses it and can change its form and shape, castrate and exploit it, and exercise any power over it. The idea that someone is "primarily bodied" is always a reason to exploit and subjugate them, and this limitation "allows" superiors to use the Other for their own needs (Syl Ko, 2017). The "closeness to nature" of women, non-Western ethnic minorities, and more-than-human animals reinforces the notion of their subordination and leads to the assumption that they lack reason and intelligence (Gaard, 2002, p. 126). The logic of dominance and value hierarchical thinking, which uses violence and control to subdue "inferiors," is also connected to "somatophobia," which is disgust and fear of the body and is "symptomatic of sexism, racism, classism, and speciesism" (ibid., 138).

Apart from the bodily regulations of human mounts, Hoots are concerned about the mind and language restrictions of their slaves. Hoots do not approve of mounts' reading because "reading is not conducive to muscles" (Emshwiller, 2002, p. 2). The masters obtain unique access to knowledge and information, and only they decide what their mounts can know, think, and speak about. Knowledge as a significant source of exercising power and force is controlled by Hoots, and mounts are obliged to follow their restrictions because "you will never *fully* understand, but you must trust us that we *always* have our reasons" (ibid., p. 3). Moreover, human mounts are taught that keeping silent is the best quality of a proper mount because the activity of speaking fosters the emergence and exchange of ideas that may lead to disobedience, a reconsideration of their dependent position, and subsequent actions for freedom. According to traditional metaphysics of subjectivity, language is considered a key component that defines the

possession of a subjective mode of existence in living beings. More-than-human animals are considered to be beings without language or with limited ways of communication that exclude their subjectivity and agency. Yet, critical animal studies scholar Sarat Colling collects examples of how more-than-human animals are quite capable of “communicating through their resistance” (2021, 7). Writer and political activist Arundhati Roy explains that this resistance is put down by deliberately silencing the Other or by not hearing what the Other has to say (Sans, 2014). When in the short science fiction story “The evolution of trickster stories among the dogs of North Park after the Change” written by Kij Johnson, dogs get the ability to speak in a human language, the narrator reasons that

It’s a universal fantasy, isn’t it? — that the animals learn to speak and at last we learn what they’re thinking, our cats and dogs and horses: a new era in cross-species understanding. But nothing ever works out quite as we imagine. When the Change happened, it affected all the mammals we have shaped to meet our own needs. They all could talk a little, and they all could frame their thoughts well enough to talk. Cattle, horses, goats, llamas. Pigs. Minks. And dogs and cats. And we found that, really, we prefer our slaves mute. (2012)

Philosopher Giorgio Agamben asserts that “Animals are not in fact denied language; on the contrary, they are always and totally language. [...] Animals do not enter language, they are already inside it” (1993, p. 52). In *The Mount*, human mounts are restricted from speaking and getting new information, and, nevertheless, their acts of achieving freedom from Hoots are dependent on their ability to speak between each other about the concept of freedom, their subjugated position, unfairness, and the possibility of ending their enslavement.

Charley and Little Master are both children from different species and from opposite sides of the hierarchical system. Speciesism is not intrinsic to birth, but it is learned from society in childhood. Hoot children learn to treat human mounts with apples, strawberries, and chocolate, and at the same time, they learn that if mounts are disobedient, it is possible to warn them with a big leap and show that Hoots are ready to choke them. After escaping from the destroyed Hoot settlement, Charley is getting ready to make his own decisions. But Little Master isn’t ready to give up his right to be in charge, so he scares Charley with the threat of choking. This makes Charley realize that,

even though they're close friends, Little Master is used to being in charge and controlling him, and when he feels like his privileges and higher position are in danger, he copies this pose to show his power. In the book *Our Children and Other Animals*, Matthew Cole and Kate Stewart argue that human children “tacitly learn to internalize and reproduce the conceptual model and the skills of “correctly” positioning other animals, and therefore their “correct” relationships with them (to eat them, love them, spectate them, and so on) (2014, p. 8). Children learn the most common ways to treat animals by eating them, having pets, going to zoos, seeing animals in the news and on social media, playing with animals, and learning about them in school (ibid.). Through these practices, children get the basics and the grounds for the speciesist belief system that defines their relationship with animals as one with non-agential and objectified beings. In the novel, Little Master starts learning the other way around: how to acknowledge the subjectivity and agency of those whom you were taught are lower than you and are dependent on you.

Charley, as an instrumental human mount for the superior species, is also a child, and at the same time, he tackles the pressure of these two states. He is only eleven and is already considered to be “too old for having my mother with me” (Emshwiller, 2002, p. 17). When Charley is holding Little Master on his lap, he starts thinking about his mother and realizes that he also wants “to be on somebody’s lap too, but I never get to be” (ibid., p. 113). The interconnections between childhood and animal exploitation are clearly depicted in the novel and show that for the system of oppression, there is no innocence of age; the readiness to be a slave for a dominant being is defined by a master. Analyzing the childhood of more-than-human animals that are used in the slaughter industry, Cole and Stewart determine that

The great majority of exploited animals are infants or at most young adults themselves at ‘resources’ for food, clothing, play, entertainment, education, and so on. (Cole and Stewart, 2014, p. 6)

The Mount represents the speciesist hierarchy and oppression by superior aliens against humans in the same way that humans treat more-than-human animals, specifically, mounts, horses, companion animals, and pets. Hoots constructed a system of human exploitation that is based on humans’ dependency on the masters, the speciesist hierarchy of senses, and the Hoot understanding of “kindness” toward human mounts, with some exceptions

for those who are not obedient. Human mounts endure regulations and restrictions on their bodies, minds, and speech, while Hoots create the illusion of mounts' freedom and objectify their bodies in objects like furniture and toys for children. The science fiction novel is considered children's or adolescent literature, and, explicitly enough, Emshwiller shows how speciesism influences children from both sides of the system of oppression: how Little Master got used to his privileges, how he is not ready to reject them instantly, and how Charley is trying to find his way to the human meaning of life, freedom, and his own sense of subjectivity.

In Western philosophy, the idea of subjectivity is very important for figuring out who has agency, consciousness, and personhood and who does not. It is claimed that human beings are carriers of subjectivity and that each person possesses a unique form of subjectivity. The difficulty in accepting animal subjectivity and agency is due to their very different natures, as well as philosophical and scientific struggles to consider animals as autonomous beings and not as instruments or objects of an investigation. The foundation of humanist subjectivity is "the abjection of embodied animality" and the criminalization of bestiality in human nature (Boggs, 2010, pp. 100-101). Thus, subjectivity functions as a basis for creating and establishing boundaries between humans and more-than-human animals, reinforcing speciesism, and justifying the exploitation of others. In the traditional and anthropocentric paradigm of subjectivity, more-than-human animals are supposed to occupy the place of objects and have the function of instruments in the same status as plants, minerals, and bacteria. In this paradigm of thought, "the subject is never simply a neutral subject of experience but is almost always a *human* subject," and the concept of subjectivity evolves only its "*human* modes" (Calarco, 2008, p. 12).

In the second half of the twentieth century, postmodern philosophy challenged the humanist subject and declared the "death of Man." The question of subjectivity shifted its focus from the center of "always-already a subject," conventionally was a white, male, wealthy, heterosexual, cisgender human, to the periphery of the dominant subjectivity – women, children, people of color, the proletariat or precariat, migrants, refugees, homosexuals, transgender people, animals, and other marginal subjects. Philosophers such as Jacques Derrida, Simone de Beauvoir, Emmanuel Levinas, Louis Irigaray, Giorgio Agamben, Donna Haraway, Rosi Braidotti, and many others gave rise to the reconceptualization of the metaphysics of

subjectivity and questioned the conventional notion of subjectivity, which includes only some subjects and excludes others. Freud and Darwin's discoveries about human nature also affected how philosophers and politicians thought about subjectivity and "opened up a profound non-humanness at the heart of the subject" (Braidotti, 2009, p. 538). A potential decomposition of the human–animal boundary is a powerful threat to speciesist and anthropocentric metaphysics of subjectivity, which is sustained by institutional, legislative, cultural, philosophical, and social forces. Cary Wolfe, the researcher in animal studies and post-humanist theory, argues that

As long as this humanist and speciesist *structure* of subjectivization remains intact and as long as it is institutionally taken for granted that it is all right to systematically exploit and kill nonhuman animals simply because of their species, then the humanist discourse of species will always be available for us by some humans against other humans as well, to countenance violence against the social other of *whatever* species – or gender, or race, or class, or sexual difference. (2003, p. 8)

Wolfe shows that different forms of discriminatory practices and the notion of subjectivity are strongly correlated in that they nourish each other's dominant schemes. Metaphysics of subjectivity which eliminates animals and defines them as objects for the sake of subjects is a cause for many human problems, and the transformative force of subjectivity may be based on the animal nature of humans by embracing the animal as "our embodied being" (Vint 2010, p. 9, p. 208). Legal institutions built on the traditional metaphysics of subjectivity don't mind that animals are "full legal subjects," and "anthropocentric moral discourse" does not perceive animals as "full ethical subjects" (Calarco, 2008, p. 131). Calarco argues that "the notion of subjectivity has the potential to be used as a radical ethical and political concept" (ibid., p. 12). Reconsidering and reconceptualizing animal subjectivity may lead to redefining the meaning of subjectivity in its conventional sense and embracing all other subjects that are erased and subjugated by "superior" beings.

In *The Mound*, the Hoots' comprehension of proper subjectivity is based on the hierarchy of senses, and those who are at the top possess more agency, personhood, and the capacity to think and decide for the Other, and

to control and punish it. The body of the Other is also used to move, and the masters admire human legs and muscles because their own legs are “skinny” and “wobbly” (Emshwiller, 2002, p. 175, p. 8). Therefore, the Hoots’ understanding and application of the concept of subjectivity is based exclusively on their superior senses, consciousness, and knowledge, while their bodies are weak and less physically capable than humans’ bodies. Hoots claim that they are “superior in every way” and humans “should be happy to serve” their masters because humans are “just primates” (ibid., p. 3, p. 99). The Hoots’ speciesist perspective is very close to the anthropocentric concept of subjectivity, and it is more important to analyze how human mounts and Charley are trying to gain their sense of subjectivity and the meaning of life.

When Charley is living with the Wild humans and his father, who is a former guard’s mount and the leader of the rebels, he is confused about his destiny. He regrets that now that he is with them, he will “never be able to do what [he] was born for”—to run a race as a mount with a Hoot on his shoulders and win trophies for his masters (ibid., p. 6). He has not thought of the meaning of his life outside of the former functions and purposes of living and working for Hoots and perceives himself in the “property paradigm” (Francione, 2007, p. 32, p. 9). More-than-human animals are similarly perceived merely as “tools or recourses” who are outside of the labor concept and whose bodies from birth are destined to be humans’ property (Blattner, Coulter, and Kymlicka, 2020, p. 2). After getting used to this new environment where humans decide everything together, have equal votes, and are masters of their lives, Charley gradually appreciates his independence, values these new conditions of freedom, and starts reconsidering his attitude towards Hoot dominance. When Charley lives with the Wild, he reflects on his humanity and the meaning of existing as a human being independently. However, when he gets to the Hoots’ prison with comfortable conditions for human mounts, he considers that “being a real human is being right here in a nice, cool prison and eating fresh-baked dry cakes and drinking milk for breakfast” (Emshwiller, 2002, p. 168). For Charley, being a proper human is to be a “civilized,” well-trained mount with an appropriate appearance and behavior. He remembers his former life with Hoots as better – how “everybody was happy” and “had a job to do that suited them” (ibid., p. 129). Still, the boy is somewhere in between his former life and new freedom, and when he is used as a mount in prison, he thinks: “I know better than to protest. If I do, they’ll know I’m not completely a Tame

and well-trained. For Little Master's sake, I have to pretend to be. Besides, that's all I ever wanted to be anyway" (ibid., p. 175).

In prison, Charley meets a human girl, Lily, whose mount's lineage is not as significant as his own, and she is called "nothing" because her life is not worthy for Hoots. However, she is quite confident in herself and does not allow a prominent mount like Charley to call her like that, and she calls him "nothing" in mockery. In her mind, there are no hierarchies between human lineages and kinds of species, and she leads Charley to this perception of reality and shows him another way of being a subject among other independent subjects. Lily is describing her sense of humanity and arguing that she would rather be "a real person than have fancy things" (ibid., p. 195). For her, the sense of being a real person is to be free from any extrinsic powers that are imposed by other beings, in a situation in which even she would have "one whole vote" and Charley would get only one vote too, regardless of their different origins and backgrounds (ibid., p. 194). At the end of the novel, when Hoots and humans decide how to live together on the planet, Charley is still confused about his comprehension of freedom and "what it's for" (ibid., p. 226). He starts to realize the equality of all humankind and the value of freedom, but he is yet at the beginning of his journey of creating and forming his subjectivity with his own head on his shoulders.

Becoming the Other

French philosophers Deleuze and Guattari determine the notions of *becoming* and *becoming-animal* by refusing the anthropocentric and humanist metaphysics of subjectivity based on individualism and advancing the idea of the multiplicity of the subject (2005). *Becoming* exists only in contrast with the state of *being*, which is characterized by a fixed and stative identity, which Deleuze and Guattari denote as a *molar* entity inside the aggregates such as "states, institutions, classes," and *becoming* coexists with a *molecular* entity which in its nature is transformative and fluctuating (2005, p. 195). The philosophers consider different types of *becomings*: becoming-woman, becoming-child, becoming-animal, becoming-Jewish, becoming-black, and other forms of becoming-minoritarian, which are always molecular (ibid.). It is not a physical or imaginary transformation from one state to another, from one stable molar entity to another. Sheryl Vint conceives this conception as "connections and affinities" (2010, p. 53) between different entities, and Rosi

Braidotti considers *becoming* through “affirmative ethical relations” (2011, p. 96) of molecular and nomadic identities with “empathic proximity and intensive interconnectedness” (2002, p. 8). Therefore, *becoming* is not construed through physical or unreal dimensions but through ethical connections between diverse forms of entities such as genders, species, races, sexualities, and so on.

These transformative affinities may function only toward molecular becoming-minoritarian as there is no becoming-majoritarian (Deleuze and Guattari, 2005, p. 291). The majority is determined not in the sense of the number of entities but through the conventional power in hierarchical relations, dominance, and superiority that are entwined in human civilization. The ideal majority is the figure of the Western white adult, wealthy and heterosexual, a powerful and rational male who exercises his prerogative of having been “pregiven the right and power of man” (ibid.). The figures of the dominant metaphysics of subjectivity and majority include white, normal, masculine, young, and healthy subjects, while other forms of embodiment as minoritarian entities “are pathologized and cast on the other side of normality” (Braidotti, 2009, p. 526). *Becoming* is only possible in the direction of minoritarian consciousness, to descend from majoritarian hierarchical thinking and connect to “a different realm from that of Power (Pouvoir) and Domination” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005, p. 106). The philosophers separate the notion “minoritarian” from the notion “minority” by arguing that the first one is “a becoming or process” and the second one is “an aggregate or a state” (ibid.). Minorities transform into minoritarians through the process of becoming which deterritorializes their entity (ibid.).

Women as fixed molar entities and states are the minority, and, through *becoming* to themselves, their subjectivity, and molecular multiplicity, they represent the becoming-minoritarian consciousness which Deleuze and Guattari also define as autonomy (ibid.). Thus, there are two forms of *becoming*: from the majoritarian point of perception in the hierarchical system to the minoritarian one and from molar minority to molecular minoritarian, in other words, coming to itself. Most clearly the authors consider these trajectories of becoming in the gender paradigm: “Becoming-woman necessary affects men as much as women. In a way, the subject in a becoming is always ‘man,’ but only when he enters a becoming-minoritarian that rends him from his major identity” (ibid., p. 291). Becoming-minoritarian is not exclusively a philosophical concept but “a

political affair” and “an active micropolitics” which helps to comprehend diverse subjectivities from a dominant position and enter into its own minoritarian subjectivity with their own history and memory (ibid., pp. 292-293).

The discussion of whether animals can encounter becoming-minoritarian leads us to consider whether animals can be *the Other*. Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of becoming-minoritarian is interrelated with the notion of the Other which characterizes the entity different from the Same and the Self. Ethical politics includes the aspiration of coming from the outside of the entity toward alterity and dissimilarity of the Other and fighting with the predominance of sameness which works when humans favor those who share a resemblance with them. Deleuze and Guattari claim that “Racism never detects the particles of the other; it propagates waves of sameness until those who resist identification have been wiped out (or those who only allow themselves to be identified at a given degree of divergence)” (2005, p. 178). The concept of the Other has diverse interpretations for many philosophers, but I will focus on Emmanuel Levinas’ consideration. The philosopher was a Jewish prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp from 1940 to 1945, and his ethical philosophy is based on his reflections in captivity. Levinas conceives that we encounter the “face” of the Other by overcoming our “the Same” egoism, and these contacts lead us to comprehend the Other within the ethics of alterity and vulnerability (1969). For Levinas, subjectivity is the embracing of the Other in “hospitality,” and the interaction with the Other is an ethical mode of intersubjectivity which gives precedence to responsibility and expressions of welcoming the Other:

To approach the Other in conversation is to welcome his expression, in which at each instant he overflows the idea a thought would carry away from it. It is therefore to *receive* from the Other beyond the capacity of the I, which means exactly: to have the idea of infinity. But this also means: to be taught. The relation with the Other, or Conversation, is a non-allergic relation, an ethical relation; but inasmuch as it is welcomed this conversation is a teaching [enseignement]. (ibid., pp. 27, 51)

The Other can be comprehended and recognized only in the ethical and vulnerable interconnection, in “the nakedness of the face,” and in the process of “giving” when I refuse “my joyous possession of the world” by accepting

and acknowledging the Other and its interests in life, suffering, “nakedness,” and mortality (*ibid.*, pp. 74, 76). The ethics of alterity integrates the state of being responsive to the Other with an initiated responsibility when “the Other becomes my priority” (Calarco, 2008, p. 69).

Levinas’ ethics of alterity may work properly only with the inclusion of the main Others – more-than-human animals – who challenge humans’ perception of ethical norms and moral values by sharing with humans feelings and behaviors of care, empathy, and unselfishness. The Other can be embraced only by ethical relations and by acknowledging its interests, refusing to take part in its exploitation in any form, and respecting the life and consciousness outside of the human species. The question of whether humanism can overcome and eliminate dehumanization was raised by post-human ethical philosophers who argue that for humans it is possible to neglect ethics of humanism by considering other human beings as animals or things; but if the ethics of the total liberation of all the Others includes more-than-human entities, humanism becomes a redundant and obsolete philosophical stance (Bunch, 2014, p. 45).

The friendship between Charley and Little Master presents a perfect instance of mutual becoming the Other. Charley undergoes two ways of becoming: firstly, he is in the position of a minority by being oppressed and subjugated by superior Hoots, and then he is on his way to becoming minoritarian by acquiring his own sense of subjectivity, autonomy, humanity, and meaning of life. His father has already understood the importance of this process of becoming-minoritarian: “My father would say we’re all human beings. But it’s as if he thinks we also have to do something about it” (Emshwiller, 2002, p. 168). Human mounts are placed in the lower position of the hierarchical system of speciesism, and to achieve their total freedom they “have to do something about it,” in other words, to become agent subjects (*ibid.*).

Secondly, and at the same time, Charley is a majoritarian compared to human mounts whose lineage is not as worthy as his, and by getting to know them better and becoming friends, Charley undergoes the process of becoming the Other or becoming-minoritarian and embraces ethical connections with those who he formerly considered as lower beings. Charley’s lineage is called “Seattle,” and he formerly claimed that he would be “ashamed to have a brother or sister that’s not a Seattle” (*ibid.*, p. 141). At the end of the novel, when he sees that lineage is an imagined construct that

does not reflect reality and which discriminates against other humans, Charley thinks that he will “have to get used to all the Sams [male humans] and Sues [female humans], whichever kind they are” (ibid., p. 231). This imposed shame on his own kind and xenophobic attitudes to the Other go away. In their place, Charley welcomes the multiplicity of subjects through his internal becoming the Other.

Apart from Charley, Little Master is also transforming his connections with the Other and his perception of his life and identity. When the two friends are in the forest with the Wild, it is difficult for Little Master to reject his privileges of commanding and controlling his mount and extend his empathy to the Other. When they are alone and need some water, Little Master commands Charley to find it, and Charley is wondering: “Doesn’t he think I’m as thirsty as he is?” (ibid., p. 60). He is thinking about equality and egalitarian principles and that back in the forest with the Wild they “could vote on who would do what [...]. So *that* proves something about voting” (ibid.). After Charley tells Little Master that they both are thirsty and there is no ruler and servant anymore, Little Master tries to frighten Charley by posing as if he was going to choke him. Charley is offended and goes to find water only for himself, but he is too attached to his Little Master, and after that, he comes back to his little friend who is scared of being alone and realizes his misbehavior. Little Master is emotionally bonded to Charley and becomes attached to other humans as well. The practices of threat and power that Little Master learnt in order to subjugate his mount gradually vanish, and Little Master starts to understand the pain and suffering that his species has inflicted on humans and even becomes “scared of his own kind” when he sees Hoot guards on human mounts that have spikes in their mouths (ibid., p. 89). When one of the guards asks Little Master to command the humans and make them mounts for the guard, Little Master rejects his privilege, refuses to subjugate the Other, and just simply replies, “I can’t” (ibid., p. 111).

Both Charley and Little Master are gradually coming to each other within the ethical connection, their becomings develop in simultaneous movements, and they become an example of an affectionate and loyal interspecies friendship. The more Charley realizes the dissonance between his wishes to live comfortably as he did before with the Hoots and his free spirit, the less he understands which side to choose: the Wild humans’ or Hoots’. In the middle of his journey, he figures out the most honest answer for himself: “I guess I’m on a very small side, with only Little Master and

me in it” (ibid., p. 119). Charley is not ready to challenge the whole system of his oppression, but he can reconsider his relationship with Little Master and through this maintain his views on freedom and relations between humans and Hoots. However, becoming the Other is not possible without practice and practical actions as ethical relations between molecular identities and the process of becoming-minoritarian exist in a political realm. When the Wild humans decide to send Charley and Little Master to infiltrate the Hoots, the two friends start practicing riding with the bit in Charley’s mouth, chains, and reins. While training Little Master causes pain in Charley’s mouth, Charley is worried that he will not be able to talk well. The attempts to explain that it is painful do not work, and Charley understands that “the only way I can get him to understand is to have him put it in his mouth and me pull on it” (ibid., p. 157). After this reverse practice of subjugation, Little Master knows and understands the pain that he is inflicting on Charley, and by this, the friends are literally embodying becoming the Other – when superiors put themselves in the shoes of subjugated beings and realize the inflicted suffering. This example of becoming the Other is not only possible by physically experiencing the same suffering and limitation of the Other, but it also can be processed by “cognitive empathy” which is “to picture oneself in the position of another individual” (De Waal, 1996, p. 48). Imagining ourselves in the situation of more-than-human animals helps to extend our understanding of other beings and their sensations and feelings. Researcher in human-animal studies Ken Shapiro proposes “kinesthetic empathy,” which requires humans to expand their empathy to other animals by understanding their bodily experiences (1990). Both cognitive and kinesthetic empathies create a field for becoming the Other for humans towards more-than-human animals and for Little Master towards Charley.

Certainly, it is not possible to let all the privileged groups of humans experience practices of discrimination and suffering of the Other, but this is an effective tool of ethical becoming-minoritarian that Charley uses to make Little Master understand and feel the experience of the Other. However, putting yourself in the shoes (or paws, hooves, wings, etc.) of the Other can be realized through hypothetical reverse practices of discrimination: how would humans act if they were used as riding mounts for a superior species? Would they enjoy pain in their mouths and a lack of freedom, or would they try to rebel? *The Mount* shows possible options for these speculations and how humans and Hoots can become the Other in mutual ethical

comprehension. Through the experience of becoming the Other and understanding its position in the hierarchical system of oppression, privileged beings can consider the interests of the Other, encounter its “face,” and make it their ethical priority.

Moreover, it is necessary to understand the reasons and justifications of the oppression, what makes a subjugated group useful for masters, and how it can be replaced without enslavement. Little Master finds the answer and starts practicing walking on his own weak legs. This new way of Hoot movement without a mount was an actual breakthrough for both Hoots and humans. Charley’s father understands that learning how to walk is a solution for Hoots to not subdue other species. Thus, becoming the Other can be realized not only through the practical and hypothetical experience of being in the place of the Other but also learning how to live without exploitation and what is required to replace unethical forms of living. Likewise, vegan communities create other ways of consumption, experimentation, and entertainment without animal enslavement by proposing ethical alternatives to products and different forms of activities.

At the end of the novel, when humans triumph over Hoots and decide what to do next, Charley puts forward a solution: “It’s *us* who will be kind. We’ll have the tidbits. It’s us who’ll imprint *their* babies” (Emshwiller, 2002, p. 227). However, Little Master is not satisfied with his friend’s solution and changes it: “We’ll *all* have the shoes. We’ll *all* have diamonds. We’ll imprint each other. This mount and I have already done it” (ibid.). Little Master and Charley agree on the equality of their interspecies future society, and by that, they are truly becoming the Other, each separately and together by the mutual consideration of the interests of each other and for a future in which Hoots and humans are “subjects-of-a-life” (Regan, 1983) with an acknowledged subjectivity of whatever species. This important step towards each other forms a foundation for interspecies solidarity and alliance when former superiors become allies of former subaltern and vice versa.

Conclusion

The Mount perfectly mirrors the life of riding mounts and companion animals, humans’ speciesist justification for the exploitation of other species, the master–slave relationship between two species, speciesist discrimination and oppression, bodily and language regulations, relations between human children and animals, the concepts of freedom and subjectivity, and possible

ways to embrace and ethically become the Other. Becoming the Other plays a significant role in the transformation of the traditional politics of subjectivity and in reconsidering our ethical interrelations with more-than-human animals. It leads to the overcoming of anthropocentrism and inviting new modes of philosophy and knowledge from “other-than-human perspectives” (Calarco, 2008, p. 42). Becoming-minoritarian helps to understand and rethink the theoretical and practical ways of overcoming speciesism, anthropocentric metaphysics of subjectivity through affectivity, and ethical interconnectedness, and redefining human–animal boundaries by including more-than-human species in the mode of the Other and by acknowledging ethical responsibility toward animal entities. Hoots’ exploitation is justified by essentialist arguments and ostensible kindness and both Charley and Little Master undergo a mutual becoming the Other in which the master puts himself in the shoes of the Other and learns how to live without exploiting the Other.

More-than-human animals in our world have a history of their own resistance and liberation, when they free themselves and others in captivity, break and open cages for themselves and for other species (Colling, 2021). This resistance is political, and more-than-human animals are agents and subjects of their liberation movement (ibid.). Listening to the voices of real more-than-human animals by “replacing savior narratives with solidarity” is an important part of transforming human-animal relations and humans’ becoming the Other (ibid., 3). The novel gives readers different ways to see humans’ forms exploitation of other species, and suggests solutions for ending human dominance on the planet by practicing cognitive and kinesthetic empathy—learning to live without animal exploitation that can be exemplified by vegan ethics, and listening to the voices of the Other with interspecies solidarity. Hopefully, our human becoming the Other and becoming-animal will sooner or later create new perspectives on interspecies interactions that are based on respect and consideration of more-than-human interests and values in their lives and liberation.

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‘PC-ravaged clowns or plant-powered pioneers?’ UK Newspaper Portrayals of Veganism in 2020

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Abstract

Research has shown western mainstream media tends to portray veganism negatively. A study of veganism in UK newspapers from 2007 argued vegans were portrayed as hostile, weird and ridiculous. The number of people identifying as vegan in the UK since 2007 increased approximately 300 per cent from 150,000 to 600,000 as of 2019. This research employed a qualitative content analysis to explore whether this increase has coincided with a rise in positive portrayals of veganism in UK newspapers. While there appear to be more positive and neutral portrayals of veganism in 2020 than 2007, disconcerting negative articles persist. Vegans are at times positioned as a hostile minority seeking to undermine the hegemonic omnivorous culture. Moreover, in choosing to ignore the rationale behind the choice of veganism for ethical reasons, articles discussing veganism ensure the lives of the Nonhuman Animals exploited for human consumption are rendered invisible and speciesism is reinforced. The findings remind critical animal studies scholar-activists they remain vigilant of and challenge media misinformation around veganism to ensure its contribution to ending the oppression, torture, and killing of Nonhuman Animals is never undermined.

Keywords: content analysis; media; newspapers; speciesism; veganism.

Nobody was waiting for a vegan bloody sausage, you PC-ravaged clowns

Morgan, 2019.

Media has the power and authority to construct meanings, is influential in informing readers' opinions, and is a critical platform for educating the public. Mainstream media is inclined to promote the practices of the hegemonic culture while simultaneously perpetuating the marginalization of minority group practices through denigration or ignorance (Herman & Chomsky, 1995; Freeman, 2009). Thus, as a minority group practice, veganism has tended to be portrayed as inferior to the omnivorous norm. Vegans are often described as strange, strict, overly sensitive, and mean (Cole & Morgan, 2011; Masterman-Smith, Ragusa, & Crampton; Barca, 2020). The title of this article is inspired by TV news journalist Piers Morgan's denigration of vegans as "PC-ravaged clowns" in response to the launch of a plant-based sausage roll in the UK in 2019.

There has been an approximately 300 percent increase (from 150,000 to 600,000) in the UK's number of people identifying as vegan between 2007 and 2020 (Statista, 2021). Furthermore, there is growing public awareness of industrial animal agriculture's destructive impacts on the natural environment and human health. This paper adds to the literature exploring media representations of veganism. While not a replica of Cole and Morgan's (2011) analysis of portrayals of veganism in UK newspapers published during 2007, it is certainly inspired by it. Cole and Morgan's (2011) findings defined the concept of "vegaphobia" - an aversion to, and marginalization of, people choosing not to knowingly engage in the systematic violence enacted by humans on Nonhuman Animals. I capitalize "Nonhuman Animal" throughout this paper to, following Wrenn, "denote their shared oppression identity" (2016, p. 91).

This study examines UK newspaper narratives around veganism across four months in 2020. Through discussion around three key findings, I argue that while negative portrayals appear to have dropped since 2007, the consumption of Nonhuman Animals continues to be framed as nice, normal, and necessary (Joy, 2020). Thus, while veganism may become a more accepted "lifestyle," this is not at the expense of a growing rejection of the carnist status quo. Veganism appears to be positioned as a lifestyle that can

co-exist with one that involves the systematic torture and slaughter of fellow beings.

I first discuss the danger of accepting the apparent decline in a negative and subsequent rise in positive and neutral portrayals of veganism since 2007, as evidence of growing awareness of and disdain for the horrors inflicted on Nonhuman Animals exploited for human consumption. I then discuss two further findings arising from the analysis. First, and most critically for activists seeking the liberation of Nonhuman Animals from human oppression, I offer an analysis of articles mentioning veganism that includes discussion on the role of the Nonhuman Animal. I find not only a lack of articles mentioning the desire to see an end to the brutality enacted on Nonhuman Animals as a motivating factor behind veganism, but also the use of language which dilutes the reality of the horror we inflict upon them in those articles where the Nonhuman is discussed. The Nonhuman Animal remains the “absent referent” (Adams, 1990) thereby allowing the non-vegan reader to ignore the impact on (Nonhuman and human) others of their consumption choices while simultaneously reinforcing their belief that what they are doing is “normal and necessary.”

I move on to discuss the evidence prevalent in the data suggesting mainstream UK newspapers, aligning with previous findings (Cole & Morgan, 2011; Masterman-Smith et al., 2014; Barca, 2020), position vegans as a nefarious hostile other intent on disrupting “our way of life,” that is, the hegemonic (Nonhuman Animal consuming) culture. I finish the discussion by arguing that there is ample evidence suggesting vegans, consistent with previous research (Cole & Morgan, 2011; Masterman-Smith et al., 2014; Barca, 2020), continues to be portrayed by some in the UK news media landscape as a hostile other intent on disrupting the lives of the “normal” Nonhuman Animal consuming majority. UK newspaper portrayals of veganism in 2020 suggest that the systemic oppression and killing of Nonhuman Animals as something normal and necessary (Joy, 2020) remains firmly entrenched in UK society. My findings indicate that activists, despite the continued growth of veganism, must engage with mainstream media to challenge the misinformation it disseminates and to call it out on its moral disengagement around what we do to Nonhuman Animals.

By understanding current media representations of veganism, activists can gain valuable insight into the work still to be done to help end the oppression of Nonhuman Animals. In the next section, I review the

existing literature on portrayals of veganism. I then describe the method used in this research before discussing the study's key findings. I conclude by giving activists advice on how to combat negative portrayals and suggesting avenues for future research.

Researcher's Standpoint

In solidarity with the principles of critical animal studies (Best et al., 2007), I'd like to share some of the experiences that shape my politics and research. I was raised into young adulthood on a social housing (council) estate in a deindustrialized northern English town. Upon leaving school, I worked low-paying manual labor jobs and spent some of my late-teens unemployed and homeless. I entered higher education in my mid-twenties, and now, in my mid-forties, I am undertaking doctoral research in sociology. I have been involved in environment, migrant, refugee, and "animal" rights organizations for almost a decade. I stand in solidarity with and strive daily to contribute to the work being carried out by critical animal studies scholar-activists seeking to advance a "holistic understanding of the commonality of oppressions, such that speciesism, sexism, racism, ableism, statism, classism, militarism, and other hierarchical ideologies and institutions are views as parts of a larger, interlocking, global system of domination" (Nocella et al., 2019, p. 11). I acknowledge that my position as an able-bodied, able-minded, white heterosexual cisgender male not only affords me privilege inaccessible to the vast majority of my fellow humans but also inevitably impacts how I perceive the world. I am grateful for and will remain forever open to the opinions of those who challenge me to recognize when this privilege manifests itself in my perspectives.

Moreover, my interpretation of the data used for the purposes of this essay is inevitably influenced by my veganism. I align with Gruen and Jones' concept of veganism as an aspiration (2015), meaning that although I adhere to veganism as a means of rejecting the systemic violence enacted on Nonhuman Animals for human benefit, I acknowledge that as a vegan located in an industrialized consumer society I cannot have "clean hands" - the abstention from the use of all animal products in such societies is "virtually impossible" (Gruen & Jones, 2015, p. 169). I aspire to an ethical veganism which I understand as a commitment to try to abstain from the consumption of products containing animal derivatives (Gruen & Jones, 2015, p. 155) and "the personal rejection of the commodity status of nonhuman animals, of the

notion that animals only have external value, and of the notion that animals have less moral value than do humans” (Francione, 2010, p. 62).

Theoretical Frameworks

Joy’s (2020) theory of “carnism” informs my understanding of human relationships with Nonhuman Animals. As an entrenched ideology, carnism is invisible, that is, it is embedded to the extent that it is unnamed. Veganism, as the opposing ideology, is named and Othered. The dominance of carnism relies on the “just the way things are” arguments underpinning omnivorous cultures (Joy, 2020). For example, “we eat animals because it is what we have always done” (Joy, 2020, p. 20). Their exploitation is justified through the “three Ns” of it being “normal, natural, and necessary,” which are so deeply ingrained in our social consciousness that “they guide our actions without our even having to think about them” (Joy, 2020, p. 87).

Hall’s “audience theory” from 1973 helps to discern what effect media portrayals of veganism might have on the reader. Hall posits that the encoder, for instance, the author of a newspaper article, produces “meaningful discourse” drawn from “the sociocultural system of which they are only a differentiated part” (1973, p. 259). The encoder produces the message cognizant of their “images of the audience” and aims to elicit a reaction in the decoder, for instance, the reader (Hall 1973, p. 259). The decoder receives the message in either: a *dominant or preferred* way in which the article is read as the encoder intended and the decoder supports the meaning and ideology behind it; a *negotiated* way – the decoder agrees with and understands some of the encoder’s views but can also form their own (different) opinions of the topic under discussion; or an *oppositional* way – the decoder rejects entirely the encoder’s position (Hall, 1973). Thus, if it is assumed that the reader chooses a publication that they feel is closely aligned with their pre-existing views, it can be argued that they are likely to engage with articles in a dominant or negotiated way. Therefore, it can be posited that media articles discussing veganism will likely be encoded in a way intended to resonate with the reader’s opinions. In a society where the vast majority are omnivorous, it is expected that representations of veganism will fit the dominant narrative. Articles will thereby be written either to reinforce the “hegemonic viewpoint” or in a more “negotiated” way, presenting it as an acceptable “Other” but not a challenge to the norm to which most of its readers adhere (Hall, 1973, p. 273).

Literature Review

It is argued that veganism is no longer a marginalized cultural practice (Gheihman, 2021) and research has shown vegans are thought of as caring, considerate, and virtuous (Ruby & Heine, 2011; Judge & Wilson, 2018; De Groeve, Hudders & Bleys, 2021). However, such positive perceptions appear to be rare, and the prevailing impression is that negative attitudes towards veganism are dominant in societies of the global north. Indeed, fear of being stigmatized can be a barrier to people becoming vegan (Markowski & Roxburgh 2019). The overwhelming majority of people consume Nonhuman Animals, and thus veganism, as a lifestyle rejecting a key tenet of the dominant culture, is positioned as socially deviant (Boyle, 2011).

Vegans are stigmatized as “psychologically affected,” “ascetic,” “freaks,” “puritans,” “emotionally immature,” and “superior” (Adams, 2003, p. 76). Furthermore, vegans are considered more moralistic and less socially attractive than non-vegans (including vegetarians) (De Groeve et al., 2021) and are positioned as “deviants and dissidents” due to their “rejection of the hierarchy-legitimizing myth of human-dominance over other animals” (Judge & Wilson, 2018, p. 75). Research even suggests a hierarchical dimension in negative bias towards vegans, with those who pursue ethical veganism, that is people who are vegan “for the animals,” evaluated more negatively by omnivores than those who are vegan for environmental or health and body aesthetic reasons (MacInnis & Hodson, 2015).

Such labeling is supported by an exploration of blogs and below the line comments posted on media articles from the UK, USA, New Zealand, and Australia discussing the concept of “vegansexuality,” defined as a “disposition (or an inclination or preference) towards those who also practice an ethical (as in cruelty-free) lifestyle” (Potts & Parry, 2010, p. 55). Findings revealed a violent backlash against “vegansexuals” who were stigmatized as “sexual (losers), cowards, deviants, failures, and bigots” (Potts & Parry, 2010, p. 53). Female vegans received the greater abuse, with misogynistic, violent language dominating responses. The threat of violence towards vegans in the UK has been sufficiently worrying to some that they have requested police involvement. Between 2015-2020, police recorded 172 cases of vegan hate crimes including assault against vegan activists, harassment by neighbors of a vegan family, and death threats (Nachiappan, 2020; Gregson, 2021).

Vegans are conscious of the negative bias they might face for their lifestyle choice to the extent that they may attempt to downplay or deny it when in the company of non-vegans (Greenebaum, 2012; MacInnis & Hodson, 2017; Markowski & Roxburgh, 2019). Omnivores intentionally socially distance themselves from vegans and anticipate being similarly ostracized should they themselves become vegan. Vegans have been stereotyped as unfriendly and experienced situations of everyday discrimination because of their refusal to adhere to the omnivorous cultural norm (MacInnis & Hodson, 2017). Unfortunately, for vegans and the Nonhuman Animals whose oppression they wish to end, such negative bias is reinforced rather than challenged by mainstream media, an institution with the power to help engender widespread positive public attitudes towards them.

Veganism in the Media

Media can legitimize, shape, and be indicative of political and public attitudes toward specific issues (McCombs, 1977; Barker, 2005; Happer & Wellesley, 2019). Positive media narratives around veganism could encourage people to change their eating habits, thereby playing a vital role in ending the human oppression of Nonhuman Animals (Happer & Wellesley, 2019). Additionally, a society-wide transition to veganism has the potential to improve public and environmental health (Marrone et al., 2022; Termansen et al., 2022; United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022). However, despite such potential benefits, studies suggest negative portrayals of veganism pervade mainstream media.

Cole and Morgan found that discussions in UK newspapers around veganism presented it as a contravention of common-sense “because they fall outside readily understood meat-eating discourses” (2011, p. 134). Vegans were portrayed as ascetics, faddists, hostile, oversensitive, and worthy of ridicule. Such discourses in print media reinforce speciesism, contribute to the marginalization of vegans by misrepresenting their experiences, and reinforce misconceptions around veganism by presenting it as a moral injury to non-vegans (Cole & Morgan, 2011). Congruent with Cole and Morgan’s findings, negative portrayals of veganism heavily outweighed positive ones in Australian newspapers published in 2007 and 2012, and vegans were consistently ridiculed (Masterman-Smith et al., 2014). Barca’s (2020) textual analysis of US newspapers published between 2017 and 2018 found rhetoric

denigrating vegans as ascetics and hostile proselytizers. The vegan diet was often portrayed as unhealthy alongside arguments advocating the normality and healthfulness of eating meat (Barca, 2020).

Media narratives constructing veganism as unhealthy are perhaps even more damaging to vegan activism than labeling those pursuing it as ascetics, hostile, faddists, weird, and ridiculous. The supposed unhealthfulness of a vegan diet has disturbingly been used to blame parents for the deaths of their children. Wright (2015) discusses five such cases reported in newspapers from the UK, USA, France, and New Zealand. Rather than the deaths being attributed to a combination of misinformation, neglect, and/or an unwillingness to seek medical care, it is the vegan diet that is blamed. Not only do the journalists sensationalize and (intentionally) incorrectly blame veganism for the deaths, but they also choose to ignore the reality that “children of carnivorous and omnivorous parents die far more often than children of vegan parents” (Wright, 2015, p. 94).

Methodology

To explore attitudes toward veganism in UK newspapers, I used qualitative content analysis, understood as “a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative material” (Schreier, 2012, p. 1), with the aim of providing “knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992, p. 314). The method allows for the analysis of manifest and latent content, and thus provides rich insights into the multiple meanings produced and reproduced in portrayals of veganism in UK newspapers. Text selection was guided by Cole and Morgan’s (2011) study. Per Cole and Morgan, I used LexisNexis, the online database of content from printed sources, to search UK national newspapers for articles containing the terms “vegan” or “vegans” or “veganism.” I restricted the search period to four months and six publications only (daily and weekend editions). Cole and Morgan’s search for the whole of 2007 produced 397 data units (articles), whereas for the entirety of 2020 there were 4,558 from the same sources using the same search terms. I chose the period 01 January 2020 to 30 April 2020 as I thought it could potentially provide a wider breadth of discussion around veganism than might be found during a later four-month period due to two events: the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and *Veganuary*, a non-profit campaign encouraging “people worldwide to try vegan for January and beyond” (Veganuary, 2021). The number of people registering with the

campaign has risen from approximately 4,000 worldwide in 2015 to 400,000 in January 2020 (Smithers, 2020)

Media weighting is a key variable ensuring best practice content analysis (Macnamara, 2006), in addition to political alignment, I chose newspapers representing three genres: quality (also known as broadsheet), middle-market tabloid, and tabloid. Quality centered newspapers are associated with a “higher-minded approach to journalism” (Lazutkaite, 2020, p. 37) and are read by “those with higher levels of income, educational attainment and social status” (Williams, 2010, p. 9). Tabloid newspapers tend to be associated with stories around “sensation, human interest, sentimentality, and prurience” (Biressi & Nunn, 2008, p. 8) and attract a predominantly working-class and lower-middle class readership (Lazutkaite, 2020). Middle-market newspapers lie somewhere between tabloids and broadsheets (Lazutkaite, 2020). I also considered the political leanings of newspapers. Research suggests those with higher right-wing political beliefs are more likely to have negative attitudes toward vegans (Dhont & Hodson, 2014; Hodson & Earle, 2018). Thus, I wanted to ensure that newspapers of differing partisan positions were represented (Table I). Thus, I selected the right-leaning *Times*, *Sun* and *Mail* along with the center- to left-leaning *Mirror*, *Independent* and *Guardian* (Lazutkaite, 2020; Cushion & Sambrook, 2015; Williams, 2010; Firmstone, undated).

Further, I accounted for the reach of newspapers. The reach covers the number of people who engage with the newspaper in print or online. Statistics for the reach of newspapers for the period 01 January 2020 to 30 April 2020, were unavailable. However, statistics covering reach during the period April 2019 to March 2020 give an idea of the popularity rank of the six newspapers observed for this study. The Sun, Daily Mail, and Daily Mirror each received over 30 million engagements, the Guardian over 20 million, and the Independent and Times both received over 15 million (Statista, 2021b)

I categorized a total of 1,044 articles in NVivo 12 by overall tone of positive, neutral, or negative (Table I) after disregarding repeat articles and contents pages. Furthermore, while Lexis Nexis includes articles from Irish editions of newspapers, these were discounted as the study was based on UK editions only. I categorized each article based on my interpretation of its overall tone (Table I.) and, in accordance with Cole and Morgan, I categorized articles containing both positive and neutral elements as negative

because “all such instances had the rhetorical effect of the ‘negative’ elements undermining any ‘positive’ content” (2011, p. 139). I took a semi-grounded theoretical approach to the research with coding being driven inductively and deductively (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The mixed coding frame I created ensured that all important data was collected (Schreir, 2012). Deductive coding, guided by Cole and Morgan’s (2011) findings, was used for the following codes: *onerous*, *fad*, *weird*, *asceticism*, and *sanctimony*. When analyzing the data, codes formulated through inductive logic included the standalone codes of *environment*, *food and fashion*, *dishonest*, and *animal referent*, along with the sub-codes of *wokeness*, *misunderstood*, *ridiculous/contrary to common sense*, and *anti-masculine*. Coding was guided by Schreier who argues that mixing concept- and data-driven strategies is a more frequent method for creating a coding frame than “creating one based on purely one strategy or the other” in qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2012, p. 89). The coding frame and data that support the findings of this study are available from the author upon reasonable request.

The use of LexisNexis presents limitations. It cannot illuminate “instances where veganism is discussed implicitly or explicitly” such as in articles on Nonhuman Animals and climate change, nor can it detect neologisms such as “veg,” “used as a generic term to describe vegans and vegetarians simultaneously” (Cole & Morgan, 2011, p. 137). Furthermore, LexisNexis presents text-only versions of articles; my interpretation of certain data may have been different had I analyzed it alongside any accompanying image(s). LexisNexis can also under-report certain topics which may have contributed to certain relevant articles published within the search period being unavailable via the database (Weaver & Bimber, 2008).

Findings and Discussion

Cole and Morgan (2011) categorized 5.5 percent of the UK newspaper articles they analyzed as offering positive portrayals of veganism. I categorized 11.2 percent of articles as positive which, while double that of Cole and Morgan, suggests that positive portrayals remain rare. I found 27 percent of articles portrayed veganism negatively and 61.7 percent as neutral. This compares favorably with Cole and Morgan’s results of 74.3 percent negative and 20.2 percent as neutral. Such differences suggest, perhaps, that while pro-vegan sentiment in UK newspapers has barely grown since 2007,

anti-vegan sentiment appears to have considerably decreased. I argue below, however, that the positive and neutral portrayals in articles, while certainly not anti-vegan, do not necessarily signify a shift in how we see the Nonhuman Animals killed for our consumption.

Table I: Frequency of tone by newspaper

Newspaper	Type ¹	P/L ²	N/K ³	Tone					
				Positive		Negative		Neutral	
				N4	%	N	%	N	%
Times	Q	R	263	15	5.7	93	35.36	155	58.94
Mirror	T	L/C	117	14	11.97	24	20.51	79	67.52
Mail	MMT	R	97	6	6.19	33	34.02	58	59.79
Sun	T	R	195	17	8.72	65	33.33	113	57.95
Independent	Q	L/C	183	20	10.93	33	18.03	130	71.04
Guardian	Q	L/C	189	45	23.81	34	17.99	110	58.2
TOTAL			1044	117	11.21	282	27.01	645	61.78

Notes: ¹Quality, Middle Market Tabloid or Tabloid; ²Political leaning: Right, Left, Centre; ³Number of articles featuring at least one keyword; ⁴Number of articles; ⁵Percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent and therefore do not always total 100.

Moreover, analysis of newspaper articles from 2020 revealed negative portrayals of veganism aligned with the previous research (Cole & Morgan, 2011; Masterman-Smith et al., 2014; Barca, 2020). Over one quarter (26.5 percent) of articles portrayed veganism as faddish, that is, veganism was framed as something one can pick up and drop on a whim. Veganism is thus positioned as a temporary “lifestyle choice” rather than a political stance indicating one’s rejection of the torture, oppression, and killing (Best et al., 2007) resulting from human consumption of Nonhuman Animals. Furthermore, almost one-third of articles (29.5 percent) portrayed vegans as weird. By adhering to veganism a person is seen as “not normal” because they reject the practices of the hegemonic carnist culture. Vegans are weird because they contradict the normal, necessary, and nice (Joy, 2020) rationale justifying our consumption of Nonhuman Animals.

However, for this paper, I focus on concepts unique to my study, *veganism and the animal referent*, and *veganism as a threat*. From a critical

animal studies standpoint, these two concepts are the most pertinent to emerge from the analysis as they can impact most negatively on both Nonhuman Animals and human activists. Denying the life of the Nonhuman Animal in discussions on veganism perpetuates their oppression and killing. Such denial allows humans to remain morally disengaged from the brutality in which through consuming them we are complicit. Furthermore, portraying ethical vegan activists and their “demands” as a threat to the established social order not only reinforces the subjugation of Nonhuman Animals, but also maintains those intent on achieving liberation for all species as a minoritized other deserving of society’s contempt and, in some cases, state-sanctioned punishment.

Positive and Neutral – but for Whom?

When veganism is shown in a good light, the health and beauty benefits of the diet are often emphasized. Such a focus, combined with the lack of articles portraying veganism as positive because it is an ethical choice, can be understood through what Fegitz and Pirani (2018) label “commodity veg*ism.” Ethical veganism is part of a political and philosophical orientation which seeks to reject and dismantle the structures on which the global capitalist order is predicated – “exploitation, domination, oppression, torture [and] killing” (Nocella et al., 2019, p. 11). This is in contrast to commodity veg*ism which reproduces existing injustices by depoliticizing and deradicalizing veganism through packaging it as a “sexy and business oriented” individual project (Fegitz & Pirani, 2018, p. 294).

Under this framing, the refusal to kill Nonhuman Animals as part of a comprehensive and diverse struggle to achieve total liberation for human, Nonhuman Animal, and Earth (Nocella et al., 2019, p. 11) plays little if any role in a person’s veganism. Instead, veganism becomes simply another means through which an individual can empower *themselves*. By becoming vegan to sculpt and maintain a “healthy, sexy body” (Fegitz & Pirani, 2018, p. 294) in a society where such a body can be a means through which the individual gains wealth, status, and power, the commodity vegan uses veganism as a means of achieving personal success in an unjust system. Thus, the commodity vegan, while not being directly responsible for the slaughter of Nonhuman Animals, contributes to reinforcing, and indeed celebrates, the brutally oppressive system that perpetuates it.

Furthermore, neutral articles, while not generating anti-vegan sentiment, are perhaps not as harmless as their non-evaluative and banal content suggests. Baltzer's (2017) argument on the dangers of neutrality allows us to understand that such articles, while not portraying veganism negatively, may contribute to maintaining carnism and, therefore, the killing of Nonhuman Animals. By asking whom our neutrality benefits, it is revealed to us that the notion of such a position is a myth. Put simply, remaining supposedly neutral in an unjust system perpetuates injustice and reinforces existing power (im)balances (Baltzer, 2017).

I coded articles describing a beauty product as “vegan,” or how to cook a “vegan” dish, or those discussing sales figures of “vegan” foods, in a non-evaluative manner as neutral. However, for such articles, while descriptive and lacking a writer's opinion, their inclusion alongside, or as alternatives to, non-vegan products or recipes does not signify a rupture to the hegemonic Nonhuman Animal oppressing status quo. It simply indicates that it is as acceptable (perhaps as *normal*) to be vegan as it is to be non-vegan. Read another way, both killing and not killing Nonhuman Animals for our consumption are equally acceptable. Such articles provide no explanations of why people may, or ought, to choose the vegan over non-vegan product or dish. The life of the Nonhuman Animal in the latter is ignored, human power over and oppression of Nonhuman Animals is maintained and strengthened, and the vegan choice is presented as simply another consumer option rather than the one that does not involve the taking of a life. This erasure of the Nonhuman Animal in articles centered on veganism, regardless of whether they may be positive, negative, or neutral in their tone, is one of the key findings of this research and it is to this the discussion now turns.

Veganism and the Animal Referent

The *animal referent* draws on Carol Adams's (1990) concept of the “absent referent” - the choice of making absent the life of the sentient being who is killed for human benefit. When the Nonhuman Animal is made absent from discussions of meat-eating and veganism it “permits us to forget about the animal as an independent entity; [and] enables us to resist efforts to make animals present” (Adams, 2015, p. 21). Nonhuman Animals were referred to in thirty-seven (3.5 percent) of the articles analyzed, of which seventeen came from one newspaper, the *Independent*. Several articles referred to

Nonhuman Animals when discussing veganism and provided explicit descriptions reflecting the reality of the practices of animal agriculture. However, even in instances when violence is made explicit, speciesism is still evident. The discursive practices employed by writers reinforce the socially constructed binary oppositions between humans and Nonhuman Animals (Nocella et al., 2019) by disregarding the individuality and emotions of the latter, and favoring the interests of the former (Freeman, 2009; Davis, 2018). For example,

Every year around the world about 7bn male chicks, which cannot be sold to lay eggs or used for meat, are systematically shredded alive in industrial macerators, gassed or suffocated to death. (Cockburn, 2020)

female cows are artificially inseminated with semen drawn mechanically from a bull. Once born, the calf will usually be taken away within 36 hours. This is so farmers can take the milk the mothers are making. Experts say that a strong bond is formed quickly after birth and the separation is traumatizing for both cow and calf. (Newkey-Burden, 2020)

Cockburn (2020) writes of chicks “*which* cannot be sold” (my italics). Using “which” rather than “who” is an example of moral disengagement as it reinforces the depersonalized objectification-commodification status of Nonhuman Animals. Rather than each chick being thought of as an individual (a who), it is part of a mass, a product *which* cannot be sold and is therefore destroyed because *it* is worthless. The chick, while referred to in the description of what happens to him, is “rendered being-less” (Adams, 2015, p. 27) through language reinforcing his status as an object (which) to be dominated by the human subject (worthy of the status “who.”)

The overall tone of the Newkey-Burden (2020) article could be perceived as positive as it gives insight into why a person might become vegan for ethical reasons. However, language such as “artificially inseminated” and “semen drawn mechanically” simultaneously alludes to and dilutes the reality: these are acts of sexual violence that underpin human consumption of Nonhuman Animals. Words such as *artificially* or *mechanically* are “innocuous phrases” (Adams, 2015, p. 27) and reinforce the position of the Nonhuman Animal as commodity/machine; a mechanized

object that can be programmed to produce benefit for *us*. As *it* is object, *it* cannot be sexually violated.

Newkey-Burden (2020) further states, “the rise of veganism is hitting dairy bosses hard” and thus, while informing readers about the motivations of an ethical vegan, ends on a note confirming the anthropocentric lens through which they view the human animal/Nonhuman Animal relationship. The latent message suggests that while it may be admirable to want to stop cows being “artificially inseminated” and “traumatized” and bulls to no longer have semen “mechanically drawn” from them, vegans refusal to consume dairy is *hitting* humans *hard* by impacting *them* financially. The language used in such articles dilutes the actual violence inflicted on Nonhuman Animals and frames the financial implications of decreased financial capital as violence towards those humans employed in and profiting from their oppression. By buffering the “negative” impacts of veganism on humans and couching the horrors inflicted on Nonhuman Animals in the language of science, the public is kept “comfortably detached from the unpleasant reality of modern farming” (Freeman, 2009, p. 98).

In contrast to the well-meaning yet still latently anthropocentric articles discussing the role of “the animal” as a reason for people choosing veganism, there were examples in which the author expressed both their own support for speciesism and the brutal treatment of Nonhuman Animals simultaneously:

we, as meat eaters, turn a determined blind eye to the industrial animal cruelty and massacre that keeps us all so very fat...Once, it wasn't remotely weird to have a beast, care for the beast, love the beast and then whack off the beast's head with an axe and serve it up for Sunday lunch. (Rifkind, 2020)

Rifkind does not employ innocuous phrases suggesting his moral disengagement from the violence enacted on the beings from whom certain foods come. However, although Rifkind expresses sympathy for the treatment of Nonhuman Animals, suggesting an understanding of ethical vegan motives, anti-vegan rhetoric and speciesism are still evident. Speciesism is clear in his argument that veganism is something most people would not do because the treatment of Nonhuman Animals is secondary to the fact they taste “nice” (De Groeve et al., 2021). Rifkind (2020) further states, “we put up with it because of burgers, bacon and chicken

drumsticks...because of cheese. Mmmm. Cheese.” The use of “*we* put up with it,” “*we*, as meat eaters,” and “the human knack of looking *our* food in the face” reflects Barca’s argument that the vegan is culturally othered and positioned as a deviant (“not one of “*us*”)” (2020, p. 216) because their veganism is a rejection of the social and cultural tenets of the dominant carnist ideology.

In stating “*we*, as meat eaters” and positioning Nonhuman Animals as “*our* food,” the author expresses anti-vegan sentiment through dehumanizing those choosing not to eat meat. The implicit suggestion here is that we (humans) are meat eaters (meat-eating is natural to us and therefore necessary) and if *we* refuse to adhere to this self-evident truth and stop doing something we have always done (something normal), then we cannot be fully human (Joy, 2020). Furthermore, the use of the possessive pronoun “*our*” before “*food*” reinforces Rifkind’s support for speciesism. The Nonhuman Animal is not seen as a self, free to make her own choices, but as “*our* food,” which we can “whack” (kill) as we see fit. Rifkind’s view is clear: “beasts” are lesser beings than us, moral disengagement is unnecessary because they are ours to kill, eating them is both natural and normal, and, therefore, anyone opposing this view is deviant.

Thus, while certain authors might discuss the brutalities enacted on Nonhuman Animals for our pleasure, they do so in a way that avoids challenging the carnist ideology to which they and their readers adhere. Describing the horror without resorting to speciesism and/or advocating for veganism would entail both writer and reader having to consider their own complicity in reinforcing the “normalization of human violence on an unimaginable scale” (Cole & Morgan, 2011, p. 149). The Nonhuman Animal, therefore, remains the absent referent (Adams, 1990) in discussions around veganism in mainstream newspapers. This absence helps perpetuate the speciesism that allows us to both morally disengage from and justify the oppression, torture, and slaughter we wreak on billions of our fellow sentient beings.

It is also worth noting that the only human animals referred to in articles, other than vegans, are those who own the means of production in the industry, i.e., farmers and bosses. The human employed in carrying out the violent labor necessary to exploit Nonhuman Animals is notable only by their absence. Slaughterhouse workers are entangled in the same systems of oppression as the Nonhumans they kill. Slaughterhouse work is repetitive,

done at rapid speeds, using dangerous equipment and, in the UK, each year over one hundred workers suffer serious injuries (DeMello, 2012; Nagesh, 2017; World Animal Protection, 2022).

Those employed on killing lines tend to be from socio-economically disadvantaged communities, thereby having little to no choice but to work in such an exploitative industry (Victor & Barnard, 2016; Slade & Alleyne, 2021). Slaughterhouse workers are usually paid the minimum wage, more than three times likely to be seriously injured than the average worker, suffer higher risks of mental health problems, such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, and can be more susceptible to engaging in anti-social behavior and developing drug and alcohol dependencies (Dillard, 2008; Hutz, Zanon, & Neto, 2013; OSHA, 2018; Slade & Alleyne, 2021). Slaughterhouse workers, much like the Nonhuman Animals they are employed to kill, are themselves commodified bodies which can be exploited and disposed of for the benefit of others. News media articles denying the lives of the Nonhuman and human animals entangled in industrial animal agriculture reinforce the central tenets of carnism and speciesism; that exploitation and oppression of our planet's most vulnerable is both normal and necessary. Not only are the lives of Nonhumans and humans exploited by industrial animal agriculture denied in discussions around veganism, but those also choosing it as a means of rejecting such cruelty, rather than being celebrated for their ethical stance, are often framed as a woke and hostile threat to the carnist social order. This framing is now discussed.

Vegans as Threat

From an academic standpoint, to be “woke” is to be conscious of “intersecting systems of oppressions...[and]...acknowledge the oppression that exists in individual and collective experiences” (Ashlee et al., 2017, p. 90). Ethical vegans, therefore, through acknowledging and seeking to end human oppression of Nonhuman Animals, are woke. However, rather than being presented positively for its rejection of oppressions, wokeness is widely used in mainstream media, especially right-wing media, as a slur reserved for the supposed hypersensitivity of certain minority and political groups associated with leftist politics (Ramaswamy, 2019; Smith, 2021). Negative media representations of veganism as wokeness were prevalent throughout the data, the majority of which were published in politically right-wing newspapers, namely the *Daily Mail*, *the Times*, and *the Sun* (altogether

approximately 72.5 percent in total). Such a finding aligns with the research suggesting rightists are more likely to engage in anti-veganism and speciesism than leftists (Dhont et al., 2014; Dhont & Hodson, 2014; Earle & Hodson, 2017; Hodson & Earle, 2018). In *the Sun* newspaper, for example, Jeremy Clarkson (2020) wrote:

Far-right politics are bad. Far-left politics are fine. Veganism is good. Donald Trump is not. You get the impression that if the BBC made the Crown, the Queen would be played by that guy in a wheelchair from Countryfile and Prince Philip by Idris Elba.

The author, expressing his incredulity at the supposed wokeness of the British Broadcasting Corporation, positions vegans alongside other individuals and groups, i.e., ethnic minorities (Idris Elba is a Black man), persons with disabilities, leftists, and women (Donald Trump has been accused of sexually assaulting women on multiple occasions) who threaten to rupture the privileged position of the hegemonic power within societies of the Global North, i.e., white, male, and abled. In rejecting the oppression of Nonhuman Animals, ethical vegans, much like others refusing to adhere to the exploitative status quo, are a legitimate target of ridicule and criticism precisely because they are yet another woke group challenging the dominant “just the way things are” cultural attitudes and norms (Dhont & Hodson, 2014; Joy, 2020). Moreover, the case of *Mr. J. Casamitjana Costa v. The League Against Cruel Sports* (2020), which led to the enshrinement in UK law of ethical veganism as a protected belief, provides the dominant culture with tangible evidence of the threat it is under from the woke vegan:

Because, thanks to this ruling, it is theoretically possible for anyone who fails to show sufficient respect for their fellow plant-based human to be accused of discrimination. Only in today’s hyper-woke world could this happen. If I offer a hungry vegan work colleague half my ham sandwich, will that be a hate crime? If a vegan waiter is asked to serve a steak, will their human rights have been violated? Potentially, yes? (Vine, 2020)

The implication that vegans are easily offended resonates with findings suggesting UK newspapers portray them as oversensitive (Cole & Morgan, 2011). This oversensitivity was viewed as a sign of weakness and vegans were mocked for their sentimentality, portrayed as lacking the toughness and

realism associated with meat-eating, and being “unable to cope with the harsh realities of nature red-in-tooth-and-claw” (Cole & Morgan, 2011, p. 145). Articles from 2020, however, indicate that the oversensitivity of vegans is now no longer something to be ridiculed but rather to be feared by the omnivorous majority - the reader is warned that upsetting a vegan could lead to the offender being criminally charged for committing a hate crime or violating human rights. In “today’s hyper-woke world” (Vine, 2020) vegans, much like other minorities, are portrayed as dangerous Others possessing the desire and power to erase the dominant culture.

Some vegans, much like other groups derided for demanding changes that supposedly exercise “threatening agency” (Cole & Morgan, 2011, p. 146) to the dominant order, were portrayed as having the capacity to go beyond operating within the boundaries of the law. A small number of articles (23) presented vegans as sufficiently hostile to the extent that they are willing to inflict harm on non-vegans. Such characterization, while rare, impresses upon the reader an image of a dangerous other willing to enact violence and destroy livelihoods to achieve their aims. For example:

The militant brand of veganism espoused by celebrities like Joaquin Phoenix is harming the mental health of Britain’s agricultural workers, the head of the National Farmers’ Union has said...” Celebrities have to be careful – there are real life consequences for others...this feeling of worthlessness on the back of a sustained assault on meat as part of the diet.” (Shukman, 2020)

Militant vegans are pushing for all domesticated farm animals in this country to be phased out. (Thomson, 2020)

Butchers are trying to get militant vegan groups who take direct action against the meat industry classified as terrorist...AIMS spokesman Tony Goodger said: “As it has been classified as an ideological cause, it’s the definition of terrorism.” (James, 2020)

By focusing on the alleged damage vegan “extremists” inflict on industrial animal agriculture, Nonhuman Animals remain the absent referent (Adams, 1990). The focus of vegan activism is distorted, indeed ignored, as their motivation for carrying-out actions against people profiting from exploitation goes unmentioned. In this framing, it is the non-vegan whose life is under

attack, and the human who pays the *real life* consequences of the rise in veganism. Thus, the vegan is portrayed as the *real* deviant “assaulting” people for what they eat. Speciesism, therefore, prevails as vegan activism is positioned as violently impacting humans rather than as action striving for the liberation of Nonhuman and human alike. The lives of Nonhuman Animals violently assaulted in their millions every single day are deemed unworthy of consideration.

Moreover, in 2020 characterizing vegan activists as militant, terrorist, and extremist not only contributes to their on-going stigmatization as a minority group engaging in socially and politically unacceptable behavior but also presents them as a clear and present danger to society. The reader is presented with an image of vengeful militant vegans hellbent on harming people who only wish to earn a living and do what is normal, necessary, and nice. The militant vegan wanting to dismantle *our* meat and dairy eating culture, unlike the non-threatening commodity vegan, is the enemy within whom *we* must resist:

But someone has to keep fighting vegan extremism – fast becoming the new way woke folk love to taunt those of us who like a steak once or twice a week. (Wootton, 2020)

A café specialising in meat has been forced to shut after being targeted by militant vegans...”The abuse has been horrendous. We shouldn’t have to give in to them.” (Sun, 2020)

Portrayals of vegans as extremists, militants, and terrorists who are intent on destroying *our* way of life and against whom *we* must fightback mirror Wright’s take on the framing of veganism as a threat to the “American identity” (2015, p. 33) in the aftermath of the 2001 September 11 attacks against the USA. Wright argues that the attacks engendered a backlash against veganism, with US authorities associating it with “protest, dissent, Muslim dietary dictates, and terrorism” (2015, p. 41). Alongside the views of the US Government, Wright also mentions TV Chef Anthony Bourdain’s views in the 2000s of vegans as a “Hezbollah-like splinter faction (of vegetarianism)...the enemy of everything good” and “the worst kind of terrorists” as evidence of the engendering of the association between “cruelty-free diets and terrorism” (Wright, 2015, p. 39-40). Such associations are, while seemingly preposterous, potentially dangerous.

Calling vegan activists terrorists, extremists, or militants stigmatizes them, delegitimizes their causes, and potentially induces a chilling effect on their activism (Sorenson, 2016, p. 271), but it could also lead to their actions being codified as terrorism. Vegans seeking the liberation of Nonhuman Animals from human oppression have already been portrayed by U.S. and UK state officials as extremists and terrorists. Such portrayals present a clear threat to critical animal studies scholar-activists who are intent on achieving total liberation for Nonhuman, Animal, and Earth (Best et al., 2007). U.S. Senators have labeled animal rights activists “our home-grown brand of Al Qaeda” (Sorenson, 2016, p. 269). The Minnesota Police called the Animal Liberation Front “more dangerous...than Al Qaeda” (Best & Nocella, 2004, p. 327). The UK Home Office paper “Animal Welfare – Human Rights: protecting people from animal rights extremists,” with a foreword from the then Prime Minister Tony Blair proposed animal rights activists “are organized in a quasi-terrorist cellular structure” and carry out “acts of terrorism” (Blair & Blunkett, 2004, p. 10) covered by the UK Terrorism Act of 2001. The Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA) of 2006 enhanced the ability of U.S. law enforcement to “protect law-abiding citizens from violence and the threat of violence posed by [...] animal rights extremists” (Lovitz, 2010, p. 113).

The right-wing press in the UK, which includes the *Sun*, *Times*, and *Daily Mail* newspapers, has the power to “make the political weather” (Cushion & Sambrook, 2015). Thus, should newspaper framings of vegans as terrorists, extremists, or militants increase in a society where the political landscape is becoming ever more authoritarian, it is not unreasonable to fear that such language may one day become enmeshed in the political discourse. It is imperative for all activists to call out such framings regardless of how hyperbolic they might seem. The persistence of negative portrayals, the intentional absence of Nonhuman Animals from discussions, and the misinformation surrounding the impacts of vegan activism remind us as activists that we must continue to challenge those powers wishing to perpetuate carnism. This ideology entails enormous destruction, oppression, and death.

Conclusion

The consumption of Nonhuman Animals is embedded in British society and the hegemonic culture will defend itself when it fears its traditions are being

eroded by outsiders engaging in different or unfamiliar practices. The mainstream press is an important component in ensuring the practices of the hegemonic culture are reinforced and reproduced, and that challenges to it are countered. Thus, veganism, as a challenge to the dominant omnivorous culture, is denigrated more than it is extolled in UK newspapers. Negative portrayals of veganism weaken its proponents' arguments and reassure the omnivorous reader that the oppression, slaughter, and consumption of Nonhuman Animals is normal, natural, and necessary (Joy, 2020). Furthermore, negative portrayals of veganism may discourage others from transitioning to it. Above all, the absence of Nonhuman Animals in newspaper discussions of veganism erases the lives of those most impacted by the carnism and speciesism underpinning omnivorous cultures. Such erasure helps ensure the consumer can choose to ignore the cruelty behind the food on their plate, the drink in their glass, or the clothes on their back, and validates the perpetual immiseration and slaughter of sentient others for human profit.

All UK journalists "must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading, or distorted information" (Independent Press Standards Organisation, 2021). This study has revealed instances of these standards being ignored in newspaper portrayals of veganism in 2020. Thus, albeit unfairly, the onus is on activists to challenge such ignorance should they find evidence of it. In the UK, we can do this by registering official complaints with regulators such as the Independent Press Standards Organisation and IMPRESS. Sentient Media, a non-profit journalism organization advocating for an end to the oppression of Nonhuman Animals, has recently started publishing "The Correction," a column which directly challenges incorrect and problematic mainstream media articles. The organization welcomes input from fellow activists. Moreover, we can contact editors and journalists directly via email and social media platforms. Questioning organizations and their representatives directly on public platforms has the potential to open debates in which activists can highlight misinformation, direct readers to activist organizations and, above all, remind people why it is we choose veganism – for the total liberation of *all species* from exploitation, domination, oppression, torture, and killing (Nocella et al., 2019).

Future Considerations and Limitations of the Study

Future research encompassing other forms of media, for example, television, film, or social media, could offer a deeper understanding of media portrayals of veganism and strengthen or challenge the conclusions drawn from this research. Further, an exploration of veganism in non-Global Northern media could reveal interesting differences and possible motivations behind such portrayals. Would newspapers in a country such as India, where 39 percent identify as vegetarian and 81 percent follow restrictions on meat and dairy consumption (Corichi, 2021), present veganism with less cynicism than those in the Global North? How might newspapers in a country where “beef” plays a significant role in its economy and its population’s diet, such as Argentina, portray veganism?

A limitation of the study is the short time frame from which I collected data. A longer study could challenge or strengthen my findings. It would be worth exploring whether there has been a steady acceleration of the decline in negative portrayals since 2007. While there appear to be fewer negative portrayals in 2020 than in 2007, this does not necessarily mean that this is evidence of a year-on-year decline. There may be a peak of negative and positive portrayals during the period, and the period 2020-2022 might indicate a regression in the latter, in which case there could be an argument that we are amid a nascent backlash against veganism. As veganism grows, those who profit from the oppression of Nonhuman Animals and feel their carnist way of life threatened may lash out with greater frequency and intensity.

For example, the growing popularity of plant-based milk has engendered a backlash from the meat and dairy industry, leading to proposals in the European Parliament by pro-industry lobbyists to make it illegal for producers of plant-based dairy alternatives to use terms such as “creamy” and “buttery” or evoke anything to do with “dairy” from Nonhuman Animals in their marketing and packaging (Southey, 2021). The European Commission voted the proposals through as Amendment 171 in 2020 only to be reversed the following year (Southey, 2021). In the UK, a Conservative Party councilor in the county of Shropshire attempted to remove pro-vegan adverts from buses because they “should not be on show in a “great county built on (animal) agriculture” (Jones, 2019). Such developments are reminiscent of Wright’s (2015) framing of the post-September 11 backlash against “un-American” lifestyles such as veganism. The hawkish, hyper-conservative and inherently bigoted attitudes and behaviors of the George W. Bush-led U.S.

Government of the time appear moderate compared to those of the current extreme right in the Global North. Perhaps a backlash against veganism is already underway. If it is, we must lash back “by any means necessary” (ICAS, 2017).

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Book Review: Two Books by Marquis Bey.

Bey, Marquis. 2019. *Them Goon Rules: Fugitive Essays on Radical Black Feminism*. University of Arizona Press. \$19.95, paperback. 151 pages. ISBN: 978-0816539437.

Bey, Marquis. 2022. *Cistem Failure: Essays on Blackness and Cisgender*. Duke University Press. \$24.95, paperback; \$94.95 hardcover. 192 pages. ISBN: 978-1478018445.

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Abstract

This review essay combines two books published by the Black studies and gender scholar Marquis Bey. The review situates these two books within Bey's wider work. The goal of this is to help introduce Bey and their work to a critical animal studies audience, as I see much in common between Bey's work and CAS, and a number of these connections are pointed out.

Keywords: Blackness, transgender, cisness, Black feminism, abolition

At present, *Them Good Rules* and *Cistem Failure* represent Bey's first and last published books, totaling five books between 2019 and 2022. Both being books of essays, *Cistem Failure* in many ways feels like an extension of *Them Good Rules* and thus they are reviewed together. I first briefly summarize each book individually but then spend the bulk of the review discussing them in view of Marquis's wider work. The point of this review is to help introduce Bey and their work to critical animal studies and vice versa. I believe that Marquis and their work provide much room for fruitful engagement with CAS. Since Bey writes in a very personable manner, this review follows that lead. I personally have taken much inspiration from Bey and their writings and try to, in ways that inevitably pale in comparison, somewhat mimic their writing style.

I'll start with Bey's "note on pronouns" from their website:

The "preference" for they/them pronouns to describe myself is an attempt to mark my irreverence toward the gender binary, and to mark my tentative and always-in-process relationship to gender nonbinariness. Put differently, this is not to say I "am" nonbinary but, more pointedly, seek a nonbinaristic relationship to my own understanding of my gender—an attempted unrelation to gender, as it were. Thus, it matters less what pronoun one uses for me; I am, ultimately, pronoun indifferent. That capaciousness is simply another attempt to express an irreverence and disdain for the gender binary and the ways it might inhere in pronouns. (marquisbey.com, accessed July 14, 2022)

This frames their works nicely. It is this sort of radicality you get from Bey, a rejection of oppressive systems and modes of thought that in this case, is not "just" nonbinary as an alternate and preferred category, but something else altogether. Bey instead looks to chart self-willed realities and futures. This is indeed radical—nothing is off the table. The future remains open and accountable to what cannot be planned for. In reading Bey with an open mind, one is left feeling more open-minded than they thought they were or maybe thought was possible.

In the preface of *Them Goon Rules*, and what is probably my favorite preface I've ever read, Bey writes,

I am nothing but a thief stealing shit I vibe with from others and making it do a different kind of work. Hacking already hacked ideas,

stealing stolen things and giving them away so others can steal more things. ... I am a thief, mind you, because I am born of thieves. (xi-xii)

Aren't we all? Is CAS not an amalgamation of various social movements and activist-scholars that came before it: Prison abolitionists, anarchists, ecofeminists, nonhuman animals who have escaped from captivity, etc.? Yes, it is. And like Bey, CAS is unabashedly proud of and humbled by that history. In some sense, this passage sets up the book as ideas that have already been expressed, albeit differently. This is also Bey's first book, published when they were still in graduate school. To show such humbleness and maturity at this initial venture is refreshing. It almost, also, seems to set the book up as if it doesn't have to be read. Who would ever start a book like that? But in fact, this is brilliant. This passage ignited my curiosity.

It is nearly impossible to read the first pages of *Them Goon Rules* and not be inspired. Inspired to rebel, resist, reclaim, unsettle, fuck shit up. We learn that Black life is resistance and its celebration is a radical act; that for some, backyard "dawg fights" "are "the only alternative to gangbangng or selling drugs" (p. 51). We learn that if a law is unjust, that the just thing to do is to break that law (how very CAS!). We learn that Blackness, transness, and feminism *must* go together—not as some highly specific form of feminism (as the order of these three terms doesn't matter) but as a multidimensional praxis; that "intersectional feminism" tries but always fails to be (as radical as) Black feminism.

Perhaps especially (seemingly) controversial, is Bey's use of "Blackness" as decoupled from skin color. Instead, it is associated with a fugitive status, lawlessness, an unsettling of the way things are (perhaps especially of whiteness which is the opposite of all this). For Bey, Blackness seems to be a type of anarchy. Blackness is always an anarcho-Blackness (Bey 2020b). The first implication of this is that anyone, not just Black-skinned people, can "claim" Blackness. The second implication is that not all those who are epidermally Black automatically fulfill the conditions for Blackness. Lil Wayne (from a song of whom the book's title comes from) and Kanye West, in their support of Donald Trump, come to mind. It is not my point to call out certain Black people for not being "Black enough" here, but to highlight how I instantiate Bey's concept of Blackness.

The essays in *Cistem Failure* revolve around how Blackness and cisgender do not fit hand-in-glove. In a previous book, Bey (2020a) argued that Blackness fundamentally disrupts gender generally. In *Cistem Failure*, this is made more specific to cisgender in particular: “blackness undermines the embedded coherency, transparency, and immutability of cisgender” (p. 73). Bey talks about how the use of “they” as a gender pronoun in Black communities may indicate an affinity between gender nonbinariness and Blackness. On the flipside, Bey associates cisness with whiteness as it is whiteness that created and imposes the gender binary system, with all its attendant associations. If this is the case, then Blackness does indeed conflict with cisness. Bey also discusses how the use of they/them pronouns can refer to a nonbinaristic orientation to gender that itself is *not* a form of gender identity. Cistem failure exists because cisness fails us, all of us. It cannot contain what humans are and imposes restrictions that impede liberation. It is for this reason that Bey ends with an essay on gender abolition but is careful to qualify this stance as one that opposes gender “that touts itself as Gender as an extractive vector hierarchizing our relation to others and the world” (p. 139). This does not overlook gender-based harm but posits gender *as the harm* (p. 131).

Much like for “Blackness” in *Them Good Rules*, Bey again raises an issue, both somewhat timidly and confidently at the same time, that may be viewed as controversial, namely that transness is not bound to a gender identity. “Rather, trans marks the ways that one *transes* gender, how one relates to the normativity of the gender binary in subversive and critical ways” (p. 65). So again, what we have here is trans going beyond being transgender. It is not difficult to see how Blackness and transness, when thought of in the ways Bey describes, work together as part of a Black trans feminism (Bey 2022), especially when feminism is understood similarly, as a stance that supports the liberation of all marginalized groups.

In both books, Marquis is at once deadly serious and playful. There is clearly rage in their words, but it is expressed so lovingly. Not all authors are so skilled. Often enough, those who are—rightfully and righteously—pissed off write from pretty much that single emotion. But Bey strikes an incredible balance between love and rage (are the two even necessarily separate?). In reading these books, one can almost feel Bey’s muscles tense up, see their face grimace and smile, and see their tears. Bey’s style is to slip in and out of various styles. They are at once personal and general. They

lapse in and out of deep (often very deep) philosophy and critical theory, to informality and slang. Marquis's form is highly artistic and this keeps their essays begging to be acknowledged and revisited, as any good piece of art should. Bey's writing is really an experience. They write otherwise as they encourage the reader to imagine otherwise, other ways of being. Bey's central premise always seems to be, to never be inhibited by what is merely imaginable or seemingly possible.

Seemingly contradictory to what I'm about to say here, but as this is a review for the *Journal for Critical Animal Studies*, it behooves me to point out that Bey essentially stays focused on humans. And this consists of my one desire, to see the concepts Bey writes about brought into conversation with animality. Bey's writing is too beautiful and too unfolding, always not fully formed, for this to be a critique. Marquis writes to work through ideas, not to necessarily express fully formed thoughts. At the same time, CAS publications perhaps focus too much on the nonhuman. As CAS is about and for total liberation, publications that do not include nonhuman animals are just as "CAS" as ones that center them. It is all one struggle. This is why this joint review is so important, especially for a CAS audience: because Bey and CAS share much ground and can be brought into conversation with each other, particularly over what the other, to an extent, leaves underrepresented. This was my intention with the interview (or informal chat) I had with Bey earlier this year on behalf of the Institute for Critical Animal Studies (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcn6xuJp4Qo>). (Or, more accurately, I showed up and said some things to try to sound intelligible and keep up with Marquis.) This is always how I read, looking for what is left out. In general, for any author that does not include nonhuman animals, I would encourage them to do so, and for any field or organization that centers nonhumans, I always want to make sure human groups are not de-emphasized. It goes both ways.

Bey does come tantalizingly close in *Cistem Failure* to engaging nonhumans via veganism when they write, "What would it be like to have food that sustains, food we can eat, food that is not predicated on the slaughtering of others" (p. 134). In this instance, it seems to be more metaphorical than literal. But it could be both. Regardless, here is an example of where CAS could run with Bey's ideas. This is also an idea I would like to see Bey press upon more. Queerness, Blackness, and animality have plenty of connections (see for example Simonsen, 2012; or Malakou, 2021). How

might Bey's conceptions of Blackness or transness help lead to or signal solidarity with nonhumans? Might that be an important component or form of praxis of these terms? Similarly, Bey's writings are short on activism and they admit this. However, their writings are theory *for* activism and this seems abundantly clear. The reader should be able to use (or one might say steal!) lessons from *Them Goon Rules* and *Cistem Failure* to transform themselves and social and geographical spaces to be radically inclusive—borderless and boundaryless. A mode of thought that is not bound by what already exists or seems possible is ripe for seeing all oppression as connected, which is a fundamental tenant of CAS that informs activism.

Bey focuses very closely on Blackness and gender but casts a net so wide within this intermingling that this becomes exceedingly fertile territory. There are many ways CAS could pick up or pick out strands of Bey's thoughts on Blackness, Black feminism, anarchism, cisness, transgender, and feminism and make them do "a different kind of work," or find Bey a sympathetic collaborator/co-conspirator. CAS proponents could also stand to learn much from reading Bey and those they frequently cite (for example, Hortense Spillers, Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, C. Riley Snorton, Kai M. Green, among others)—and likewise for Bey. To show how similar Bey and CAS already are, I'll end with another quote from *Them Good Rules*: "Instead of French writers, I want to move arm in arm with the misfits, the deviants, the lowlifes and imbeciles, the poor and the uneducated, because rebellious knowledge happens underground" (p. 14)." Sounds like critical animal studies to me.

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Book Review: Salzani, Carlo. 2022. *Agamben and the Animal*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

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Abstract

Is Agamben anthropocentric? In *Agamben and the Animal*, Salzani aims to separate the “non-anthropocentric” aspects of Agamben's thought from the residual anthropocentrism that still limits it, pointing beyond the threshold of human dominion over nonhumans.

Keywords: Agamben, Salzani, anthropocentrism, Critical Animal Studies

Agamben and the Animal by Carlo Salzani is a book published in 2022 by Cambridge Scholars Publishing that aims to discuss the question of the animal in Giorgio Agamben's philosophy. The Italian philosopher's 2003 book *The Open: Man and Animal* has left a lasting mark on animal studies. However, the theme of animality is present in all of his other writings, even if the results are uncertain and need to be discussed.

Agamben and the Animal is an extraordinary tool to clarify the lively debate on Agamben's work, particularly about the presence of anthropocentrism. The book includes three already published texts (in Italian and English): *Beyond Human and Animal* (in *Animality in Contemporary Italian Philosophy*, ed. by Felice Cimatti and Carlo Salzani, Palgrave 2020), *Outside of Being: Potentiality Beyond Anthropocentrism* (in "Ethics & Politics" ed. by Carlo Crosato, XXII.3 2020), *The Human as Signature: Beyond Human Nature* ("L'umano come segnatura" in "I quaderni di poesia" n.7, ed. by Jacopo D'Alonzo and Lucia Dell'Aia, Italian Cultural Institute, Amsterdam 2019), and three critical unpublished writings: *Beyond Species and Persons: Towards a New Ethology*, *Beyond the Open: Boredom and Shame*, *The Virus is the Open: Beyond Agamben*.

With *Agamben and the Animal*, Salzani aims to develop what is still unexpressed in Agamben's thought (the *Entwicklungsfähigkeit* Feuerbach would say) and to separate the "non-anthropocentric" aspects of his philosophy from the residual anthropocentrism that still limits it (*Pointing Beyond* that threshold, as the introduction states). There is no doubt that both of these aspects are present in Agamben's thought, but Salzani underlines that highlighting anti-anthropocentrism would enrich discussion about nonhuman animals that, at this moment, suffer the crisis of Derrida's deconstruction. Furthermore, in Agamben, there is a radical critique of the *dispositif* (see Foucault) of "species" (p. 47), an apparatus that separates humans from the living that could align with anti-speciesism and buttress statements that suggest nonhuman animals have no face and no politics (p. 79). At the same time, the statement that animals have a language (p. 5) merges with the view that only humans are capable of *praxis*, free action (p. 50).

Salzani's book explicates these paradoxes with a rich number of quotations and arguments that gives rise to a fruitful discussion on such a complex argument. Furthermore, the text can problematize the question of anthropocentrism in Agamben, avoiding dogmatic positions.

The author broadens the reading that Matthew Calarco had offered of

Agamben in *Zoographies* (Matthew Calarco, *Zoographies. The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida*, Columbia University Press, 2008), in which *The Open* had been identified as a cornerstone of animal studies that had mounted a frontal attack on the “anthropological machine” that separates man and animal. At the same time, Calarco says that Agamben's early works are marked by “performative anthropocentrism” because they only focused on rethinking the human.

Salzani's thesis is very close to that of Calarco. Still, Agamben *and the Animal* also discusses texts ranging from those by Sergei Prozorov, who argues that Agamben is not anthropocentric, to those by Dominick LaCapra, who instead strongly support his anthropocentrism.

Under Salzani's interpretation, Giorgio Agamben's philosophy has the potential to go beyond its limits. Namely, in *The Open*, there is the idea of boredom that “dehumanizes the human subject and brings her closer to an (ostensibly) animal-like stupor” (p. xv). But for Salzani, the proper way out of anthropocentrism is the concept of “shame”: “the shame of being human [that] can also be extended to include the shame at our subordination to the dictates of the myth of human exceptionalism, the shame at our subordination to the myth that violence towards nonhuman animals is necessary and inevitable” (p. 97).

The original thesis carried out by Salzani is that not the boredom discussed in *The Open* is the key to use Agamben to overcome anthropocentrism, but the shame discussed in *Remnants of Auschwitz*, namely “the shame of being human.”

In conclusion, Salzani proposes at the end of the book a very original reading of the philosophy of Giorgio Agamben that aims, starting from the controversial writings of the philosopher on the COVID-19 pandemic, to go beyond anthropocentrism and Agamben himself, making free use of his thought to rethink animality and what animals do. This makes his ideas very relevant to critical animal studies. Every fight for nonhuman animals involves rethinking what it means to be nonhuman and human. *Agamben and the Animal* by Carlo Salzani is an important part of this process.

Book Review: Crossing Boundaries in Times of Pre-emptive Biopolitics

Carr, R. (2022). *Species of contagion: Animal-to-Human Transplantation in the Age of Emerging Infectious Disease*. Palgrave Macmillan (ISBN: 978-981-16-8288-9). 221 pages.

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Abstract

Xenotransplantation, an emerging biotechnology, denotes a vision for a world that provides organ donations for all people needing new body parts by transferring tissues and organs between one species and another. However, it also reorders the hierarchy of non-human animals and establishes new boundaries between humans and animals. Xenotransplantation has grown into an elaborated and complex biotechnological apparatus, which operates through both sovereign and security power, applying a different mix of these at different times. Depending on how these power mechanisms work, the technology suggests different ways of thinking about contagion and prevention. Each designates different fates for the animals involved in research and animal production. Ray Carr manages to scrutinize the “species of contagion” while pinpointing the bigger picture involved in biotechnological development.

Keywords: xenotransplantation, human-animal relations, contagion, power, biopolitics, biocapital

Species of Contagion by Ray Carr is a brilliant read in its thorough application of the sociological imagination throughout the book. While zooming in on the phenomenon of xenotransplantation, Carr explores the broader context of this biotechnological development, touching on human-animal relations, the social construction of pigs and primates, national imaginaries, migration, and xenophobia, as well as power relations within contemporary biopolitics and its genealogical conditions. The book was published at the right time, given the world's first xenotransplantation of a genetically modified pig heart to a human being at the beginning of 2022. David Bennett was the first human to receive a transplanted heart from a transgenic pig. He died two months after the procedure.

The book's first chapter introduces the technical matter of xenotransplantation, namely the transplantation of cells, tissues, or organs across species boundaries. Research has focused in particular on the utilization of pig organs for human transplantation to alleviate demand for organ transplants. But, most importantly, the blurring of biological lines between humans and animals raises the risk of transmittable diseases (zoonoses). The boundary between humans and non-human animals requires a constant labor of social construction, whereby "the human" is maintained by othering and suppressing "the animal." To achieve both, first, the prevention of zoonoses, or infectious diseases moving from one species to another, and secondarily, the maintenance of an unchallenged human self, two modes of power can be detected. Following the differentiation of Michel Foucault, Carr works out that it is the mechanisms of sovereign power on the one hand and security power (or governmentality) on the other. While the former tries to eliminate infections and maintain a strict binary division between human and animal biology, the latter is directed towards the containment of contagions by means of an adaptive immunosystem.

Chapter 2 tells the story of the Auckland mini pigs. Having lived on an island uninhabited by humans, these pigs are as "pure" as pigs possibly can be, lacking common infectious pathogens. This presumably qualifies them for use as an organ source for xenotransplantation, as infections are to be avoided by all means. The same applies at the social level, where the social order is seen to be placed in jeopardy by undesirable groups said to carry diseases and pose a health hazard to the population. Anxiety around boundary blurring also extends to the biological differences between humans and animals. A case in point is New Zealand's tourism industry -- which

promotes itself by advertising “100 % Pure New Zealand,” - and where the same phrase has been applied by the biotechnology firm Living Cell Technologies, which promotes a “100 % Pure” pig, safe for xenotransplantation. This phrase also evokes purity narratives, which are not without colonial historical overtones insofar as it is intended to maintain species boundaries. Ultimately, the aim is to prevent any disease from spreading by preventing any interspecies contamination or boundary blurring. Sovereign power appears insofar as it frames biotechnology within a definite binary between animals and humans and a clear divide between nature and culture.

Pigs are not the only animals involved in xenotransplantation research. Primates, while not used as organ sources anymore, are used to stand in as human models, where it would be unethical to test on humans. Mostly baboons are the primates that receive pig organ transplants to test these organs' tolerability. Chapter 3 illustrates how science and ethics committees in the UK have constructed pigs and primates symbolically to justify their respective uses in research. Primates are deemed to be too similar to humans to be used as organ sources. This is especially true because they are more evolved than other species in their ability to feel pain. This definitory construction comes at the expense of pigs. This utilitarian reason is given a lot of weight, even though Peter Singer has said that pigs display capacities characteristic for personhood. Carr pinpoints the scientific literature that underlines the abilities of pigs for communication, self-awareness, and memory. Finally, there appears to be practical and economic reasoning that leads to each animal group's idiosyncratic positioning (a detailed sketch of these rationalizations has been outlined by Peta Cook, 2006).

Chapter 4 gives a broader overview of the security mechanisms of power in the US, the most advanced example of “pre-emptive” biopolitics. While Foucault sketched out the original idea that security apparatuses manage risks to populations by normalizing them, current risks are of a speculative nature. The actors involved in biopolitics tend to have their attention directed towards uncertain and improbable emergencies, such as unpredictable pandemics, tackling this litany of crises by means of pre-emption, imagination, speculation, and simulation (in the form of surveillance, screening, and intervention). To reach these goals, new viruses might be created so vaccines against them can be made. By creating new

risks and producing security responses to tackle those risks, new uncertainties often emerge, leading to a mutual co-evolution of risks and attempted securities. “Pre-emptive strategies,” Carr explains, “actively intervene and produce a particular reality” (p. 139), as can be perceived in the implementation of xenotransplantation. Prevention is not the declared goal in this biopolitical imaginary; instead, the seeming goal is shaping the future by producing new forms of life. The best example of this kind of speculative capitalism is the biotechnology startup eGenesis, built entirely on venture capital and based on speculation from the start. Here, non-human animals are perceived as “biocapital” that is meant to make future surplus.

Chapter 5 pinpoints the national history of Australia, as characterized by its restrictive migration policy and anti-migrant sentiment. In the past, a mix of public health and racial politics was used to try to make a “White Australia.” The primary target of this were Aboriginal Australians and people who came from Asia. Stressing the insight of Roberto Esposito that the imaginaries of immunizing a body and a society co-determine each other, Carr attempts to make sense of the moratorium on xenotransplantation that the Australian government adopted in 2004. Politics tends to treat the governed population based on a vision of the state as a body. From a historical point of view, public health (or biosciences in general) now scrutinizes actual living bodies as a political matter. This can form an analogy to the germ theory, wherein external microbes cause disease. In turn, politics, having epidemiology on its side, aims to identify and isolate those carrying germs and diseases (most often in the form of constructed “outsiders” and “foreigners”). Following this logic of maintaining clear boundaries between inside and outside, the healthy body versus infectious intruders, the Australian government’s moratorium opted for a precautionary approach. But by now, liberal ideas have gained ground in the debate about xenotransplantation in Australia since the ban was lifted in 2009.

Chapter 6 concludes the findings outlined throughout the book. Xenotransplantation illustrates the recombination of different rationalities of power, in particular sovereignty and security. It’s an excellent example of how a new type of biopolitics plays out in security systems involving politics, economics, science, and ethics. At the same time, sovereign power logic tends to make a (re-)appearance, leading to peculiar and particular formations of power structures.

The arguments in *Species of Contagion* are strong, and the book is well-researched and covers a wide range of topics that are related to xenotransplantation. Carr knows how to combine different ideas, points of view, and theoretical approaches. He covers various disciplines from bioethics to history while keeping a sociological perspective overall.

As a reader, one could think of two additional chapters in this book. While many aspects Carr touches on can be extrapolated from the national contexts set in the chapters, a general evaluation on the global scale is missing. Regarding xenotransplantation, there is an unresolved debate on global justice (see, e.g., Sparrow, 2009). A significant part of the world's population would not benefit from xenotransplantation due to lacking access to its technology. At the same time, this part of the world's population bears the highest risk, were a disease to be created through these practices, because healthcare systems in many countries are ill-equipped to manage zoonotic infectious diseases. Given these circumstances, xenotransplantation does not meet the preconditions for global social justice. Herein would be the place to attach a debate from a postcolonial STS and bioethics perspective.

The other possible chapter might seek to find an answer to the question of what the emerging mechanisms of power involved in this biotechnology come down to concretely for human and non-human animals. This question arises in particular as we have recently encountered a pandemic caused by a xenzoonotic infection. Here, I would like to add a few thoughts that follow Carr's examination of power in chapter 4. The chapter ends by stating that while "companies generate profit from the promise of the regenerative ability of vital mechanisms, they leave a trail of non-human death and discarded vitality. In this necropolitical quality, capital accumulation, with a radical commitment to deterritorialization of the human-animal boundary, also bears the trace of the sovereign human/animal binary" (p. 146). So, while humans in this context are supposed to circulate freely, destined to create resilience against potential and actual contagions, animals are used relentlessly as long as they biopolitically serve the prospect of future surplus. It is estimated that less than one percent of genetically modified embryos grow into adult pigs (Entwistle et al., 2022). In the recent pandemic, one can identify similar traits of necropolitics in animals. The killing of Denmark's entire mink farm population is an example. Animals that were infected or at risk of becoming infected (one may see here some form of pre-emptive necropolitics) were killed for the sake of humans' health

security. Animals that form part of research studies, as a result of their status as valuable biocapital, are meant to flourish within the confines of their socially engineered environment, living “freely” while being examined testing injected drugs, vaccines and pathogens.

In the pandemic, we witnessed a strong (re-)appearance of sovereign power. Governments reacted with various interventions, including lockdowns and closing borders. Even the economy was shut down to some extent. While sovereign power employing such measurements and prohibitions was evident, its legitimation was representative of the pre-emptive biopolitics described by Carr: based on simulation (such as epidemiological model calculations) and imagined worst case scenarios, the state attempts to calculate the unpredictable, instead of working with perceivable probabilities. Control and security apparatuses were implemented and extended on a large scale, including by multiple non-state agents. At least when it came to the rollout of vaccines and the expectation that the pandemic should be brought to a halt as rapidly as possible, a peculiar mix of power regimes emerged. Vaccinated people did not need to be tested anymore and were allowed entry to shops, restaurants, etc. A return to a security regime appeared possible if it were not for the deviants refusing to follow the government's advice to get vaccinated voluntarily. However, even then, sovereign power stopped before the individual's right to physical integrity. It seems that contemporary neoliberal states still hesitate to eradicate the individual's autonomy. Given that individual liberties are the ideological bedrock of biopolitical power, doing so would risk shooting itself in the foot. Individual liberties rather need to be steered and managed. It is here, where we see power mechanisms at play in the field of its own rationale. Those who do not use their freedom responsibly, such as opting to get vaccinated for the sake of the population's freedom, risk being sanctioned. While the binary of vaccinated/un-vaccinated became overtly visible, the sanctions did not bear the same marks of sovereign power. As previously pointed out, obvious measures like prohibitive rules enabling penalties (conviction, fine, detainment) were out of reach. Instead, social exclusion, through stigmatization and unequal distribution of privileges and access barriers, was utilized to put pressure on those who deviated from the prescribed regime. Rules and legislation did not infringe on their liberty, but comparing themselves to people with more privileges did. Privileges included access to venues and events, clearance from testing, and the right to

gather with others, all of which left the deviating population deprived of social and cultural life. The aim here is not the physical exclusion of the deviant's body (detainment, imprisonment, encampment, deportation). One could compare the social death of a deviant and their ostracism from the community of respectable citizens and moral persons to how the Catholic church treated excommunication. A grave version of excommunication was to be declared *vitandus* (to be shunned). Accordingly, the person "was then publicly denounced as *vitandus* and therefore to be shunned by all the faithful in religious gatherings" (Bretzke 2013, p.260). Thus, we can speak of the social shunning engineered by this context as *vitando-politics*.

Necropolitics (Mbembe, 2019) is a dark side of biopolitics that turns groups of people into walking dead. Vitandopolitics is the dark side of a pre-emptive biopolitics that targets the body in order to create future life. Anyone not willing to contribute to the preservation of the population with her biological body, bears the consequences of the social body. Those who are compliant walk free, while those who are noncompliant are shunned to achieve compliance after all. Individuals are addressed calling on their "personal responsibility." Megan Glick (2018) compares the fight against obesity in the U.S. and xenotransplantation. She states that "'[p]ersonal responsibility' dogmas can be seen throughout government initiatives designed to penalize the obese," encompassing higher insurance rates, BMI record cards, and associations of fatness with all kinds of negative personality traits such as lazy and stupid (Glick, 2018, p. 165). We have witnessed the same mechanisms of coercion during the pandemic which may be similar to what we can imagine for the future of biotechnologies, and their enforced uptake, such as xenotransplantation. Patients who receive animal organs are expected to allow continuous monitoring through extensive surveillance, and waive their right to withdraw from the post-trial proceedings (Fovargue, 2011). A comparison can also be drawn to the animals used in xenotransplantation, which are segregated from their peers, barred from species-appropriate social lives, and even biologically separated from their species-typical genome.

Compliance also plays an interesting part in the first xenotransplantation of a genetically modified heart. David Bennett's history of noncompliance in following his doctor's orders made him ineligible for human transplant but a good candidate for an experimental xenotransplantation. It did not go unnoticed that exactly this background of

noncompliance would make David Bennett ineligible for future xenotransplantation trials, as the monitoring and surveillance after xenotransplantation is deemed to be distinctly more encompassing and challenging in contrast to allotransplantations (Entwistle et al., 2022). Surveillance and monitoring are part of the pre-emptive biopolitics described. These are critical pillars for a proactive public health policy for xenotransplant patients. When the time comes, we may consult Carr's theoretical outline of contemporary power mechanisms again.

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Animal: Living Soul

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Hebrew scripture, Genesis:
Chapters One and Two.

Animal beings, translated:
living souls, *nefesh chaya*,

life force with divine breath
blessed with *ruach*, spirit of God,

will and consciousness.

We have gardens to tend:
abad and *shamar*,

to serve and
exercise great care over

as we are one
body sharing this Earth

needing protection, eager for love.

Author Biographies

Annie Bernatchez is a doctoral student in sociology at the University of Ottawa, Canada. As a political sociologist in the field of social movement and critical studies, her research interest focuses on animal justice activism in Canada. The central point of interest of her thesis is the structural and emotional dimensions of contentious politics.

Ermanno Castanò teaches philosophy and is the author of (2018) *Agamben e l'animale. La politica dalla norma all'eccezione (Agamben and the Animal. Politics from the Norm to the Exception)* and (2011) *Ecologia e potere. Un saggio su Murray Bookchin (Ecology and Power. An Essay on Murray Bookchin)*.

Iana Fishova holds a Master degree in English and American Studies at the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena, Germany. She organizes a project “Vegan Studies and Critical Animal Studies” where she translates and writes articles for Russian-speaking readers.

Lynne Goldsmith is a counselor and award-winning author. Her first poetry collection, *Secondary Cicatrices*, won seven honors. Two of her three children’s picture books won honors. Her new poetry collection, now out, is *By Light and Hidden Matter*. She works as a licensed and certified therapist/counselor and recently had two photos chosen as “Favorites” in an international photography competition.

Johannes Kögel is a philosopher and sociologist who works as a research associate at the Institute of Ethics, History, and Theory of Medicine at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. His research interests comprise migration and democracy studies, STS and medical sociology. Currently he works on a project about xenotransplantation.

Nathan Poirier is a Ph.D. candidate in Sociology at Michigan State University with specializations in Animal Studies and Women’s & Gender Studies, and previous master’s degrees in mathematics and anthrozoology. He also is co-director for Students for Critical Animal Studies, and Director of Publicity for the Institute for Critical Animal Studies. Nathan is currently

writing a dissertation that investigates links between proponents of "in vitro meat" and animal agribusiness.

Norman George Riley is a year two Ph.D. researcher at the University of Essex, UK whose research focusses on attitudes towards and barriers to veganism within a working-class community in the United Kingdom.

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

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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