

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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