

STUDENT JOURNAL OF

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International Association of Vegan Sociologists

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Proclamation

In the midst of global crises, of security, health, and civil unrest, we find ourselves, again and again, shaped and reshaped by the world in which we belong. In the cycles and processes interwoven into a tapestry of new imaginaries, we find ourselves amongst a new order, and a new call to service. We are being asked to expand beyond scientific ration, as we know it, to include wisdoms of embodiment and fortitude. A fortitude which hails in a time of a great worldly shift, a shift back into the spaces of life, of heart, of love, of reverence, of a sacredness. We know once again the fragility of life. We embrace this opening with a plea for emancipation of life beyond humans. We embrace a vegan modality during this great transformative journey. Where the focus and the gaze fall upon nonhuman species. Species who share the Ancient Earth with us. Here we move away from hierarchical and binary paradigms, toward a oneness, equanimity, and union with life beyond the human race. We recognize delights, the authentic nature, and the agentic empowerment of nonhuman animals. We recognize them as souls...

This journal, the *Student Journal of Vegan Sociology*, is a space for all of this. It is a space holding together creative and vital students, so their voices can be heard, not after they have reached a pedigree of a certain ranking, but rather, now. Now, in a time of chaos, of dissolution of old ways, and the remaking of the new. We called on the next generation of scholars, activists, and empathetic beings to hold the torch and carry us forward. Our style, in doing so, is unorthodox, anarchist, and bold with goodness. We embrace kindness to all humans, and nonhumans alike. We ask animals to be written about as if they were of a human species, with respect, and tenderness. We ask that life is recognized with humility and regard. We have attempted herein to breach the academic mold of rigidity and discontent with ideas that do not align with our own ideology of the liberation of animals, and instead offered other venues for those discourses. Our journal, then, begins a conversation of what liberating nonhuman animals may mean, to those who care, openly and transparently, about other than human lives. The time for this discussion has long passed, and the only way forward is breaking free of what no longer serves us...us with the inclusion of them, "our" animals. I say "our" yet they are not ours at all, they are free.

I envisioned a space where the vibrant, passionate, and meaningful work of my students could be seen. A space, to co-create, reimagine and reshape a new era for our nonhuman kin. Corey Wrenn, Zoi Sutton, and I founded the journal in knowing a place for student voices, in illuminating the path of nonhuman animals, must be central to the way forward. My vision of the journal is student-centric. The intensely profound, creative potential and force of student work goes unnoticed. So then, in this space, let us allow these structures to soften, empower the voices and the hearts of the next generation of academics, and let us give them a space to find cohesion and coherence in unity. A solidarity in life, beyond humans.

A collective of editors, writers, and faculty have joined together to make this, our first issue of Vegan Sociology about nonhuman species. Rarely the focus of any Sociology

conversation, and often overlooked as even a part of society, nonhuman animals finally have a central place within our next generation of Sociology. We honor and celebrate this space, with a unification of the heart and mind in the discourse of us, and them, of nonhuman species. Yet, the honor, heart and softness, only feeds the intense fury of our logic and reason, as we stand strong in solidarity, as abolitionists, of the atrocities toward all of the nonhuman species of this world.

We have braved a new written understanding in our journal. While we attend to American Sociological Association citation conventions, as anachronism runs in our blood, we do stray. We stray, only for readability, and only because we listen to our own felt sense of the words, our words, our ideals, our hearts, and our spirits, in and on these pages. We embrace kindness to nonhumans, and humans, alike, as a choice to empower those of us, in this space of liberation. With that said, we intensify language, and we embellish in it. We write of animals, herein, as nonhumans, to acknowledge they are a species, as are we. We find personhood in nonhuman species, and in this recognizing him and her, as well as he and she, to allow for an encasement of individuality, as opposed to *it*, which is old and objectifying, and as opposed to *they*, which diminishes their individuality and authentic qualities. Instead, we write of them, the nonhumans, as a unification of their corporeality and spirit. And finally, we have intentionally and deliberately reoriented the spoken and written language to centralize around a raw reality. That is, we have offered *animals as food*, rather than *meat eating*, throughout, to disembodify the objectification within and around the Western cultured human language of consumption. We once again, bathe in the intensity of our reality.

Our writers are beautiful expressions of a Vegan Sociology, *of a hope* for anew, a Utopia, writes Ruth Griggs. *Of a hope* for a lived and embodied coexistence with nonhumans, a shared sentience, writes Cosette Patterson. *Of a hope*, for a sacredness once again, a sacred body, of a sacred woman, of a sacred cow, of sacred mothering, writes Natalia Ciecierska-Holmes. *Of a hope*, for an empowered feminist vegan ethic, who rise for themselves and for nonhuman animals, in a dismantling of the man-animal binary, writes Daniel A. Harrison. Students who stand in solidarity behind one profound professor, *of a hope*, to reimagine education for, and with, living and feeling nonhuman animals, writes Jake Sallaway-Costello and his student colleagues, Maisie Corbett, Abigail Larkin, Andrew Mellard, Lily Murray, and Katherine Sellens, and yes, they listen intently to their inner voice. And to all of us, who stand in the fire, who stand in the place of the other...*Of and for a hope*, on behalf of our nonhuman kin, on behalf of animal souls, writes Lynda M. Korimboccus.

My deepest and sincerest gratitude to our editorial collective. A global gathering of dedicated scholars for the emancipation of nonhuman species...from the United States of America, and Canada, to Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom, to Romania, and to Australia...we serve as a culturally diverse perspective of radical ways in which we embrace animals in a new society. I am immensely grateful for our distinguished, dignified, and empathetic faculty: Corey Wrenn, Zoei Sutton, Matthew Cole, Jessica Greenebaum, and Catherine Oliver. It fills me with gratitude to introduce our extraordinary collective of graduate students, who are wonderful, open and committed to a new path forward, for *our*

animal kin: Lynda M. Korimboccus, Sarah May Lindsay, Maria Martelli, Rachel Lamarche, Gillian Moise, Renelle McGlacken, Nicole Raleigh, Sarah Burton, Daria Healey, and Katherine Calvert. This lovely collective is as brave, courageous, and empowered, as they are kind, caring, and compassionate. The way forward is through the heart, this is how we best know the animals...may we honor this, as we set them, the animals, free...

To Lynda M. Korimboccus, Editor-in-Chief of our *Student Journal of Vegan Sociology*, in gratitude and honor of you, a great woman, who led a bunch of anarchists, abolitionists, rebels, and empowered scholarly women. Yet, you did it with Sarah May by your side. A beautiful duo of strength and commitment, love and spirit. I read your letter of commitment, Lynda, in the opening of our journal last year, and I knew it was you...an embodied wisdom, some may say. You are an extraordinary woman, of fortitude, strength, heart and soul. May you relish in the joy of our creation--may all of you, this beautiful collective of scholars, and may you all relish in the love we have for our nonhuman animals. As I read your acknowledgements in my final edits, I was brought to this... *This is life, Lynda, thank you for loving them, as we all do. This is purpose, and this my dear friend and colleague, is meaning; drink it, absorb it and bathe in it. For this now, will carry us forward...*

To our animals, we love you. We hold you in our hearts. We send to you both gratitude and love for being here with us. Thank you for shaping our lives, being a part of our journey, and awakening us to the call.

To our readership, a student focused, sociological journal with academic rigor, and a heart, calling for the liberation of animals. I present to you, our readership, the *Student Journal of Vegan Sociology*.

I end with hope, the holding of life as sacred, and an offering of a Sanskrit chant...

Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu

May all beings everywhere find freedom, peace and happiness, and may my thoughts, words, and actions, in each and every way, contribute to that freedom, peace, and happiness, of all beings everywhere...

In the Spirit of Animals,

Jennifer Rebecca Schauer, Ph.D.

Teacher, Writer, Activist, Scholar of Human Coexistence with Nonhuman Species, and Ancient Earth Mother

Introduction

Dear Reader,

In many places in the world, veganism has eased into the mainstream vocabulary. There is, perhaps, less ignorance and animosity towards an ethic that ultimately seeks to do no harm. There is not (quite) yet, however, widespread acceptance of the need for a Vegan Sociology to reflect the multitudinous areas of life in which nonhuman and human animals interact and are interconnected, even though “the social world with which sociologists concern themselves has always been a multi-species one, it is time for sociology as a discipline to reflect this” (Taylor, Sutton, and Wilkie 2018:465).

This first volume of the *Student Journal of Vegan Sociology* (SJVS) is a contribution in response to Nik Taylor and colleagues’ call. It is the product of a year of collective action by dozens of individual vegan scholars across the world. The voices are student voices, the journal itself the work of sociology students and faculty guides, together: a joining of emancipatory energy and academic integrity. This work is situated in the justice movement, following a vision that foregrounds nonhuman animals, revealing the ways that vegan sociologists locate, educate, and move the liberatory conversation forward.

We sought to act together, mindful of how we organised and interacted, with fairness and kindness, all the while understanding that we would not follow the “normal” path (whatever that is). This academic endeavor is reflective of our shared consciousness, brought together by the need to widen and push forward sociology as a discipline, to work specifically as vegan sociologists (whatever our official disciplines), and where it was quickly established that “this is not a hierarchy, this is anarchy” (SJVS visionary/faculty mentor, Jennifer Rebecca Schauer 2021).

The journey to this first edition has been a memorable one, full of lessons, not just in journal management, editing, and production, but also in collaborative labour between an editorial team with 17 hours of time zone differences. The initial call for papers preceded the establishment of the team itself; this created challenges such as maintaining the anonymity of a collective member’s contributed article throughout the peer review process. That said, even our processes were a little unorthodox.

Despite many competing priorities (including our own studies) and a global pandemic, ten of us got set to work reading the many great submissions, each receiving the attention of no less than two of us. Authors all had their submissions returned with names of peer reviewers attached to their comments; though an unusual occurrence, it was one we felt might make the whole experience more inclusive and encouraging. Most submissions aligned with our ethos, and some of these pieces, whilst not selected for journal publication, will feature as articles on the International Association of Vegan Sociologists (IAVS) blog throughout 2022. All of the papers chosen to move forward to the Journal were revised, resubmitted, and read again by one of the original reviewers. Each was then carefully proofread by a different member of the team, and final edits and formatting completed

before sending them to faculty. Jennifer approved them with a “seal of love” and now, here they are before you.

The articles are the voices of six of the many student scholars who answered that call for papers in late 2020. In this first issue of the SJVS, emerging vegan sociologists claim space and break new ground in academia, in the sense of who and what is published. The vegan sociological field is vast, and this is reflected in the contents of this inaugural volume. The works herein span topics such as gender, religion, culture, activism, nature, and food systems, locating the vegan sociological field as everywhere, for, and about, everyone.

The issue opens with Natalia Ciecierska-Holmes' “In the Name of Cows’ Rights: Sacred Cow “Mothers” and Ethnonationalism in India”, which considers, through a post-humanist and feminist political ecology perspective, cows’ cultural position in Muslim, Dalit, and Hindu communities in India. This article contributes to a vegan sociology by highlighting how cow protectionism is inextricably laden with human religious practices and class (caste) division. Ciecierska-Holmes makes clear that the cows in these communities are frequently foregrounded not for themselves, but instead, representative of and wrapped up tight in political disputes, human disparity, and anthropocentrism.

We move next to a work by Ruth Griggs, who, in “Queering Veganism: Prospects for a New Utopia”, speaks of how veganism is productively viewed through a queer theoretical lens. In her writing, Griggs takes a distinct stance against oppression, and common treatment as an “other”, placing a Queer Vegan as ontologically outside dominant, hegemonic norms. The author explores how veganism is powerful in its “ability to queer the present moment” and demonstrates its potential as a radical means of reaching a “queer utopia”.

Continuing the theme of hegemonic identities, Daniel A. Harrison’s “Sabotaging the Anthropological Machine: Meat-Eating, Hegemonic Masculinity, and a (Feminist) Vegan Ethic” draws attention to the paradox of growing animal welfare concerns in the West, while violence toward nonhuman animals used for food and other human “needs” is incessant and largely ignored. Harrison employs a feminist lens to demonstrate how veganism, as an ethical system, is “counter-hegemonic and distinctly post-human”, that practices such as “meat-eating” are intertwined with oppressive masculine ideologies, and thus ripe for deconstruction through a “specifically feminist vegan ethic”.

Vegan activism is foregrounded by Lynda M. Korimboccus in “Repressing Righteous Rage: The Capitalist Criminalisation of Animal Advocacy”. The demonisation of those who reject human domination and use of nonhuman animals is ongoing, and Korimboccus captures the complex and disturbing ways in which those who seek liberation for nonhumans are frequently cast as criminals. The author draws attention to the “threat” that abolitionists pose to capitalist anthropocentrism. Specifically, she acknowledges how those who benefit from nonhuman death, enslavement, and torture, fear exposure, and just how dangerously deep-seeded that fear is, for the humans that rage against it, and for the nonhumans who fall victim to a system built upon their backs.

Cosette Patterson’s “Humans and Nonhumans: Coexistence Continuum and Approaches for Working Toward Shared Sentience” considers how nonhuman and human animal

coexistence occurs in disparate ways. How the beings in these various environments navigate shared space, proximity—togetherness—is found to range from tolerance to “extreme coexistence” (Schauer, Walsh and Patterson 2021), or “shared sentience” (Schauer 2020a; 2020b; 2021). The author presents weak and strong actions, contrasting case studies, of these interactions, with the aim of identifying tangible ways that human society can move toward shared sentience with other beings in our collective environments.

Completing this first issue and complementing our own collective efforts, is a reflective look at the vegan experience within nutritional science education by Jake Sallaway-Costello, Maisie Corbett, Abigail Larkin, Andrew Mellard, Lily Murray, and Katherine Sellins. “Vegan Faces in Anthroparchal Spaces: Student Reflections on Educational Experiences of Veganism in Nutritional Sciences” addresses the anthropocentric nature of education systems. The curriculum and training of nutritional scientists is a site ripe for “veganisation”, as “there is growing interest in this field from vegan students and vegan academics, seeking to reimagine nutrition as a science of liberation and change, primarily via the deprivileging of human agency”. Written by those engaged in the current anthropocentric training system, five students and their professor document how pedagogy and practice in the field reveal “conflicts between academic tradition and total liberation”, and how a vegan orientation in nutritional sciences is powerfully positioned as a site for innovation and liberation.

As a collective, we hope you enjoy this contribution to *Vegan Sociology*: the first journal of its kind. As participants and practitioners, this first issue’s creation is an act of resistance, undertaken with love and commitment. It represents a determined step forward in a revolution that is increasingly loud and powerful, with and for all beings.

In solidarity, for liberation, for peace and love.

Lynda and Sarah May

Editor-in-Chief and Assistant Editor
Student Journal of Vegan Sociology

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In the Name of Cows' Rights: Sacred Cow "Mothers" and Ethnonationalism in India

Natalia Ciecierska-Holmes

Abstract

This essay analyses the role bovine bodies play in the co-construction of social difference in India. Following the election of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2014, the phenomenon of cow protectionism and anti-beef legislation across many Indian states has added a political dimension to the long-standing cultural and economic history of cows, and hegemonic practices of vegetarianism among the majority-Hindu population. The politicisation of bovine bodies under Hindutva nationalism has had both symbolic and material implications, especially for marginalised human groups such as Muslims and lower-caste Dalits, as well as cows themselves. Drawing on feminist political ecology and material feminist approaches, this essay examines how discursive constructions of nonhuman nature, such as the sacred cow, interact with distinct material realities regarding violence and discrimination against human and bovine bodies. Moreover, it demonstrates how acts of resistance from the same minority groups can deepen the divide between humans and nonhuman animals, invisibilizing nonhuman suffering further. More broadly, this calls for a deeper examination of animal welfare claims to reveal the lived experiences and everyday impacts of human-nonhuman animal power relations.

Keywords: cow protectionism; feminist political ecology; human-nonhuman animal relations; India; post-humanism

After Daksha created living beings, so the story goes, he found them clamoring for food. He therefore drank a cup of nectar (amrit) and out of his mouth came the divine cow Surabhi. She gave birth to a number of tawny daughters (kapila) who, in turn, became mothers. The cows multiplied and their milk provided food for the humans being created by Daksha. Some of the milk fell on the head of Shiva, who grew red with anger and the reflection of his color produced different colors among the cows [...]. Daksha calmed Shiva by arguing that milk, being nectar, was pure and by the present of a bull to Shiva, who henceforth became Pashupati, the lord of cattle. Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of wealth, agreed to reside in the semi-divine cows and so those who tended them were considered blessed in every way (Excerpt from the Mahabharata, In Lodrick (2005:71).

1. INTRODUCTION

In India, there is a long tradition of cow protectionism and a deep-rooted Hindu ethic of the "sacred cow" (Harris 1978). The above excerpt is just one among many sacred Hindu scriptures that depict the complex entanglements of religious deities, motherhood, sustenance, ritual, and wealth in Indian religious and cultural thought. Today, cattle have also taken on a political role, with the enactment of stringent cow protection legislation in most Indian states (Sarkar and Sarkar 2016), which has prohibited and criminalised the slaughter of cows and the consumption of beef. However, there are still a variety of different and conflicting beliefs and practices regarding the cow in India, which are beset by power hierarchies, social exclusion, and violence.

This paper argues that, beneath the façade, cow protectionism is incompatible with the protection of cows and animal advocacy (Narayanan 2018). What is more, there is a broader agenda, whereby Hindu "cow mothers" have become an instrument of nation-building through the mobilisation of cows' sacrality. These mandates protect Hindutva nationalism based on a pure upper-caste Hindu nation while other societal groups are marginalised (Narayanan 2019). In order to shed light on the politicisation of the cow and the phenomenon of cow protectionism, both discursive and material interactions between humans and bovines are deemed important. By considering human-human as well as human-nonhuman animal relations, this paper, therefore, poses the following research question: What role do bovine bodies play in the co-construction of social difference in India?

Cattle in India have economic, cultural, and political significance, which fuse historical roots with current consequences, and merge nature and culture. They are very much intertwined with the material realities of many different groups in India, as meta-commodities, livelihoods for many minority communities, such as Muslims and lower-caste Dalits who work in the beef and tanning industries, and women's work, through feeding, milking, and nurturing sick cows, and food processing (Shiva 2000). Moreover, in India, vegetarianism has historically been hegemonic, and beef has been stigmatised (Balmurli and Suraj 2018). This is related to the symbolic role of bovine bodies through identification with various Hindi deities. Dyaus is, for example, the bull with a thousand horns and sky god

who fertilises Prithivi, the Earth cow, leading to the creation of all other gods and creatures. The cow is thus a “supreme symbol of femininity, fecundity, and maternalism” (Shiva 2000:67), where Prithivi and the personification of the earth is depicted as a divine cow and mother of the gods.

The significance of cows in India today offers an interesting case, since, unlike in other societies where cows are meta-commodities, the politicisation of bovine bodies in the cow protection debate has resulted in religious and caste-based discrimination as well as contestation (Narayanan 2018). Moreover, according to Yamini Narayanan (2019:197), both bovine bodies and women’s bodies in India “are enmeshed as productive, reproductive, and symbolic capital in the intersections of anthropatriarchy and gendered ultranationalist Hindu patriarchy”. This paper demonstrates how feminist political ecology can illuminate discursive-material entanglements as well as exclusions in the cow protection phenomenon. While scholarship from post-structural feminist political ecology has considered the role of nature in producing social difference (Elmhirst 2015) and has engaged with the concept of intersectionality to examine the intersections between dimensions of social relationships (Nightingale 2011), this paper aims to explore human-nonhuman animal power relations more explicitly, seeking insights from material feminist scholarship that has analysed how race, ethnicity, class and age are formed and performed through a human and nonhuman divide (Birke, Bryld, and Lykke 2004; Collard 2012; Hovorka 2012). Since politicised constructions of nonhuman nature and questions of discourse interact with distinct material realities, this paper employs a post-humanist relational ontology in an attempt to overcome “human exceptionalism” (Haraway 2008). Subsequently, it analyses the “intra-actions” (Barad 2007) of human and nonhuman nature through an intersectional approach, which considers the material implications of the politicisation of cows in India for cows, women, Muslims, and Dalits.

2. THEORISING HUMAN/NONHUMAN CONNECTIONS

2.1 Feminist Political Ecology

Emerging from the roots of both gender and development as well as political ecology (PE) research, in the mid-1990s, feminist political ecology (FPE) evolved as an approach to address social equity and justice in environmental change by drawing on power and difference from within feminist theory. The ground-breaking publication of *Feminist Political Ecology: Global Issues and Local Experiences* by Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, and Wangari (1996:4) situated FPE as a subfield of PE that recognises gender as power relations, which are a “critical variable in shaping resource access and control interacting with class, caste, race, culture, and ethnicity to shape processes of ecological change”.

Within FPE, there are three broadly defined branches; structuralist, post-structuralist, and post-humanist. For the purposes of this essay, focus is placed on post-structuralist and post-humanist strands of thinking and empirical research. Post-structuralist and performative theories of subjectivity (Butler 2004) look at the contextual constitution of gender with an emphasis on fluidity. In order to emphasise a non-essentialist view of the

link between nature and women, gender is often conceptualised as “a process by which subjectivities are produced and shift over time and space” (Nightingale 2011:165). In this way, how changing environmental conditions produce categories of social disparity are highlighted through intersectional analyses of society-environment relations. FPE’s contribution, therefore, is a transformation from a narrow focus on gender, taking into consideration how people are affected via caste, gender, race, ethnicity, and other differences. An intersectional approach opens up pathways to understanding how power operates not only in two dimensions, but across multiple dimensions (Nightingale 2011).

While highlighting fluidity and change, however, poststructuralist accounts may focus too much on agency and too little on structure (Elmhirst 2015). Moreover, these approaches have also been criticised for overlooking the role of nature. Judith Butler, for example, has been instrumental in breaking down the female-male binary, but their work is critiqued by material feminist scholars for excluding lived experiences and bodily practices that interact with the nonhuman world—subsequently deemed by Karen Barad as “anthropocentric” (2007:151). While the linguistic turn in feminism and critical theory since the 1970s has foregrounded the role of language in the construction of social reality, material scholars have argued that language also interacts with material reality (Hekman 2008; Latour 2004). What is needed, therefore, are dynamic understandings of agency to “account for myriad ‘intra-actions’ between phenomena that are material, discursive, human, more-than-human, corporeal, and technological” (Alaimo and Hekman 2008:5).

2.2 Material Feminism

Within the broader shift towards ontological concerns in the social sciences and humanities, material perspectives on gender and nature can overcome the nature/culture dualism which pits a deconstructivist understanding of gender and the materiality of nature against each other (Agarwal 1992; Barad 2007; Bauhardt 2013; Haraway 2003). Thinking with Donna Haraway’s (2003) concept of “naturecultures” is useful in dissolving the binary opposition between nature and culture and for understanding the embeddedness of human life in material *and* discursive processes. In addition, Karen Barad’s theory of ‘agential realism’ moves beyond the privileging of matter that occurs in traditional realism or the privileging of language that occurs in discursive theories to suggest the occurrence of “intra-actions” of matter and discourse (Barad 1999:96). She thus poses an idea of performativity that shares Butler’s (2011) attempt to explain how discursive practices produce material bodies, yet develops this further to also explain how discursive construction is related to non-discursive practices (Hekman 2008:105). Matter is therefore not fixed, but a doing. To overcome the binary separation of the observer and observed object, Barad (2003:804) emphasises phenomena; her notion of performativity is a “materialist, naturalist, and posthumanist elaboration that allows matter its due as an active participant in the world’s becoming.” In that, it is both material and discursive, and questions the human/nonhuman binary, Barad’s “post-humanist performativity” proves useful as an ontological basis to

analyse how human-nonhuman animal relationships are co-constructed through discourse, facilitating emergent phenomena.

Critical scholars positioned within this latter strand of materialist research have undertaken both theoretical and empirical research into human-nonhuman animal relations, which structure and are structured by gender, race, caste, and class (Birke et al. 2004; Doniger 2010; Hovorka 2012; Narayanan 2018). Retaining an explanation of power relations, Hovorka's (2012) gender-species intersectional approach balances discursive and material elements to empirically investigate the intersections of chickens and women, and cattle and men in Botswana. She states that:

Certain groups of humans become symbolically associated and materially related to certain other (nonhuman) species (and vice versa)—this process, together with hierarchical privileging and othering, reproduces the positionality and life chances of both humans and nonhumans within society (2012:876).

Such work is useful to think with when examining India's social fabric, where the boundaries between the human-nonhuman animal-divine might be blurred in certain instances. Significantly however, this may not automatically equate with emancipation.

In sum, these approaches are helpful in analysing the entanglement of meaning-making around the symbolic feminine entity of the "sacred cow" and practices of gender, caste, and religious discrimination in the phenomenon of cow protectionism. The blurring of religious symbolism, sacred motherhood, and the material realities of bovines and humans from different social groups can be benefitted by a relational ontology that retains an analysis of power across multiple dimensions. The next section moves this forward in its engagement with the phenomenon of cow protection in India.

3. COW MOTHERS AND ETHNONATIONALISM IN INDIA

3.1 Cow Protection and the Hindu Food Hierarchy

The politicisation of bovine sacrality occurred with the emergence of the cow protection movement during the 1880s and 1890s, when India was under British colonial rule. Popular Hindu reform movement, *Arya Samaj*, founder Dayananda Saraswati utilized cows as a political symbol to stir feelings of Indian nationalism in the face of British rule. He established the first Cow Protection Society in 1882 and his work and legacy has a strong anti-Muslim element (Sarkar and Sarkar 2016). At this time, while the symbolic language of the sacred cow was used to establish the nationalist movement and unify Hindus across caste, in reality, the cow protection movement furthered the interests of India's upper castes (Narayanan 2018), in subduing racial and ethnic differences.

Post-independence in 1947, the ethic against cow slaughter and beef consumption in India was expressed in laws prohibiting the practice of cow slaughter; this includes Article 48 of the Constitution of India:

The State shall endeavour to organise agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines and shall, in particular, take steps for preserving and improving the breeds,

and prohibiting the slaughter, of cows and calves and other milch and draught cattle. (Das 1950:Art. 48)

Following these requirements, laws to prohibit cow slaughter have been enacted in 22 of India's 29 states, although they vary widely. Under amended legislation from 2015, in the state of Haryana, the slaughter of cows is not permitted under any circumstances, including disease, disability, and infertility, while, in Assam, cows are permitted to be slaughtered if official certificates are granted. Punishments for slaughter and beef consumption also vary. In the state of Gujarat, for example, the punishment for cow slaughter ranges from seven years to life imprisonment, whereas some states issue fines only. Moreover, state definitions of "cattle" can be more or less inclusive; in Gujarat, cow protection does not extend to buffaloes (Sarkar and Sarkar 2016). In the states of Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh, the consumption of beef is also a punishable offence.

Pre-dating the aforementioned legal manifestations of cow protection, beef-eating taboos, practices of "untouchability", and communal violence were practiced (Chigateri 2008:15). According to Shraddha Chigateri, there is a long-standing Hindu food hierarchy in India, which decreases in desirability from vegetarianism to non-beef meat-eating to beef-eating. Laced throughout this symbolic hierarchy is the taboo of beef-eating and the belief in the sacred cow, which creates a binary of those who cherish the cow and those who do not. Vegetarianism is posed as a "superior ethic" and it is interconnected with values of "non-violence" (Chigateri 2008:19-20). This can be found in Mahatma Gandhi's influential religio-spiritual ethics, depicted in a letter to Indian independence activist Asaf Ali in 1920:

I have no right to destroy animal life if I can subsist healthily on vegetable life. I have no right to slaughter all animal life because I find it necessary to slaughter some animal life. Therefore, if I can live well on goats, fish and fowl (surely enough in all conscience) it is sin for me to destroy cows for my sustenance. And it was some such argument that decided the rishis of old in regarding the cow as sacred, especially when they found that the cow was the greatest economic asset in national life. And I see nothing wrong, immoral or sinful in offering worship to an animal so serviceable as the cow . . . cow slaughter is indefensible on moral grounds (M.K. Gandhi in Chigateri 2008).

However, the food hierarchy positions the cow at the top, which has an impact on non-Hindu religious communities, as well as lower-caste Hindus, who engage in the production and consumption of beef—practices entangled with "impurity" (Chigateri 2008). The non-violence of vegetarianism and cow protection cannot simply be assumed, it is riddled with conflicts, contestations, and hypocrisy. This is where Barad's (2003) post-humanist performativity approach, outlined above, can help to locate the materiality of the cow in the process of meaning-making, which emerges from the nexus of human-nonhuman animal relations and various practices. Engaging with this approach, the next sections focus on the conflated role of motherhood in women and cows in Hindu patriarchy, and the othering of Muslims and Dalit communities through the sustained hierarchy of Hindu cow worship in India's Hindutva nation-building project.

3.2 The Instrumentalisation of Motherhood and the Sacred Cow

While it may be true that the presence of “Earth mother myths” have declined in academic debates and international development circles more generally (Leach 2007), they remain very much present within Indian discourse to this day. As recently as 2015, at the United Nations Summit for the Adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, Prime Minister Modi declared in his speech: “We represent a culture that calls our planet Mother Earth. As our ancient text say: Keep Pure! For the Earth is our mother! And we are her children!” (2015). The Hindutva narrative in India includes, on the one hand, technological economic development, privatisation, and digitalisation steeped in the language of modernity. At the same time, it is flooded with the bright colours of saffron, cow worship, polytheism, vegetarianism, and female chastity (Banaji 2018).

Hindutva aims to transform India into an exclusively Hindu state by alienating minority groups (Edwards and Ramamurthy 2017). Hindu nationalism found political voice through the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sang* (RSS), otherwise known as the “National self-help organisation”, established in 1925, which has been instrumental in constructing this narrative. The RSS has gained prominence since the 1920s and many former or current members hold positions of power within Indian political and civil life. The BJP and the RSS have employed various images of gods and goddesses, cow symbolism, and images of Mother India in an attempt to win voters (Brosius and Butcher 1999). An example of this fusion is the BJP’s *Incredible India* campaign, launched in 2002, to promote tourism in India. This form of nation branding highlights “global Indianness” and depicts India as what Edwards and Ramamurthy (2017:325) call a “hybrid nation, open to global capital but distinctively Hindu in nature”. Moreover, the BJP’s 2014 election campaign slogan for Prime Minister Modi was “*BJP ka sandesh, bachegi gai, bachega desh*” (BJP’s message, the cow will be saved, the country will be saved) (Puniyani 2015). Such evocations fuse a pastoral and romantic past with a scientific and rational present.

In keeping with this, is a patriarchal romanticisation of the past that backgrounds women and nature in the conception of the mothering body as a location for nationalism. According to Narayanan (2019:201), Hindu extremism is founded through “the objectification of female and feminized ‘Hindu’ bodies—whether human, bovine, or the physical and metaphorical landscape of ‘Mother India’—as mothering bodies.” In a blurring of the human/nonhuman animal divide, women and bovine Hindu bodies are mothers in both a material sense, by producing children, and of a symbolic sense, as mothers of the Hindu state, which in turn is also a mother. This embeddedness of Hindu motherhood is also deemed “patriotic motherhood” which comes with a duty to uphold and pass on Hindu values and culture, a duty which lies within the private sphere (Hansen 1994:93). The patriarchal conception of Hindu motherhood employed in cow protection debates conflates maternal and material exploitation; the cow is stripped of her biological motherhood, that is, her infants and her milk, which in Hinduism is viewed as her *dharma* or ethical duty and responsibility to give. The cow’s body is thus framed as a site of maternal care for humans, blurring the maternal and the material (Narayanan 2019:204-205). In this way, Samantha Hurn aptly describes

cows as “symbolic entities whose physiological or behavioural characteristics are consumed by human imaginations” (Hurn 2017:213).

A more concrete example where this dynamic plays out is in cow sanctuaries or *gaushalas*. In India, these are spaces for unproductive dairy cows where they can spend the rest of their natural lives; they are regarded as some of the oldest spaces of animal welfarism and the humane use of animals in India. Narayanan (2019:208) highlights the interconnectedness of the symbolic and the material in her empirical fieldwork with managers, workers, and priests of almost 50 *gaushalas* across India. In these discussions, she outlines the sanctification of milk as not just food but “sanctified food.” Echoing the “hypocrisy of the food hierarchy” (Chigateri 2008:22), one man she spoke with at the Carterpuri Gaushala in Gurgaon said:

I drink a big glass of milk morning and evening, I like it; these cows are like my mothers. I come every weekend to feed them. No, cow milk is not causing any harm to the cows, it’s all these people wanting beef; beef is the issue. Milk is fine, for us milk is not only food, as Hindus we give it even more respect and use it for sweets and prasad [sanctified offering] (interview in Narayanan 2019:208).

In the sanctified ingestion of both a tangible liquid and an intangible idea, the whole passage frames a dichotomy, while perpetuating a hierarchy, between Hindus as caring, and beef-eating Muslims as harmful. This is further exposed in instrumentalization of bovine motherhood and cows’ reproductive capacities serving Hindu patriarchy by claiming women and cows require protection from endangerment and victimisation by Muslim men and denies them agency as self-governing subjects (Subramaniam 2014:76). Patriarchal Hindu hierarchies are therefore sustained by the reproductive labour of female bovines and their milk products, as well as distinguishing between those who eat cows, and those who do not.

Recent displays of resistance reveal contradictions in the symbolic “twinning” (Doniger 2010: 200) of women and bovines within material reality. In 2017, Sujatro Ghosh, a photographer based in New Delhi, created a project which depicts women wearing cow masks to claim that cattle are more important in India than women. Although gendered crimes of sexual violence and rape continue to be widespread and court cases go on for years, he asserts that “when a cow is slaughtered, Hindu extremist groups immediately go and kill or beat up whoever is suspect of slaughter” (Pandey 2017). While well-intentioned, Narayanan (2019:214) highlights that this representation positions the interests of women and cows as oppositional to each other and “invisibilizes the violence perpetrated by humans against nonhumans.” This further segments the human-nonhuman animal divide as well as the gulf between human social groups.

Obscuring nonhuman violence is especially significant since sites of cow protection do not necessarily lead to the material emancipation of cows. This is the result of a narrow conception of what constitutes violence within cow slaughter, as well as a shield of bovine sacrality that is symbolic. The “humane” treatment of cows in these spaces is rendered humane through their lack of slaughter and their worship, while ignoring other forms of

violence, such as forced impregnation and separation from their young (Narayanan 2019:206). What is more, in many cases, they are left to starve to death due to an insufficient capacity to house and feed abandoned ex-dairying animals. Therefore, cow protection seeks *only* to abolish cow slaughter while ignoring other forms of violence, in which bovine motherhood is exploited, her milk commodified, and her reproductive labour extracted under her “dharmic duty” (Narayanan 2019:207).

Thus, *gaushalas*, as supposed sites of animal welfarism, in fact provide a base for Hindutva politics through the conflation of the “biological, cultural, and material roles of the cow as mother” (Narayanan 2019:204). The shield of sacrality and symbolic protection ignores material implications across other levels of violence against female bodies, both human and nonhuman. In addition to the fact that these spaces often do not provide protection for bovines themselves, the political instrumentalisation of the cow as a Hindu mother has also been used as a way of sustaining “graded hierarchies” in India’s identity politics (Chigateri 2008:32). The next section explores the question of who or which groups bovine bodies are really being protected from.

3.3 The Sacred Cow and the Othering of Minority Communities

Despite the ethic of “non-violence” and sacred protection of the cow mother upon which the cow protection movement has been established, the politico-religious mobilisation of Hindus against both Dalits and Muslims has resulted in the increasingly violent marginalisation of these minority groups, whose livelihoods rely on the tanning and beef industries. It should also be noted that while violence of this kind against women is seldom documented, women make up roughly 30 percent of the 2.5 million workers in the leather industry, and are more likely to be employed as homeworkers, making them especially vulnerable to exploitation (Hoefe 2017).

From a historical perspective, the cow has come to hold a salient role in the conflict between Hindus and Muslims in India, where Hindus are defined as “cow protectors” and Muslims as “cow killers” (Sarkar and Sarkar 2016:334). Antony Parel argued that Muslims interpreted the symbolic significance of cows in Hinduism as “a pretext for the oppression of Muslims and a deliberate tool to interfere in the Muslim festival of Kurbanī” (Parel 1969: 188). Kurbanī is a sacrificial tradition where, in India, many Muslims offer cows, which they consider their most valuable livestock, as indication of their devotion to God. In this way, cow protectionism is defined in oppositional terms and poses a threat to Islamic religious practices and livelihoods (Sarkar and Sarkar 2016).

Today, beef bans materially impact Muslims through violent extremism posed by cow protection vigilantes. A prominent event in September 2015 involved the murder of a 50-year-old Muslim man named Mohammad Akhlaq, from the village of Dadri in Uttar Pradesh, by a mob who alleged he and his family had eaten beef. The justification provided by one of the accused in a 2017 interview depicts the interconnection between the protection of nature and motherhood when exclaiming: “We did everything to protect the mother cow” (Kumar 2017). This incident is far from spontaneous, as found by a data journalism

organisation IndiaSpend, which started tracking hate crimes reported in the media in 2010. Since 2010, 86 percent of those lynched by Hindu *gaurakshaks* (cow protectors) have been toward Muslims and 97 percent of the attacks occurred after 2014 (Parakh 2017). Since the BJP came to power in 2014, cow vigilantism has risen, with 76 incidents of hate crimes occurring between 2014 and 2017 (Saldanha 2017). The symbol of the cow then, is used as a tool to mobilise rural masses as evidenced by a new category of violence, termed “bovine-related mob lynching deaths” (Baksi and Nagarajan 2017). Such events led Indian politician Shashi Tharoor to claim in 2015, that a “cow is safer in India than a Muslim” (Times 2015).

Moreover, caste-based violence from within the Hindu community dispels any claims that cow protectionism is an attempt to mitigate social inequalities among Hindus, as was the discourse of the early cow protection movement. For example, in the state of Gujarat, four Dalit men were stripped, tethered to a car, and publicly flogged by *gaurakshaks* for skinning a dead cow. India’s Dalit community is traditionally responsible for disposing of animal carcasses (Prabhu 2016), which entangles cow politics with caste labour (Adcock and Govindrajan 2019). The incident sparked what turned into violent protests against the treatment of Dalits. Dalits in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat ceased removal of cow carcasses from the streets and fields, and some protestors dumped bovine carcasses in front of government offices. One tweet at the time exclaimed: “Your mother, you perform the funeral rites” (Pullanoor 2016). These events demonstrate that bovine bodies are not just sites of violence, but also landscapes for Dalit resistance against Hindutva identity, which posits the holy cow as their mother. Moreover, beef bans have elsewhere been resisted through “beef festivals” organised by both Dalit and non-Dalit supporters across India. By eating “transgressive foods” (Sathyamala 2019:880), Dalits are challenging the Hindu food hierarchy by performing a culinary counter-culture. Despite advancing minority rights, as is similar in the case of Ghosh’s photography project, this, however, positions casteised groups against specific animal species, thus both deepening the human-nonhuman animal divide and ignoring the material aspects of animal liberation.

4. CONCLUSION

Using a feminist post-humanist approach (Barad 2007; Alaimo and Hekman 2008), this paper analyses the role bovine bodies play in the co-construction of social difference in India to highlight forms of discrimination and violence that undermine animal advocacy and social justice of minority groups. The theoretical framework demonstrates how post-structuralist FPE approaches have been useful in examining the discursive role of nature in producing social difference, yet they do not account for the intra-actions of politicised constructions of nature with material realities. By shedding light on lived experiences and bodily practices that interact with the nonhuman world (Barad 2007), insights from material feminism can illuminate the intra-actions between material and discursive phenomena (Alaimo and Hekman 2008). Subsequently, this enables a more explicit investigation of human-nature

power relations through intersectional performances, to capture the everyday impacts of the politicisation of cows in India, for cows, women, Muslims, and Dalits.

Analysis of the intra-actions of discourse and reality at the intersections of gender, religion, and caste reveal a dissonance between symbolic prophecies of the sacred cow and material oppression of various minority groups, even those the cow protection movement seeks to protect. While discourse in relation to gender and mothering is found to be prevalent in the justification for cow protection, the effects thereof are less convincing. First, when looking at the role of patriotic motherhood, the narrow conception of violence, in this case, cow slaughter, ignores other forms of violence against cows, and neglects the reproductive nature of cows. Female cows, in fact, often suffer from violence and oppression through a conflation of the symbolic and material (re)productive value of bovine bodies and their products (Narayanan 2019).

Moreover, in addition to the failure of cow protection, symbolic bovine sacrality acts as a cover under which patriarchal Hindutva narratives and practices have been used to marginalise other minority groups, such as Muslim and Dalits, in India's Brahmanical nation-building project. The material reality of caste-based violence dispels symbolic claims from the RSS and BJP that Hindutva represents all Hindus, including Dalits (Sarkar and Sarkar 2016:349). Bovine bodies have been used as a political tool, mobilised by right-wing Hindu political groups to "build an ideologically 'pure' Hindu nation, constructing cow slaughter as a direct attack on Hindu nationhood and identity" (Narayanan 2018:331); this has material implications, resulting in discrimination and mob violence against Dalit and Muslim communities, who depend on the tanning and beef industries for their livelihoods.

Instances of provocation and resistance from minority groups, such as Ghosh's viral photography project concerning a dualistic conception of women and cattle, the corpse dumping events in Gujarat, and beef festivals concerning Dalits and bovine bodies, are at first an indication of human agency against dominant social groups. However, when considered within the wider intersectional framework of both human and nonhuman agency employing Barad's post-humanist performativity approach, such acts present the danger of invisibilising nonhuman suffering and creating deeper divisions between humans and nonhuman nature. In the future, this approach could help to highlight human-animal division in opposition to cow protectionism and the politicisation of animals more broadly in order to move towards post-human liberation.

Cow protectionism and beef bans are not a new phenomenon, but the election of the BJP in 2014 and again in 2019 has connected bovine politics with violence against minority communities. With increasing Hindu-nationalist sentiment, the rights of cows on the grounds of animal welfare is an evocation with a much broader goal, a goal to elevate patriarchal, Brahmanical, nation-protecting Hindu practices while disregarding the material realities and livelihoods of India's Muslim and Dalit communities. Thus, bovine bodies become sites of violence and resistance between both human and nonhuman groups. Rather than a unitary symbol, cow mothers provide a divisive and hierarchical landscape for India's ethnonationalist project, all in the name of cows' rights.

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Queering Veganism: Prospects for a New Utopia

Ruth Griggs

Abstract

Undertaking the examination of the relationship between queerness and veganism, this article finds its importance in its configuration of veganism as a space of queer imagination. In resistance to the norms of anthropocentric culture, veganism is understood as an empowered practice of queer resistance and radical potential. Most notably, veganism disrupts dominant understandings of temporality and promises alternative constructions of time beyond the confinements of the present and the multispecies oppressions embedded within the current social order. Exploring this disruption to structures of time, alongside an examination of José Muñoz's (2009) work, veganism is identified as a queer utopia. Specifically, the article explores the processes and practices of veganism—in particular, total liberation veganism—that make possible its position as a queer utopia. In so doing, it focuses upon veganism's ability to queer the present moment, as exemplified through the position of the vegan at the dinner table. Further, it examines veganism's conceptualisation of a future beyond all oppressions, including but not limited to nonhuman animal exploitation and queer oppression. Here it draws out the multiple existences, subjectivities and cross-species relationships, such a configuration poses. Thus, this article demands veganism be configured as a queer utopia in order to further enhance its radical potential and open up new spaces of resistance against speciesism in the fight for a liberation beyond all oppressions.

Keywords: queer resistance; queer utopia; temporal disruption; total liberation; veganism

At its core veganism is much more than a dietary choice, rather it is a powerful act of agency and a quotidian form of resistance to dominant societal ideals and demands that normalise both nonhuman animal and human oppressions. Veganism disturbs several seemingly hegemonic narratives, including but not limited to anthropocentrism and speciesism, two discourses upholding practices of a believed, human superiority. This article engages with queer theory to draw out the political and social resistance embedded within veganism and the radical possibilities it offers in response to our current social order and its harmful and exploitative systems. Through bringing it into conversation with queerness, veganism is reconfigured as a deviant and queer act. Here queerness is interpreted as a practice stretching beyond personhood and sexual identity. Through the rejection of strict categorisation, queerness is understood as a mass of shifting, unstable and “deviant” everyday acts reaching beyond fixed notions of subjectivity, and structures of time and existence. It is within such a configuration of queerness, that I argue veganism lies.

This article examines veganism, in particular total liberation veganism, as a space of queer imagination, promise and ultimately, utopia. It works with José Esteban Muñoz’s (2009) conceptualisation of queerness to posit veganism itself as a queer utopia, in particular disrupting dominant structures of time and our relationship to the future. As the not-yet-conscious, the conceptualisation of a vegan future breaks from the limitations of the here and now and promises a turn to revolutionary forms of multispecies subjectivities and collectivities. I argue that in realising veganism as such a potential space, multiple possibilities of agency are encouraged to flourish beyond what appears to be all-pervasive and dominant temporal structures of existence, and a new future is glimpsed. Thus, I call for the wider recognition of veganism as a queer utopia in so that its radical potential can be fully explored.

To begin, I briefly examine the construction of time as a form of social control, intersecting with ideas of identity, sexuality and the social order. Such understandings pave the way to an exploration of the processes that create veganism’s powerful destabilisation of dominant temporal discourses and the queer potential it therefore promises.

VEGANISM, QUEER UTOPIAS, AND ALTERNATIVE TEMPORALITIES

Society’s relationship with, and understanding of, time determines the interpretation of the past, construction of the present and development of models of progress for the future (Halberstam 2005). Notably, societal narratives constructing heterosexuality operate in conjunction with constructions of temporality, thus the positioning of heterosexuality as both the norm and superior to queerness runs throughout society’s relationship with time (Halberstam 2005). As such, Halberstam (2005:5-6) labels dominant temporalities as straight time. Here straight time refers to the confinement of the subject to the narrative structure of heterocentric markers, such as, adolescence, marriage, reproduction, and family (Dinshaw et al. 2007). Furthermore, Muñoz (2009:29) speaks of the “tyranny of the now” as a heterocentric form of control that attempts to centre society around the present moment and construct the current social order as the only possible form of being. Muñoz

(2009:22) writes “straight time tells us there is no future but the here and now of our everyday life”, suggesting that current constructions of society are infinitely stable and alternative futures inconceivable. It is important to note, however, that heterosexual temporalities can only ever attempt to silence queer constructions of time and space. Indeed, straight time can never assert itself as a totalising and all-encompassing power and there will always be spaces of queer resistance. Such queer resistance to straight time comes within the narratives of queer utopias and its temporal potential. It is within these spaces that I, too, position veganism. In order to explore veganism as an alternative temporality, I first turn to the broader discussion of queer utopias and their disruption to straight time.

It is within its destabilisation of straight time that queerness generates alternative modes of existence, society, identity, subjectivity, and desire, and most importantly finds its position as a utopia (Muñoz 2009). Muñoz (2009) argues that an engagement with queerness, be it through sexual acts or a broader sense of queerness as an antinormative practice (again it is here that I come to refer to veganism), enacts utopian ideals. Muñoz (2009:25) argues the “deviance” inherent in practices of queerness results in its “ecstatic and horizontal temporality” that acts as “a path and a movement to a greater openness to the world”. By this Muñoz (2009) speaks of the multiple possibilities that arise when our relationship with time is no longer defined by the limitations of the present and is instead focussed on future promises of unfamiliarity and opportunities for new modes of existence. Through utopian ideologies and everyday utopian practices, the break from straight time enables a reconfiguration of the past, present and future. Certainly, the disturbance of heterocentric temporality is achieved through what Bell (2017:80) describes as the “utopian affirmative function”, meaning the ability of a utopia to facilitate the imagination of an alternative future. Importantly, Bell’s (2017) work begs us to refuse the conceptualisation of utopias as fully formed and tangible spaces, but rather to think of them as a tool through which possibilities of new temporalities are opened.

It is in this sense that I align with Muñoz (2009) in describing queerness and veganism respectively as utopias, for the two share the ability to produce new potentialities. Although queerness and veganism exist in the everyday present, these are merely glimpses of their broader potential to suggest a future beyond the doctrines of our present, for example a future beyond both queer and nonhuman animal oppression (Muñoz 2009). Put alternatively, both veganism and queerness have not yet truly arrived. Indeed, Muñoz (2009:21) writes of queerness, “[t]he not-quite-conscious is the realm of potentiality that must be called on, and insisted on, if we are ever to look beyond the pragmatic sphere of the here and now, the hollow nature of the present.” Similarly, to queerness, veganism is called upon for its disruption to the present and envisioning of a future beyond dominant norms, most significantly the dismantling of anthropocentrism. Anthropocentrism is the belief in the superiority of human life above all other life forms and the doctrine of humanity as the central existence within the universe (Boddice 2011). Veganism works away from such speciesist concepts and towards the development of new relationships, both between humans and other animals, and also between humans themselves.

Drawing on Simonsen's (2012) understanding of veganism as a multifaceted practice, rather than an act focussed on a singular objective, I stress the powerful destabilisation of multiple dominant narratives that veganism poses. Thus, alongside Simonsen (2012:73), I argue that "we approach veganism as something that can always only be 'to-come,' in the sense that it does not represent a telos but rather one ethical position among many." To think of veganism as a utopian force holding multiple alternative endings to the limitations of the now, is to recognise the radical queer potential that veganism holds. Here I point specifically to total liberation veganism. Total liberation veganism refers to a sort of veganism focussed upon dismantling the intersecting oppressions of all lives (Best 2014). It moves away from mainstream single-issue veganism and instead examines the connections between the oppression of nature, nonhuman animals and marginalised humans, such as how structures of heterocentrism work to oppress both queer people and nonhuman animals. For example, the erasure of sexual diversity and queerness within the nonhuman animal world upholds the idea that heterosexuality and reproduction are a "natural" norm, harming both nonhuman animals and queer individuals. Brueck (2018) identifies the total liberation approach as a movement of "consistent anti-oppression", arguing that there is no singular liberation without liberation from all oppressions. Situating nonhuman animals at the heart of an intersectional enquiry into multiple oppressions removes the divide between humans and nonhuman animals, targeting multispecies exploitations at their roots. It is through total liberation approaches, therefore, that veganism finds its position as a queer utopia, for it promises multiple endings of freedom and justice for all whilst simultaneously weakening the grip of current oppressions upheld in the "tyranny of the now" (Muñoz 2009:29).

Indeed, total liberation veganism works similarly to queerness to promise alternative constructions of society and temporalities through a queering of the present moment. Arguably, veganism achieves its disturbance of the here and now through what Bell (2017:80) describes as the ability of a queer utopian act to "historicize our present." Here Bell (2017) references the ability of a utopian force to make the present strange and uncanny to itself, also understood here as the process of queering. Put alternatively, the queer utopia, in its presentation of an alternative future, negates the present moment. Consequently, through the lens of queer utopias the present moment is recognised to be a contingent product of history and its position as an authoritative temporality is destabilised, emphasising the shifting and conditional nature of the present and the social order, in which it is embedded. As it is within the construction of the present that heterosexual values are reinforced, queerness reveals, in the perceived pervasiveness of straight time, the fragility of sexuality norms as ever shifting and unstable social constructions. Muñoz (2009) argues queerness's embrace of the instability of both temporality and sexuality allows for the configuration of a future beyond oppressions. Ultimately, queerness promises an alternative temporality through its disruption to the present and its simultaneous occupation of the horizon and the process of "becoming" (Muñoz 2009:26-7).

Similarly, veganism unveils the contingency of the anthropocentric values embedded within the present and promises a future beyond its supposed authority. Notably, through the power of individual acts, the practice of veganism provides evidence of the subject's ability to step outside of dominant animal eating culture and create not only a new diet, but new practices and relationships with food and nonhuman animals. The existence of a practice beyond the confinements of nonhuman animal marginalisation, highlights to those who exist within dominant spaces, that alternative practices and ways of being are possible. Moreover, veganism recognises the norms of eating animals, such as the necessity of animal protein for health purposes, as social constructions rather than natural and inherent aspects of human existence. Consequently, the present moment and its materialisation in anthropocentric culture, is exposed as a social and historical contingency. Importantly then, the contingency of the present, facilitates possibilities of new models of existence and alternative futures, such as veganism.

To illustrate veganism's process of queering the present, it is helpful to step away from temporality and ideological concepts and instead focus on a tangible example of this process. Therefore, I now turn to a discussion of the ways in which heteronormative and anthropocentric structures of family mealtimes are challenged by the presence of a vegan (Simonsen 2012). The act of family dinner is one bound up within heterosexual politics relating both to structures of time, as a heterocentric time marker of the day or week, as well as constructions of gender and family, such that the female figure cooks the animal flesh for the family. As such, any disruption to its tradition, is an inherently queer act. For example, in refusing to eat animals, the vegan refuses the supposed community embedded in the consumption of animals as food, disrupting the family mealtime, around eating animals, as an image of heterosexual joy.

Ahmed's (2012) concept of the "killjoy" further exemplifies the deviant and queer position of the vegan at the dinner table. Whilst Ahmed (2012) bases this theory on the feminist subject's challenge to gender norms, Twine (2014) labels the vegan as a "killjoy", simultaneously challenging heterosexuality, anthropocentrism and speciesism. Here, Twine (2014) refers to the ability of veganism to contest the order of happiness entrenched in the act of family dinner time tradition. In refusing to eat animals as food, as well as nonhuman animal by-products, the pleasure both in the act of eating animals and the "togetherness" surrounding it, is denied. As Twine (2014:628) explains "[v]eganism constitutes a direct challenge to the dominant affective community that celebrates the pleasure of consuming animals". The vegan challenge thus disrupts the social order of the present as it is embedded in an animal eating culture, and its materialisation in repetitive acts, such as, the dinner table tradition.

Furthermore, in relation to the vegan's queering of the present, it is helpful to examine the space of the dinner table in relation to Carol Adams' work. Adams (2015:20-22) explores the processes through which harm towards nonhuman animals is made invisible, focussing specifically on the animal's position as the absent referent. The absent referent describes the detachment of the nonhuman animal from the food on one's plate and the consequent

erasure of an animal's subjectivity from its consumption altogether. It is at the dinner table that the absent referent is so strongly deployed, yet the presence of a vegan, their demands and refusal to engage in this animal eating culture, challenges such discourse. In refusing to conform to the normative culture of the dinner table, the vegan makes visible multiple species' subjectivities and lives through simply calling into question hegemonic norms of nonhuman animal exploitation and consumption.

It is within this process that veganism makes the present strange to itself. Drawing attention to the consumption of a nonhuman animal and their wider exploitation, simply via the vegan presence, largely reverses the process of the absent referent. As such, what has previously been concealed is made visible, and the present moment and its anthropocentric structure is ultimately queered; in other words, it is made uncanny to itself. It is within this disruption to the act of consuming nonhuman animal products at the dinner table, that veganism reveals an animal eating culture as a fragile and contingent construction. Consequently, veganism functions as an alternative present and holds glimpses of a utopian future beyond the inherent violence of an animal eating culture.

Indeed, total liberation veganism operates as a practice of everyday resistance working towards an alternative future beyond the heterocentric present. Drawing again on Bell (2017), a utopia is not necessarily a perfectly formed society already in existence, but rather a force, practice or ideology that raises the potential of such a society, and the ability to imagine an alternative future. Through practising veganism, one is opened to the possibility of a future beyond nonhuman animal exploitation, and the wider oppressions entangled in such anthropocentric hierarchies. Although a vegan future is not a necessary goal for all vegans, for many, working towards a future beyond the exploitation of nonhuman animals for food products, labour, domestication and so on, is a substantial element of their veganism (Rodriguez 2015). Indeed, championing a vegan future can be an ethical and moral position, evidencing multiple demands, such as rights for nonhuman animals, environmental sustainability and a rejection of the multiple human oppressions upheld in an animals eating culture (Rodriguez 2015). For example, Adams (2015) recognises the disruption of veganism to anthropocentrism, as not only the development of an alternative future, but also the destruction of the harmful gendered doctrines embedded within the consumption of animals as food. She (2015:79) writes of vegans and vegetarians alike, "[they] see themselves as providing an alternative ending, veggie burgers instead of hamburgers, but they are actually eviscerating the entire narrative." The use of the term "eviscerating" is significant, for it points to a future in which society is completely reconstituted, as though to practice veganism is a step towards the de- and thereafter re-construction of society, thus echoing the goals and values of an abolitionist approach to social problems.

Furthering such arguments and championing total liberation veganism, Best (2014) calls for a movement that works towards a future beyond capitalism and consumerism, arguing that it is within these systems that anthropocentrism is engrained. Rather than incorporating veganism into the current social order, and thus weakening its utopian potential, Best (2014)

demands a radical abolition of global capitalism. Best (2014:103-104) writes “[t]he vegan and animal standpoints bear the seeds of a profound paradigm shift, turning away from dominatory cultures, [...] toward a new ethic and culture of complementarity, interconnectedness, and reverence for all life.” Ultimately, therefore, Best (2014) proposes a vegan future that demands the dismantling of several dominant discourses and ultimately a reconfiguration of societal structures and hierarchies as a whole. To practise veganism is thus to envision a time where all of nature, human and nonhuman animals, exist in harmony. It is within such an approach to veganism that Muñoz’s (2009) idea of a queer utopia comes into play. The ability of veganism to create visions of a future beyond the confinements of today’s social order fundamentally disturbs the present and what Muñoz (2009:29) calls the “tyranny of the now.” The suggestion of a new social order founded upon equality and new understandings of progress, rather than exploitation, promises new subjectivities and relationships between both humans themselves and our relationship with nonhuman animals and nature. Thus, veganism looks beyond the limitations of a straight time, re-envisioning a future by reconstructing our understandings of progress as we dismantle harmful narratives of exploitation and oppression. Importantly, veganism thus weakens the grip of the status quo, and in offering a hopeful future, reveals the fragility of dominant norms, and becomes the “not-quite-conscious” (Muñoz 2009:21) utopian promise. It is here that veganism, more specifically total liberation and consistent anti-oppression veganism, finds its place as a queer utopia.

Evidently, the utopian vision of a vegan future doubles as a queer space in regard to its promise of new social orders and simultaneous queering of the present moment and its norms. In other equally significant ways, veganism further maps neatly onto Muñoz’s (2009) conceptualisation of queerness itself as a utopia and a horizon. In advocating for a future of species equality, veganism anticipates a space of “multiple forms of belonging” (Muñoz 2009:20). For Muñoz (2009), queer utopias are founded upon an idea of a broad collectivity within which subjects exist and thrive through their difference, and it is this understanding and acceptance of difference that is considered so utopian. Veganism adds multiple species, and thus new forms of subjectivities and understandings of agency, to Muñoz’s (2009) image of a utopian future. It is through veganism’s celebration of various models of existence, for example the subjectivities of cows, fishes, and chickens, that its vision of the future is queered. Veganism queers the very meaning of belonging, creating new models of collectivity and community to include nonhuman animals. Through refusing the exploitation of nonhuman animals, vegans abandon an anthropocentric hierarchy and work to value and respect the differences in nonhuman animals. In this way, veganism offers a future of radical queer potential and finds its position as a utopian force.

As such, veganism champions an anti-speciesist, harmonious and peaceful society, beyond exploitation and marginalisation, and towards the acceptance and flourishing of multiple subjectivities and identities. Indeed, there are several existing vegan and queer spaces that arguably already act as utopia. Worldwide there are many sanctuaries run by queer individuals (and couples) for nonhuman animals rescued from exploitation, such as

farming and vivisection (Vegan Rainbow Project 2020). One specific sanctuary that practises total liberation veganism is VINE (Veganism is the Next Evolution) Sanctuary, that rescues and cares for nonhuman animals whilst working to dismantle intersecting oppressions through education, events and publications on the queering of animal liberation. VINE's approach is noticeably queer and utopian in its actions, encouraging the nonhuman animals to cultivate autonomy, friendships, relationships and a sexual agency beyond what their exploited selves would have previously been confined to. In her talk "Queering Animal Liberation" (2018), co-founder Patrice Jones speaks of the multiple relationships and sexual experiences of the nonhuman animals that are made possible through the sanctuary and the lack of human authority and control regarding the spaces, routines and activities of the nonhuman animals. Consequently, VINE welcomes queerness within nature, embracing a queer eros beyond limited constructions of heterosexuality and reprocentrism as they are predominantly enforced onto nonhuman animals. Thus, this vegan utopian space fights both for nonhuman animals and also for the queer community, whose sexuality is deemed "unnatural" due to the erasure of queerness from within nature. As summarised by the Manifesto of Insectionals (n.d), a total liberation vegan collective, "sanctuaries [...] are the only political places where they [nonhuman animals] can gain their individuality back." VINE demonstrates the importance of queerness and sexual agency for the individuality and subjectivity of nonhuman animals. Vegan sanctuaries thus demonstrate both an existing queer utopia and a step beyond anthropocentrism and heteronormativity towards a total liberation future.

CONCLUSIONS

By examining queerness and veganism side by side, this article has foregrounded their relationship as a vehicle for change and progress beyond the current confinements of society. Indeed, through the configuration of veganism—more specifically, total liberation veganism—as a queer utopia, its disruption to limiting constructions of heterocentric temporality has come to the fore, such as its negation of the present and vision of alternative futures. Veganism creates new and empowering relationships with, and understandings of, time, as evidenced through the complex forces at play within its ideological promises and their materialisation in its everyday acts and already existing utopian spaces, such as the vegan "killjoy" and vegan sanctuaries.

To conclude, the queering of veganism makes visible the multiple pockets of resistance that exist throughout society and shatters the image of dominant discourses of control, such as anthropocentrism and heterocentrism, as totalising and inescapable powers. It is through such destruction that veganism occupies the position of the queer, developing new forms of being, new subjectivities and multiple forms of belonging, collectivity, and agency external to current societal confinements and heterocentric temporality. Therefore, I end by demanding the recognition of total liberation veganism, as a queer force building an alternative future beyond the multispecies oppressions of today. Such recognition is necessary to the integral intermingling of both vegan sociology and queer theory, both of

which can work more powerfully together in the deconstruction of harmful anthropocentric and heterocentric discourses. Indeed, veganism, as a queer potential, promises a utopian space in which non-human and human animals, as well as the rest of nature, can exist in harmony, putting into play radical practices of both vegan and queer resistance. The configuration of veganism as a queer utopia celebrates the potentialities of a movement that abandons the dominant structures of the human/nonhuman animal divide upheld by anthropocentric and heterocentric discourses, and instead, reconfigures the future as a space of opportunity and possibility. It is in this space of queer potential, that total liberation veganism can be read as both a foundational and developing utopian force, making a future beyond the current social order into a tangible reality.

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Sabotaging the Anthropological Machine: Meat-Eating, Hegemonic Masculinity, and a (Feminist) Vegan Ethic

Daniel A Harrison

Abstract

While the number of people identifying with veganism in the United Kingdom (UK) quadrupled between 2014 and 2019, vegans make up just 1% of the population. In the UK, around two-thirds of these self-identified vegans are women, with this figure rising to 79% in the United States (US) (Vegan Society 2020), and while consumption of some animals seems to have plateaued in many Westernised countries, consumption of pig and chicken is still increasing (Potts 2016:2). This seeming contradiction reflects a wider trend in the West, in which more and more people identify with nonhuman animal welfare issues, while violent factory farming and nonhuman animal transportation practices continue to contribute to a large part of the animals eaten in Western diets. Situating this contradiction within the wider feminist scholarship on hegemonic masculinity, this article asks in what sense masculine values are bound up with practices of meat consumption, or more appropriately herein and throughout, animals as food for consumption. Building on a number of feminist traditions, including ecofeminism, feminist phenomenology, post-structuralism, as well as Carol J Adams' *Sexual Politics of Meat*, this article proposes a specifically feminist vegan ethic, and locates within this tradition a counter-hegemonic and distinctly post-human ethic.

Keywords: feminist ethics; masculinity; posthumanism; sexual politics of meat; veganism

1. INTRODUCTION

As a dietary term, veganism describes the practice of dispensing with those products derived “wholly or partly” from nonhuman animals (The Vegan Society 2021). However, veganism also describes a larger philosophical or ethical position that seeks to exclude “all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals” for either food, clothing or “any other purpose” (The Vegan Society 2021). As such, veganism is understood herein as both a dietary choice *and* an ethico-political stance, with the notion of a vegan ethic consequently advanced. In the context of the past two decades, then, the disavowal of animals as food for consumption, has not only become increasingly recognised as a legitimate dietary choice, but has largely disassociated itself from earlier narratives of disordered, and even pathological, eating (Wright 2015:89). Nevertheless, veganism continues to be associated overwhelmingly with women, particularly in the UK and US (Potts 2016:2). Indeed, narratives around, and demand for, vegan products are still perceived as a negative and joyless forms of complaint (Ahmed 2021). For example, Richard Twine (2014) has, in an engagement with the concept of the ‘feminist killjoy’ (Ahmed 2010), forwarded the notion of the ‘vegan killjoy’. Situated within this context, this article asks, in what sense masculine values are bound up in practices of eating animals as food: that is, the consumption of nonhuman animal flesh as a food source (Toldra 2017:1). For, as Carol J. Adams argues, the word “meat” all too often operates in such a way as to render the nonhuman animal entirely absent, obscuring the inherent violence involved in eating them. This “absent referent”, as Adam’s labels it, refers to “that which separates the meat-eater from the animal, and the animal from the end product” (Adams 1990:14). Thus, by propounding a vegan ethic, this article is not only committed to the disavowal of animals as food, but to the active avowal, an emancipation, of the nonhuman animal.

Building on Adams (1990), the sexualised and embodied relationship between masculinity and animals as food will be explored, while the work of Jacques Derrida will be developed in order to highlight the “carno-phallogocentrism” (Derrida 1992) inherent to hegemonic (and heteronormative) masculinity. The article argues that there has been a re-trenchment of masculine ideals around eating animals as food in the twenty-first century, particularly since the events of 9/11, which, as Susan Faludi (2010) notes, caused a visceral sense of embodied vulnerability. In addressing this ontological uncertainty, and in engagement with recent feminist phenomenology, this article proposes a vegan ethic that is rooted in a shared corporeal vulnerability, in which the suffering of an-Other is foregrounded. Through this, hegemonic ideals of masculinity are not only be resisted, but the central humanist project upon which Giorgio Agamben’s “anthropological machine” (2004) is enacted, are disavowed for a more feminist and post-humanist ethic.

While there are myriad reasons why a vegan diet might be adopted, this article emphasises the *ethical* obligations implied in vegan practices. In foregoing all animals and as well as their byproducts, such as dairy, a specifically vegan ethic is to be understood herein as a practice of non-violence (Francione 2015) vis-à-vis the culture of consuming animals as food, what is known as a meat culture (Potts 2016). It is within this context that

the tension between veganism and hegemonic masculinity will be explored. In his 1993 paper, "What is Hegemonic Masculinity?", Mike Donaldson argues masculinity, in its hegemonic form, refers to a culturally idealised project of manhood that is necessarily "exclusive, internally, and hierarchically differentiated", often "brutal and violent", and invariably "contradictory and crisis-prone" (1993:647). That is, in its original Gramscian sense, a dominant and dominating mode of thought through which power is enacted via both elements of control and consent and is simultaneously economic and cultural (Gramsci 1972). This masculinity is rooted not only in what Donaldson identifies as female subordination, but for purposes of this article, what might be more appropriately termed *feminised* subordination, for the article seeks to highlight the ways in which this subjugation results in non-human violence and domination over the "more-than-human" world (Abram 1996). In so doing, the notion of the "anthropological machine" (Agamben 2002) is developed, recognizing the constitutive role the (edible) nonhuman animal plays in Humanism's construction of "anthropos" as *man*. As such, a vegan ethic seeks out a space that is decidedly *post*-humanist, for if there is no better way to negate the nonhuman animal than to *consume* "it", what better way to negate the (hu)man than to refuse this foundational act?

2. THE SEXUAL POLITICS OF MEAT (EATING)

The relationship between masculinity, eating animals as food, and the feminisation of both women and the more-than-human world has a rich philosophical history. In his 1967 work, *On Grammatology*, Jacques Derrida (1988) highlights the way in which much Enlightenment thought since Descartes functions dualistically, in which the meaning of one concept—or "sign"—operates differentially through the negation of another, and by which an outside constitutes an inside: what Derrida later calls the 'constitutive outside'. For example, in her book *The Death of Nature*, Carolyn Merchant argues that since the eighteenth century, with the rise of industrialisation, urbanisation, and humanist thought, nature came to be viewed in purely mechanistic terms, and was seen as passive, inert, and plunderable (Merchant 1980:164). In this sense, "nature" became the constitutive outside via which "culture" was secured. Through this process, notions of nature were relocated onto the female body, with femininity now perceived as passive, inert, irrational, and corporeal (Merchant 1980). This dualistic relation is vital in understanding the consumption of animals as food and its relation to hegemonic masculinity, for as Val Plumwood (1993) notes, notions such as masculinity not only operate hierarchically by way of a subjugated femininity, but also function "synergistically", deriving their power from other dualisms, such as culture/nature, mind/body, reason/emotion, and human/animal. Thus, as Greta Gaard notes, hegemonic masculinity is fundamentally anti-ecological (In Adams & Gruen 2014:225). Indeed, not only is the humanist project logocentric, in that it "presences" the rational, self-mastering, speaking subject, as well as phallogocentric in its imposition of notions of virility and phallic symbolism, but it is also *carnophallogocentric* (Derrida 1992:280)—the Western male subject is, above all, a meat-eater. Any vegan ethic must

recognise this intimate relationship between the eating of animals as food, and the masculine, if it is to resist the hegemony of masculinity.

Highlighting the way in which hegemonic masculinity is positioned differentially and appositionally to notions of nature, emotion, embodiment and, importantly, the nonhuman animal, this article now explores how such ideals are always already heteronormative.

In her 1990 work *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, Carol J. Adams traces the legacy of eating nonhuman animals, and the objectification of women in Western culture. For Adams, the violence enacted upon the female body is intimately bound up in the human/a nonhuman animal dualism, and any attempt to conceptualise the feminine anew must recognise the deep intersectionality between nonhuman animal flesh, masculinity, sexuality, and histories of colonialism. Throughout her work, Adams employs the concept of the *absent referent* (1990:51). As has been discussed, the term denotes a process by which the physicality of the embodied nonhuman animal is absent in the consumption of them, with Adams accentuating the way such acts of violence are rendered invisible. A vegan ethic thus confronts the violent power practices between the animalisation of the woman and the sexualisation of the nonhuman animal in contemporary culture, and how both women and nonhuman animals are consumed under contemporary capitalism, either figuratively or literally. Just as the pig becomes a dismembered piece of pork, bacon, gammon, or ham, the female body is associated not only with its embodiment, but active *disembodiment*. Femininity is sexualised via a form of cultural dismemberment—breasts, thighs, buttocks, hips—while masculinity is bound up in the consumption of these same body parts: indeed, as Adams elsewhere notes, contemporary misogynist discourse is replete with comments such as “I’m a breast man; I’m a bum man; I’d have a piece of that” (Adams 2019:57). Returning to the notion of hegemonic masculinity, it is noticeable how, without reference to the materiality of the nonhuman animal (and human female) body, “meat” functions much like a floating signifier in contemporary culture: the act of eating nonhuman animals performatively reinscribes masculinity at every meal. Thus, returning to Adams’ intersectionality, such consumption is not only a re-articulation of masculinity, but simultaneously an act of civilising, of rationalising, of capital accumulation, as well as a show of “carnivorous virility” (Derrida 1992). To engage in veganism, then, is to practice non-violence - not only against nonhuman animals, but anyone deemed the “other” of hegemonic masculinity.

The relationship between violent practices against the nonhuman animal, including eating animals as food, and dominant forms of masculinity has a long history in the West. That is, prior to focusing on contemporary examples, it is necessary to situate these processes within their wider socio-historical context. In his book, *A View to Death in the Morning*, Matt Cartmill (1993) identifies hunting as a particularly potent form of ritualistic masculinity throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Similar to Merchant’s work on the mechanisation of nature, the “hunt” became an exercise imbued with deep symbolic meaning. Indeed, the deer hunt became a metaphor for sex around this time (Cartmill 1993:30). As Cartmill notes, the woman became animalised, and the hunt suffused

with sexual imagery, such that to engage in sex was to metaphorically kill. The arrow, as a quintessential phallic object, penetrates the animal-as-woman (Cartmill 1993:69), while man is identified with his tools and his weapons: as *homo faber* (Scheler 1961) or what might more appropriately be called *homo phallus*. This notion of "man as maker" is also bound up in early (male-dominated) anthropological work, in which hunter-gatherer societies were assumed to have developed complex language skills necessitated through hunting. Correspondingly, it was believed human sociality evolved paternalistically, that the majority of calorific content came through the consumption of animals as food, and that the advent of fire was intimately tied to eating the flesh of animals (Sterling 2014). Contemporary anthropological scholarship has not only disputed this but has completely decentred the role of the hunter (as man) in early human societies. Rather, gathering practices require a much more complicated epistemological schema, while early sociality was based on reproductive relations, particularly shared child-rearing practices (Ember 1978). Likewise, many early hunter-gatherer societies would have derived the majority of their calorific content from plant-based sources; while the fire was the basis for a range of cultural practices, it certainly never cohered around the eating of animals, alone (Smith 2014). However, as much contemporary anthropological scholarship continues to emphasise, there is no homogenous or monolithic hunter-gatherer society, but rather a panoply of differing social and cultural relations that are spatially situated and historically constituted. Despite this, such "meat myths", and their reifying appeals to an illusory and ahistorical "natural" past, continue to be propounded today. Indeed, in engagement with these earlier anthropological traditions, it is argued that there has been a re-articulation of discourses around "meat" and masculinity in the U.S. and U.K., particularly since 9/11.

3. GOING INTO BATTLE AT EVERY MEAL: 'HEGAN' MASCULINITIES

In her book *The Terror Dream*, Susan Faludi (2007) argues that in the U.S., and the larger Western culture, the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers provoked a visceral sense of embodied vulnerability. However, rather than opening up a space in which notions of vulnerability and grief could be explored, traditional gender roles were re-affirmed through explicit displays of masculinity (Faludi 2007:46). Situated within this Western cultural context, contemporary forms of animals for food consumption are explored, noting the way in which earlier practices of nonhuman animal violence are being re-articulated in the U.K. today. One of the more immediate expressions of masculinity vis-à-vis eating animals as food, is the introduction of new animal-based diets, such as the "Paleo" diet, or more extreme still, the "Carnivore" diet; both of which refer back to a reified—and, as has been established, largely imaginary—"hunter-gatherer" past. However, this is apparent even in non-animal-based products, such as the rise in protein bars, the consumption of which performatively reproduces its own hegemonic notions of masculinity, lest the lack of animals as food, signify a *lack* in masculinity itself. This is particularly noticeable in so-called "Hegan" (a portmanteau of "he" and "vegan") circles whereby the non-gendered word vegan has been masculinised; such is hegemonic masculinity's inherent fragility to the perceived

destabilising qualities of veganism. For example, the protein bars “Carb Crusher” and “Carb Killer” denote not only force or violence, but an attempt to distinguish protein from those food sources typically feminised and associated with women, such as carbohydrates. This evocation of force is evident in a number of other protein bars, including “Warrior”, “MaxiMuscle”, “Grenade”, and “Battle Bites”, that invoke not only themes of war, but hark back to a Hobbesian state of nature in which combative struggle occurs within an individualised and antagonistic zero-sum political arena.

Elsewhere, products such as “nakd”, “Primal”, “Raw” and “Paleo” appeal directly to an essentialised and naturalised masculinity, with Paleo’s wrapper reading, “Satisfaction For Your Inner Caveman”. Thus, we see attempts by men, who do not eat animals, to not only dis-associate themselves from veganism or vegetarianism, but to re-instantiate a form of hegemonic masculinity built on the disavowal of all that is feminine or feminised. This is particularly important in recognising how hegemonic masculinity is being navigated by men in response to the growth of veganism, often reproducing the relationship between eating animals and masculinity, even when animals are eschewed, for example in the word “meat”.

Perceived purity is important in practices of food consumption, particularly in response to danger over a loss of masculinity. As Mary Douglas (1966) notes in her book *Purity and Danger*, what enters into and out of the body is heavily regulated, and often deeply gendered. This might explain the seeming emasculatory fear of veganism and femininity in contemporary popular culture, such as those exhibited in Burger King’s “Manthem” (2007) and Hummer’s “Tofu” (2006) advertisements, or even Yorkie’s “Not for Girls” (2002), Snickers’ “Get Some Nuts” (2008), and McCoy’s “Man Crisps” (2009) commercials, in which the perceived danger of a plant-based diet is assuaged through ritualistically eating animals or protein. Burger King’s “Manthem” advert, for example, opens with a man walking out of a restaurant, apparently too hungry to “settle for chick food”, in order to purchase a “Texas Double Whopper” from Burger King. As he leaves the store, he is joined by other men who collectively announce “Yes, I’m a guy” while “admitting” to having been “forced” to eat quiche. Flames, muscle-pumping, brick-breaking, car-throwing, and other bizarre masculine bravado follows, ending with the declaration: “I am hungry; I am incorrigible; I am Man”. Not only is the imagery based on the disavowal of all that is deemed feminine, but tellingly, when the man’s stomach is “starting to growl”, he goes “on the prowl”, evoking, once again, not only the eating of animals but an implied (and imaginary) hunt, too. Notably, who or what is being hunted exactly is unclear: it could be the nonhuman animal, the feminine, or more than likely, both. Hummer’s (2006) advertisement follows a similar theme, albeit with tofu replacing quiche as the feminine food source. Noticing another male shopper who has purchased nothing but meat (here and throughout, a nonhuman animal as food), charcoal, and alcohol, the evidently ashamed man discovers an advert for a Hummer, that summarily purchases, with the commercial ending “Restore the Balance”. While the implication here is that a large SUV can restore some semblance of masculinity, the purchase of tofu (and vegetables) is only rendered shameful when juxtaposed with nonhuman animal flesh. It is the purchasing—and by implication, the eating—of nonhuman animals that performs the

work of masculinity, and commensurately, it is the tofu (and vegetables) which necessarily emasculates. Thus, in both commercials, alternatives to animals as food, become, in Richard Roger's terminology, not only sources of non-meat, but *anti-meat* (2008:291). As such, the act of eating animals as food performatively and purificatorily excludes and disavows femininity, for anything that is not "meat"—and consequently, not masculine—becomes a dangerous and potentially polluting form of *anti-masculinity*. In fact, even those advocating for an end to violent practices against nonhuman animals, such as factory farming, commit to these purity myths. Michael Pollan, in his book *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (2006), as well as his documentary series "Cooked" (2016), describes veganism as a "denial of reality" (Wright 2019:4), and builds his entire "locavore" movement around the spectacle of the (heavily masculinised) fire, in which men drink beer and slow-roast an ethically-sourced hog, in constant appeal to a "natural" (and therefore neutral) Palaeolithic masculinity. One need only look at any barbecue advertisement between the 1950s and now in order to observe this spectacle, in which men stand around an ersatz fire serving charred animals to grateful women and children.

In the context of the United Kingdom (UK) specifically, the intersection of eating animals, masculinity, and *fatherhood* has become increasingly evident in recent Father's Day food advertisements. Since 2018, for example, the supermarket Aldi has promoted a "Big Daddy Steak" campaign, followed by a "Bigger Daddy" Rump Steak challenge in 2020, in which fathers are encouraged to consume the entire nonhuman animal product in a single sitting (Aldi 2020). For 2021, Aldi introduced a new "28-oz Steak Challenge", replacing its Big Daddy Steak with what it now calls "The Godfather" (Shaw 2021). Following suit, Iceland launched a "Big Daddy Cheeseburger" for Father's Day (Bradbury 2020), while M&S Food launched the "Daddy of All Burgers" (Flook 2020). Likewise, Morrisons advertised a 32oz (2lb) "Tomahawk Steak" (Johnson 2020) for the occasion, replacing a "Mighty Meat Feast" (Gladwell 2019) that included a rump steak, a lamb chop, a pork chop, three sausages, and two black puddings (a product made from nonhuman animal blood). This follows on from successful campaigns such as Burger King's own "Father's Day 'Whopper'" burgers, advertisements for which have read "Take the King of the House to the House of the Whopper" (2011) and "Like Whopper Like Son" (2019), as well KFC's Father's Day special, the "Big Daddy Box" (2021). Similarly, when McDonald's announced its limited-edition sausage and bacon sandwich, its advertisements read "Sausageness, Baconess, Manliness" (Off 2019) and, quite inexplicably, "Looked at the Horoscopes this morning? Reclaim Your Manliness" (Lockwood 2018), clearly associating horoscopes with women and the irrational, and, by implication, eating nonhuman animals as food, with rationality and the restoration of masculinity. Indeed, the term "sandwich" is seemingly all too emasculating for some, with the food company Conagra introducing their own "Manwich" range, selling sauces specifically made for nonhuman animal-based sandwiches (2021). What these excessive acts of engorgement showcase is not only men's restorative attempts to purify their masculinity via eating nonhuman animals, but the *fragility* that necessitates such acts: a fragility which, as Faludi contends, has become increasingly re-affirmed in the past two

decades. However, rather than disavowing this fragility, the article proposes an ethical position that actively avows notions of vulnerability and bodily precarity.

4. TOWARDS A (FEMINIST) VEGAN ETHIC

Despite the attempt to secure masculinity through eating animals, the dependence on a constitutive Other (both human and non-human) renders masculinity inherently unstable. Much like Robin DiAngelo's (2018) notion of "white fragility", by defining itself differentially, masculinity has little positive value outside of gendered power relations, such that we might speak of the inherent fragility of masculinity. However, before offering a specifically feminist vegan ethic that seeks to not only resist, but actively destabilise the illusory coherence of hegemonic masculinity, it is necessary to first look at how vegan practices have intersected with feminism historically, as well as highlight ways in which practices of veganism have actually reinforced hegemonic ideals of masculinity. For example, there is a rich intersecting history between the feminist and animal-rights movements. In her historical account of women and the animal rights movement, Emily Gaarder (2011) notes how the early suffrage movement identified patriarchal control over (primarily female) nonhuman animals' reproductive organs in both the cattle and dairy industry, as well as predominance of vivisection in the medical field, as a unifying cause shared between both movements. However, this shared recognition of embodied suffering was actively pathologised, and as Lori Gruen identifies, the medical profession soon began diagnosing female animal rights activists with what was termed "zoophilpsychois" (2018:5). Historian Dianne Beers (2006) argues that this was part of a process of disciplining the early animal rights movement, feeding into larger psychiatric and medical regimes that gendered emotional expression and depicted any overt emotional excess as "hysterical". That hysteria originates from the Latin root *hysteria*, meaning womb or uterus, underlines the longer legacy of associating women with nature, bodies, emotion, and animality, and is a forceful example of what Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva (1993:28) label "mutually reinforcing oppressions".

This relationship between gender, medicine, and (mental) illness is evident today in the discourse of veganism as dietary deviancy. As Stephanie Jenkins and colleagues note, just as early nonhuman animal activists were labelled "mad" through psychiatric diagnoses such as "anti-vivisection syndrome", so too veganism has become medicalised today through diagnostic terms such as "selective eating disorder" and "orthorexia nervosa" (2020:1), diagnoses that disproportionately applied to women. Indeed, Jenkins argues this relationship between gender and disability is best articulated vis-à-vis the concept of animality, a term that describes the way nonhuman animals are classed, hierarchised and rendered legible solely through practices of human – and Humanist - ordering (Wyckoff 2015). For Jenkins, such diagnoses only become explicable through this association with the nonhuman animal Other. Not only is the condition of "madness" necessarily gendered, as Gruen contends, but it is conditional on an equally necessary nonhuman animal alterity, such that, veganism becomes less a *female* malady than an *animalady* (2018:3). Thus, in much the same way hysteria was about medicalising and regulating the female body, so too

contemporary Western narratives of veganism as pathological and disordered seek to delegitimise veganism and vegetarianism by associating eating animals, and often milk, with health and wellbeing (Wright 2015:89). In extending an analysis of disability and animality to accommodate (masculinised) eating of animals, then, the tabletop as quintessential site of the feminist killjoy (Ahmed 2010) instead, becomes a common space for multispecies solidarity and *post*-humanist care. It is telling, then, that where this narrative has been successfully resisted by men, it is often by employing precisely the same hegemonic language that is antagonistic to a vegan ethic. For example, the recent "Game Changers" (2019) documentary has had some relative success in promoting a vegan diet, but only through continued appeals to extreme forms of hegemonic masculinity, including violent combat sports (MMA or boxing), weightlifting, auto-racing, and even improved sexual performance, including harder, longer erections and increased girth. Indeed, the "Hegan" movement is the apotheosis of this trajectory: so, destabilising are the perceived qualities of a plant-based diet that only appeals to penis size or muscle density can restore hegemonic masculinity without its recourse to eating animals. Palaeolithic *homo phallus* and twenty-first century *homo phallus* are one and the same species.

What these examples show is that despite veganism being popularised in contemporary culture, it is often done so while redefining hegemonic notions of masculinity. It is for this reason that the article proposes a specifically feminist vegan ethic, in correspondence with recent feminist scholarship. In their book *Precarious Life*, Judith Butler (2004) locates the body at the centre of any ethical obligation. For Butler, building on earlier phenomenological scholarship, embodiment implies a certain vulnerability, or precariousness: indeed, even a *fragility*. To be embodied is to be open to the world, that also implies the possibility of being wounded. While exposure to precarity is differentially distributed, such that some bodies are much more vulnerable to violence than others, it is precisely in this openness to the "Other" that an ethical relation is necessitated of us. Building on the work of Emmanuel Levinas, Butler locates the "face of the other" (Levinas 1979:207) as that which demands an ethical obligation upon us: a "most basic mode of responsibility" (Butler 2004:131). To expose oneself to the vulnerability of the face—that face which is not only before me but above me—is to put one's "ontological right of existence into question" (Butler 2004:131). Thus, to eat animals, to render the nonhuman animal as flesh, as consumable, is, *above all*, an act of *effacement*; a de-ontologising refusal to see. For, as Levinas himself intimates at, "the face is not exclusively a human face" (Levinas cited in Butler 2004:133). Or as Butler remarks, in words meant for the human Other, but all too applicable to the non-human: "the face makes various utterances at once; it bespeaks an agony, an injurability, at the same time that it bespeaks a *divine prohibition against killing*" (Butler 2004:135).

As the work of Susan Faludi (2007) highlights, it was the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001 that exposed many to the precarity at the heart of embodied life. However, rather than reproducing traditional gender roles through heteronormative rituals of masculine purity, as is the case with many animal eating practices, a vegan ethic positions both human and non-human bodily vulnerability at the centre of normative life. For, as Derrida (1992)

observed, Bentham's famous maxim on the shared suffering between human and nonhuman animal invites us to base our relation to the Other not on capacity, but *incapacity*. It is, to borrow Donna Haraway's term, an act of multispecies "response-ability" (2016:11) in which the "grievability" (Butler 2009) of the nonhuman animal is equally secured. With an emphasis on embodiment, shared suffering, and a form of reason co-extensive with emotion, the vegan ethic proposed here not only resists hegemonic masculinity, but all those synergistic notions of culture/mind/reason/human through which it derives its illusory coherence. A specifically *feminist* vegan ethic not only exposes the central emptiness of the human—"that hiatus which separates man from animal"—but, in responding to the precarity of human existence, "risks ourselves in that emptiness" (Agamben 2002:92). Veganism thus refuses the founding ontological act upon which anthropos secures *his* status: the separation between man and nonhuman animal thus sets the anthropological machine in motion. Indeed, it challenges the concept (and central conceit) of humanity itself, with its humanist fantasy of transcendental, disembodied reason and pure, disincorporate objectivity. A feminist vegan ethic is, therefore, the sabot in the anthropological machine, not only a practice of non-violence, but of active, more-than-human *sabotage*.

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Repressing Righteous Rage: The Capitalist Criminalisation of Animal Advocacy

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Abstract

It is the unfortunate truth that, in many places, more legal protection is afforded to industrial property than to the many animal souls held captive therein, awaiting their fate at the hands of inseminators, slaughterers, or vivisectioners. Whilst capitalism has brought opulence to some and opportunity to many more, it has also commodified the nonhuman to no more than a number. When activists for animal rights seek to redress the balance of power on behalf of their nonhuman brothers and sisters, they are labelled terrorists, and their activism deviance, whilst the perpetrators of physical and psychological violence against those nonhumans receive legal (and sometimes financial) protection from the state. In a nation of animal lovers such as the United Kingdom (UK) or the United States of America (US) alike, advocates for our finned, feathered, and furred friends should be applauded, yet instead, campaigns against cruelty are criminalised. This paper applies several classical, critical theories of crime and deviance to this criminalisation of nonhuman animals' human allies. In most cases, the industries and institutions responsible for the use of animals in this way are also considered responsible for the perception of animal rights activism and liberation as acts of terror. But with the violence inflicted upon nonhumans within these settings, which side of the gate is the enemy on?

Keywords: activism; critical criminology; deviance; nonhuman animals; terrorism

*"First they ignore you.
Then they laugh at you.
Then they fight you.
Then you win."*

(Misattributed to Gandhi; source unknown)

1. INTRODUCTION

Society is in a constant state of evolution and, over time, one social injustice after another has come to the fore, created anger, been subjected to scrutiny, and eventually abolished. The subsequent want to implement positive change for those treated unjustly—by whatever means necessary—is now accepted in various campaigns for human freedoms. Despite the intransigent rhetoric of the powerful with vested interests in the status quo, the roles various (often violent) social movements have played in creating the change they wish to see is now acknowledged. Obvious examples include the direct action taken by radical feminists for the emancipation of women (*Gilcher-Holtey 2019*), the civil disobedience that was a large part of the American Civil Rights movement (Marek 1965), the abolition of South African apartheid which led ultimately to the election of the once-notorious African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela to the Presidency of South Africa (Macozoma 1994), and the various illegal acts of protecting Jews in Nazi-occupied territories during World War II (Henry 1986).

The nonhuman animal liberation movement seems unable, at least at this point in time, to be privileged with the same romantic notions of freedom fighting and social justice now afforded many of those mentioned above. They are routinely branded as terrorists or extremists, and it is this notion of an enemy status I seek to investigate here—particularly as attributed to abolition and liberation activists. I will do so primarily by way of explanations of such vilification in terms of the instrumental nature of animal rights criminalisation for the protection of vested economic interests. The characterisation shift from “gentle pacifist to violent criminal in one single bound” is suggested by Lovitz to have occurred when “protests against facilities that exploit, abuse, and/or threaten animals or natural resources, began to threaten the financial integrity of some major corporations” (2007:79). Money talks, and money silences.

This view is widely supported by a variety of critical criminological theories, including labelling theorists such as Howard Becker (1963), Stan Cohen’s 1972 “Folk Devils and Moral Panics”, and other views on social control such as William Chambliss’s ideas about political economy (1975). Ian Taylor, Paul Walton, and Jock Young also highlighted the crossover between the micro sociological labelling theory and the macro sociological conflict approach, theorising a “new” fully social theory of deviance that incorporates both perspectives (1973). All acknowledge the role of the state, its representatives, or funders as key informants in the stigmatisation of sub-cultural groups. Some lay the blame very clearly at the feet of big business.

2. DEVIANT LABELLING

The generally accepted understanding of deviance involves behaviour outside social convention, though not necessarily criminal. Such activities might range from obvious demonstrations of anti-social behaviour, binge-drinking, or unusual body piercings, to less obvious practices such as veganism, or minority religious belief. When certain deviant behaviours are brought to the attention of the wider population (often through mass or social media), practitioners are “othered” and become a common enemy. As Becker states: “deviant behaviour is behaviour that people so label”, supporting the view that normative behaviour and by extension deviant behaviour are entirely social constructs: “social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance” (1963:6). Deviants become “outsiders”.

2.1 Folk Devils and Moral Panics

Cohen (2002) describes the process by which organisations and social structures, with media help (often believed to be directly influenced by those institutions), criminalise certain deviant behaviour through the discourse of division. Using an example of two British youth groups of the 1960s, the “Mods” and “Rockers”, Cohen explains how public fear was created from one relatively non-eventful skirmish between the two on a slow-news Bank Holiday. A “self-fulfilling prophecy” was created in those categorised as trouble, who thereafter became more troublesome, with subsequently lowered public expectations of them. Young people became “symbols of trouble” (Cohen 2002:vi), adopting their deviant status and ultimately leading to actual criminality. Rather than accept its role in the creation of this criminal behaviour, society successfully demanded action be taken and felt righteous justice was served on those young people with every arrest and prosecution prompted by the moral panic.

The ability of the powerful to influence both public opinion and individual behaviour is well-documented (see for example Becker 1963; Hall et al. 2013; and others). Not always is this acknowledged ability applied to the case of the various groups of humans who advocate for the rights and protection of nonhuman animals. They and their protestations simply become another perceived system of trouble in a society which subconsciously accepts a significant level of animal death as inevitable and necessary.

2.2 Labelling the Liberators

The labelling of these advocates is problematic, and categories range from “welfarists” and “reformists”, to “abolitionists” and “liberators”, with often very little separating one group from another, except perhaps in individual practise. Abolitionism, for example, is predominantly theoretical in nature (see Francione and Charlton 2015), with veganism and vegan education promoted as sufficient praxis to save lives in the future, whereas liberation tends to be more hands-on and direct in action (see ALF n.d.; HSA 2019) to save lives in the present. The uneducated in these often-subtle distinctions (the general public, for

example) may see no difference, though, between an anti-fur leaflet protester outside Edinburgh's Harvey Nichols on a Saturday afternoon and someone releasing American mink from a fur farm in the Highlands of Scotland (see Munro 2014). That is not to say that the same activist may not be involved or interested in both events, but saboteurs are more likely to be sabotaging a hunt on a weekend morning whilst possibly unconnected indirect action such as leafleting or demonstrating is undertaken in tandem by others.

It should be noted, however, that advocates often self-identify with these complex categories rather than accept a label allocated to them. Creating and attempting to maintain a Scottish alliance of animal rights activists in the early 2000s saw divisions created by media coverage and subsequent interpretation of various events, including and perhaps especially the Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) campaign (see Best and Kahn 2004). Coalition members who sat more distinctly on the welfare side of campaigning than the rights or abolitionist position grew increasingly uncomfortable with the idea of associating, or being associated with, the anti-vivisection movement. The media's labelling of those opposed to animal experimentation as extremists and anti-progress created fear, not just in the general population, but also in those on the softer side of campaign groups such as the Alliance. Individuals resisted involvement in certain single-issue campaigns to avoid the negative stigma that surrounded the animal rights movement at that time.

The fracturing of the movement could in some ways be viewed as a successful outcome for the animal-reliant industries, particularly when cohesion would have stood its opposition in better stead—presenting a united front against animal industry. That said, the varying disruptive successes of SHAC and other similar campaigns in obstructing business as usual for those industries cannot be overlooked or minimised in terms of their strategies, methods, and efficacy (Ellefsen and Busher 2020). Economic sabotage is an incredibly powerful tool in the activist armoury.

2.3. Capitalists' Criminalisation of Anti-Cruelty Crusaders

Chambliss (1975) and other orthodox Marxists propose that criminal law is state-imposed on behalf of capitalists—that the capitalist elite are creators of crime and protectors of economic interests. This would necessarily include the multiple industries reliant upon the use of nonhuman animals in one way or another for their survival—food agriculture such as farming and fishing, others for clothing, shoes, or accessories, captivity for entertainment such as aquaria and circuses, "pets" of all species and associated vets, and of course pharmaceuticals. It is the latter industry (including Huntingdon Life Sciences) that has borne the brunt of some of the most intensive animal activism in the history of the movement so far (Best and Kahn 2004) and prompted the world's first anti-vivisection organisation as far back as 1875, the UK's National Anti-Vivisection Society (NAVS n.d.).

In the US, as in the UK, a significant amount of legislation exists to prevent and punish cruelty, though this is focused primarily on "domesticated animals" and excludes the vast majority who are reared intensively for agricultural purposes. Marceau highlights the custom-in-practice exemptions to such protections:

- Animals raised for food may be exempted from general requirements for shelter, including minimal protection from the weather.
- Animals may be confined in cages or crates so small that the animal cannot even turn around.
- Animals may have their testicles and tails removed, or they may be branded, all without anaesthetic.
- Chickens have their beaks removed without anaesthetic.
- Chickens may be starved in order to induce a new egg laying cycle.
- Cows as young as a day old may be removed from their mothers and housed in veal crates that preclude exercise or play.
- Chickens are killed at rates that make minimally careful handling impossible, with many facilities striving for line speeds in excess of 140 birds per minute (meaning that each worker has to hang the birds by their feet upside down on a moving conveyor belt at a rate of about 30-45 birds per minute).
- Unwanted fowl may be drowned in foam, despite the final death taking up to fifteen minutes. (Marceau 2019:100)

Those raging against such processes by way of demonstration or other means somehow find themselves typed and vilified for daring to criticise what is viewed as a necessary evil by those seeking to maintain these exemptions. However, it is fair to assume that any of these exemptions, were they to be applied to nonhuman animals such as cats or dogs, would be considered *unnecessary* evil by many of the same people. One had only to witness the global condemnation of Englishwoman Mary Bale following CCTV footage of her putting a live cat in a wheelie bin (Barkham 2010) to see this contradiction in action. Her punishment was a fine of GBP 250, further outraging the public, who demanded a stronger penalty.

2.4 Labelling and Legislating

Unfortunately for activists daring to expose below-par intensive farming practices or highlighting sub-standard laboratory conditions, their wish to bring to the public's attention the plight of the nonhuman animals therein is frequently met with derision or denigration, rather than decisive action for improvement or change. As such, so-called "Ag-Gag" legislation and other laws designed to protect animal enterprises (including laboratories) have served only to further distance the public from the processes conducted on their behalf by these industries. Evidence-gathering becomes impossible and the veil of secrecy surrounding animal enterprise activities ever opaquer (see Fiber-Ostrow and Lovell 2016; and Wrock 2016 for further analysis). Business continues as usual without checks or balances.

3. NEW "RADICAL" CRIMINOLOGICAL REASONING

More than forty years ago, well before the enactment of such reactive rulemaking in agriculture, Taylor, Walton, and Young (1973) set out what was at the time a new, "fully

social theory” of deviance, still applicable here and now. Elements of their thesis included much already mentioned, though they acknowledged the interplay of social and cultural context as well as individual choice in their explanation for deviance. They argued there are always wider, social origins to an act being considered thus—crime is created in a cultural context and is therefore structural (and potentially fluid) in nature. If, for example, we as a society widely accept the use of nonhuman animals for food, clothing, entertainment, and product or medicine testing, then oppositional behaviour will necessarily be viewed as criminal—or at the very least, deviant. The deviant or criminal act itself marries the belief system of the actor to the choice to act based on that belief, despite awareness of accepted social norms and values.

Some decide to be the change they want to see in the world by being part of a wider moral and social movement as a form of prefigurative politics (Boggs 1977): for example, the consequentialist act of abstaining from eating nonhuman animals to live one’s ethical ideals may contribute over time to the reduction in animal use. For others, actions are more deontological, interventionist, and immediate, where a belief that animal use is morally abhorrent requires nothing less than direct, disruptive action, such as hunt sabotage. Both are viewed as socially deviant, some even by others within the animal rights movement, as previously described.

Taylor, Walton, and Young (1973) are clear that laws are created within a capitalist framework to protect property and maintain social order. This is further supported by Chambliss’s (1975) view of capitalist control, not only of their respective industries but of normative ideology driven by economic interests. Maintenance occurs through mass media (another capitalist industry), deeming such deviance newsworthy, labelling it thus, and reinforcing social norms in doing so. In this case, the norm of viewing the utilisation of animals in food production or experiments as necessary (Taylor, Walton, and Young 1973; Erikson in Cohen 2002:10-11) sees opposition to these accepted practises as at best odd, and at worst, anti-human.

3.1 Capitalist Interests vs. Campaign Intersectionality

A more Gramscian proposition may be that whilst activists debate over effective campaign strategies and which animal is most worthy of their time and energies, they are ignorant of the capitalist elite growing their surplus value to obscene levels via cultural hegemony (Gramsci 1971). Whether environmentalists, animal rights activists, or any other social movement, they share a common enemy: the capitalist class. As such, many (such as Francione and Charlton 2017) believe they should be presenting a collective case for change rather than each focusing on the separate fragments of what is overall mass oppression and exploitation of both humans and nonhumans. In the same way that the Scottish Animal Rights Alliance disintegrated, so we see a distancing of one social movement from another, despite having similar aims and objectives—and a shared belief in making industry accountable for its actions, and improving the world for its inhabitants, present and future.

Perhaps the divide and conquer approach is a successful ruse by industry, via the media, to distract the masses and continue business as usual: the deaths of millions of animals every day in the United Kingdom alone, and billions annually worldwide (Animal Clock 2021). Despite the huge number of animals killed daily, these figures are not the sort to make news headlines—another example of the control of the system by those benefiting from its continuation.

“The importance of the media lies not in their role as transmitters of moral panics nor as campaigners but in the way they reproduce and sustain the dominant ideology.” (Cohen 2002: xxxvi)

4. TERRORISTS OR FREEDOM FIGHTERS?

Best and Nocella (2004a) investigate how activists opposed to these unimaginable numbers might be represented as “terrorists”, not just by media but also in law, by first considering how such a term may be defined. Various definitions exist from the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and others tasked with formally sanctioning crime, both in the US and the UK. These include “the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property ... in furtherance of political or social objectives” (FBI in Best and Nocella 2004b:69), despite the law already containing more than adequate mechanisms to protect people and/or property from criminal damage.

Is it possible, however, to commit violence on an object or property? Can one terrorise bricks and mortar? When Animal Liberation Front (ALF) activists free animals from what they consider to be morally unjustifiable conditions, some property damage to buildings or locks in order to gain access to often sick or injured animals is unavoidable. This seems reasonable and in line with ALF rules that specify the avoidance of harm to all living creatures (ALF n.d.). That a padlock is broken or a window smashed bears little relevance to the moral aberration being conducted behind those closed doors, though many disagree. That property destruction is what makes headlines, without mention of the reason behind the incidents, provides further support for the critical criminologist position.

5. HYPOCRITICAL HYPERBOLE

Controversy surrounds the debate(s) on the personhood of (some species of) nonhuman animals (see for example, Kymlicka and Donaldson 2011) but ultimately, proponents of animal use would at least afford them “thinghood” as objects of property, legally owned by industry, and kept within the physical property of farm or laboratory buildings. But if industrial property is protected from terror under law, and animals are the property of industry, then why are those animals not also protected from terror? The FBI’s own definition of terrorism mentioned earlier carries with it only one stipulation: that it is “unlawful”. This brings us back around to Marceau’s detail of agricultural exemptions, such as mutilation without anaesthetic (2019). In 2006, the recognition in UK law of the capacity of nonhuman animals to feel pain and suffering was heralded through the Animal Welfare

Act (2006). Despite this, more than two million sentient beings were slaughtered in the UK in August 2021 (and this figure only cows, pigs, and sheep) (DEFRA 2021a). The UK's Action Plan for Animal Welfare (DEFRA 2021b) includes an Animal Sentience Committee, tasked with ensuring animal welfare is accounted for in ministerial policy making. However, the same proposed Bill excludes animals killed to be eaten from the full legislative protection afforded to companion animals and others. One key pledge is to consider "what further welfare at slaughter improvements should be made" (DEFRA 2021b), clearly indicating the continuation (and potential reinforcement) of a normative dichotomy between the cared-for cat and the consumed cow. Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb, on 16 June 2021, stated: "the Government have finally published a Bill that, if one graded it, would get an F for fail" (2021).

6. HOODED VILLAINS OR MASKED HEROES?

There are multiple, often multinational industries at play in the war on terror waged against animal activists in the last few decades. These include so-called "meat" and "dairy", fur, "leather", household products, pharmaceuticals, and the media itself: arguing against disruption or obstruction of any business reliant on sentient beings for profit. In 2006 (many believe in response to the SHAC campaign), the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA) overwrote the Animal Enterprise Protection Act (AEPA) in the US to make illegal damage or interference in "the operations of an animal enterprise" (US GPO 2006). What these nonhuman animals really need is alternative institutional intrusion: a Thirteenth Amendment against their enslavement.

There remains a fundamental juxtaposition in most of these industries' insinuations, that despite the social acceptance of their businesses as necessary, it is not the case that humans need them at all. It is well documented now that a plant-based diet is as nutritionally balanced as mainstream ones based on the consumption of nonhuman animals, and in many ways protects the practitioner of the former from the early onset of a whole host of diseases such as diabetes and heart disease (see, for example, The British Dietetic Association 2017). Humans need not use household products tested on animals in laboratories, particularly when many of the substances contained in such products are so harmful to humans that they necessitate a toxic warning symbol (Health and Safety Executive, n.d.). Most poisonous cleaning products around the home could be replaced with more natural substances (Friends of the Earth, 2017), that are not only kinder to the house's inhabitants, but also the environment. Despite numerous calls for alternative therapies and medicines to be scrutinised for efficacy (and their practitioners labelled "dangerous" in the meantime), the fundamental problem of vivisection's lack of evidence itself as an appropriate tool for the development of human medicines is seldom mentioned, but hugely significant nonetheless (Fano 1997; see also Jayne and Hermann 2019).

Chambliss (1975) explained how capitalism created a perceived need for products, and although his focus was on how the working classes were then prisoners to exploitative employment to purchase these goods, it is not too far a step to apply this to the institutional view of animal use. If holding down two or three minimum wage jobs to survive is necessary,

there is no time (or energy) to consider alternatives to habitual practice—eating “meat”, bleaching the bathroom, using animal-tested products, or popping pills for one ailment or another. One’s focus is also individualistic in nature; it is understandably difficult to have empathy for others when life is a daily struggle. Nonhuman animals might feature some way down a priority list, if at all.

Those who dare to raise their head above the parapet of “normal” to highlight problems and start a moral conversation, are deemed a threat to the fabric of society as currently accepted. They are demonised, and ultimately criminalised. One need only look to the gaping chasm between each of the official responses to *Black Lives Matter* and pro-Trump *Stop the Steal* protests outside the US Capitol in Washington in 2020. Whilst various groups have leapfrogged each other to the top of domestic terrorist agendas, it remains the insistence of many national authorities to reinforce the view that (certain) activism is dangerous and requires what is very often disproportionate punishment, particularly those fighting for the rights of the powerless without taking lives themselves in the process (Brown, 2019).

Interestingly, although there is no singular definition of terrorism (FBI or otherwise), the Encyclopaedia Britannica in 2007 proposed terrorist acts to be those that “harm unarmed civilians who, except by way of their unfortunate location in the world, otherwise have little to do with the politics that inspire the acts” (Lovitz 2007:79). The topic page is very different now and its definition much more akin to that of the FBI (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2021). Might even Britannica have succumbed to the media-driven moral panics regarding advocacy activism?

So-called “terrorists” might say the real criminals are the capitalist companies making money from the unnecessary misery of millions of nonhuman beings each second, minute, hour of every day, across the world. These animals, and not their keepers, breeders, experimenters, or killers, are the genuinely innocent victims referred to in the FBI’s definition of Domestic Terrorism. Campaigners for the liberation of these individual innocents may view themselves and their actions as ones that, when the time comes, will be morally judged as having been on the right side of history.

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Humans and Nonhumans: Coexistence Continuum and Approaches for Working Toward Shared Sentience

Cosette Patterson

Abstract

In this paper, I explain a continuum that focuses on coexistence between human and nonhuman animals, with different examples as outlined below. Starting at Tolerance and following the continuum to the right leads toward Extreme Coexistence (Schauer, Walsh and Patterson 2021), or Shared Sentience (Schauer 2020a; 2020b; 2021). Within the continuum, I identify approaches that can be classified as solutions for coexistence, they differ based on effectiveness. Recognition of Sentience is the most effective solution for coexistence, within the continuum, for example. However, within each approach along the continuum, variations of stronger and weaker elements exist. Along the continuum, I move from Behavioral Shifts to Economies of Life (Schauer 2020c; Schauer and Healey 2021; Schauer et al. 2021), to Recognition of Sentience, and in doing so, I explain a stronger and weaker example for each. My hope, herein, is to provide tangible solutions for the goal of what Schauer (2020; 2021) calls, "shared sentience" between humans and nonhuman animals.

Keywords: coexistence; empathy; interaction; shared sentience; tolerance

1. INTRODUCTION

The realms of humanity and that of non-human animals are continuously divided by the prevalent social constructs that exist today and have existed for centuries. As humans removed themselves from “pristine” and “untouched” wilderness (Cronon 1995) and began to manipulate nature, and her resources, in order to set boundaries on an exclusive empire-like human domain, the notion that humans are, indeed, animals faded. Because they could write and articulate their thoughts in a way that made sense to their own species – and only their own species – parts of society felt as though they were superior, that animals could be exploited for the sake of humans’ happiness, indulgences, and the expansion of humanity’s realm. I believe wholeheartedly that humans and nonhuman animals can coexist – and while stepping into the forest and marveling at all of the homes wildlife have constructed for themselves – nests, dams, cocoons, holes in tree trunks, hollows in soft clay ground – I wonder why humans did not develop their lives in such a way that was not environmentally degrading, with homes that blended into the landscape and remained holistic and organic in design and function, as all other species have. Speciesism¹ and human supremacism have convinced some humans that they are mightier than the beast, and yet they continue to harm their own species with pollution, emissions, racism, sexism, and other terrible parts of society. Nonhuman animals have never negatively impacted society nor other animals in the extensive, environmentally-altering way that humans have. We are scared of non-human predators, and yet the biggest predator of humanity is itself; countless tragedies have stemmed from the actions of human beings, and in many cases, animals are in the cross-fire. Because human-wildlife conflicts are easily identifiable, I aim to use this paper to instead focus on coexistence, and options for the solution to peaceful, empathetic interactions. Shared sentience (Schauer 2020a; 2020b; 2021) is the ultimate, crucial goal of human-animal interactions; a bond that unites the two in reverence, respect, and recognition of the other’s very spirit. However, society is currently supported by an anthropocentric, exploitative economy, much of which is driven by animal suffering. By diving deeper into Frank’s (2016) conflict-to-coexistence continuum, we can begin to move toward Schauer’s (2020; 2021) notion of shared sentience. In this paper, I examine the ways in which we can move toward coexistence by examining several methods to approach human and nonhuman interactions. In doing so, I place such experiences on a continuum – yet focusing on the coexistence end of the spectrum, where potential solutions have the ability to shift from conflict to coexistence.

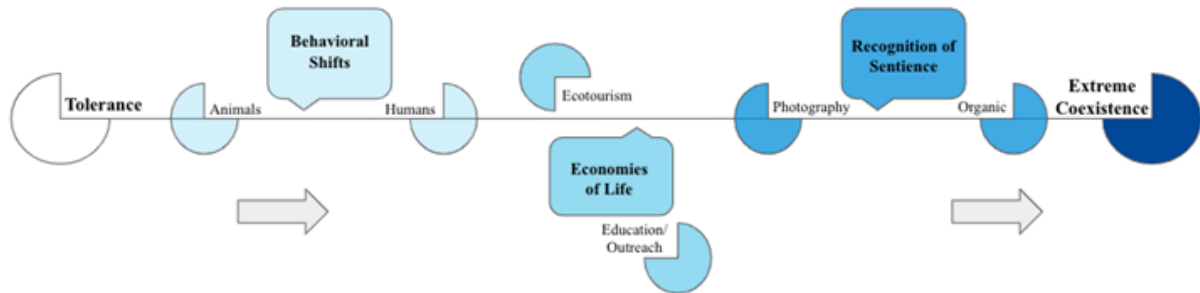


Figure 1. Human and Nonhuman Coexistence Continuum with Approaches and Variations

Figure 1 above depicts the coexistence end of the continuum, with different examples as outlined below. Starting at Tolerance and following the continuum to the right leads toward Extreme Coexistence (Schauer et al. 2021), or Shared Sentience (Schauer 2020a; 2020b; 2021). Although each of these approaches can be classified as solutions for coexistence, they differ based on effectiveness, where Recognition of Sentience is the most effective solution for coexistence. Below, within each approach, I explain variations of a stronger and weaker example.

2. BEHAVIORAL SHIFTS

Weaker: Shifting the Behaviors of Animals

Oftentimes, animals are killed in retaliation due to depredation on livestock or because humans feel threatened by an animal in another way. However, this also connects to “perceived risk versus real risk” (Conforti and Azevedo 2003 cited in Kelly 2019:360), and where animals are constructed as “man-eaters” (Kelly 2019:357). Yet, we know such attacks are rare (Kelly et al. 2019), often extremely rare. or are caused by provocation on the human’s part because the animal is defending his or herself from hunting, fishing or invading the territory of the animal (Kelly et al. 2019). Dichotomization seems to be a common human tendency, that everything must be categorized and divided between what is considered “good” and what is constituted as “bad”. The rigidity of this is so far from what life, and especially nature, entails. In other words, if humans refuse to understand animals, then how can they label them as such, with divisions that are based around the values, ethics, and norms that humans have deemed correct? Kelly (2019) examined this duality in Costa Rica and found that jaguars and pumas were “perceived” risks for Ticos, or non-Indigenous people, and “real” risks for Cabécar, or Indigenous people. This examination of

social constructs is helpful in understanding fear. Significantly less Ticos had encountered, directly or indirectly, a puma or jaguar. However, they were more likely to think of these animals as attackers, with the only solution being to kill them. Within her sample, one could extrapolate the closer one lives to jaguars and pumas, the less fear they have (Kelly 2019). While a large portion of the Tico sample who did not have recent experiences with jaguars or pumas, thought of them as “bad”, in humanity’s terms, though again, such a belief was not based on any relevant or recent events (Schauer 2021). This is something I have encountered in Colorado, where many bears cross the invisible and imagined borders of civilization, into where their habitat once was, and people become frightened and panicked. This hysteria can lead to law enforcement killing the bear, that is if he or she is considered too big of a problem.

While solutions to coexistence with bears in Colorado have been to provide bear-proof trash cans, which are stationed at every campsite, it is not a panacea, as bears travel outside of what is termed, ‘nature’ and ‘wilderness’ (Cronon 1995). Just last June, a bear was killed by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) after he entered a home, his second time entering the town after he had been relocated—no humans were injured. It is also legal to hunt bears in Colorado for sport. Such hunts are even encouraged by CPW because there is the fear that bears are threats to livestock—yet there is so much misinformation around this. For example, life with large carnivores is complicated. Mostly, we know large carnivores, such as, bears, wolves, pumas, and jaguars, prefer to prey on sick and vulnerable animals.

Nyhus (2016) offers some approaches to managing conflict through controlling the behaviors of animals, which offers a potential avenue toward coexistence, though not as strong as shifting the behaviors and outlooks of humans, which I discuss next. However, anything is better than lethal control, which is an extreme form of conflict, as well as torturous and violent (Schauer et al. 2021). For nonlethal approaches, Nyhus offers: translocation, though its success rate is “typically low and frequently expensive” (Nyhus 2016:155); barriers and exclusionary devices, such as fences or vegetation; modified habitats that discourage certain animals (Nyhus 2016:156). Additionally guarding, restraints, deterrents, or repellants, as well as emerging technologies, such as sterilization programs are also used (Nyhus 2016). I argue here, of course, for the methods that stray the farthest from hurting the animal. Although these can be used to keep animals at bay and allow for ‘business as usual’ to continue on the human end, there is no doubt that these are less effective, and simply unethical. Therefore, next, I argue, for an approach that prioritizes humans changing their own personal behaviors, above forcing animals to do so. I argue here, humans are a large part of the problem, and micro, individual changes are extremely important, and will significantly support coexistence.

Stronger: Shifting the Behaviors of Humans

As Kelly and colleagues (2019:27) contend, “in part, coexistence with wild animals means humans must take responsibility to avoid attacks.” Although we can attempt to control animals through management efforts, the behaviors of individual humans matter just as

much, and arguably, even more. This goes along with systematic record keeping of human nonhuman animal encounters, investigating the health of a nonhuman animal to see if the attack was induced due to disease (Kelly et al 2019), as well as simply, understanding how to live alongside nonhuman animals; something as simple as storing camp food in bear-proof storage can prevent conflict and save a bear's life. As Nyhus (2016:147) writes, "entire species have been vilified because of conflicts with humans [. . .] real and perceived conflict with wolves led to their eradication from large areas of Europe and the continental US." As a global "superpredator," humans, (Nyhus 2016:148), are harming nonhuman animals more than nonhuman animals have ever harmed us. We, as humans, must recognize, that we are pushing into their habitats—not only this, but causing rising emissions and therefore climate change, which is damaging ecosystems—their home...herein, there is bound to be conflict. While such a conflict discourse may be useful in some circles, I move into the spaces where the focus is on solutions that will lead us to coexistence with nonhuman animals. This includes evaluating the language we use to discuss the interactions between humans and nonhuman animals. One example of the lexicon around nonhuman animals, is the media. The media, "plays a powerful, intermediary role in communicating facts, ideas and concepts between policy makers, scientists and the public" (McCagh, Sneddon, and Blache 2015:272) and can influence the public's "ability to relate" to environmental discourses" (McCagh et al. 2015:272). While this may at first glance seem useful, I want to bring attention to the fact that many of the people consuming the media have not had firsthand experiences with wildlife, and therefore are swayed by external, even non-credible, sources on what these interactions might look like. Therefore, we can also apply a continuum to language, with positive, coexistence-based language on one side. Such a discourse is often lacking in the media and discussions around human-wildlife interactions, especially large carnivores. Such as this, language, I argue here, also has significant implications on how we approach conflict and coexistence with nonhumans.

Perceived risk (Conforti and Azevedo 2003 cited in Kelly 2019:360; Nyhus 2016) is an important aspect of interactions with wildlife. In order to understand how we can shift our own actions and behaviors toward one centered around sentience, we must understand the difference between "perceptions of risk, actual degree of risk, and proportional response to risk" (Nyhus 2016:153). Wolves, for instance, are often seen as vicious killers of healthy livestock and elk by farmers and elk hunters, but in actuality they prey more often on weak and vulnerable animals, such as elk who have chronic wasting disease (CWD). Perceived risk here is very different from the real one, and therefore scientific conversations that engage these varying civilians are incredibly important. Specifically, the ways in which wildlife are perceived is based on cultural and historical contexts (Kelly 2019), and these are also important to keep in mind, as much as it is important to recognize that animals are also actors in these interactions—toward this end—we must continually keep them at the forefront of our minds, when making decisions. In other words, we should observe and understand their behavior before drawing conclusions on how to change it. As Nyhus explains, "in addition to managing wildlife or building barriers, there is growing recognition

that efforts to change human behavior can be as or more important than simply reducing damage caused by wildlife" (2016:157). In sum, we must recognize our own responsibility in managing conflict, which then can build coexistence. For example, in their application of the human wildlife continuum to human-shark interactions, Schauer, Walsh and Patterson (2021) acknowledge that "all activities along the continuum can be subject to an invasion of a sharks' agency" (n.d.), and therefore we must acknowledge the shark's territory, behavior, and comfort levels and adjust our own behaviors accordingly. In that, Schauer and colleagues, focus on the ways in which divers can train for safe interactions with sharks, which also cultivates shared sentience by taking the time to understand the comfort level of sharks and how they define their space. However, there are many options beyond sharks and at a scale larger than divers, by which human behaviors can change for the better; governance and education are arguably the most important in order to allow for stakeholder participation. Additionally, certain laws and policies that foster coexistence and reverence, such as endangered species protection. Economic incentives may also fit into shifting human behaviors toward increasing tolerance and therefore moving toward coexistence, as Nyhus notes (2016:159): "photographic tourism and other forms of ecotourism in which tourists pay local communities to see wildlife may reduce incentives to eliminate wildlife that cause conflict".

3. ECONOMIES OF LIFE AND DEATH

Weaker: Ecotourism

While economic incentives are useful, it should not be the case that nonhuman lives are valued by their economic worth, that is, the difference between whether a nonhuman animal lives or dies is dictated by money. This is the erasure of an animal's spirit, soul, and sentience—the idea that the meaning of their existence can be boiled down to how they fit into our narrative and the extent to which they enhance the lives of humans. However, this is the world in which we are now operating—nonhuman animal lives are dependent on how we assign them value, which is most often through the lens of economic profit. That said, it is crucial to the wellbeing of animals and the development of coexistence that we integrate the acknowledgement of their worth into our social framework—and doing so through an economic lens is the easiest way to initiate this. Therefore, it is imperative that economies reliant on death (shark finning in Schauer et al. 2021 or lion hunting in Schauer and Healey 2021, for example) can begin to transition to life (Schauer 2020c)—and most often, this is incredibly beneficial to the nations, local communities, and residents. An economy of life, such as through ecotourism, can bring long-term benefits where nonhuman animals are allowed to live, rather than the one-off economic profits of killing a nonhuman animal, or an economy of death (Schauer and Healey 2021; Schauer et al. 2021). Economies of death completely overlook the individuality of animals through desensitization; by denying the sentience of these beings, it is easier for people to kill them, and furthermore for consumers to be entirely removed from the killing. This has been referenced in the theory entitled "politics of sight", coined by Timothy Pachirat in his novel *Every Twelve Seconds*, an account

of industrialized killing. "Politics of sight" refers to the assumption that making visible these practices—the inhumane treatment and slaughter of animals—is enough to transform political and social discourse (Pachirat 2011). This is because economies of death, such as industrialized killing of nonhumans, conceal the horrific slaughter that goes on to supply nonhuman animal products to our population. By distancing the public physically from the slaughterhouses, any kind of possible emotional connection is severed. For example, pigs raised for slaughter are seen collectively as a means to an end, a product that can be defined by economic value. We even use the language to dismember them, referring to pig as pork when served for food. Rather, we should be looking at these brilliant and beautiful animals more closely, at the individual level—especially on an individual-to-individual bond through intimate interactions—to acknowledge the meaning that each of their lives hold and the fact that just like us, the time they spend on this planet is significant and should be considered and treated as such.

Cultural perspectives that have been formed throughout history pull our mind and opinions, and therefore sway our feelings, toward one way of thinking. This also connects to social constructionism, or how society places worth and meaning on certain objects and ideas. Today, the economy, money, especially is the primary example of a social construct that now controls our view of not only society, but also of nonhuman animals, as well as what we have deemed outside of society—"nature" or to frame it according to Cronon (1995), "wilderness". This is a very Western, non-indigenous, abstract and privileged way of viewing the world, as many people struggle throughout their lives to have enough money to even survive on a day-to-day basis. However, it is for this very reason that ecotourism can be so effective; it is enormously profitable, and when done with community participation, can ensure the basic and social needs are met of peoples in impoverished regions. Ecotourism is on the rise, and works to keep animals alive. According to Tortato and colleagues, in relation to tourism around jaguars in Brazil, it "will accelerate even faster in years to come" (2017:134). This is then one tool we have to promote the lives of nonhuman animals in our global world. Furthermore, and important to sharing sentience, ecotourism can lead to human-wildlife interactions that evoke emotion, shared sentience, and foster a powerful connection that leads to reverence and importantly, conservation-oriented behavior. Additionally, such a tourism allows for wild nature, reserves, preserves, sanctuaries, and so on, rather than using that land for industry that focuses on killing nonhuman animals, such as the case with lion hunting in Africa (Schauer and Healey 2021). In other words, the use of a natural environment, through ecotourism, fosters more authentic, and therefore more powerful, human-wildlife interactions. As Tortato and colleagues (2017) made evident through their study of jaguar tourism, "the monetary argument is no more powerful than an ecological or the moral argument, but it can reach a wider societal audience and can easily sway even the most hostile stakeholders to facilitate benign policy decisions that can achieve unanimous consensus" (Brauer 2003 cited in Tortato et al. 2017:134). Although in the end, we must move toward viewing animals as

sentient beings, ecotourism, at least, offers an alternative to the much more horrific act of injuring or hurting them through hunting or fishing.

Stronger: Education and Outreach

Ecotourism and any other form of an economy of life, becomes a much stronger path toward complete coexistence when it is combined with education, outreach, and community development. Because many impoverished communities rely on certain economies of death in order to survive (for example, fishers in Schauer et al. 2021), economies of life must do the same, and they do so to an even greater extent. In other words, economies of death are not a necessary path to economic gain; economies of life in the form of ecotourism, can be immensely more profitable, as well as beneficial to the local communities, nations, and most importantly, they keep nonhuman animals alive in a natural state (Schauer et al. 2021; Schauer and Healey 2021). We can look at what this means through ecotourism of sharks. As shown on the continuum put forth by Schauer and colleagues (2021), the strongest form of coexistence is the immersion of humans with nonhuman animals in their natural environment, without the need for attractants. However, because economic value is so important, it may be that we have to hover on the weaker end of coexistence until we can finally reach the ability to freely dive with sharks or create space in the sea for massive marine reserves. This is still better, however, for both the sharks as well as humans. Fishers can join the shifting economy by becoming dive operators, as their knowledge and skill set are invaluable to the sea. Communities, and tourism operators, can participate in citizen science programs and shark monitoring, and importantly, leading the educational outreach that is so vital to wildlife conservation.

Ecotourism and economies of life (Schauer and Healey 2021; Schauer et al. 2021) have proven to be the most beneficial route for all stakeholders, including, and importantly, nonhuman animals. Socioeconomic status, cultural elements, and traditional knowledge can all be addressed as well, involving local residents with historical traditions surrounding these animals and knowledge of living amongst them. Ecotourism is a highly profitable economy of life (Schauer and Healey 2021; Schauer et al. 2021) and a durable, growing alternative to economies of death (Schauer and Healey 2021; Schauer et al. 2021). Not only does its revenue consist of direct payments from the cost of a dive, but also "auxiliary expenses, including travel costs, wages and tips for guides, and other elements of the service industry such as purchases in restaurants and craft markets" (Tortato et al. 2017:134). Compensations can also be made, such as land-use revenue as indicated by Tortato and colleagues (2017), or levies used in diving, in which the tourist pays a fee to the operator, who then pays the fishers in return for blocking off the site temporarily to dive, or the operator can put this levy into a village bank account, and later these are divided up between local communities (Schauer et al. 2021).

Engagement and emotionally salient, positive interactions must occur along with education in order for change in human behavior and perception to occur. Therefore, stakeholders could partake in activities like a citizen science program (Schauer 2021). This

strategy would not only include the conservation organizations and farmers, but even local residents who are also stakeholders. Such a program “moves beyond educational efforts toward something much more tangible and engaging. As with other management, outreach, and educational efforts, a citizen science program should be crafted with an understanding of cultural distinctions among people who live in the SBBD²” (Schauer et al. 2021:19). Due to the dimensionality of human-wildlife interactions, the approaches taken for coexistence must also reflect this. Nyhus also suggests that “a major challenge of modern conservation is how to balance the protection of endangered species with the needs of local communities” (Nyhus 2016:148). Factors that influence conflict often revolve around rural communities that rely on agriculture or livestock for their livelihoods. However, education may help with this – either through information and implementation of mitigation strategies, such as, changing husbandry practices, and especially through understanding the species in question, more fully. Like the wolf, another misunderstood carnivore is the coyote, considered invasive, a pest, fear-provoking and dangerous, the coyote suffers not only speciesism but also the perception of their species as unimportant and an “other” (Boesel and Alexander 2020). In many urban areas, we share space with them, because society has encroached on their native habitat and range. Much of society despises them, feeding into the social construct surrounding this species. With educational services that allow humans to understand coyotes, and other animals with whom we share our environment, coexistence will become easier to achieve.

The most important part of economies of life is the prioritization of shared sentience (Schauer and Healey 2021; Schauer et al. 2021) along with economic value. If this does not materialize, coexistence will not. Therefore, emotionally salient experiences through ecotourism must be coupled with education, which can have a profound impact on individuals, both tourists and locals. Economies of life have many branches of powerful, positive benefits: education, socioeconomic importance, long-term benefits for human and animal communities and ecosystems, and the inexplicable experience of shared sentience that will further conservation efforts and therefore continue the implementation of economies of life. Therefore, while they are based on economic rather than emotional, intrinsic value, economies of life can be strengthened and made into an empathetic path toward coexistence with the addition of other elements that stray from solely economic incentives.

4. RECOGNITION OF SENTIENCE

Weaker: Interactions Through Photography or Other Media

Using photography and other media, positive media—such as environmental and wildlife documentaries that spur interest in conservation—can be an extremely beneficial and an effective way to garner support for wildlife, especially for those who cannot physically have an interaction with nonhuman animals. Photographs can be a tool for education; there are success stories such as that of Shawn Heinrick, who through his documentary, helped reduce shark fin consumption in China: he notes that “imagery gives a voice, and combining

visual elements with education resulted in an incredibly impactful change in behavior, exemplifying how educating individuals about conservation crises and campaigns can result in positive changes in action" (Schauer et al. 2021). Here we imagine images as incredibly powerful. Images that capture animals in their natural habitat, showcasing their magnificence, can transform mindsets and have a powerfully emotional impact on the public. Of course, "charismatic megafauna" can more easily pull at the heartstrings of the public. However, if they are given the attention they deserve, so can smaller animals that people often deem insignificant or "pests"—such as a field mouse or pigeon—and even animals that humans fear, such as lions or sharks. Wildlife photography and documentaries that foster conservation and empathetic interactions with wildlife have had a niche within media for so long, and are becoming more accessible, popular, and relatable to current generations, that there is hope and evidence that this can be a stronger path toward coexistence than conflict.

Social constructionism through the media, gender norms, and voyeurism can all skew how we view animals; therefore, photography can be intensely impactful. Unfortunately, photography, such as the case with hunting, can also be used in ways that demean animals, solely for the interest of humans. For example, Kelly (2018) found that jaguar and puma hunting is frequently driven by Westerners that "took indigenous symbols but left behind meanings" (Kelly et al. 2018:4), and often "the display of feline parts indicates prestige for urban, non-indigenous, wealthy men" (Kelly 2018). The hunting of lions—and related photography—is in the same vein. Schauer and Healey (2021) found "symbolic significance . . . [of] defeating another powerful being" for the hunters in their study, who were majority White men (Schauer and Healey 2021). The desire by these men to display a sense of superiority and power by killing an animal deemed as an "aggressive beast" can be identified as what Schauer and colleagues (2021) frame as Extreme Conflict on Beatrice Frank's (2016) conflict-to-coexistence continuum. Such acts are extraordinarily cruel, ending in intense suffering, pain, and a torturing mortality. It is further separating humans from nonhuman animals, perpetuating the idea of nonhuman animals as objects, to be feared or conquered. Trophy hunters, then, become what society fears in predatory animals: senseless and merciless aggressors. Here photography to the hunter does not focus on sentience, yet to someone who shares sentience with, and a love of, nonhuman animals, such images tug at the heart.

Stronger: Organic Interactions without Barriers

Placing animals within history and tradition gives them meaning within the narrative of humans. This way, animals are no longer an instrument to the success of humans; rather, the two are experiencing history alongside each other. As Sax writes, "to regard each sort of animal as a tradition also encourages respect [. . .] tradition links animals to the ideas, practices, and events that make up human culture" (Sax 2001:xi). He argues that appeals to pragmatic reasons relating to why we should care for nonhuman animals and our environment are more persuasive to humans, and that using tradition can include all the complexities of our relationship with animals. Sax acknowledges that the idea of every

animal as a tradition will not provide a simple answer to ethical questions but will “at least provide a way in which to think of them” (Sax 2001:xi). With tradition, we can preserve a way of thinking of the animal that has been woven through cultural practices, historical values, and personal experiences. Despite the constantly changing landscape, traditions are rooted in history and are thus able to be adjusted respectfully without losing the values. The coupling of economic growth and environmental degradation has led to the divergence of humans and nonhuman animals, and therefore has created a barrier to coexistence. Tradition then, opens a way in which humans can understand animals more comprehensibly, thus strengthening our relationship with them. Although it is unfortunate that we are driven to explicitly define ways of thinking so that human-wildlife interactions are salient enough to change behaviors, rather than just allow these experiences to play out naturally, such as in sharing sentience with nonhuman others (Schauer 2020a; 2020b; 2021), it is important to do so in our modern world.

Animals have long represented motifs and ideas in literature, art, beliefs, politics, and other parts of culture. An example of this is the gray wolf. The wolf is a symbol of the West and often a revered animal in Native American mythology. But just as much as they are a figure of wonder, wolves are also a figure of fear. This is often because we do not understand them. Last year, I interviewed Delwin Benson, a professor of wildlife studies at Colorado State University and a member of the Colorado Wolf Management Working Group. Through his research, Benson found that wolves were “symbols of the rural past when they were removed as problem predators and now are symbols of urbanites who want them back³”. In this paradox, we find flaws and misunderstanding in the human perception of these animals. People view the wolf as either a destructive predator or a “token” of the wild West. Instead, we must begin to see them as a living, autonomous species. I would add that we should view them not only for their symbolic and spiritual power, but also for their sentience. We must recognize that wildlife has meaning on its own terms, despite humans’ perception of them (Pierotti and Wildcat 2000). Whether that be spiritually, physically, or emotionally, they exist as individuals just like us (Schauer 2020a; 2020b; 2021). Tradition must be coupled with an acknowledgment of the latter in order for us to fully comprehend an animal’s experience. In Lévi-Strauss’s, *The Totemic Illusion*, it is clear that Totemism and spiritual guides are traditional beliefs that bring a human closer to an animal not only through a general sense of symbolism, but also through ordering animal species in a way that allows them to understand the human and nonhuman animal relationship more fully. This practice of reverence is more developed than the use of an animal for the purpose of understanding solely the human condition. It forms the bridge between experiences of nonhuman animals and those of humans.

Last summer, I had an experience that illuminated the value of appreciation and understanding when interacting with wildlife; coincidentally, it was connected to gray wolves. I was in Yellowstone and was on a mission to find a pack of these magnificent and mystical beings, who were reintroduced into Yellowstone twenty-five years ago and now roam the Lamar Valley. A deep, smokey blue dusk was settling in and I was giddy from

having encountered a couple of brown bears playing in a meadow filled with vibrant yellow flowers; the scene was nothing short of spectacular. We kept driving down the road in hopes of seeing some wolves, and we saw a group of people perched on top of a hill with telescopes and massive cameras, all looking toward the same point in the distance. Upon sprinting up to them and inquiring, I learned that they were in fact looking at a pack of wolves, and although they offered me a moment to look through the telescope, I couldn't quite make out the tiny dots in the distance that were these beautiful creatures. I was feeling slightly disheartened that the wolves were so far away when a little girl, hair almost as pale as a wolf's piercing eyes, tugged at my jacket earnestly. She began to tell me all she had learned about the wolves—the mother and her pups, what the animals had faced that winter, the routes they choose for roaming about the valley—and she concluded by exclaiming earnestly "wolves are my spirit guide." Her father, smiling all the while, told me that he and his family spend the summers camping in Yellowstone and as a professor, he teaches his children about the animals, their importance to the ecosystem, and how important peaceful coexistence in all its forms—recognition of sentience, respect, admiration—are for the species.

This struck me as a perfect example of an essential piece of coexistence, which is education paired with experience and interactions. As stated in the previous section, an interaction with a nonhuman animal often sparks an emotional response, but if an educational aspect follows the experience, that response sticks around much longer. Education not only allows humans to further understand animal behavior or to marvel at the abilities of wildlife, but also helps form a deeper connection through an interaction that goes beyond the senses and delves into the heart space. This summer, I had the opportunity to go to La Jolla Cove, in San Diego, where sea lions and seals are known to reside. Because this is such a well-known spot for wildlife watching, massive crowds may gather to watch the seals and sea lions. Unfortunately, often this means that people do not respect the nonhuman animals' space, and in order to get the best photo, will ignore warning signs placed by wildlife organizations. I remember one particular moment when to everyone's surprise, a mother sea lion had suddenly birthed a pup. I was in awe at the mother's strength, nudging her baby and shielding his newly-exposed body from the chaos of the world and the loud exclamations from the crowd. However, not everyone seemed to recognize how powerful this moment really was. Around me, tourists were murmuring at how disgusting it was to have seen a nonhuman animal give birth. I was taken aback: why do we find birth so miraculous for humans, and yet when it comes to this sea lion, this crowd's reaction was one of disgust and mockery? The only onlookers who seemed to acknowledge the beauty of this moment were a mother and her daughter, who were delighted to see another baby come into the world. I walked away from the beach and found a volunteer with the San Diego Seal Society, telling her what had just occurred. She knew immediately to get to the site and speak with the crowd; both to protect the sea lions, and to educate the public with the intention of transforming their reaction into one of reverence. This is why education is so important when it comes to human-wildlife interactions: these

may spark emotion, but it is the nature of this emotion, and how we choose to respond to it, that matters. Education may help shift these viewers' response from disgust or indifference toward respect, which can then turn into a willingness to practice conservation and efforts toward coexistence.

As Schauer emphasizes, "culture [...] is crucial to examine *prior* to management implementation" (Schauer 2019:111). There are social constructs, albeit many are rooted in culture and tradition, and we must examine them all in order to coexist. However, examining these with an anthropocentric mindset is not enough; *shared* sentience (Schauer 2020a; 2020b; 2021) must always be the goal. We must regard ourselves as part of nature, of a system in which we, too, will suffer if it does. We must also make room for many other cultures in the conversation surrounding nature, and most importantly, we must make room for the voice of nature and of wildlife for themselves. We cannot romanticize, love, or respect, without also acknowledging the rights of the non-human species that also hold sentience; without this, the perceptions we place upon nonhuman animals and nature are objectifying. Our social constructs of nature and the fact that we are bound by our own language and human perceptions, might have long existed as a barrier against coexistence, but we can instead use these as ways to reform our ways of knowing, to acknowledge that not only is nature what we want to preserve, but she is also a part of our own narrative and existence.

5. CONCLUSION: COMPLETE COEXISTENCE THROUGH SHARED SENTIENCE

Along the veins of social constructs is also the human tendency to dichotomize, to comprehend through viewing things in life as "night and day", and not recognizing the complexity of life for fear of its complications. However, it is damaging to view human-wildlife interactions through this lens; nonhuman animals and nature are rarely so straightforward, and that is part of what makes them so beautiful, and as sentient as we are. Therefore, we should strive to view interactions as on a continuum, which can be multidimensional, varying on a continuum "from positive to negative, in intensity from minor to severe, and in frequency from rare to common" (Nyhus 2016) with the added dimension of shared sentience (Schauer et al. 2021). By putting interactions on a continuum, we can see that there is an entire spectrum and range of characterizing interactions. More specifically, we can pinpoint which interactions will lead us toward coexistence. As was mentioned in the Nyhus (2016) article, humans cannot place blame solely on the nonhuman animal or force them to behave differently; so much of it has to do with humans' behaviors, taking responsibility for them, and striking a balance between the behaviors of nonhuman animals and humans in order to give way to connection. This brings to mind the "summational effect" in music, in which notes played together reverberate to form a chord, and can often begin to form an amplified third pitch just by resounding together. During an interaction, humans and wild animals may be coming together from very different experiences – but a third, almost spiritual and entirely holistic way of knowing is created, a "shared sentience" (Schauer 2020a; 2020b; 2021). This is something upon which we can

place no monetary value, for it is so rich in empathy, compassion, and a power of connection living beyond language (Schauer 2020a; 2020b; 2021). Throughout my life, I have seen various moments of these “summational effects” in human-wildlife interactions; I will end with this one...

My experience of finding a small, champagne-colored bird, a Brown Creeper, trapped in a roadside shop in Vermont. I could see his little chest heave with deep breaths of panic and overworking himself to get out, startled by all of the foot traffic in the shop. Although my travel companions and I did everything we could to get him out, he kept flitting from wall to wall with such incessant, frantic stress that we thought it best not to force the situation; we left a note, propped the doors open, and began heading back to the car. However, I hesitated, pivoted on my heels and desperately looked back once more, tempted to try once more to help the bird out. However, as the bird perched on the shelf of the shop, his soulful eyes meeting my gaze, I felt a sense of profound calm wash over me. It was a moment of connection that allowed me to understand he'd make it out of there eventually, his steadying breaths soothing my worries. This is Schauer's (2020; 2021) shared sentience: an interaction and instant of communication that goes beyond the physical and pushes into the psyche and spirit, striking a chord of empathy that leaves each being with the potent force of understanding one another.

NOTES

¹ *A form of oppression and marginalization, the "assignment of different moral worth based on species membership" (Caviola et al. 2018:1).*

² *The Barbilla-Destierro Biological Subcorridor (Subcorredor Biológico Barbilla-Destierro) of Costa Rica*

³ *Delwin Benson, email message to author, October 2, 2021.*

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Vegan Faces in Anthroparchal Spaces: Student Reflections on Educational Experiences of Veganism in Nutritional Sciences

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Abstract

In *Our Children and Other Animals* (2016), Cole and Stewart explored the role of the school education system in the tacit and explicit teaching of anthroparchy, primarily through the normalisation and promotion of anthropocentrism. This paper argues that those teachings not only continue at university, but that higher education presents additional challenging practico-discursive spaces for the rationalisation of anthroparchy. This is prevalent in the nutritional sciences: disciplines that actively promote anthroparchal discourses, practices and cultures. The academic study of nutritional sciences traditionally privileges human gain, presenting pretences of human health to give false legitimacy to the commodification of nonhuman animals for human pleasure. Despite this, there is growing interest in this field from vegan students and vegan academics, seeking to reimagine nutrition as a science of liberation and change, primarily via the deprivileging of human agency. Energised and excited by the potential for nutrition as a tool for sustainable ecology, social justice, planetary health, and the freedom of nonhuman animals, these scholars must navigate and challenge a science in which their progressive imagination is not always welcomed. The role of vegan students in disrupting cycles of educational anthroparchy must be acknowledged, explored, and developed if nutritional sciences are to serve as a platform for vegan innovation and a catalyst of change. This paper presents the emergent thoughts of five vegan undergraduate students studying professionally accredited programmes of nutritional sciences on their educational experiences, practices, and discourses that present conflicts between academic tradition and total liberation. Co-produced with a vegan social science lecturer, this paper concludes with remarks on the future scholarship at the intersection of vegan sociology and pedagogy, towards a future in which nutrition may serve as a science of liberation.

Keywords: anthroparchy; anthropocentrism; higher education; nutrition; studentship

1. INTRODUCTION

Veganism and other forms of post-anthropocentric consumption (Marchesini 2019) are growing in popularity across all age groups. Although the statistical representation of veganism is contested, recent estimates describe approximately 720,000 people in the United Kingdom (UK) as being vegan, representing 1.2% of the national population (Food Standards Agency 2020). Though the demography of veganism is poorly understood, it is recognised that veganism is more popular amongst younger age groups, being most common amongst people aged 18 to 35 (Bryant 2019), likely due to greater long-term adherence to veganism if the plant-based diet is adopted in earlier stages of the life course (Kerschke-Risch 2015). Veganism is also more common amongst university graduates (Radnitz, Beezhold, and Di Matteo 2015). Despite this rising popularity, an emergent body of literature suggests that vegans in educational spaces experience social prejudices and stigmatisations related to their ethical praxis and values (Kahn 2011). Identified as a barrier to full or open engagement with veganism (Markowski and Roxburgh 2019), the experience of vegan studentship presents a novel area for sociological investigation, building upon scholarship in the social construction of veganism in early school years and adolescence (Cherry 2015; Lindgren 2020). This paper seeks to provide initial reflections regarding the scope for future studies of vegan studentship.

Anthroparchy refers to the social processes and means by which the human species dominates and subjugates nonhuman animals and other organic entities such as natural ecosystems (Springer 2021). Cole and Stewart (2016) identified two distinctive pathways for the promotion of anthroparchal practices in the school environment: a formal curriculum for the explicit teaching of the exploitation of nonhuman animals, and a hidden curriculum to facilitate practical application of those concepts, thereby normalising human dominance. In the pre-university education system, these pathways might be seen in examples such as a formal curriculum including home economics classes that teach nonhuman animal proteins as essential elements of human nutrition, and a hidden curriculum offering a field trip to a zoo. These pathways, whilst sometimes more subtle in nature, can be found in physical and conceptual learning spaces in higher education. Amongst other life sciences, this is particularly true in the teaching of nutritional sciences. Curricula for professionally accredited undergraduate programmes in nutrition, dietetics and food science demands the teaching and learning of content that may be comfortably situated, sociologically, at the intersection of anthropocentrism and anthroparchy: students are taught that the rights and interests of nonhuman animals may be negotiated or explicitly denied for human privilege, and that this may permissibly be expressed through violent action. For the theoretical framing of this paper, these disciplines will be described using the collective term “nutritional sciences”.

This paper seeks to explore emergent insights of the experience of vegan studentship in the nutritional sciences. Five vegan undergraduate students in these fields studying at the University of Nottingham, representing all degree stages, were provided with a prompt sheet of potential questions, framed as reflecting upon their lived or anticipated experience of veganism “before”, “during” and “after” university, though they were not required to answer

any questions in particular. This chronological breakdown of the student experience was intended to aid reflection, embracing the changes in experience and perception that may occur through the academic cycle.

The responses to these reflective cues are presented here as a collaborative reflection on the vegan student experience in nutritional sciences, in a similar style to that adopted in a recent paper on vegan stigma (Bresnahan, Zhuang, and Zhu 2016). All five contributors are thereby recognised as co-authors, rather than research participants. The production of the paper in this format presents challenges when considering the opportunity for authorship is not open to all vegan students across the relevant courses. However, we also consider that the role of students as authors rather than research participants provides students with novel academic experiences that might not otherwise be accessed. Future developments of this approach might therefore see vegan student-researchers collaborating with vegan student-participants to further progress vegan scholarship concerning experiences of higher education.

This paper has been written as a co-production between five vegan undergraduate students and their vegan social science lecturer. The writing process recognised and followed best practice guidance in learner-teacher co-authorship of publications according to Burks and Chumchal's Decision Trees on Earned Authorship (2009) to empower student voice and promote co-production through fair and truthful recognition of student contributions in the production of knowledge. The authors also adhered to the Recommended Best Practices of the International Association of Vegan Sociologists (2021). In accordance with the latter's guidance on the disruption of the speciesist nature of the human/animal binary, this paper uses the term "nonhuman animals". Where the names of specific species of nonhuman animals are described, apostrophes are used to recognise nonhuman animal possession of produce that has been involuntarily taken by humans, with assumed anthroparchal violence.

2. MOTIVATING LIBERATION THROUGH NUTRITION

These reflections concern our experiences "before" university. We considered the role nutrition might serve in liberation of both human and nonhuman animals, mired by familial, institutional and cultural doubts about the health benefits or risks of veganism to humans. The nature of this influence was voiced in both directions; some of us found veganism through an existing interest in nutritional science, whilst others realised our professional interests in nutrition through veganism.

"Spurred by the majority of my family's doubt, I was determined to succeed at veganism and to not 'die of protein deficiency', as they all expected. I thoroughly researched all the nutrients in which I could possibly get deficient. I fell in love with cooking and through all this, I found a new path, to dietetics."

"My interest in nutrition, and my subsequent adoption of a vegan lifestyle, began with the discovery of the book "How Not to Die" by Dr. Michael Greger. Asking myself why some of the information being presented by him and other advocates for plant-exclusive nutrition

was not presented by healthcare institutions, was my initial motivation for applying for the dietetics course."

Some of us openly recognised initial anthropocentric motivations for adopting a plant-based diet: improving dietary health in humans and preventing non-communicable diseases in human populations were cited as key influences in initial abstention from consumption of nonhuman animals. However, those initial interests inspired further consideration of the ethical implications of plant-based diets, allowing for our transitions towards veganism as the post-anthropocentric value of plant-based diets was realised.

"I've been vegetarian since the age of 12, later becoming vegan a year before starting my course. I had already looked into nutrition at this point and my interest was a partial contributor to why I decided to follow a plant-based diet. I've now been vegan for almost four years and the more I've learnt about the ethical and environmental implications of diets based around nonhuman animal products, has further motivated me to stick to a vegan diet."

"Before turning vegan, I was set on medicine. However, after watching 'What the Health' and falling down the rabbit hole of vegan documentaries, my eyes were opened to the prospect of preventative medicine, of curing diseases that I was to treat as a medical doctor, before they manifested as a problem. I had never considered that nutrition could do this. This concept intrigued me on an individual basis, but also from a global perspective. A vegan diet could help prevent further damage of climate change. And, most importantly, I could still eat all my favourite foods and meals without harming a living being."

Following exploration of the potential for nutritional science as a platform for liberation of nonhuman animals, privileging of planetary needs and development of social justice matters, we came to see professions in the nutritional sciences as having potential for positive change. However, some of us experienced problematic anticipation of vegan studentship, recognising our experience of higher education was likely to be affected by being vegan.

"Before joining the course, I had already resigned to the fact that I may be asked to taste food of nonhuman animal origin. I now understand this is never the case, but this information would have been useful before enrolment. Whilst being interviewed for the course, I specifically avoided saying the word 'vegan' for fear of being rejected based on that fact."

"When I initially applied to university to study a degree in nutrition, I whole heartedly believed that I would be able to keep my personal affiliation with veganism separate from my educational environment. Of course, I anticipated that I would openly discuss veganism with my fellow students and the lecturers, but I believed that to achieve a successful career in nutrition, I would not be able to promote a vegan diet."

These initial reflections on the motivations for vegan studentship, and the experience of vegans preparing to enter higher education, suggest a natural positioning for nutritional sciences as a platform for the liberation of nonhuman animals and addressing complex relationships between interests in human health, the sustainability of ecosystems and the

rights of nonhuman animals. Future explorations of anticipatory experiences of vegan studentship might further consider vegan stigma and perceptions of vegan privilege in guiding subject choice when making decisions about higher education.

3. EXPERIENCING THE FORMAL CURRICULUM

These reflections concern our experiences “during” university. The formal curriculum, as described by Cole and Stewart (2014) concerns the structured learning and teaching activities of an educational system: the prescribed learning material, the way it is structured to form curricula and the methods used to teach and assess students. In higher education in the UK, this typically takes the form of “modules”: the basic units of learning, expressed through timetabled teaching activities commonly known as “lectures”. On nutritional science programmes accredited by recognised professional bodies, students study a range of modules covering diverse material, primarily privileging human interests in accordance with professional competency and knowledge frameworks. This curriculum, however, is slowly changing, with new modules being introduced concerning planetary health to better make sense of the role nutrition plays in the co-dependence of human health and the sustainability of natural ecosystems. Optional modules in “animal nutrition” might concern the dietary needs of nonhuman animals, but the material is taught purposefully for the development of nonhuman animals for human consumption. We, the authors of this paper, had not studied those modules. Introductory modules during the first year of our nutritional science programmes concerned global food security, presented in anthropocentric contexts. Our reflections described lectures on these modules in some depth, particularly concerning the framing of this content as either concealing anthroparchy, or debasing veganism.

“The most challenging lectures have been those on agri-food systems, showing harrowing images of enslaved nonhuman animals and discussing in detail how they are ‘reared’ and ‘bred’. The discussion of how the nonhuman animals’ lives are ended prematurely was never mentioned.”

“My course discussed ‘free from’ diets and the topic of vegan and vegetarian diets is coming up in the future. Morals and ethics are always very briefly mentioned, but never discussed in detail. The learning experience is often a challenge as a vegan. The constant narrative by some lecturers is that ‘vegans should be careful’ or that vegans should plan carefully to avoid deficiencies. I am always the first to point out that care and planning is required by everyone wanting to eat healthier and is not specifically a vegan problem.”

“When I reached university, I was hopeful that the benefits of a vegan diet would be explored in my lectures. However, despite being vaguely mentioned, mostly when prompted by students, I was left disappointed by the lack of discussion, let alone promotion, of a plant-based diet. A diet that could help reduce the incidence of diseases such as diabetes should be celebrated in my field, not avoided. Many mentions it was given were almost always critical.”

Some of our reflections related to lectures that actively confronted the nutritional needs of nonhuman animals and the impact of food systems on the environment. However, this

may have been a mask for anthropocentricity: the dietary health of nonhuman animals was taught only to increase efficiency of the production of those species for human consumption, and the mention of the environment concerned the efficiency of land use to legitimise the privileging of human needs.

"Certain lectures advocated against [veganism] through poorly evidenced arguments such as 'soya milk causes mass deforestation', despite that most soy is fed to nonhuman animals. In lectures about sustainability, the main focus was on making nonhuman animal agriculture more environmentally friendly, but actually reducing nonhuman animal consumption wasn't mentioned."

"I found lectures on global food security particularly challenging when discussing veganism. It has been difficult to learn about the culling of nonhuman animals for 'meat' production, however it was interesting to learn about the different ways in which they are kept, purportedly optimising their welfare. One lecture specifically felt like a critique of the vegan diet. It was a lecture on sustainability, providing several examples of how vegans were contributing to environmental issues. It placed sole blame for rainforest deforestation on vegans just because vegans eat soybeans. What wasn't said was that a rapidly growing human population demands increased production of nonhuman animals, subsequently increasing demand for soybean meal. That need for soybeans to feed nonhuman animals results in deforestation, to cultivate land on which to grow more soybean crops."

"One guest lecture was given by a dairy farmer. He proposed that 'meat-free Monday' was a pointless exercise and that the healthiest diets must include some nonhuman animal protein several times a week. It was disturbing that on a course about giving evidence-based information to the public, someone from outside was allowed to give this advice."

We all reflected on a particular lecture series about the dairy industry on our degrees, taught annually as part of an introductory module on food security. These sessions evoked strong offence for varying reasons and raised concern regarding the promotion of dairy produce in the diet.

"Another lecturer voiced an opinion that I personally found offensive to mothers that allow their young children to consume soya milk. I am a vegan mother who chooses to bring their child up on a (mostly) vegan diet, including the use of soya milk and soya-based products. Said products, I was told, were 'not fit for a dog to consume, let alone children'. I know these comments were not directed towards me personally, and despite the negative press against even moderate consumption of soya being now outdated, if a university lecturer is strongly voicing this opinion, then it is no wonder that the layperson may feel the same way about such products."

"A lecture on the nutritional value of dairy provided a photo advertising how dairy farmers help human babies to grow healthily. The lecturer then went on to slam almond milk. A lot of vegans on the course were furious after this lecture. I think I got about halfway through the lecture before I gave up. After that, I really hated listening to these lectures, I even skipped some of them, which is not like me at all."

Despite our recognition of these challenges, about the content of the formal curriculum promoting anthroparchal norms, we also highly valued the rigorous science, intellectual curiosity and academic professionalism of our lecturers in providing platforms for the exploration of plant-based nutrition.

"The negative experiences on the course have been with academics from outside nutritional science, on modules about the wider agri-food system. Although annoying at the time to hear negative opinions on vegan diets, and unsupported claims on the health benefits of products such as 'dairy', the fact that these academics were not likely to be keeping up-to-date with scientific studies into the nutritional value of these products, and the vegan alternatives, made it easier to take their statements with a pinch of salt."

"The nutritional science academics have had positive opinions on veganism. They are very accepting and encouraging of plant-based alternatives and vegan diets, so long as they are followed healthily and all nutritional requirements are still being met. As vegetarian and vegan diets are supported by the British Dietetic Association and National Health Service, these opinions are justified and have made me feel validated in my dietary habits as a vegan student."

Regarding the formal curriculum, it is evident, as somewhat expected, that anthroparchal discourses in nutritional science programmes evoke a profound emotive response in vegan students. We experience a binary of academic repulsion and support: academics who engage in anti-vegan narratives devoid of scientific integrity contrasting with scholars who embrace a scientific curiosity, being open to critical discussion of anthropocentric science and the emergent ideas that contest them. Future developments in this area of research and pedagogy could concern vegan-centric audits of curricula and their alignment to the practice guidance of professional regulators, as veganism becomes subject to increasing legal protections (The Vegan Society 2020).

4. NAVIGATING THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

These reflections further concern student experiences "during" university, but outside of scheduled learning activity. Less tangible than the content of lectures and modules is the invisible and often unspoken normalisation of anthroparchy through the hidden curriculum. Cole and Stewart (2014) focused on the tacit endorsement of human dominance in schools via eating spaces and teacher-led consumption practices in lunch breaks. Whilst those dietary norms are replicated and maintained at university, social spaces in higher education are more pronounced, with the majority of students living on or near university estates for at least short periods during their degree. In our reflections, the social impact of veganism on participation in the student experience was voiced through the problematisation and, to some extent, medicalisation of veganism.

"I am always wary of telling people I am vegan to avoid any negative comments but coming to university I have had more positive experiences than negative. There are more vegans on this campus than I expected and that has made it easier to be more open about

it. There are some people I just know are going to give me grief about it, so I keep it to myself."

"In a cookery session, I was in a group that was asked to make omelettes. None of my group members had cooked omelettes before, so I jumped in so that staff would not be disappointed with our performance. I started to feel uncomfortable and was very aware of the smell of the chickens' eggs. I did manage to brave the experience in the end but brought up the experience with a member of staff. I was advised to book a counselling session to develop coping strategies should I be required to do this sort of work again in the future."

The teaching, framing and otherwise conceptualisation of veganism in the formal and hidden curriculum gave us the opportunity to reflect upon the role of scientific integrity in the promotion and study of veganism. This challenged us to consider anthropocentrism that occurs in the vegan diet, such as agricultural practices that may not directly harm nonhuman animals but threaten the sustainability of natural ecosystems.

"It is clear that a vegan diet is something that is continuing to grow in popularity, so ensuring that nutrition professionals are educated with the correct, scientific information surrounding a vegan diet is paramount in ensuring that we can confidently and accurately work with vegan, or vegan curious, clients in our careers ahead."

"Certain parts of the lectures have made me rethink my diet from a sustainability perspective. I hadn't realised how bad almond milk was for the environment. I can accept scientific justifications as to which parts of the vegan diet may not be great because I want to have a part in improving the environment, however the way in which these messages were shared was what didn't sit right with me, as if everything we're doing as vegans is useless and that we may as well give up and just 'enjoy meat'."

Despite some challenging experiences of the hidden curriculum (Cole and Stewart 2016), we reflected on the support that staff in the nutritional sciences provide and the positive aspects of learning nutritional science in a supportive community of intellectually curious vegan and non-vegan students.

"To my surprise, there are several vegan students and staff in the nutritional sciences community at our university. Not only that, but there are also other students beyond my course who are very interested in learning more about veganism, including how exactly evidence-based nutrition can be used to support and promote a vegan diet."

"The lecturers who I have worked with in practical sessions have been very understanding of dietary requirements and have made cooking practicals accessible for all. Throughout hands-on practical classes, I have always felt I had the option of abstaining from cooking with nonhuman animal products myself by delegating these recipes to other members of the cooking group. This has allowed me to still achieve the learning objectives of the practical sessions by overseeing the cooking process and end-product without having to handle or consume nonhuman animal products myself."

Discussion of the hidden curriculum also evoked diverse reflections, suggesting that vegan students might experience something of a "sink or swim" dichotomy at university.

This perhaps calls for the integration of vegan studentship in the pastoral support offered in higher education, discussion of veganism as a form of protected identity (The Vegan Society 2020), or a general shift in higher education discourses towards a more open and reflexive discussion regarding the politics of nutrition.

5. LOOKING TOWARDS A FUTURE OF TOTAL LIBERATION

These reflections concern our visions and expectations of our lives and careers “after” university. To end our reflections on vegan studentship, we reflected on our intended graduate destinations. These are presented here without equivocation or interpretation, towards a future of valuation and recognition of veganism in academic spheres and a body of emergent vegan sociological scholarship to support it.

“I want to provide information to anyone wanting to change their dietary habits towards a plant-exclusive diet and provide information for those that are already following this lifestyle. This motivation has not changed since joining the course. If anything, it has provided me the insight that my expertise and knowledge will be needed as the movement gains more traction.”

“In the short time since I have started my degree in nutrition, I have taken a ‘180’ and decided that I will 100% incorporate my personal affiliation with veganism into my professional work in the future, and I very much look forward to it.”

“My current intentions for post-university employment involves working in the mental health specialism of dietetics. As this will likely involve working with individuals with eating disorders or history of disordered eating, it is unlikely that I will bring my personal dietary views into my clinics. This is because although it plays a positive role of dietary abundance and variety in my life, it may be seen as a form of dietary restriction and further disordered eating in my future patients. I will instead continue to focus on the evidence-based guidelines specific to my patients and only prescribe treatments to my clients which follow these and are suitable for their current mental and physical states.”

“I want to work as a paediatric dietitian. I will most definitely promote veganism and help families who wish to raise their children as vegans. There is not enough information readily available on this, in fact there seems to be a lot of judgement towards those who are raising children as vegans as if this will make them weaker or underdeveloped compared to meat eaters.”

“As a nutritionist, I will generally promote a more plant-based, evidence-based diet where reasonable. Patient-centred care is stressed in our curriculum and if a plant-based diet will support the physical and wellbeing of our clients, then information about it should be given. It is my opinion that this knowledge should be promoted and discussed much more widely in our curriculum so nutrition professionals, the bridge between confusing nutrition science and the general public, are aware of the benefits of a plant-based diet, not to push onto unwilling clients but as another method to help fight against diseases, promote sustainability and improve the lives of our clients.”

Our summary collaborative reflection on these visions of a future of vegan scholarship and studentship is a remark on the positivity we see in our futures. The anthroparchal practices and discourses we experienced “before” and “during” university have generated and motivated further aspiration for championing veganism in our careers and beyond. To this end, whilst the anthroparchal spaces in nutritional science may sometimes be challenging to experience, they also challenge us to address the culture that perpetuates them and support vegan discourses that dispute them.

6. CONCLUSIONS

As in society and culture, vegan studentship in nutritional sciences is situated within a complex micropolitics of change. In all three of the “before”, “during” and “after” stages of vegan experiences of higher education, we recognise a dichotomy in which vegan students experience both support and contention from a range of social actors. Our role in progressing nutritional sciences as those of total liberation offers potential, but this potential is mired by framings of veganism in familial, institutional and cultural contexts that problematise veganism to further legitimise anthroparchal discourses and values. As this body of conceptual work develops, vegan scholarship that values the experiences of vegan students beyond the nutritional sciences may further provide opportunities for liberation. We therefore conclude this paper with a call to embrace the scholastic potential of vegan sociology and the role students might play in its development.

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Author Biographies

Natalia Ciecierska-Holmes is a PhD student of Sociology on a joint programme between the University of Adelaide, Australia, and the University of Nottingham, UK. Her research interests relate to human-animal relations, food politics, and alternative food networks, backed by feminist political ecology. During her Masters at Humboldt University, Berlin, she became interested in Indian environmental politics, specifically bovine politics, following a research stay at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB), India. She subsequently co-edited a book titled *Environmental Policy in India*. Her current project explores relational understandings and ethics of alternative human and dog diets. She is also engaged in community-supported agriculture and enjoys spending time in nature.

Ruth Griggs is a PhD Sociology student at the University of Edinburgh. She completed an MA in Gender, Sexuality, and Culture Studies at the University of Manchester. Her doctoral research centres around veganism as a queer and antinormative practice. In particular she focuses on vegan cooperatives as utopian spaces of everyday resistance.

Daniel A. Harrison is a vegan and a Sociology student who recently started an ESRC-funded PhD in the Sociology Department at Lancaster University. He has recently completed a Masters by Research in Sociology at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan). Daniel's work straddles a number of disciplines, including Sociology, History, Environmental Ethics, and Feminist Philosophy. The journal essay was originally written as part of an undergraduate module on Sexuality and the Body at UCLan.

Now an activist scholar, **Lynda M. Korimboccus** has been a committed ethical vegan and grassroots campaigner since 1999. She recently started a PhD in Sociology with the University of East Anglia (UEA), investigating the lived experiences of young vegan children. Lynda holds an MA in Anthrozoology from the University of Exeter, as well as undergraduate Honours degrees in Philosophy, Politics, Social Psychology, and Sociology. She is Editor-in-Chief of this Journal, writes for Faunalytics, writes for fun, and has taught Sociology and other Social Sciences at West Lothian College, Scotland, for 15 years.

Cosette Patterson is a senior at Boston College majoring in Environmental Studies. Growing up in California, Colorado, and now experiencing life out East, she has been fortunate enough to experience the range of beauty in the natural environment, especially through interactions with wildlife. The biggest driving force in her life has been a deep respect for the Earth and an incredibly profound love for animals, who she's found companionship in since she was a young girl. She hopes that with the first volume of the Student Journal of Vegan Sociology and her contribution to the journal, shared sentience—and the ultimate goal of coexistence—will become a closer reality.

The authors of “*Vegan Faces in Anthroparchal Spaces: Student Reflections on Educational Experiences of Veganism in Nutritional Sciences*” are a group of vegan students, representing different stages of undergraduate education, in the Division of Food, Nutrition, and Dietetics, at the University of Nottingham. They are supported by their vegan social science lecturer, **Jake Sallaway-Costello**. **Maisie Corbett** is studying BSc Nutrition, accredited by the Association for Nutrition, leading to qualification as a Registered Associate Nutritionist. **Abigail Larkin, Andrew Mellard, Lily Murray,** and **Katherine Sellens** are studying MNutr Nutrition and Dietetics, a course leading to qualification as a Registered Dietitian. Jake Sallaway-Costello is an Assistant Professor in Public Health Nutrition, teaching social scientific perspectives on food and the diet, and conducting research on nonhuman animal consumption and sustainable diets in the Anthropocene.

Cover Artist Biography

Mina Mimosa is an illustrator and visual artist and part of the *just wondering...* project, where she is responsible for art direction and creating visual essays. She is interested in how political art can become a medium of communication to envision a world beyond capitalism, and create an ecofeminist, anti-speciesist, and inclusive future.

Mina’s work is available at @minamimosart, <https://www.behance.net/minamimosa> and <https://www.justwondering.io/>

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This Journal is dedicated to our nonhuman kin, who drive us forward and who keep us grounded.

Thank you all for being you, and for helping us be the us we are.

Lynda

Lynda M. Korimboccus

Editor-in-Chief

About the International Association of Vegan Sociologists

The International Association of Vegan Sociologists (IAVS) is proud to publish the inaugural *Student Journal of Vegan Sociology*.

The Association is a scholar-activist collective putting sociological theory and practice in the service of animal liberation and veganism. It was formed to provide a platform for sociologists from a Critical Animal Studies background, who recognise veganism and anti-speciesism as an ethical imperative in the discipline.

Founded in May 2020 by Corey Wrenn, Chair of the Animals & Society Section of the American Sociological Association, and Zoei Sutton, Co-Convener of the Australian Sociological Association's Sociology and Animals Thematic Group, IAVS is now recognised by these and other major sociological associations across the world.

Our aim is to increase the visibility and legitimacy of vegan sociology, and this Journal is an important part of that process, allowing students a voice within this context. IAVS and the Student Journal of Vegan Sociology are both completely volunteer-led.



For more information, including our guiding principles, lectures, blog posts, details of our Annual Conference, and to sign up to our newsletter, visit: <https://www.vegansociology.com>.

