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Issue Guest Editors

Kimberly Ann Socha

Judy K.C. Bentley

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An Introduction to Eco-Ability: The Struggle for Justice, with Focus on Humans with Disabilities and Nonhuman Animals

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AN INTRODUCTION TO ECO-ABILITY: THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE, WITH FOCUS ON HUMANS WITH DISABILITIES AND NONHUMAN ANIMALS

Eco-ability studies explore the intersection of dis-ability studies, environmental awareness, and nonhuman animal liberation. A nascent area of scholarship developed by intersectional theorist and activist Anthony J. Nocella II, eco-ability was first explored in *Earth,*

Animal, and Disability Liberation: The Rise of Eco-Ability (Peter Lang, 2012), an anthology edited by Nocella, Judy K.C. Bentley, and Janet M. Duncan. What started out as interrogation of the overlapping subjugations of nonhuman animals and humans with disabilities soon turned into a further analysis of how ecological concerns factor into those subjugations. Although the environment is not generally seen as a marginalized group in the anthropocentric (and even nonhuman-centric) sense, considering our current ecological crises, the living world we term "nature" is certainly a casualty of human dominance and unbridled technological advances.

Inspired by eco-feminism, eco-racism, and eco-colonialism, eco-ability challenges cultural conceptions of "normalcy" as determined by dominant social groups. As part of this challenge, Nocella, Bentley, and Duncan (2012) evaluate special education and dis-ability studies as civil arenas built upon the "charity model" that attempts to make those with disabilities as mainstream as possible (p. xv). In defiance of this tradition, Eco-ability argues for the respect of difference and diversity, challenging social constructions of what is considered normal and equal. Eco-ability also challenges labels and categories that divide and separate rather than unify and collaborate. Eco-ability respects imperfection and the value of "flaws." … Difference was, and is, the essential ingredient for human and global survival. (Nocella, Bentley, & Duncan, 2012, pp. xvi-xvii)

Indeed, for *nonhuman* survival as well. Other-than-human animal species have traditionally been viewed as "flawed" by nature of their not being born human. As such, they are always already excluded from conventional conceptions of who gets counted in the moral community. This is seen in their use within nearly all major profit-making institutions from corporations, to education, to entertainment, and so on.

In Nocella's (2012) individual contribution to *Earth, Animal, and Disability Liberation*, he argues that both "the natural world" and "disability" labels lead to further social divisions, and suggests "that for the current global ecological crisis to transform into a more sustainable global community . . . the field of environmental studies needs to engage in a discussion of colonization and domination of the environment" (p. 3). Ecological issues do not factor highly into this special issue, which explains the title of our editors' introduction. To be sure, we are pleased with the variety of essays amassed for this collection. At the same time, we look forward to

developing discussions and scholarship about eco-ability that thoughtfully integrate environmental issues into this growing intersectional area of theory and political action.

At the forefront of this special issue is recognition that campaigns for social justice cannot be won without an intersectional awareness that understands how no issue can be adequately addressed in isolation from any other. To put any issue on the backburner while fighting for another will always reinstitute an ontology of discrimination that keeps oppression intact. Ignoring racism to challenge sexism preserves a system of Othering that enables a hierarchal system of binaries to continue unhindered. These often include dichotomous formations such as white/black, male/female, civilized/barbarian, hetero/homosexual, and so on. Often forgotten among these troubling dualisms are human/nonhuman and abled/disabled. Eco-ability seeks to reassert interrogation of these binaries into conversations about social justice and academia. Until this happens, society will continue to leave the privilege of able-ness unquestioned, despite its intersection with all other forms of oppression. As Marjorie Spiegel (1996) notes, "Our approach to social problems is to decrease their visibility. . . . The result of our social efforts has been to remove the underlying problems of our society farther and farther from daily experiences and daily consciousness, and hence to decrease in the mass of the population, the knowledge, skill, and motivation necessary to deal with them" (pp. 77-78). Only by bringing awareness to these often forgotten modes of oppression can we begin to approach the idea of liberation for all.

Often the very viability of one's functioning in a community depends on that individual's access to whiteness, wealth, species, sexuality, and not least of all physical or mental capacity. Throughout Western-colonial history, the lack of ability to reason by slaves, indigenous peoples, or nonhuman animals was often taken as a precursor to justifying their enslavement and slaughter. Likewise, whether one can walk, see, or hear serves as a precursor to justifying their exclusion from certain environments and social locations. In all cases, the privilege of being able-bodied is taken as a given, while those who are labeled as *dis*-abled are subordinated. To challenge this cultural paradigm, we must question the ontological environments that mental and physical abilities construct. These constructions are anything but neutral. Rather, they are fraught with imbalances that falsely present the norm as both natural and desirable.

As contributing author Gregor Wolbring writes in his previously published article, "Ableism, Disability Studies, and the Academy," What abilities one favors and what ableisms one exhibits is a dynamic that also defines human-nature relationship . . . which in turn has an impact on which strategies and priorities are envisioned and employed for gaining water, energy climate and disaster security and avoiding insecurity. … Ableism leads to an ability based and ability justified understanding of oneself, one's body and one's relationship with others of one's species, other species and one's environment. . . . Ableism and ability preferences are not just about distribution but also about judgments. . . . In such contexts, people with disabilities have fewer abilities than others to protect themselves from the negative consequences (such as war). These judgments over what constitutes normal from an abled perspective requires a renewed awareness of how technology and discourse are deployed. Thus, in Wolbring's included essay, "Ability Privilege: A Needed Addition to Privilege Studies," he furthers this line of analysis by highlighting how science and technology intersect with often unseen advantages that come with being a heteronormative white male human-abled body, and its resulting effects. These privileges manifest not only in literal technological creations but also in the discourses that give rise to their existence in the first place. Whether one is labeled a "moral schizophrenic," "retard," "animal," or is diagnosed with "gender identity disorder" says more about the society that labels them than it does the individual who is labeled. To deploy this language unproblematically in everyday conversation or academia is to render their ontology invisible despite their discriminatory impact.

Looking at this special issue as essays in conversation, Zach Richter challenges Wolbring's conception of ableism, as defined in the latter's "Ableism and Energy Security and Insecurity" by critiquing what Richter terms "essentialist methodology" and by offering that assessment through the theoretical filter of Critical Animal Studies. Richter further explores the ways in which capitalism fosters continued identification of the nonhuman and disabled body as "abnormal" while also tacitly (and sometimes overtly) enforcing a coalition between those two marginalized groups. Therein, he offers a new definition of intersectionality through a Neomarxian critique of current technologized power structures.

In Anna Pinchuck's included essay, "Foreignness and Animal Ethics," she argues how English-centric modes of education exclude more comprehensive viewpoints and dialog within

academic spaces. This happens by excluding those who can't speak the privileged language of the academy. In so doing, she pursues an avenue of thought that leaves behind traditional academic rhetoric in favor of a narrative-style of argumentation that she finds more accessible to certain readers. While no single avenue of communication can be equally accessible, analysis based on eco-ability studies must always strive to promote its message through a multiplicity of mediums and styles so that no single framework for understanding is upheld as privileged. Thus, we must see beyond the normalizing tendencies that compartmentalize oppressions and modes of expression.

One example of how Pinchuck's ideas could be realized was tested at the 1st Annual Conference on Eco-Ability Studies, held at Binghamton University in April 2013. Conference organizers encouraged presenters to participate via Skype when individuals expressed how they would be disadvantaged by travel and the environment of academic conferences. By no means was this a perfect solution, but it was a step towards awareness that was recognized as part of a desire to do more and be better at what we do. Skyping also brought questions of the environment into the conversation on eco-ability studies. For instance, remote participation allowed some presenters to reduce their carbon footprint by foregoing the typical air and/or automobile travel necessary for attending academic conferences. Of course, there is always more work to be done.

This call to always do more demands increasingly innovative means of inclusion that does not become stable and get reduced to accommodation or assimilation. In kind, A. Marie Houser's "Grace for a Cure: The Poisonous Ethics of Disabled-Nonhuman Images," is testament to this concept. In her article, she criticizes the eco-ability movement's use of images of disabled animals. She argues that their use is a cathartic maneuver that reinstitutionalizes the oppression of the disabled body by putting it on display for consumption. In turn, for eco-ability to succeed it must always remain self-reflexive and willing to critique itself instead of taking criticism as a way to shut down coalition building.

Moving eco-ability to the academy, Cynthia Radnitz's "Applying the Argument from Marginal Cases to the Protection of Animal Subjects in Research: A Blueprint for Studying Nonhuman Animals in a Post-vivisection World" considers how humans should, if at all, utilize the nonhuman animal body. However, she explores this question in the area of scientific and

medical research. Radnitz proposes a set of guidelines for improving the health of "vulnerable" persons such as children, people with disabilities, and nonhuman animals that will provide other species with the same ethical dispensations as humans. Therein, she grapples with the controversial topic of how we are to determine consent within the behavior of other-than-human species.

In "Animal Crips," artist, activist and author Sunaura Taylor troubles our human assumptions about disabled animals, as they are informed by human ableism. The author's critical analysis of the intersectionality of human and nonhuman ableism emerged from her discovery of a story about a fox who shared her disability of Arthrogryposis. The fox was shot by a hunter who believed he had committed a "mercy killing," when, in fact, the fox (like the author) "was actually doing very well." Taylor further explores documented cases of able, nonhuman animals helping and protecting disabled members of their species. In so doing, she forces us to face unflinchingly the torture and genetic manipulation of nonhuman animals that we use as food—who are literally bred to be disabled. "However," Taylor notes, "the term and meanings of 'disability' are still uniquely human"—created and defined by human cultures over centuries.

Erica Grossman, herself an artist and activist, gives us further insight into Taylor's reflections on intersectionality with an in-depth interview. In the end, we hope that this special issue contributes to the self-reflexivity that is essential for the survival of eco-ability. Only by being continually open to how forms of expression can be co-opted and normalized can it continually evolve to see the invisibility of how discrimination operates for the Other: Just as we cannot discuss race without arguing how "whiteness" … performs hegemonic control over other racial identities, we cannot ignore how "ability" realizes its constituent disability. … First, we must understand the hegemony which makes dis/ability invisible through silence. To put this notion into a context of race, some members of "white" society remain color-blind and resist talking about race, rendering race invisible. As such, some members of an ableistic society sometimes choose to be silent about disability; thus, disability remains invisible. Ability, too, can be invisible. Those of us who are "able-bodied" might not see it because we are it. Plus, we often do not see that our ability constructs disability. Second, once we've made disability visible, we can then expand our awareness through language by becoming sensitive to various terminologies

assigned to various disabilities. Last, we must always question the language we use so that we do not slip back into hegemonic unawareness, where we simply take for granted yet another term. [Once awareness] … of hegemony [is] established, we can then further this awareness into the realization of how words and their concepts maintain control over "other" halves of conceptually dichotomized cultures. (Lunsford p. 330)

Such languages include not only our words but also our images and mediums of communication. By continuing to critically reflect on how hegemonic discourses situate themselves in ways that privilege certain bodies— human and otherwise—we can avoid our struggles being co-opted since every struggle we engage in is always already incomplete and disabled. But it is through embracing these disabilities, and failed attempts at a perfect movement, that we can celebrate a world of abilities and potentials that have been brushed aside and ignored for being "abnormal."

It has been a daunting task—for authors and editors alike—to develop this provocative special issue on the nascent discipline of eco-ability. We would like to thank our authors for their dedicated, paradigm-busting ideas, and their groundbreaking scholarship, which moves the discipline so significantly forward.

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An Interview with Sunaura Taylor

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AN INTERVIEW WITH SUNAURA TAYLOR

Hi Sunny! I've been looking forward to doing this interview with you! Can you tell us about the new book you have been working on? Does the book have a title yet? What's it about? What compelled you to write it, and what kind of readership are you hoping for?

Hey Erica! Firstly I just want to say I'm excited to be doing this interview with you! For the past few years I have been writing a book on animal ethics and disability studies. The title is *Beasts of Burden*. I'm looking at the relationship between the fields of disability studies and animal ethics scholarship. I'm also examining what happens when animal issues are explored through a lens of disability studies. The book moves from areas that have historically been points

* Erica Grossman is an interdisciplinary artist and activist who studied at California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland, CA. She currently resides in Boston, MA. She works in a variety of mediums including book arts, collage, and social sculpture. Her creative practice explores intersecting themes of human/non-human animal relationships, ecology, feminist queer identity, mental health and the healing arts.

of contention between disability and animal issues, such as Peter Singer's work and animal research, to topics that I hope will be productive for both fields, such as the intersection between ableism and speciesism, the question of disability in animals (especially domesticated animals) and the ways in which disability studies can challenge conversations around "humane" meat.

It's been a long and challenging process, but it's getting there. It needs to go through a few rounds of editing. It's being released with the Feminist Press, hopefully in a year or so. It's my first book and I'm coming to it from the background of being an artist. So I've really had to teach myself this whole new language, plus all the research skills needed to write a book like this. But it's been incredibly rewarding.

You have been writing your book in the midst of the blossoming Occupy movement, which you have also been very passionate about. Could you describe your involvement? Do you feel this movement has a unique potential to address the intersectionality of oppressions? If so, how? Do you see connections being made at all or more so in particular areas?

My partner and I were at Occupy Oakland the first day the camp was setup. We were there during the big confrontations with the Oakland police. We camped out numerous nights, and we went to nearly every general assembly for the first few months. Being a part of that was truly one of the most remarkable experiences of my life. It was inspiring in a way I don't think I've ever felt before.

I think what was really amazing to me was the ways in which people came together to take care of each other and build their own support networks. Each encampment was different, but what I can say about Occupy Oakland is that folks were (and are) really dedicated to working through a broad range of oppressions and really confronting issues as they come up. It was hard, as people have varying needs and opinions. But it was incredible what was beginning to happen there, and a total shame that the city and the police have been such a destructive force to what was being made.

I think the beauty of Occupy is that it is a place where people bring their different struggles, issues and frustrations, and yet also feel connected to broader issues. Occupy was really criticized for not having specific demands. I think that was partly what made it so strong,

as people brought their own struggles, which showed that there's not just one problem to fight against. It meant that all sorts of issues, from ableism and disability access, to animal justice could be brought up and explored. I remember early on Occupy Wall Street put out a statement that mentioned animal cruelty among a long list of grievances. I found that really quite amazing. Of course not everyone would agree on which issues were important, but at least they could be brought to the table. To me that was why the camps were so important. They were spaces in which issues were brought up and people were really confronted with different kinds of concerns and oppressions because they were all living together—all trying to make a world together.

Oh yes, and you are also an artist. How exciting! What mediums do you work in and why? Do you feel your art has the potential to be activism, or vice versa?

I've been a painter for years, and received my MFA from UC Berkeley in 2008. I use oil and watercolor and also do some printmaking. My book really was a surprise, as I was totally committed to painting when I first started writing it, painting these massive oil paintings. But at the time I was making works that dealt with animal agriculture—paintings of animals in slaughterhouses and factory farms—as well as works about disability and embodiment. Eventually the two topics just started overlapping. Along with the art, I began writing articles on the intersections between disability and animal ethics. I definitely still consider myself to be a painter, but I think different subjects and ideas call for different kinds of mediums. At a certain point I realized that I was trying to make too many arguments in my paintings; and writing just felt more appropriate for what I wanted to be saying.

All of my work is activism in some way. I am definitely drawn to work that deals with issues, and challenges us to think about difficult things. Which is why I admire the work you do Erica, because you are really committed to dealing with the issues that are important to you in your art. I think we both know how hard making "activist" art, especially animal activist art, can be in terms of career and stuff. Sue Coe has called art about animal cruelty a “kiss of death” for one's art career. But we stick with it because it's important, and because maybe we're helping in some small way.

I do think it's important to find the best way to say different things. Sometimes that's painting, sometimes it's writing a book, and sometimes it's being out in the streets expressing your opinions and putting your body on the line.

While many kinds of animal advocates with different values and perspectives can agree that the most egregious and unnecessary forms of animal exploitation need to be abolished, what do you have to say about the more nuanced and controversial issues of using non-human animals in ways that "help" humans, whether it is for something as potentially invasive as medical research, or as tame as service animals?

I think medical research and service animals bring up really different issues for me. I am strongly opposed to animal research. One of the most amazing things I discovered writing my book was the work of DIIAAR (Disabled and Incurably Ill for Alternatives to Animal Research). DIIAAR was a group of disabled people who acknowledged that they were benefitting from animal research, but who were protesting it, demanding alternatives, and saying they didn't want animals tortured on their behalf. I really agree with DIIAAR. Animal research is unethical in so many ways, even where it has benefitted

My thoughts on service dogs are a lot more complicated in some ways than my opinions about animal research. I have a long chapter on these issues in my book, so I'm not sure how well I can answer this in a few paragraphs. But I'll give it a shot. Our relationships with companion animals, especially service animals, are really messy. A lot of very confusing issues come up in terms of disability studies. There are all sorts of questions about domestication that we could talk about, which are really complicated. But if we think about the situation we're in right now with domesticated dogs, then I think the question of service animals really is a question of critiquing some aspects of the organizations service dogs often come from, not so much the relationships of interdependence that can exist between a disabled person and a dog.

I turned down a service dog from an organization a few years ago; I had been on a waiting list for five years. There are aspects of the programs I think are problematic, like breeding. Instead, I adopted a rescue, Bailey, who really does not assist me in any practical way and who it turns out is disabled himself! He helps me invaluably with his presence and love,

though. So I am critical in a lot of ways of some service dog organizations, for disability reasons as well as animal reasons. But I'm also not completely opposed to the idea of service animals.

A lot of service animals are rescues who either have learned on their own how to help their people, or who went through training with their person after they were rescued. I wish there were more programs that trained rescues and that worked with disabled people to empower us to train rescue animals ourselves. But I'm also not about to protest these organizations or look down on someone who receives a dog from them. It's way more complicated than that. My own position was pretty privileged in that I had the time and means to train a dog, or rather to train myself. (To be honest, I wasn't very good at it, which is why Bailey couldn't care less if I drop my keys or phone on the floor). I also wasn't working with him to help me with tasks that could save my life, like crossing the street. Service dog organizations have problems, but I don't think helping dogs and disabled people learn how to support each other is a bad thing.

In the past, you have created written pieces and participated in programs and visual art exhibitions alongside artists like Ehren Tool, addressing the relationship between militarism and disability. War has obvious repercussions on the mind/body for veterans and civilians who are impacted by violence. What would you say to expand this conversation to include domesticated animals who are used or affected by war? (For example, you could discuss animals used in war experiments or companion animals who are neglected and abused in war.)

This is a great question, and one my partner David Wallace and I have been discussing a lot recently. He is an artist too and makes a lot of work that deals with militarism, especially drones. My disability was caused by US Military pollution, so it's an issue that is really close to me. There's no question animals are affected by war—not only those who are actually used by the military for various tasks and research, but animals whose habitats are destroyed or who, like me, are affected by war's pollution. I traveled to Vietnam last year to do some research on Agent Orange; and you know there are innumerable ways in which just that one chemical has devastated the environment and animal life.

It's also really fascinating how human beings have used animals for war. David read an article recently about how the military is replacing dolphins with under water drones –I didn't

even know dolphins were used by the military. But it's this kind of stuff that shows just how deeply and bizarrely we have entangled animals in our conflicts.

In regards to animal agriculture, does it take some degree of manipulation to breed farmed animals to produce what humans want, whether for "humane" or factory farms? How does the practice of engineering animals correspond to the discourse around normativity and ableism?

Disability is everywhere in animal agriculture, and especially factory farms. The animals people eat are largely manufactured to be disabled. Animals are bred to have too much muscle for their bodies to hold, cows and chickens develop broken bones and osteoporosis from the overproduction of milk and eggs. Very often the very thing animals are bred for is, or leads to, disability. They are also disabled through mutilation, through abuse, and through dangerous and toxic environments. Even my disability, Arthrogryposis, is found on farms. In cows it's known as "Curly Calf."

Of course the first thing these issues bring up are ethical concerns over the use of animals for food. But they also raise a lot of other sorts of questions for both animal ethics and disability studies. For instance, what happens if we try to view disability in this context through a social model lens of disability? The social model understands disability largely as a consequence of discrimination and inaccessible environments. Well, there is no doubt that the environments these animals exist in disable them, even more than their physical impairments do. But simultaneously it is challenging to understand disability in this context as anything other than suffering, which is another thing that disability studies has really tried to theorize. So thinking about disability in animals raises important questions about what disability is—questions about such things as vulnerability, normalcy and suffering.

These issues are bigger than factory farms. Disability is found in pretty much all animal industries—circuses, research labs—even the domesticated animals we live with are prone to certain disabilities due to their breeding. For example my dog Bailey, who is a rescue dog, has slipped disc disease, which dogs with really long backs and short legs like him are prone to. Domestication has brought with it a host of questions about the boundaries between disability and enhancement, as well as questions about adaptation and naturalness. I'm really interested in

what disability means in other species—how other animals comprehend difference in themselves or others. Questions like: How do animals help each other? How do they adapt? How has disability helped shaped different kinds of animal relationships? I'm interested in challenging the notion that disabled animals inevitably don't survive in "the wild," and instead asking the more complex questions about how they adapt and interact with their communities. I think all these questions are vital to understanding what disability, is and what roles it plays in our individual lives and cultures.

From a disability studies perspective, how would you respond to the claim that humans are superior to other species of animals, especially considering faith in advanced technology as a means of being able to do "anything" that any animal could conceivably do (such as fly or run at high speeds)?

Well right, animals have historically always been judged against a human yardstick: "we can do this thing or that thing that animals can't" sort of logic, which is not only speciesist, it's also ableist. I think one of the most important contributions disability studies can make to animal ethics is the concept of ableism. Ableism at its simplest is prejudice against those who are disabled, and against the notion of disability itself. But more than this ableism is the historical and cultural perpetuation of discrimination and marginalization of certain bodies that are understood as different, incapable and vulnerable, and the simultaneous privileging of bodies labeled able-bodied. Through an analysis of ableism we can begin to understand the marginalization of disabled people as a socio-political phenomenon. But we can also begin to understand how the supposedly unbridgeable divide and unquestioned hierarchy between human and animal is also a product of ableism ...

So disability advocates and scholars argue that differences in ability should not be used as justifications for discrimination and exploitation. Disability studies and activism are about recognizing our sameness while valuing our differences. We have fought for our equality, our sameness, while also arguing in effect that there is value in our differences and in our limitations. It is this valuing of otherness, other ways of doing and being, that makes disability studies so profoundly important to conversations around animal justice. Animals are far more similar to us

than we have wanted to think, as well as being extremely different; but this difference should not be seen as justification for exploitation. So I think disability studies can help move the conversation around animals away from simply comparing them to humans, so we can learn from and value them.

Thanks so much for discussing these mind bending topics with us, Sunny (and be sure to give Bailey dog an extra hug for me)! How can we stay posted on the publication of your upcoming book or upcoming art shows if we are looking forward to seeing and learning more about your work?

This has been a pleasure Erica. Thanks for your great questions! I have a website (www.sunaurataylor.org) where people can see what I'm doing in terms of my art. I also contributed to a new book celebrating Carol Adam's *The Sexual Politics of Meat.* The book is called *Defiant Daughters: 21 Women on Art, Activism, Animals, and The Sexual Politics of Meat. Defiant Daughters* is available on amazon.com. In terms of my own book, we don't have an exact release date yet, but hopefully sometime next year. I'll announce it on my website and people can learn more when it gets closer to publication by going to (www.feministpress.org).

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Grace for a Cure: Poisoned Ethics and Disabled-Nonhuman Images

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Key words: anthropocentrism, ableism, photography, imagery, homeopathy

GRACE FOR A CURE: POISONED ETHICS AND DISABLED-NONHUMAN IMAGES

Abstract

While the material bodies of nonhuman animals disappear inside laboratories, farms, slaughterhouses, kill shelters, and zoos, representations of nonhuman animals have proliferated. In particular, photographs of sick and disabled companion animals have trended on social media sites and have been mobilized for animal welfare and liberationist purposes. This essay regards the proliferation of these photos as homeopathic: the photographs serve to soothe our "knowing without knowing" that nonhumans are used and abused. It posits that this homeopathy contains its own poison, much like a Derridean autoimmunity, that is both speciesist and ableist.

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Nonhuman animals have disappeared: sequestered in Concentrated Animal Feed Lots, stockyards, slaughterhouses, breeding facilities, and research laboratories; culled from the land and corralled into zoo exhibits, circus compounds, and Bureau of Land Management auction sites. Companion animals, bred to dwell with us, languish in shelters once they are marked as unwanted, disabled, or otherwise "abnormal."

At the apex of animals' literal disappearance from our lives, John Berger tells us, they were returned to us figuratively: anthropomorphized in illustrations; infantilized in toys and children's books; and exhibited in curiosity cabinets and zoos. The disappearance and return began in the 19th century and is "being completed by…corporate capitalism" (1992, p. 3).

Since the time of Berger's writing, nonhuman animals have also returned in photographs and videos. Maru, Grumpy Cat, and baby pigs on wheelchairs are but a few examples.[1] Their gaze is not the injunction "Do not kill me." It is the declaration, "You have not killed me." And: "I am whole"; "You make me whole." So we are assured, and satisfied in that assurance.

"Do not kill me": a reference to Emmanuel Levinas, for whom the face is a proxy for Otherness. It presents a challenge that calls us into being. "There is a commandment in the appearance of the face, as if a master spoke to me," Emmanuel Levinas writes. "However, at the same time, the face of the Other is destitute; it is the poor for whom I can do all and to whom I owe all" (2009, p. 89). In ASPCA ads, the faces of sick and injured shelter animals function to invoke such an ethical relation.[2] So it's not that nonhuman animals have become entirely absent.[3] But there is something of a homoeopathic treatment to their reappearance. There is also something homeopathic about the memes that circulate around gleeful images of pigs, dogs, and other nonhumans in wheelchairs (Figure 1).



Figure 1 "Lizzie pops a wheelie" (© jimnista)

A homeopathic remedy is prepared by diluting a substance that is causative, in larger quantities, of disease: water carries the memory of the *materia medica.* Do the pixels of digital images carry memory like water? Does the emulsion of halides in fluid, coated over photographic paper? What would photos of human-assisted animals cure us of? Our "knowing without knowing" (Joy, 2010, p. 71) that we do violence to nonhumans—a sustained, totalizing violence in which multiple industries collude to breed and raise up nonhuman animals to maim and kill them. That even companion animals arrive in shelters abused, neglected, injured by cars, and starved by the eradication of "vermin" and garbage from our urban places.

The photos tell us that our grace—for the animal welfare movement arises out of dominion; it is dominion *turned towards grace*—extends even to farm animals, what we mark otherwise as "meat." Our farms couldn't be places where pigs are beaten, immobilized in cages, and ignominiously killed: here is the proof of the heart of humanity; a pig in a wheelchair.

If nonhumans came to be represented en masse during their removal from our everyday lives, transmogrified into the figurative from materiality, their representation has reached a fever-

pitch in the advent of technology for nonhuman disability–or rather, the advent of thinking technology as applicable to nonhuman disability. In many cases, their representations-via-photographs are produced, replicated, and shared for ethical purposes. I am thinking both of ASPCA ad images (available at aspca.org) and of images used to advertise the 1st Annual Conference "Engaging with Eco-Ability," but I will turn to the ASPCA for the moment.

The ASPCA is an animal-welfare and protection organization. The animal-welfare movement may be distinguished from rights and liberation in its focus on alleviating "unnecessary" suffering,[4] which it achieves through regulatory change and enforcement. Animal welfare does not challenge the legal, political, and socio-cultural systems of oppression that create the conditions for rampant nonhuman-animal suffering, nor does it challenge speciesism. Welfare organizations seek legal protection for some animals under some conditions, while on the ground, animal protectionists provide narrow services for narrow subsets of nonhuman animals, such as rehoming for purebred cats. By working within and with laws that enshrine the status of animals as property, welfare work may be regarded an apparatus of dominion–even as it may incrementally reduce suffering (see note).[5]

In the beautiful and often heartbreaking *Dominion, The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy* (2012), Matthew Scully excavates the Biblical message of dominion, recast as stewardship, for grace. By this he means that "higher" beings have the power to bestow on "lower" ones emotions of empathy and love. He writes, "We are called to treat them with kindness, not because they have rights or power or some claim to equality, but in a sense because they don't ... Human beings love animals as only the higher love the lower, the knowing love the innocent, and the strong love the vulnerable." (pp. xi-xii). Scully finds shabby, shameful versions of dominion in trophy hunts, factory farms, whaling, and laboratories. But he argues for grace by putting up ethics theory on the one hand and abolition on the other as straw people of intellectualism and extremism.[6] At sixteen, Scully writes, he read Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* and found it too "abstract." Further, his dog Lucky "didn't care much for his theories either. Try as I might, I could not discern in his furry face any desire at all for Liberation. … And so it is with domesticated animals generally, who look to us only for creaturely respect and whatever scraps of love we have to offer" (p. 22).

Scully does not think he found in Lucky's "furry face" an ethical invocation, but inasmuch as Lucky, nearing death, brought Scully to a regard for "the beauty of animals, their dignity and vulnerability," a call was put forth – and Scully responded. His love for Lucky began to extend outwards to other nonhuman animals – as it were, "without choice" (Levinas, 1981, p. 116). But how far can this rapprochement go? Folding into itself what appears similar to self, anthropocentrism brings "into the house" of sovereign-human ethics those beings who are close enough. In the ASPCA images, these beings are often dogs, whose facial expressivity and social responsivity mirror that of normate humans.

The *materia medica* of the homeopathic animal image is quite like Scully's grace. Grace is kindness and a small favor[7]: a break in a fever, drawing from a larger ill. Grace is caesura, interval, breath: it is the space between hooks on a disassembly line that do not interrupt the disassembly line, finite in its parts, infinite in its conveyance. It is a law that opens gestation crates for sows and regulates puppy mills—giving activists a victory, a sigh of relief—but leaves pigs and dogs in the hands of masters and owners. It has the taste of poison.

The problem with grace is it can be withdrawn. Grace is as arbitrary as the conditions that make it needful, flowing from the onto-epistemological ground on which "the Animal" has been pastured, put afield, the human ensconced or housed. From anthropocentric heights, the alluvial spillover of nonhuman life into multiple, different, and particular lives falsely appears to be one graspable thing–Animal.

Not all images of nonhuman animals are homeopathic. While theorizing all the conditions under which an image is homeopathic is not the intent of this essay, it seems rather clear that ASPCA images are. Take one of the photographs currently in rotation on the organization's homepage. It features a dog looking timidly, perhaps pleadingly, at the camera; superimposed over his image are crudely drawn bars. ASPCA photographers tend to snap their subjects head-on, slightly from above, so that the animals must look up. Often the subjects are behind some sort of fence or cage wall.

As for this photograph, and its overlaid bars, we might ask: Are the bars meant to underscore confinement? Which confinement? Confinement in kill shelters of the type the ASPCA supports? Who, then, is confining the dog pictured there–or rather, all the dogs this dog is meant to synecdochically represent? The ASPCA may earmark some of its grant monies to

shelters, but it operates only one shelter of its own, in New York City. In 2012, its cruelty investigations resulted in seizures of only 152 animals and arrests of only 42 abusers (ASPCA Annual Report, 2012, pp. 6-7). Yet its advertisements imply that the organization primarily provides rescue and sheltering services. After broadcasting an especially provocative commercial that featured Sarah McLachlan's song "Angel," the organization received unprecedented donations (Strom, 2008, n.p.). But animal-rescue groups criticized it for deceiving donors into thinking that the money would directly assist animals.

The ASPCA image, thus deployed, offers a "cure" that has the taste of poison–not only in the context of these facts, to which I am guided by the unbelievability of the image itself, but in the dog's beckoning look. Of course, throughout history we have seen nonhumans seeing us. But following the analogic transposition of "human is to god as animal is to human," we have often seen nonhumans seeing us as *gods*. Matthew Scully quotes Jack London, who characterizes his canine-character White Fang as apprehending humans as deities. On the same page, and with great feeling, Scully notes that children of elephants "after seeing their mothers slain, have been observed waking up in convulsions, crying" (p. 8). Nonhumans see each other. But they do not see us, we think, in anything but our self-made guise as (empty) gods.

Sight is the privileged tool of humanism, indeed a rhetoric and apparatus of Western philosophy itself (Kleinberg-Levin, 1999). Derrida writes that we do not see that we are "*seen* through the eyes of the other, in the *seeing* and not just *seen* eyes of the other" (Derrida, 2008 p. 12, italics in the original). "*Seen* through the eyes" but also "seen *through*" (with the eyes): seen past, seen entirely, and seen through, as in, seen in our deception; they see right through us. And seen not just in our deception–for Derrida understands that deception is not "proper" to humans; nonhumans can also deceive–but in our lack. Derrida recalls that the god Prometheus stole fire for humans to compensate for Epimetheus, who neglected to clothe clothed humans. It is "within the pit of that lack … man installs or claims in a single stroke his property." This property, which is "the peculiarity [le propre] of a man whose property it even is not to have anything that is proper to him," establishes a "superiority over what is called animal life" (p. 20). Philosophy is pre*occupied* with the attempt to fix something "proper" to human, such as reason, consciousness, or language. But because there is nothing proper to "the human" that isn't also proper to some or other animal, the "propers" keep changing.

What does the dog in the ASPCA image see in seeing the nonhumans around him? In J.M. Coetzee's *The Lives of Animals* (1999), Elizabeth Costello asks us to consider Sultan, the primate who may have inspired Kafka's *Red Peter*. The psychologist Wolfgang Köhler had captured and caged Sultan and other chimpanzees. Sultan was esteemed to be the brightest and therefore the favorite. As Costello tells it, Köhler keeps putting bananas just of Sultan's reach while placing objects nearby his pen, to test Sultan's tool use. Costello imagines that the tests push Sultan, in his starvation, ever more towards thinking instrumentally, thinking about the objects and their uses, when he would instead think, When will I go home? Costello says, "Sultan drags the crates under the bananas. … He thinks: Now will he stop punishing me?" (p. 28).

Perhaps we don't want to know the questions the ASPCA-photographed dog might really ask: Why must I beg? Why can't I leave this place? Why are you here? What do you want from me? Perhaps we don't want to know what the ASPCA dog *smells*. Sultan knows when Köhler is not near the enclosure because he does not smell him. What does Sultan smell when he smells him? What shape does the thought of a smell take, what content? What does smelling disclose that thinking does not? To ask these questions is to grant that there are "disparate modes of being, relation, and language to be found among animals" (Calarco, 2008 p. 4).

Shelter dog ratings, which seek to measure whether dogs are to be euthanized, retrained for adoption, or put up for adoption straightaway, assign ratings to such "behaviors" as "cage behavior," "room behavior," and "commands," as well as resistance to human appendages (feet and hands, particularly when they are pushing and nudging), handling of toys and like objects, and possessiveness towards those objects. This language renders dogs like enough to be expected to "behave," but different enough that they aren't allowed the right *to refuse response*. Nonhumans brought into human spaces–houses, labs, and farms–particularly bear the multiple ways dominion is manifested. "Dominion" comes from the Middle French *dominion* for "rule" or "power," a modification of Latin *dominium*, "right of ownership," from the Latin *dominus*, "lord," related to the Latin *domus*, "house." Inside the house, domesticated animals are closest to human rule and fully within the sphere of human ownership. Rather than commune with beings in their being, ASPCA classifies, defines, and rates the whatness and isness of their lives: breed characteristics, dog characteristics.

Are images of nonhumans in wheelchairs an instantiation of the greater reach of human rule–and human grace? The animals made more obedient and human love become more powerful? For whom, then, exists the caesura of human grace? For whom does the homeopathic animal-image offer a cure?

The homeopathic animal-image is a gift of the human to the human for the nonhuman. That gift giving, effected and represented by ASPCA images, derives in part from an assumption that nonhumans do not give except as part of an exchange: a wag and a lick for a biscuit**,** a bit of play. Recall that, to Scully, companion animals "look to us only for creaturely respect and whatever scraps of love we have to offer."

In the first place, many regard nonhuman animals' giving and taking as a reaction rather than a response. We may think about nonhumans with more nuance than René Descartes, who concluded that nonhumans react as automatons because they do not (he thought) intelligibly speak, but we still consider many of their actions to be re-actions, reactions to their human masters and owners. But buried in the history of Western thought, in its dark corners, in its dank dirt, are the scented bones of other thoughts. In *The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopolity in Shakespearean Locales* (2012), Laurie Shannon makes delightful reference to paintings and texts, including those of Michel Montaigne that "creaturely embodiment (especially evident in tails and feet) hobble human claims of unfettered authority or control across species." Shannon continues, "Free animal prerogative, instead, mocks human sovereignty, sometimes by 'turning tail' and sometimes by looking back defiantly" (p. 84). This enchanted thinking *after* animals has been largely lost.

In the second place, biological determinism and ontological essentialism fixes what we think nonhumans are capable of in their responses. Shelter dog ratings ask how dogs react to human limbs; they do not ask what humans do to be convivial in their use of limbs around dogs. But the point really is: we transpose difference in appendages into differences in the ability to give and respond. As Derrida writes of Martin Heidegger's profoundly anthropocentric discourse on the hand, "man's hand *gives and gives itself, gives* and *is given* … whereas the organ of the ape … can only *take hold of, grasp, lay hands on the thing*" (1998, p. 175). The hand, metonymic of the human, gives; the hand of the ape does not. Nor does the paw.

Matthew Calarco (2008) finds that the anthropocentrism of Levinas' face-to-face relation, a "miracle" that takes its exit from animality, is betrayed by his description of Bobby, a dog who "survived in some wild patch" of a German war camp. In "The Name of the Dog," Levinas recalls how the guards refused to recognize their Jewish prisoners as human. But Bobby greeted them every morning with delight: "for him, there was no doubt we were men." Though Levinas could not believe that Bobby was acting ethically, Calarco writes,

> Admittedly, Bobby is not in a position to give anything "material" to Levinas and the other prisoners.…Bobby cannot give any possessions "with both hands," or paws as the case may be. And yet, despite Bobby's poverty, there is an ethical gift of sorts exchanged between him and the prisoners, even if it takes a form not often noticed by Levinas. Bobby does not literally tear the bread from his mouth and give it to the prisoners, but he does pause in his struggle for existence to be with the prisoners and to offer them what he can: his vitality, excitement, and affection. Is not Bobby, then, a prime example of the "otherwise than being"? (pp. 58-59)

> The human hand is not always so generous. What it gives to nonhumans is often as a favor–as grace. The favor is conditional. Every year, six to eight million dogs and cats are put in shelters; every year, nearly three to four million "adoptable" cats and dogs–those that had passed behavioral assessments–are euthanized (Humane Society 2013). The ASPCA images ask for humans to extend a hand by giving money but not something greater that cannot be subsequently withdrawn.

Only by denuding nonhumans of meaningful subjectivity can these images be deployed, for they reiterate–replicate like a virus employed as a cure–the same *reaction* to the camera: a doleful look, a look that asks for a "scrap of love." These images render dogs into automata that react to us. We soothe ourselves both in the giving and in the knowing that other humans give, affecting the caesura of grace that draws on the poison of limits–the limits of welfare, the limits even of rights, of law. Kelly Oliver writes,

> Moral rules and juridical legalism help us sleep peacefully at night, whereas ethical responsibility, as Levinas might say, produces insomnia. Rights can be granted, laws can be

followed, but ethics and justice cannot rest there. In this sense, ethics must go beyond rights (2009 pp. 12-13).

In the last few years, gleeful images of nonhuman animals using wheelchairs proliferated among activists and animal lovers. Their production and replication seems to have intensified around two phenomena: the appearance of a particular photo of "Chris P. Bacon," a piglet in a wheelchair (available at http://on.fb.me/HnWMkq) and The 1st Annual Conference "Engaging with Eco-Ability," a two-day program that is helping to expose commonalities in oppressions.

The webpage for the conference had been advertised with a banner image (Figure 2) and a graphic, both of which show dogs bounding in wheelchairs.[8] Of course, the conference images were shared out of an ethical impulse. By asking questions of them, I mean to work through a "hyberbolic ethics," one that requires a "constant vigilance" (Oliver, 2009, p. 82). This vigilance begins with Walter Benjamin (1968) writing in the wake of fascism. If indeed, we are in a war for nonhuman animals (Derrida, 2008)–one in which nonhuman-animal lands are conquered and destroyed, and nonhuman animals are confined without cause and raised to be tortured, maimed, and killed–then Benjamin's take on the technological deployment of imagery for propaganda is apt. He wrote worryingly, "'Fiat ars–pereat mundus,' says Fascism, and … expects war to supply the artistic gratification of a sense perception that has been changed by technology'" (p. 242).



Figure 2 (Banner image for the eco-ability conference website)

Advances in photography and moving pictures had restructured lived moments, interrupting an everyday somatic and relational apprehension of them. Film images looped,

rehearsing and rehearsing the disappearance of their subjects, for photography's last flare before retreating into landscape was of portraiture and images of the dead. Enchantment withdrew; it withdraws: Benjamin compares a "cameraman" to a surgeon who penetrates the body and "abstains from facing the patient man to man" (p. 233). Released from context, history, tradition, art drifts from ritual–its auric function–into politics, so that what is lived and loved is expropriated from the body and transmogrified into law. Its meaning destabilizes, threatens to erupt into a phantasmagoria of mythic normality–the golden, the virile, *the pure*: regimes, slaughterhouses.[9]

The *proliferation* of these disabled-nonhuman images is a homeopathy that soothes through reassurance. The photograph evidence that these beings have been saved defers mourning–defers knowing–to an ever-receding horizon. The photos have the persistence of presence, an airy confection that is constituted of ghosts. More, they resurrect again and again the body of exception, those nonhumans doubly brought into the human fold: as beings allowed "into the house" and as beings fitted with human equipment.

This exceptionalism is zealously policed. As reports noted, Dr. Lucerno, the veterinarian behind the "Chris P. Bacon" photos, took the piglet in from a farm. What would have happened to the piglet had his congenital disease not marked him as unique? The newspaper reports do not say, but the image nonetheless carries the possibility–the poison–of death. When reports surfaced that PETA had asked Lucerno to change the piglet's name, journalist "Ily 'Meatmouth' Goyanes" responded, "It's a joke, PETA. A funny one. A cute one. No one looks at that adorable pink snout and thinks of slicing him up and throwing bits of his flesh into a sizzling frying pan; that's why it's funny" (2013 n.p.). Similarly, A *Mankato Free Press* editorial asked readers to respond to the controversy: "PETA wants the man who saved a disabled pig from certain slaughter to change the pig's name to something other than 'Chris P. Bacon.' Has PETA gone too far?" (2013 n.p.). Most readers said yes. The question did its job. It provided an out, a homeopathic ampule, by way of pointing out a false equivalency: a linguistic insult (or joke) is not the same as material slaughter. The same could be said of the contents of this essay because certain readers who get this can congratulate themselves, even as they continue to consume nonhumans.

The compulsive repetition of these photos suggests another kind of compulsory sameness: in the conference images, the dogs are photographed in profile, which shows the full length of their bodies in the equipment, a disclosure of being through technology, a prizing open. In reproducing our seeing of nonhuman animals, our seeing them in equipment use—which discloses them through a scientific mode, as Heidegger (1993) would say—we reproduce and reiterate the human gaze, enhanced. One technology—a camera—trains its eyes on another technology, the wheelchair: the "soft murder" Susan Sontag speaks of in *On Photography* is doubled. "To photograph people is to violate them," she writes, "by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them that they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed" (2001, pp. 14-15) There is something particularly aesthetic about the photos used for the conference: not just in their availability as objects of pleasure, but also in their classical beauty, which is achieved through the completion of these beings, the restoration of their limbs. It is an Aristotlean (and ableist) aesthetics for which perfection is beautiful, and perfection is that which has symmetry, unity, and coherence: the body made complete.

The homeopathic is affective and aesthetic but also per formative, as per formative as taking medicine is when we "open up." To return to repetition and mourning, a compulsive sharing of these kinds of images allows activists a caesura, a breath, away from the horrific. But it also enacts a performance: that of the caring activist. "I do it so it feels real," Sylvia Path writes in "Lady Lazarus," a poem of traumatic performativity (2008, p. 245). Within the purity of activism is simply our need to *perform* caring and love–a dirty need, not entirely selfless. It sets us apart from those who perpetuate war on nonhuman animals. But as Kelly Oliver writes, following Derrida, "our ways of loving can also be ways of killing" (2009, p. 16). Derrida is clear that these ways of killing are physical and also figurative, though the two are not equivalent. Still, Oliver continues, Derrida "is not proposing that we stop loving or giving or seeking justice" because "we cannot stop" and should not "rest in our quest to love or give"–but we must also not stop questioning ourselves. (2009, p. 6)

In *What is Posthumanism?* Carey Wolfe refers to a magazine cover of a tall, thin woman–that is, someone not readily identifiable as disabled–and a German shepherd service dog.

Rosemary Garland-Thomas, Wolfe writes, had noted in an essay that the German Shepherd dog is meant to "mark" the model as disabled. "Yes" Wolfe responds, "but only at the expense of doing to nonhuman 'differents' what 'normates' have traditionally done to the disabled." Wolfe asks that "instead of seeing the nonhuman animal as merely a prop or tool" for shepherding persons with disabilities into "liberal societies and its values," we conceive of the two beings as "neither *Homo sapiens* nor *Canis familiaris*" but a "shared trans-species being-in-the-world constituted by complex relations of trust, respect, dependence, and communication" (2010, p. 140).

To do so would first require an ontological rupture that has yet to come: a posthistory, as Giorgio Agamben anticipates in *The Open: Man and Animal* (2004), in which the human does not ceaselessly define itself against the nonhuman animal, thereby drawing the constitutive insides and outsides that create the possibility for a third category: the subhuman. Agamben's concern with this third category is in its essential relation to biopolitics. The designation of the subhuman gave rise to the concentration camp, a gladiator pit in which captors violently sort out what is human and inhuman. Agamben is thus primarily concerned with the human that is animalized. But what of the animal that is humanized?[10]

If the-animal-within-human sets up a zone of exception in which law is suspended, as it was in the camp, the human-within-animal brings nonhumans inside, with all the confused expectancy that they now have the same moral, somatic, and cognitive attributions. One need only peruse content distributors such as Jezebel.com, which delights in articles with headlines such as "Asshole Cats Acknowledge Your Existence in Imperceptible Ways" (available at http://bit.ly/10Z8JWU). This yoking of one thing to another (cats are like humans; and like humans, they can be assholes) becomes most apparent when images of disabled nonhuman animals are mobilized for human political and ethical ends.

When released from context, photographic content becomes symbolic, synecdochic, or otherwise tropological: a powerful carrier of *intended and unintended* meaning. Of the eco-ability conference images, we might ask: do they proxy for nonhuman animals with disabilities *and* persons with disabilities? The answer, of course, is yes. And as critical animal studies theorists and disability theorists have both argued, tropes that abstract something of living beings

efface their very lives. In the article "Aestheticizing Animal Cruelty," Josephine Donovan writes: "In literature, one of the most common devices that exploit animal pain for aesthetic effect is the animal metaphor, or, more specifically, the animal 'stand-in' or proxy, where the animal is used as an object upon which to project or act out human feelings" (2011, p. 206). Of course, the conference images of the dogs in wheelchairs do not strictly or necessarily represent pain; in fact, they are quite gleeful. But the point remains.

That the photos do not represent disability as anything other than equipment use is problematic in another way: they reinforce an ableist view of the intact body as being normative. Speaking of the "prosthetic metaphor" that has flourished in cultural studies, Vivian Sobchack writes that it is "predicated on a naturalized sense of the body's previous and privileged 'wholeness'" (2007, p. 22). Likewise, the photos of nonhuman animals using wheelchairs—or rather, the *proliferation* of them—represents disability as something awaiting correction. These are "able" nonhuman animals, the images seem to say, and they are able by dint of human-made apparatuses that make them "whole," both aesthetically and conceptually: their hind legs are straightened by or hidden in the equipment; they are moving forward or they are facing the wind. The body that would spill over–the disabled body–uncontained, uncontrolled, unperfected–is saved from itself and kitted up.

The prosthetic metaphor that Sobchack analyzes works like this: extensibility and other material characteristics of prosthetics become "a tropological currency for describing a vague and shifting constellation of relationships among bodies, technologies, and subjectivities." (p. 22). Academic texts carry this metaphor through to different domains: prosthetic aesthetics, prosthetic consciousness, and others. In their use as a trope for the eco-ability conference themes, one of which is animal liberation, these images become prosthetics-as-metaphors *for* animal liberation and *for* able-bodiedness. These nonhumans using wheelchairs have "overcome" not only the "anthropological machine," that which would make a piglet meat, a rabbit a test subject, and a dog a statistic in a kill shelter, but also disability.

The notion that one does indeed "overcome" through equipment use, a notion that sometimes shows up in disability narratives and activism, demarcates hard lines around about what disability is and who may be counted. The synecdoche of one wheelchair for all, "standing"

for all—quite as the International Symbol of Access does—reduces the multiplicity of "disability" as it exists for nonhumans and humans. Feminist disability theorist Susan Wendell writes that those who are chronically sick and in pain feel "pressure to pass" as the "healthy disabled," such that "activists … downplay the realities of fluctuating impairment or ill health" (2001, p. 22). Wendell was speaking of human disability activists but her insight extends to images of nonhumans using wheelchairs, which downplay other kinds of disabilities—including disabilities that arise from human use and abuse of nonhumans.

The question, then, isn't whether the photographed animals get on better with assistive devices. The question is why we celebrate and distribute these images rather than photos of a Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary resident, Felix, before he got fitted for a prosthetic (Figure 3)? The grace of the images of nonhumans in wheelchairs—grace in the double sense of an ameliorant and a thing of loveliness—becomes a poison that dissolves the edges of the ethical.



Figure 3 (© Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary)

This year, I searched for an image to advertise solicitations for an anthology of personal-critical accounts of the apparent confluences — as well as the disjuncture–between the status of animals and that of disabled persons. I had conceptualized this book a few years ago, after I had been diagnosed with a painful connective tissue disorder. The photograph I chose shows a chimpanzee on a treadmill: electrode patches placed around arm and leg joints, a mask at the end of a tube clamped to his or her face. A horizontal blur applied to the image, which I'd lengthened to a banner size, hides pixel artifacts and implies a passage of time that feels unending, as confinement does (Figure 4). I chose the photograph from a random image search; I do not know where or when the photograph was taken, or whether the chimpanzee pictured there still lives.

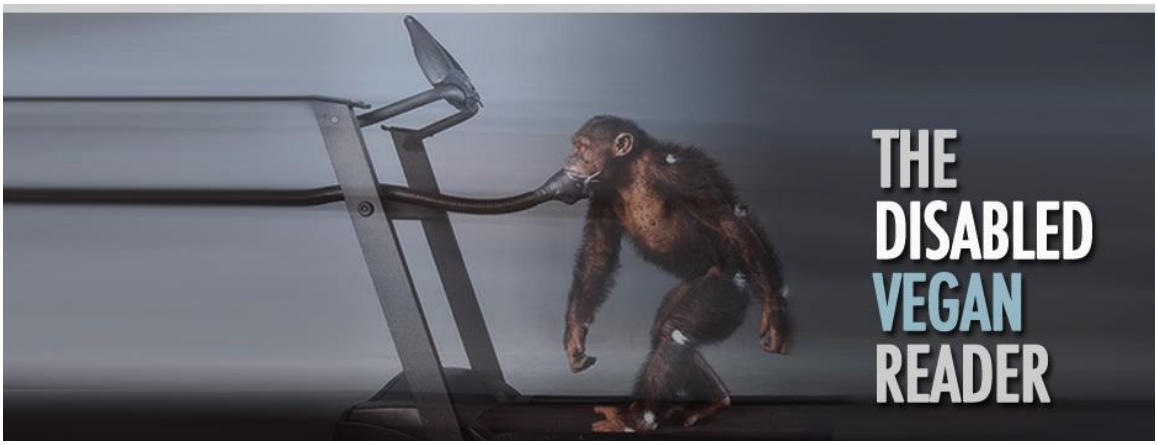


Figure 4 (Cover Photo from The Disabled Vegan Reader Facebook Page)

In the context of the proliferation of disabled-animal images, and the responses they have engendered, I thought more critically about this photograph. Seeing the chimpanzee on the treadmill, goaded to prove or disprove a theory, to surpass or fail a measurement of performance or ability, I had a deep bodily response that traveled from my nerves and muscles up my spinal cord, nesting in my brain where rationalizations were birthed: the image fit the project, I thought. In a sense it does; one of the suggested ideas for the anthology is an analysis of the legal and physical means by which nonhumans and humans are confined or subjected to testing without consent. But for whom is the grace of this witnessing enacted, when the witnessing is of a photograph, and the context of the photograph is lost? Who is to be congratulated for this image?

The photograph handily uses the chimpanzee's image to convey a multiplicity of meaning—too handily. So that the photograph of the chimpanzee is, much to my chagrin, a powerful carrier of unintended meaning—of poison. Concentrated in the use of this image are the twin strands of ableism and speciesism. We may even think of ableism as a kind of speciesism.

Speciesism relentlessly asks of nonhuman animals that they be like us, that their species-capabilities be measured against that of the homo sapiens, a term that pings its own echo, a call and response of "the human" to "the human." Sapiens? Sapiens. As we seek to make visible that which has been withdrawn into itself—our private suffering in pain and debilitation; the suffering inflicted on nonhumans in seclusion—we must maintain vigilance against curing through harm.

Notes

1. YouTube, is, of course, a treasure trove of such imagery. Videos of Maru are available at http://www.youtube.com/user/mugumogu,GrumpyCatat http://www.youtube.com/user/SevereAvoidance, and a baby piglet ("Chris P. Bacon") at http://www.youtube.com/user/chrispbaconpig.

2. Levinas' primarily excluded nonhuman beings from this "face to face" relation. As Derrida (2008) admonishes, "Putting to death or sacrificing the animal, exploiting it to death—none of those, within [Levinas'] logic, in fact constitutes murder. They are not forbidden by 'Thou shalt not kill'" (p. 110). But in elasticizing Levinas' theory to include animals-as-ethical-Other, I follow Matthew Calarco (2008), who argues that "the human" is merely an "*ethical* concept rather than a species concept; consequently, the concept of the human could—at least in principle—be extended well beyond human beings…" (p. 65).

3. In the case of "food animals," nonhuman animals are not entirely absent after their deaths either, but their bodies return to us in nearly untraceable forms. Carol J. Adams (2010) writes, "An animal proceeds down a 'disassembly line,' losing body parts at every stop. This fragmentation not only dismembers the animal, it changes the way in which we conceptualize animals." The "absent referent" of the animal can also be traced in definitional and metaphoric language, which attempts to hide bodies through reassignment of terms and meaning, e.g. a "chicken's wings" becomes "chicken wing" (Kindle Locations 830).

4. The welfare position is premised on the belief that "necessary" and "unnecessary" suffering is distinguishable. The animal rights and liberation movement generally proceeds from the belief that the use, confinement, and slaughter of sentient beings is always unnecessary. Where variance arises in value-theory discourse is in defining sentience. Most activists, however, regard creatures thought to be non-sentient with a radical openness, treating them *as if* sentience had been established.

5. See Tom Regan's *Defending Animal Rights* (2001) for an argument in favor for "incremental abolitionist change" (p. 148); Regan's primary interest is in articulating a deontological ethical case for animal rights (1984/2004). Gary Francione (1996), a legal scholar, argues that supporting "single-issue campaigns" *as well as* incremental changes in law is antithetical to animal rights and, as such, constitutes a "New Welfarism," a position not without controversy among activists and ethicists. I tend to agree with author and activist pattrice jones' pragmatic argument: "our ultimate aim must be the liberation of animals as a class" but we must also "do what we can to improve the welfare of actual animals in the interim." As she states, "Animals are not abstract entities. They are real creatures who experience real pain and who must live with the results of our choices" (n.d. n.p.).

Welfare is different in kind and degree from rights and liberation, which works against animal use and abuse in Toto, but drawing hard and fast lines around what constitutes proper liberation work disregards both the everyday suffering of nonhumans and the political realities activists confront. Still, it's possible to sift strategic liberationist reforms out from end-goal reforms that are tantamount to collusion. The argument can be made that maneuvering city councils to ban the use of bull hooks in circuses will starve circuses of business, at least temporarily, since those that use elephants abuse them with bull hooks; it's difficult to make such an argument for legislation crafted by the Humane Society of the United States in concert with the United Egg Producers, the Egg Products Inspection Act Amendments, which phases in minor changes in factory farms, such as an increase in the hens' cage size from forty-eight square inches to sixty-seven, over a few years time. (http://www.humanesociety.org/news/press_releases/2012/05/hen_bill_052412.html).

It's important to note that, beyond the welfare vs. rights arguments articulated by Regan and Francione, a number of other political and ethical grounds have been articulated for liberation, from anarchism to virtue theory to ecofeminism. Posthumanist and continental theorists have not held out much hope for legal rights as a recourse. For Derrida, who has "sympathy" towards "the declaration of animals rights that would protect them from human violence," it would be "preferable not to introduce this problematic concerning the relations between humans and animals into the *existing* juridical framework," since it is that framework that gave rise to the violence (qtd. in Wolfe, , ; italics in original)

6. Lest I also set up Scully as a straw man of moderation, I want to say that Scully does argue powerfully that "laws protecting animals from mistreatment, abuse, and exploitation are not a moral luxury or sentimental afterthought to be shrugged off." But his work vacillates between placating a demographic that might be otherwise unwilling to consider this beauty, dignity, and vulnerability and powerfully shaking them by the shoulders. He quips, "My copy of the Good Book doesn't say, 'Go forth to selleth every creature that moveth" (p. 92). But also, "When philosophers, theologians, or scientists inform us…that we may never use animals, even cooperatively and humanely, or that we may use them without end, they have all overstepped themselves."

7. The twelfth-century meaning of grace was "God's favor."

8. The website changed before this article went to press. An archive can be found at http://web.archive.org/web/20130818074625/http://ecoability.wordpress.com.

9. Here I want to acknowledge that there are a number of problems in analogizing human histories and oppressions to that of nonhuman animals. As Kim Socha writes, "[T]o animalize humans is to denigrate them, and pretending that we do not live in a speciesist world is unproductive" (2013, p. 230).

10. If the camp, for Agamben, is the place where humans are stripped of political life, and reduced to a "bare life" that is akin with the animal, are factory farms and labs places where bare life (nonhuman animals) are made barest? If the camp is a state of exception outside of

the political order, are factory farms and labs places where the state of exception is always within?

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Foreignness and Animal Ethics: A Secular Vision of Human and Constructed Social Disability

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FOREIGNNESS AND ANIMAL ETHICS: A SECULAR VISION OF HUMAN AND CONSTRUCTED SOCIAL DISABILITY

Abstract

English-centric dominant discourse of equality, power and justice controls not only who is or is not included, but also how the knowledge is produced. The machine has coopted the meanings, feelings, our relationships with other beings while creating static universalized conceptions which all have one starting point: the secular vision of the human. In this personal narrative I will examine how English-centric knowledge-production system staged the war on our minds and feelings by controlling not only what gets spoken and who should be included in the system of power, but also how we are allowed fight against those forms of oppression. I will focus on foreignness in academic community that creates the double-bind whether a) people who

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do not fall under the normal standard category of "human" have to assimilate and pretend to be similar to everyone else or b) accept their exclusion and social disability. I will then draw connections to animal ethics which are also controlled by the dominant forms of knowledge production, which even advocating for becomes a form of exclusion in academic settings. I will conclude with ways that helped me fight English-centric knowledge production and advocate against different forms of oppression.

Introduction

I have decided to write this essay in a form of personal narrative because I find it problematic that the current academic scholarship discourages and undermines the power of personal experience, artistic expression, and meditating thought process. Rationality and fixated structure are all parts of the English-centric mode of production which I have encountered as an international student in the United States. They pose barriers and divisions between those who belong and those who do not, citizens and non-citizens. Sharing personal experience can be both powerful and revolutionary. Current discursive formations discourage personal engagements and demand writers and scholars to be "objective", "reasonable," and "fair," which recreates the static concepts of perfection, idealism and rationality. Such writings reinforce English-centric system of power and undermine all counter-hegemonic movements. I think it is very important not to let the dominant system of rules separate the writer's personality from his or her work of art and expose how personal experience can be both productive and important to theory.

Fixated and Pre-Determined Forms of Interaction

The domination and power of "English-centric" knowledge production can be seen in every sphere of social life, especially in academic settings. By "English-centric" I do not simply mean English language, but the discursive formations inherent in the ideas of nationalism, belonging, citizenship and rationality. It is an abstract concept that includes and encompasses legislation policies, popular discourses, stereotypes, popular media and academic discussions. English-centric can also be understood by using Cornell West's explanation of the "normative gaze" which is the ideal concept of what is normal and beautiful as the central foundation of Western, specifically British and American, societies (West in Essed and Goldberg, 2008, p. 99).

When I first encountered English-centric culture, specifically in the United States, I noticed its similar or monocular frameworks of language in the academia, natural and social sciences; its domination and desire to control what gets spoken or advocated for. The United States is said to be one of the most liberating and inclusionary country in the world, especially on the streets of Boryspil, a small city near capital of Ukraine –Kiev, where I was brought up. The Statue of Liberty had always been the symbol of liberty, freedom and acceptance in my imagination.

Coming here I expected to encounter an open-ended culture that accepts difference and celebrates the multiplicity of opinions and ideas. Instead I encountered the pre-determined, static, and assimilative forms of knowledge-production. Everything that gets spoken or is present in academic discussions falls under the framework of progress, development and citizenship of the American ideal. This not only creates one centered vision of the world that everyone must support but it also assimilates, isolates, or tries to destroy difference. English-centric discourses are filled with assumptions of progress and development, of what is good and bad, normal and deviant. They operate by the Universalist claims inherent in them, which hide the inequalities, techniques of power and different forms of oppression (Pam, 2005).

Moreover, English-centric system has become so brilliant in dictating the perfect way of life that everything else simply becomes foreign, socially disable, and denied out of existence. Concepts such as citizenship, civil society, social justice and human rights "entail an unavoidable—and in a sense indispensable—universal and secular vision of the human" (Pam, 2005). The concept of perfect and ideal human life is ingrained into social culture and never gets questioned. It tries to encompass difference and foreignness and transform it into "normal."

Foreignness as Social Disability

There are usually two most researched and identified types of disability: medical and social. Medical disability is informed by chronic illness or impairment and entails suffering or social disadvantage. Social disability, on the other hand, is centrally structured by social oppression, inequality, and exclusion (Thomas, 2004). The concept of foreignness is constructed in opposition to the citizen. In order to maintain the idea of citizenship and belonging, the nation-state needs to constantly draw and maintain the imaginary borders between "us" and "them" (Said in Essed and Goldberg, 2008, p. 20). Language has often been one of the main

assimilative processes that draws distinctions and maintain the borders of inclusion. Immigrants who did not speak English or fit into the ideal of "citizen" did not have the same access to schooling, newspapers, television, social forums and other forms of socialization. They were socially disadvantaged because they could not receive the same benefits in society that other members received because of the oppressive formations around them. Moreover, they were easily identified and exposed by their accents and speech patterns that were not "citizen-like." Usually many first and second-generation immigrants refuse to learn and speak their native language. In such way language becomes a collective memory which perpetuates itself at the cost of an individual forgetting of his or her "origins." One mother's tongue is not necessarily the language of one's "real" mother, but the language of one's present community that assimilates everyone who does not belong (Balibar in Essed and Goldberg, 2008, p.227).

However, English-centric society did not stop at simply spoken discourse to maintain its distinctions and exclusions. Words, such as freedom, liberty, citizenship, nationalism and identity became ideas and foundations that defined English-speaking societies. Carol Schmid (2001a, p.9) writes that language with its discursive formations is one of the main tools in mobilizing ethnic groups and is an important factor in modern nationalism. The first process of defining who was and was not American started with English language. Many communities had to go through assimilative process when they encountered English-centric society:

> Forced assimilation also included the extermination of Native American languages. In 1868, the "Peace Commission," composed of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and a group of generals—including General Sherman—set the tone for later Native American language policy. … Now by educating the children of these tribes in the English language these differences would have disappeared and civilization would have followed at once. Nothing then would have been left but the antipathy of race, and that, too is always softened in the beams of a higher civilization. . . . Through the sameness of language is produced sameness of sentiment and thought, customs and habits are molded and assimilated in the same way, and thus in the process of time the differences producing trouble would have been gradually obliterated. (Schmid, 2001b, p.23)

If we view social disability in terms of exclusion, assimilation, denial of social benefits, then foreignness becomes a form of social disability. It is a social disability because not

belonging to the English-speaking society, by which I also mean not belonging to the ideals and concepts of citizenship, nationalism, dominant ideology and background, means being unable to compete for jobs, social benefits, and even face discrimination and prejudice from other members of society. David Roedieger (2002, p. 138) provides a very powerful story of Joseph Logaidis, an Italian American from Chicago, who shared his most vivid childhood memory: "In 1980 during a race riot in Chicago he saw 'a man running down the middle of the street hollering . . . 'I'm White, I'm White!'' He was a white coal handler covered in dust and was screaming for his life fearing that 'people would shoot him down.'" For millions of European immigrants who arrived in the United States fitting into the constructed category of "White" meant being included and accepted into society, while not belonging to the English-centric ideals of "normality" and "citizenship" meant being "unfit" and excluded.

In contemporary time such discourses have become less evident and increasingly hidden within academic frameworks. I have experienced this unspoken and hidden social system as a foreign student when I came to the United States in 2010 to attend a university. I was growing up in a post-Soviet system of education, in which the ideas of communism were refuted by the new emerging democratic system of governance, but the ideas of nationalism and Ukrainian identity were still weak and almost non-existent. I could not choose my subjects and had a fixated schedule of classes that I had to learn. The void after the Soviet era has not been filled with new knowledge or experience as Ukraine struggles to locate its national identity in the international arena. The discussions and different opinions were still quiet and discouraged, and the spirit of unity and "equality" was still in the air. As a result, I wanted to study and gain education in a free, liberal and democratic country, so I could bring that knowledge to help my own country to become strong and independent.

During my freshman year I got involved in policy debate. Policy debate is an academic activity in which participants employing theory or scholarly articles can debate about political, normative or philosophical issues. There is usually a resolution that advocates for the United States Government to do a specific action in relation to international, domestic or legal issues. The affirmative proposes a plan and the negative team tries to give reasons for why the plan should not be implemented. Since there was nothing similar in Ukraine where people could openly disagree and express their opinions, I was very eager to experience what was at heart of

American ideal: freedom of speech, individualism, knowledge and constructive debate. I was also eager to bring my own experience and knowledge to the activity to share about my culture, traditions and policy-making in Ukraine. Unfortunately, what I experienced did not fulfill my expectations, and one of the most liberating and open types of debate turned out to be one of assimilation.

The first time I questioned my own position in American society and where I fit was while having to adapt to hyper-textual and technical English-speaking debate. Instead of having discussions, most policy debaters speak very fast to have more in depth and diverse arguments. While there are a lot of benefits to fast speaking, the system privileges native English speakers and people with background and knowledge in American policy-making and governance. The problem of clarity started to worry me because having an accent did not seem to be normal in the debate community. Sometimes judges would tell me to be clearer during my speech, asking me to adapt to the "norm." Others would quietly pretend to understand me by giving me "leeway" or accepting my "non-normality". This can be implied in the looks, the way people slow down when they talk me, and the way they are very careful asking me questions. I feel non-normal or "socially disable," because the society asks me to do so. I am trapped in the double-bind, whether I have to erase my difference and pretend to be like everyone else asking for inclusion or I have to accept my "social disability" and the fact that "I do not fit" and ask for exceptions, social benefits, and nice looks from other people.

Moreover, the policy debate resolution (the topic) asks debaters to role-play as policy-makers in Washington, DC. The resolution automatically assumes that the norm would be "American policy-makers" asking me to adapt to the ideal starting point, erasing any form of difference, and leaving out the option of belonging or advocating from a different point of view. My Ukrainian heritage has no place to belong on such scheme of discussion. Policy debate, like other forms of discussion and public forums, represents a new form of assimilation and mobilization of non-citizens into American lifestyle.

My discussion of policy debate is important because such style of debate claims to express and fulfill the greatest ideas of liberal democracy: freedom of speech, liberty, acceptance and open discussions in which opposite, radical and revolutionary ideas are welcomed. Moreover, its alumni include influential policy-makers, lawyers, activists and business leaders,

who after doing policy debate further their ideas in their careers, social and political spheres of life. Policy debate also closely represents democratic decision-making process in academic classrooms, legislation-making institutions and business meetings.

Such decision-making process and rationality in policy-debate and broader social spheres erases difference and excludes those who do not fit into its rules and norms. The dominant ideology of living and knowing tries to impose one particular view of the world on all other cultures and people. Michael Baker described the current problem with English-centric knowledge production:

> Eurocentrism [English-centrism] will be described as the epistemic framework of colonial modernity, a framework through which western knowledge enabled and legitimated the global imposition of one particular conception of the world over all others. Eurocentrism is an ethnocentric projection onto the world that expresses the ways the west and the westernized have learned to conceive and perceive the world. At the center of this ethnocentric projection are the control of knowledge and the maintenance of the conditions of epistemic dependency. Every conception of the "world" involves epistemological and ontological presuppositions interrelated with particular (historical and cultural) ways of knowing and being. All forms of knowledge uphold practices and constitute subjects. What counts as knowledge and what it means to be human are profoundly interrelated. (2008)

The English-centric vision of how the world should be and what it means to be human has occupied minds of millions of its population through internet, popular media, newspapers, television, books, advertising and many other cultural products. This colonial machine has defined freedom, progress, law and community and tries to re-create and impose those views on the rest of the world. Everything that doesn't fall under its definitions must accept those conditions or be denied out of existence. Everyone who challenges the systems of oppression must accept the terms within he or she can advocate for liberation and use the tools given and created by the nation-state. Instead of learning new ways to see the world or advocate for inclusion of other forms of knowledge, English-centric education and academia reproduces imperial, colonial, monocultural, and deluded conceptions of and ways of being in the world (Baker, 2008).

Strategic Accommodation of Animal Ethics

Similarly to how English-centric policy debate and academia creates social disability for foreigners, animal rights and liberations have many struggles of trying to fit in within its epistemological and ontological frameworks. Social and political spheres exclude animal rights' advocacies by strategic silence and accommodation of activists by giving them the tools already created by the dominant forms of English-centric knowledge production. The tactics of silence and strategic exclusion occur "in those places where speakers reveal the assumptions they think they do not need to defend, beliefs they expect to share with their audiences" (Bell and Russell, 2000). Human-centeredness not only becomes the normal way of seeing the world, but also limits people from confronting inequalities. The primacy of the human enterprise is simply not questioned. It reinforces the ideal of what it means to be human which can only exist because of its opposition to what it is not – the non-human animal.

In my personal struggle to advocate for animal rights, I have noticed that speciesism has not been thought of as being on the same level with racism, sexism or ethnocentrism. The problem is not in the harshness of oppression or which "ism" has more violence associated with it, but because speciesism, unlike other forms of oppression, is erased and silenced from the "human" framework under which we can discuss and support it. English-centric discourse has so powerfully created and ingrained the idea of what it means to be human, that it automatically excludes even the possibility of thinking in different terms:

> The Human in other words is, in an ontological sense, always an act of becoming Human, bound up with the anxieties that one is not quite there, will never make it to fruition. In this and despite the careful work that is currently being done by a whole host of scholars, activists and artists, the term Human continues to have a performative power and often signifies a normative space in social and political terms, defined against those who are deemed unrecognisable and thus excluded from its remit. (Giffney and Hird, 2008)

A non-human animal is excluded from the concepts of equality, justice and rights; and advocating or supporting ethical decisions in regards to animals becomes a social disadvantage. When I discuss such issues with my friends, I constantly feel the need to defend why I do not consume animal flesh. I get the label of "difference" and feel that I do not fit under the normal

definition of "human". I always have to justify myself and my actions, while people who consume animal flesh do not.

Eco-Activism and Ways to Resist English-Centric Power

Questioning and believing that I can make a difference has been very influential for me on this struggle to be a foreign student and advocating for animal ethics. Emmanuel Levinas wrote about the moment of encounter: when we face injustice - we have to confront it. It is an endless struggle and a desire which can never be fulfilled because the world can never be perfect or absent of all forms of oppression. We will encounter many barriers on our way, but this struggle is what brings fulfillment in life and minimizes oppression and violence in the world (Simmons, 1999, p. 96-98). Through our language, actions and continued struggle to understand and question our decisions we can fulfill our obligation to ourselves and other beings.

When I first had discussions about meat-eating, my argument for why I ate meat was that human beings were brought up that way and that it was a natural way for us to live. I was raised with such ideas and never questioned where my food came from. However, after many discussions, research and awareness, I realized that eating meat is not at all natural to human beings, and it is only a dominant discursive construction that reinforces human supremacy over animals and nature in our contemporary society. Human bodies never adapted to meat consumption because early human diets consisted of primarily plant-based foods, while vegetarian or vegan diets can reduce the risks of cancer, heart diseases, and supply more beneficial vitamins and minerals (Freston, 2009). Moreover, factory farms and animal testing centers commit a lot of unnecessary physical and psychological harms to animals which can be easily avoided with current technological advancements in science and food production (Fassa, 2013, Sareen, 2013, Suddath, 2010). Refusing to eat meat, supporting animal ethics, or joining animal rights groups not only brings us closer to saving the environment and reducing animal suffering, but also questions the current English-centric construction of supreme human enterprise.

Changing personal beliefs and habits is just the beginning, because we cannot be silent or keep our beliefs to ourselves for the fear of being different or do not "fit" into social norms. JL Schatz, North American Representative for the Institute of Critical Animal Studies, writes that

for a large-scale reform to occur, we must be different and speak out in our communities, our families and schools. We cannot simply wait or accept the oppression and injustice:

> To remain silent, to do nothing, to be idle is no longer an option. In fact, it is an acute form of human privilege to not speak against the speciesism of modern food consumption. One only has the luxury to do nothing if one has the privilege of not bearing the brunt of violence and discrimination. For the pig in the slaughterhouse, to not struggle is to die. For humanity to do nothing is not only morally reprehensible, but also speeds up the destruction of the planet and all life within it. Every time someone sits down to consume the flesh of another animal, one pays for the confinement, torture and slaughter of that animal. (2013)

Discussions with JL Schatz and support from other animal rights activists inspired me to stand up for animal ethics. Even though in Ukrainian culture meat has always been the main dish and ingredient, awareness and questioning had the power to break old traditions and habits, causing my family to become vegetarian after having conversations with them.

It is very critical in our eco-activist approaches to challenge the foundation of our knowledge-production system and use alternative tools of resistance when addressing ecological and social problems. The reason-centered culture with its characteristics of success and ruthlessness in dealing with the nature has allowed the domination over non-human animals and other cultures. It has commodified the world and created long-term ethical and ecological failures (Plumwood, 2002). In order to address those problems, we must question the foundations and assumptions of rationality and unethical decision-making. Chris Hedges writes that "artists, writers, poets, activists, journalists, philosophers, dancers, musicians, actors, directors and renegades must be tolerated if a culture is to be pulled back from disaster." They are usually dismissed by the dominant powers because they do not embrace the collective self-worship and expose the system of corruption:

> They make us face ourselves, from the bitter reality of slavery and Jim Crow to the genocidal slaughter of Native Americans to the repression of working-class movements to the atrocities carried out in imperial wars to the assault on the ecosystem. They make us unsure of our virtue and challenge the easy clichés we use to describe the nation—the land of the free, the greatest country on earth, the beacon of liberty—to expose our

> darkness, crimes and ignorance. They offer the possibility of a life of meaning and the capacity for transformation. (Hedges, 2012)

By giving preference to assimilative logic and hegemonic reason in social and political discussions we will continue to use the tools given to us by the dominant forms of English-centric knowledge production. Instead we must struggle to find alternative ways of understanding ourselves and the world through personal narratives, cultural artifacts, experiences and ethical engagements with each other.

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Applying the Argument from Marginal Cases to the Protection of Animal Subjects in Research: A Blueprint for Studying Nonhuman Animals in a Post-vivisection World

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APPLYING THE ARGUMENT FROM MARGINAL CASES TO THE PROTECTION OF ANIMAL SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH: A BLUEPRINT FOR STUDYING NONHUMAN ANIMALS IN A POST-VIVISECTION WORLD

Abstract

Although experimentation on nonhuman animals for both research and product testing continues, there are some signs that we are on a trajectory toward abolition of animal model research due to the combined effects of pressure from animal activists, changing public attitudes toward animal research, improved replacement technologies for both scientific investigation and product testing, and the expense of purchasing, housing, and studying animals. Nonetheless, just as we study humans, we may still be interested in studying animals using research paradigms that protect their rights. By applying the Argument from Marginal Cases to animal research

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guidelines, a plan is presented for shifting toward ensuring the rights of animals by affording them the same status for consideration in research studies as that given to two groups of humans classified as "vulnerable" in laws governing human subjects research, specifically young children and individuals with cognitive impairments. In doing so, we propose the idea of animal assent as an additional layer of protection so that animal research participants are adequately safeguarded.

Introduction

The tensions between animal advocates[1] and animal researchers dates back to the seventeenth century and continues to the present time (Lederer 1995). While animal researchers point to advances in medical care putatively attributable to animal research, animal advocates note the pain and suffering endured by animal research subjects, and they question both the morality and utility of most animal experimentation. The development of newer non-invasive techniques that allow researchers to conduct human studies into topics formerly studied only on animals has meant a reduced need for laboratory animals (Fentem, Chamberlain & Sangster 2004). Yet, there are still an estimated 100 million mice and rats and 1.13 million other animals (excluding rats, mice, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and agricultural animals) used in experiments in the United States, as well as 76,001 animals that experienced pain without anesthetic drugs (USDA 2010a). Animal activists have attempted to eliminate laboratory studies involving the use of animals through petitions, letter writing campaigns and, in some cases, direct-action operations (e.g. the liberation of captive subjects).

Although much has been written on both sides of the argument—both justifications for animal research (e.g. Festing 2004) and condemnations of it (e.g. Anderegg et al. 2006)—little if anything has been published describing procedures for including animals in research under conditions that uphold their rights, when considering rights comparable to those of humans. The Argument from Marginal Cases (AMC) is the idea that certain groups of humans, those that lack basic cognitive abilities such as language, reasoning, judgment, etc. are the equivalent of higher mammals in terms of intelligence with the only difference being species membership (Dombrowski 1997; Francione 2008; Regan 1983; Singer 1990). Consequently, animals should be afforded the same rights as humans. In applying AMC to the issue of animal research, we discuss a new scheme for deciding the value and permissibility of research with animals[2] using

principles similar to those used to determine the suitability of research conducted on some vulnerable human populations such as young children and persons with significant cognitive disabilities. These new conditions should be acceptable to people who currently condemn animal model research, as the rights of animals to be treated with the same consideration as vulnerable human groups are upheld.

There is no indication that animal model research will be discontinued in the near future, although there are some signs that we are headed on a trajectory toward abolition. In 2004, the EU banned all animal testing of ingredients used in cosmetic products, including those imported from outside the EU. Although difficult to assess, a best estimate of the number of animals being used as research subjects suggests that it peaked in the 1970s, while today only about half that number are being studied (Franco 2013). Both the European Commission (Louhimies 2012) and the Humane Society of the United States (Stephens 2012) have set goals of full replacement of animal experiments. Although we are still a long way from a global ban of invasive animal research, it is not farfetched that in the future, some countries or institutions would prohibit vivisection and other forms of animal model research that are objectionable from an animal rights perspective. Alternatively, some investigators might opt to use these guidelines to ensure that the rights of their nonhuman research participants would be upheld. If either of these scenarios were to occur, the guiding principles in this paper may prove useful.

Current Guidelines for Conducting Research on Animals

Much of the research on animals conducted today involves unnatural captivity for long periods of time, and often pain, substantial discomfort, and injury. A detailed discussion of guidelines for conducting research on animals as they are stipulated across the globe is beyond the scope of this paper. For illustrative purposes, a discussion of the guidelines used in the United States will serve as an example, as the U.S. conducts more research on animals than any other country (Taylor et al. 2008).

In the U.S, under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA; Animal Welfare Act of 1966), institutions conducting research must form an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) which is responsible for overseeing all aspects of animal research conducted at that institution. The AWA only covers primates, dogs, cats and other larger mammals. It excludes 90-95% of the animals studied in research, specifically rats, mice, birds, cold blooded animals (fish,

reptiles, and amphibians) and farm animals used in agricultural research. Although these genera may be covered by other regulations (federal, state, or institutional), concerns have been raised that the guidelines were developed for laboratory mammals and may not be applicable to other species (e.g. fish; Borski & Hodson 2003). Moreover, IACUCs may not possess the required expertise to evaluate protocols using fish, amphibians, and invertebrates, given the large number of these species and the varied requirements they have (Alworth & Harvey 2007; Borski & Hodson 2003; Harvey-Clark 2011). For the remaining animals (cats, dogs, primates, guinea pigs, hamsters, rabbits and other warm blooded animals) minimal standards are established for housing, feeding, handling, veterinary care, and in some cases, provision for psychological health. Although the AWA has stipulations that require institutions to become licensed or register with the USDA and consequently undergo semi-annual inspections, as there are only 150 inspectors for over 12,000 sites engaged in research, breeding, or sale (USDA 2010b), it is impossible for them to do an adequate job.

In addition to concerns about the AWA's scope, intent, and provisions for ensuring compliance, others have leveled criticisms of how it is implemented at the local level (e.g. Hansen 2012; Hansen, Goodman & Chanda 2012; Plous & Herzog 2001; Rice 2011). According to PHS Guidelines (Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 2002), the Chief Executive Officer of the institution appoints the IACUC which consists of at least five members including a veterinarian with training in laboratory animal science and medicine, one practicing animal researcher, one member whose primary concerns are in an area that is not animal research (e.g. law, clergy), and one member who is unaffiliated with the institution except for membership on the IACUC. However, since five is the minimum number of members, larger committees may include large numbers of scientists working with laboratory animals. A recent study of 21 of the top 25 National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded institutions found 93% of IACUC chairpersons and 67% of committee members were animal researchers while another 15% were veterinarians employed at the institutions (Hansen, Goodman & Chanda 2012). The limited diversity on these committees has meant that reviews of protocols have focused on procedure and design and an unwillingness to undertake cost-benefit analyses or consider ethical issues, as is done on Institutional Review Boards (IRBs; Hansen 2012). What is most concerning, though, is the tendency to eventually approve almost all the

protocols these committees receive. In one study, a 98% approval rating was obtained for in-house protocols, compared to a 61% approval rating for external submissions, suggesting that IACUCs relax their standards for studies submitted from their own institutions (Plous & Herzog 2001). Moreover, there is evidence that some of these approved protocols do not meet federal standards (Hansen et al., 2012). Although he does not support this assertion with data, one medical researcher (Rice 2011) has noted several instances where the relative ease with which protocols are reviewed by IACUCs versus the difficulty (extensive delay and cost) of obtaining IRB approval for human subjects research has meant that his colleagues have chosen to study animals as opposed to studying humans despite the fact that human subjects may have been the first choice.

Although most protocols are eventually approved, failures to adhere to the AWA have been reported. Despite the AWA's requirement that researchers consider alternative procedures in the research protocols submitted to the IACUC, in a 2005 report of the USDA's Inspector General (USDA 2005), it was found that many of the IACUC's in U.S. research facilities were not fulfilling their mandate to consider alternatives to animal studies, to make available sufficient veterinary care, to examine painful interventions, or to determine if studies represent an unnecessary duplication. Moreover, in a three month period in 2005, there were 124 reports of 160 incidents (representing 216 "reportable departures from OLAW and ILAR") from 91 institutions (Gomez, Conlee & Stephens 2010). At minimum, 1,006 nonhuman animals (primarily rats, mice, guinea pigs, and hamsters) were affected in 74% of the incidents. Around eighty percent of the animals affected died, including at least 36 that were euthanized. The actual total is unknown and undoubtedly higher as some of the information provided to the authors was either heavily redacted or missing. The authors found that at least 82% of the 1,006 animals "directly or potentially" experienced pain or distress as a result of the incidents.

To be fair, there has been a renewed emphasis in recent years on enforcement of the AWA (Cardon, Bailey & Bennett 2012). At the same time, as the federal government sequester went into effect in the spring of 2013, the availability of manpower to enforce the AWA is likely diminished. Regardless, to those concerned about the plight of animals, the current system is grossly inadequate both in its intent and implementation. Most animals are not covered by the AWA, and other regulations are not specific enough to cover the thousands of other species that

may be studied. Furthermore, for those animals that are covered, the system is engineered so that almost all protocols eventually gain approval. This occurs despite the fact that several incidents have been reported where researchers have failed to adhere to AWA standards. Even if it were well-enforced, the present system would be unacceptable to those concerned about the rights of nonhuman animals as they are kept in unnatural captivity, inflicted with diseases or conditions they don't have (or bred in an unnatural way to have the conditions), and often subjected to pain, discomfort, or death. The problems that have been described highlight additional flaws in the system that just make it worse for animals.

Refinement, Reduction, and Replacement

Objections to animal research have been based primarily on concern for their rights and treatment although others have objected to the costs of these experiments as well as their scientific grounding (Greek & Greek 2000; Ruesch 1983; Shapiro 1998). Concerns about the conditions of laboratory animals have led to widespread adoption of the principle of the three Rs: refinement, reduction, and replacement (Russell & Burch 1959; Nuffield Council on Bioethics 2005). For some, the goal of the three Rs has been animal welfare or improved conditions in research studies. *Refinement* refers to improving the conditions under which the animals are studied. It can mean substituting less invasive methods of study, the use of more effective anesthesias, or the provision of a better environment more suitable to the animal's needs. *Reduction* means that fewer animals will be used in research studies. This can be accomplished through eliminating unnecessary duplication of studies, data sharing, and even improved experimental designs and statistical methods (Festing 2004). *Replacement* involves the development of alternatives to animal testing as long as the replacements do not involve harm to other animals. Some examples include computer modeling of the system to be studied, substitution of cell and/or tissue cultures, microdosing (giving small doses of drug compounds to humans in order to ascertain pharmokinetic properties) (Rowland 2006), and redesigning the study to include human participants. The principle of replacement has been adopted into the U.S. AWA in the requirement that researchers investigate the possibility of alternatives to the use of live animals before proceeding with invasive experiments. As advances in technology drive the development of more accurate, less costly and more efficient replacements for animal model

research, there are more and more opportunities for examining research questions relevant to humans without studying animals.

Although some would consider the three Rs to be an area of agreement for both animal advocates and researchers alike (e.g. Flecknell 2002), it is not without controversy. Most notably, the three Rs are a general principal, not a regulatory mechanism (Ibrahim 2006). Due to substantial loopholes in the law (e.g. the exemption, for rats, mice, fish, birds and farm animals and the exception for pain relief in cases of "scientific necessity"), the incorporation of this concept into the AWA has given the appearance of concern for animals without an enforceable mandate that researchers make a genuine attempt to utilize alternatives. During a 3 month period in 2005, 32 incidents were reported to NIH's Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare, where researchers failed to do an adequate search for alternatives (Gomez et al. 2010). If this is a representative number, it translates to approximately 128 incidents in that year that were identified. There may have been several others that were not detected. Consequently, many would argue that additional protections are required for inclusion of nonhuman animals in research.

The Argument from Marginal Cases

In philosophical discussions of the rights of animals, some of which have described how most animal model research is not justified on moral grounds, theorists have based their argument on what has come to be known as the Argument from Marginal Cases (AMC) (Dombrowski 1997; Francione 2008; Regan 1983; Singer 1990). Although there are other differences among their philosophical stances, AMC is one common thread which many seem to espouse. According to AMC, humans possessing higher cognitive abilities that enable them to make complex decisions involving morality are *moral agents*. They include adolescents and adults with intact cognitive abilities. Regan would categorize people with significantly impaired cognitive abilities, young children who are incapable of reasoning, and nonhuman animals to be *moral patients*. Regan also asserts that those moral patients (e.g. most normal mammals aged one or more) who possess capabilities such as "perception, memory, desire, belief, self-consciousness, intention, a sense of the future" have an inherent value, since having these abilities makes them "subjects of a life," and thus, deserving of consideration (Regan 1983, p. 81). He concludes that the only morally significant difference between human moral patients and

nonhuman animal moral patients (e.g. mammalian animals) is the species to which they belong. In fact, adult members of some animal species (e.g. dogs, primates, horses, dolphins) have more developed language and thought capacities than some human moral patients.

The concept of the moral patient is important to a discussion of animal experimentation in that the groups identified as human moral patients correspond very closely to two of those groups identified as vulnerable populations[3,4] by federal law in the U.S. and by other laws elsewhere, such as the EU (Silverman et al. 2004) and Australia (National Health and Medical Research Council et al. 2007), specifically, very young children and individuals with significant cognitive impairments. It is ironic that humans with diminished capacities are afforded greater protections in research studies than animals with similar cognitive abilities, further drawing attention to the fact that animals are used in research as models for humans, presumably because the animals have reduced capacities (Walker 2006). The guidelines governing research on humans and animals are based on fundamentally different principles. For humans (especially humans that are members of vulnerable populations), great care is taken to ensure that harm and risk are minimized to research participants in relation to potential benefits and that they are informed of these risks and benefits. With animals, the possible benefits to humans are almost always given greater weight than the interests of the research animals, with the only provisions being that if animals are given adequate veterinary care, "it is permissible in principle to do nearly anything to animals for the sake of some promising scientific end" (Walker 2006, p. 312).

Although there are other populations included in the category of vulnerable populations (such as prisoners in the U.S.), the fact that both very young children and persons with cognitive disabilities are also included in this category means that there are already some guidelines for including in research individuals with equivalent cognitive capacities to animals. These are the most appropriate counterparts for nonhuman animals as the ability to willingly participate in research studies necessitates the capacity to understand the concept of research or at least the activities that the research study entails. Members of other vulnerable populations such as prisoners and pregnant women possess these capabilities. Consequently, when we refer to guidelines, laws, and regulations, we are only referring to those specifically for young children and persons with cognitive impairments, as these represent the most appropriate counterparts to nonhuman animals. Hence, if we were to give animals the same protections as these populations,

we could model new guidelines for animals on extant guidelines for these populations. As these individuals will be referenced frequently, they will be referred to as non-agent humans (NAHs). Applying the protections given to NAHs to research with nonhumans, some studies would be allowed, basically those which have comparable risks, benefits, and protections to studies conducted with NAHs. Currently, research is routinely conducted with NAHs without controversy as their rights are almost always protected. If we were to apply AMC with rigor, it seems logical that similar types of research studies could be conducted with animals if the same pains were undertaken to protect their rights. It is reasonable to include animals in the same research category as NAHs (rather than categorizing them with all humans) since they are incapable of giving informed consent and additional safeguards need to be put in place to protect their interests.

Proposed Guidelines for Conducting Research on Animals

Although many have addressed the issue of the use of animals in research, most have either 1) described the ways they are used, 2) discussed the ethical issues inherent in their use, or 3) argued either for or against their use. What is lacking is a discussion of how animals might participate in research studies in settings where their rights are equivalent to those of human participants.[5] In other words, if a society or an institution were to ban invasive studies of animals, might they still be included in some protocols where the degree of harm and/or risk is comparable to those conducted with human participants? Walker (2006) discusses the possibility of animal assent and notes that animals assent to other activities (such as dogs expressing willingness to go outside). Pluhar (2006) acknowledges that animals could take part in some research studies just as we allow humans to participate. She notes that the guiding principle with children and mentally incompetent individuals is "concern for the best interest of the nonparadigmatic humans" (Pluhar 2006, p. 350) and that some experiments would not be permissible. She also states that guardians must have the best interest of the nonhuman at heart and could not be a breeder or animal supply house. All the questions and issues that may arise when trying to delineate how animals can be researched while their rights are preserved are unlikely to be resolved in this early discussion. However, it can be a first step toward developing initial guidelines and a springboard to further examination and refinement.

According to AMC, animals should be afforded the same rights and protections that we currently extend to human moral patients. Consequently, there should *not* be separate guidelines for humans and animals, and decisions should not take species into consideration. In addition to what is typically required for IRB submission, narratives would address whether the interventions described could be used with human participants as a litmus test to determine if the rights of the animals included in the study were being safeguarded adequately. The implication of this stance is that there should not be a separate committee for evaluating research on animals. Rather, the same IRBs that have traditionally made decisions about human subjects research should do the same for nonhuman animals. This is very important for three reasons. First, having a separate committee implies there are separate guidelines and a different process for animals. If we are proposing that animals have the same rights as NAHs, then the same committee should make judgments about both groups. Second, most IRB members do not have a vested interest in the continuation of animal model research and consequently there would not be as much concern about their objectivity as there would be with committees comprised mostly of researchers that had performed animal research under the provisions of the AWA. Third, human subjects IRBs typically have a great deal of experience scrupulously protecting the rights of human research subjects. Consequently, they would be best able to apply those same considerations to nonhumans. At the same time, additional members of the committee would need to be added who would advocate for the interests of the animals as well as experts in the particular species being studied (e.g. animal behaviorists). If the expertise were not available locally, ad hoc reviews of the protocols could be solicited from experts at other institutions in the same way that external reviews of papers are obtained by academic journals.

As additional protections, the guidelines utilized by these IRBs would prohibit captive breeding for research purposes, and they would prohibit animals from being maintained in a living situation that was substantially different from what they would be in if they were not in a research study. Although some human vulnerable populations such as prisoners and psychiatric inpatients are held in captivity, they are held captive for reasons other than being used in a research experiment, meaning that their captivity is not a direct consequence of research participation. To hold humans captive their entire lives, without consent, for the sole purpose of using them in research studies would be considered highly unethical and would violate the laws

of most (if not all) civilized societies. Consequently, in the scheme proposed, animals would not be held in a captive living situation for the sole purpose of being studied. In other words, research participation would be only a small part of an animal's life; it would not consume the nonhuman's entire life.

As captive breeding for research would be prohibited, only certain groups of animals could be studied. Research on animals that are not free roaming would be limited to "socially valued animals" (Miller 2001, p. 743). Some examples include family pets and "exotic" animals residing in sanctuaries. By limiting research participation to these animals, there is more assurance that there will be no exploitation, abuse, maltreatment, or neglect in a research context as their life and well-being is of value to their guardians. This stands in contrast to rats and mice, who are often bred to be used in laboratories or are considered by many to be "pests" and have few human protectors.

Research Guidelines for Non-agent Human Populations and Their Application to Nonhuman Animals

A review of regulations and best practices for conducting research on NAHs is warranted as these regulations and practices can serve as a model for guidelines for conducting research on nonhumans. In most countries engaged in research, IRBs review proposals which must address questions regarding the rights and protections owed to human participants. Usually, informed consent is required. IRBs make a determination as to whether the project risk/balance analysis justifies approving any potential study. In the U.S., there are specific guidelines for research with young children that center on provisions regarding consent/assent and risk. These will serve as a basis for deriving similar guidelines for nonhumans.

Consent

Studies conducted with NAHs can be divided into those that are therapeutic and those that are non-therapeutic. In non-therapeutic studies there is no expectation of a direct benefit to the participant from taking part in the study. Instead, individuals agree to be included in studies because they are interested in the question being addressed, want to make a contribution, or there is some form of compensation. In therapeutic studies, usually the research is designed to investigate an intervention for a medical or psychiatric condition so individuals seek to participate in these studies because there is some expectation of therapeutic benefit.

In both therapeutic and non-therapeutic research, NAHs are by definition deemed incapable of giving consent. In these cases, consent by proxy is sought (Silverman et al. 2004). These proxies should be legally authorized to make decisions. In the U.S., both parents need to give permission for their child to take part in research studies unless one is deceased, unknown, incompetent, unavailable, or only one parent has legal custody (HHS, Human Subject Protection Regulations). If the child has a legal guardian, that person would provide consent. The law stipulates some conditions for waivers, such as in the case of abused and neglected children. Children who are wards of the state may be included in research studies only if 1) the study relates to their status as wards or 2) it is conducted in a setting (e.g. hospital, school, camp, or institution) where the majority of children are not wards. For children who are wards, the IRB appoints an advocate, who "shall be an individual who has the background and experience to act in, and agrees to act in, the best interests of the child for the duration of the child's participation in the research and who is not associated in any way (except in the role as advocate or member of the IRB) with the research, the investigator(s), or the guardian organization" (HHS Human Subject Protection Regulations, p. 13).

As with human studies, studies of nonhuman animals that might be considered by IRBs can be divided according to whether they are therapeutic or non-therapeutic. Non-therapeutic research has no direct medical, psychological, or behavioral benefit to the animal. An example of this type of research is studies of dog cognition where people bring their pet dogs into the lab. Therapeutic research is performed to investigate medical, psychological, or behavioral interventions that might benefit one or more species of animals. Most of these studies are done by veterinary researchers although there may be some performed by other professionals.

Animal guardians would be the logical choice as proxies for consent if family pets were being studied. If there are two guardians, both would need to give permission. If there is only one guardian, that individual should reside with the nonhuman animal and there should be some record to show this (e.g. pet license, veterinary records, and/or adoption records). As with children, there may be some circumstances where a waiver of consent might be obtained (e.g. abuse or neglect). In these cases, an advocate may be appointed by the IRB if the animal has been removed from the household and there is no other guardian.

However, for animals in other living situations (e.g. shelters, sanctuaries, or in the wild), there may not be a person functioning as a guardian. As their situation is analogous to children who are wards, these animals could only be studied if the study was focused on shelter animals or it took place in a veterinary setting where they were being seen and the majority of the animals in the study were not shelter animals. The individual responsible for running the facility would need to give permission. For animals that are wild, if they reside in a state or national park, there is usually one or more persons in charge who can provide permission, as the study will likely be performed in that jurisdiction. Permission would be provided by the individual(s) with authority over their place of residence. If the animals are migratory, and the study covers their migration, permission may need to be secured from more than one authority. In addition, an advocate who is independent of the researchers and qualified to promote the animal's interest would be appointed by the IRB to act on his/her behalf for the duration of the study.[6]

This raises the question as to whether humans can act as responsible proxies for animals in experiments. Studies show that they seem to be responsible and motivated for non-exploitative reasons when acting as proxies for children and persons with cognitive impairments. In one study (Rothmier, Lasley & Shapiro 2003), guardians (predominantly parents) cited learning more about their child's illness and making a contribution to science as the most important reasons for volunteering their children for study participation. Financial gain was less important in clinical settings (e.g. Langley et al. 1998; Rothmier, Lasley & Shapiro 2003) than in studies of healthy volunteers (Bigorra & Baños 1990; Novak, Seckman & Stewart 1977). Iacono and Murray (2003) reviewed studies which used proxy consent, concluding that proxies make decisions based on their perception of what is in the best interest of the person with an intellectual disability and based on what they believe that person's decision would be if s/he was capable of making it. Calveley (2012) notes that the Mental Capacity Act of 2005 in the UK requires that for individuals who lack decision-making ability, it must be shown that participation will be in their "best interest" even though this is a subjective concept. Taken together, these findings suggest that proxies can act responsibly in making decisions about study participation and act in the best interest of NAHs.

As for whether humans can act as responsible guardians in research studies of pets and other valued animals, that question has not be answered directly. Hankin (2009) notes that in

most cases, animal guardians in consultation with their veterinarians make responsible decisions regarding their animals' health care, with the most notable exception being premature requests for euthanasia for elderly pets. If we extrapolate from the research examining proxies decision-making regarding NAH's study participation, we might assume that proxies would also act in the best interest of the animals they are responsible for when making similar decisions. However, as with humans, there are no guarantees that this will occur. It is quite possible that animal guardians may give permission for their pets (or other animals for whom they are responsible) to participate in a study that may ultimately cause the animal harm. Consequently, it is incumbent on the researcher, in consultation with the IRB operating at his/her institution, to carefully design the study so as to minimize risk as much as possible, with special attention paid to inclusion and exclusion criteria. In other words, if there are characteristics of animal participants (e.g. concurrent illness), which would put them at greater risk for adverse consequences if they enroll in a study, these should be well defined in case permission is given in error. Consequently, the principal investigator, in conjunction with the institution's IRB, would bear ultimate responsibility for the animal's safety and well-being, as is currently the case with studies of child participants.

Non-therapeutic Research

Historically, exclusionary approaches have been used to limit the ability to give consent to those who have the cognitive capacity to understand research studies and make decisions about participation (Dewing 2007). This has meant that NAHs were excluded from the process and proxy consent was sought instead. An inclusionary approach means that to the extent possible these individuals are a part of the process. For children, the National Children's Bureau recommends that parents are essentially gatekeepers giving consent for researchers to approach the child. In giving assent, children *de facto* give the ultimate "consent" (National Children's Bureau 1993). For children to assent they must positively agree to be a part of the study (Silverman et al. 2004).

Conducting non-therapeutic research with animals would require both proxy consent from guardians and assent from the animal. To switch to a form of proxy consent without assent would implicitly emphasize a belief in animal inferiority as we would be neglecting to take into account whether they want to participate in the research activity. Depending on the

characteristics of the animal population being studied, IRBs would determine if animal assent is appropriate and how it would be assessed.

Voluntariness

For NAHs, providing assent means making a deliberate choice free from outside influence (Miller & Nelson 2006). This may be difficult to accomplish as children's decisions are often impacted by their parents and those of persons with cognitive disabilities may be influenced by others as well. Bray (2007) builds on this definition by proposing that the individual must freely choose to participate in the study and impart this choice clearly to the researcher, understanding that the option to withdraw is always present. In healthcare research there can be a risk that the power differential between providers and patients will impact the patient making the decision of his/her own free will. Children might refrain from withdrawing from research studies due to their belief that the researchers would be unhappy if they did so (Ondrusek et al. 1998). Wolthers (2006) found that children believed their parents, classmates, and teachers thought that research participation was a good idea and consequently might not have given assent free from this influence.

Just as the relative powerlessness of children and persons with cognitive impairments may impact the voluntariness of their decision, the same may be true for some domestic and captive bred animals who are accustomed to being commanded by humans. To obtain true animal assent, researchers must ensure that they are not receiving undue influence from their human companions. Treats or other inducements could not be used to lure them into assenting to procedures which they would otherwise reject. Similarly, punitive forms of coercion or even obedience commands could not be used to obtain assent. Although it is unrealistic to turn off an animal's tendency to obey a human to whom s/he is bonded, the human may be asked to refrain from using obedience commands to compel the animal into assenting. The researcher would have to specify how assent might be obtained free from undue influence.

Another concern that may impact the voluntariness of animal assent is the tendency in some species to exhibit an anti-predatory response that conceals their distress and the fact that some species' behavior may be difficult to read. In these instances, it is incumbent upon the researcher to demonstrate that his or her team possesses the required expertise to read the body

language and/or vocalizations of these species, describing in concrete terms what would constitute assent.

Developmental Level and Communication of Assent.

Typically, assent involves the investigator communicating the purpose of the study, the procedures to be administered, and benefits and harms (Diekema 2003). For children, assent guidelines stipulate that IRBs should take into account the child's age, maturity level and psychological state (Miller & Nelson 2006). For example, adolescents and older pre-adolescents are capable of understanding the concept and purpose of research studies. For younger children that cannot understand more abstract ideas such as "research," a more developmentally appropriate form of assent is warranted, often involving simplified explanations of the research tasks. For pre-verbal children and individuals with severe cognitive impairments, this may require the use of props (Dewing 2007) or very simple non-verbal communication. Presentation of information should be user friendly and tailored to the person's needs so that it is presented at an appropriate pace with neither too much nor too little given at one time (Lambert & Glacken 2011).

Just as imparting the nature of research studies to persons with limited verbal abilities is difficult, understanding their communications about participation is just as challenging. As these individuals may be incapable of verbalizing their assent, it may instead be implied. To assess implied assent, the researcher needs to comprehend the meaning of the individual's facial expressions, behaviors, and vocalizations, so it is important that s/he familiarize him/herself with the participant beforehand as the validity of implied assent depends on an accurate interpretation of these forms of communication (Calveley 2012). Assessing the capacity for assent involves identifying how persons usually "consent" to a range of activities within their day-to-day lives (Dewing 2007). Although studies have shown that caregivers are adept at these interpretations, other researchers (Grove et al. 1999; Hogg et al. 2001) have found that observers make diverse judgments about the meanings of these communications, which can be inaccurate. Calveley (2012) advises that communication passports and profiles be developed. These tools are used to record important information about the meanings of the person's behaviors, expressions, and utterances. Maintaining assent requires repeated assessment in case it is withdrawn during the course of the study (Dockett, Einarsdottir & Perry 2009).

In order for assent to be given and maintained, researchers must ensure that participants do not dissent. Dissent does not require a reason or justification and can occur at any time. Moreover, persons can assent to some parts of the research and not assent or even dissent to others. Dissent can be expressed verbally, behaviorally (escape attempts), or emotionally (expressions of distress or aggression) (Black et al. 2010). Calveley (2012) gives several examples of dissent including biting fingers, throwing things, pushing, and screaming. The researcher is responsible for being cognizant of verbal, non-verbal, and behavioral signals and learning what means "yes" and what means "no" (Dewing 2002; Lambert & Glacken, 2010). If there is ambiguity, he or she has an obligation to try to determine the meaning of the behavior and, if necessary, seek assistance from a knowledgeable informant (e.g. family member, caregiver). If the meaning of the communication remains unclear, the person should not participate in the study.

As with NAHs, communicating to a nonhuman animal about a research study and understanding whether the animal assents can be challenging. Certainly, the procedures used for providing descriptions to adolescents, older children, and even younger children who typically receive simplified narratives of what participation entails would not be appropriate for animals. As with NAHs, a variety of forms of communication could be used including simple vocabulary words, gestures, and even props. A dog might understand the question, "Do you want to go for a walk?" If the investigation is centered around dog-walking, then a verbal question to a dog may be appropriate. However, if the research tasks do not fall within the animal's vocabulary, then showing the animal what is involved may be suitable. In marine mammal playback studies where sounds are presented to wild marine mammals, researchers could present an initial brief sample of the sound and assess whether the nonhuman animal shows interest and approach behavior (Deecke 2006). For studies of horses that involve discrimination training with positive reinforcement, the horse can be led into the stall where the study is being conducted and shown the learning task (pressing a lever for a food reward) (McCall et al. 2003). In any case, it should be incumbent upon the researcher to document that the animal has at least a rudimentary understanding of what is required of him/her for participation. If it is not possible for the animal to understand what research participation involves, then researchers should make this case and

argue that assent should be waived. In these cases, permission from proxies still would be obtained. IRBs should be responsible for ensuring that this is well-documented.

In order to obtain implied assent, the researcher should be able to understand the animal's vocalizations, facial expressions, and behaviors. To do so, a communication profile can be developed based on knowledge of what species-specific behaviors usually mean and information from the human caregiver (if applicable) about how consent to activities is typically given (Calveley 2012). For example, in wild cetaceans, approach behaviors and increased sociability may be signs of assent to activities that researchers present (Marino & Frohoff 2011). Dogs will focus on the researcher and the task, wag their tails briskly, sometimes pant, and generally show interest and even enthusiasm. Horses will have a calm demeanor, be responsive, prick their ears forward, show soft eyes, lower their heads, relax their jaws, and even yawn. Assent should be re-assessed repeatedly throughout the trial and the researcher should be conscious of signs of withdrawal of assent. In cases of ambiguity, when even information from a knowledgeable informant is insufficient, the animal's participation should be stopped. If it is not possible to communicate to an animal the nature of what their participation entails, it might still be possible to proceed under two conditions: 1) if their companion consents and 2) if there is constant monitoring of mood, verbalizations, and behavior for signs of assent withdrawal.

Transparency

Considering that NAHs are by definition "vulnerable," transparency in the consent and assent process is even more paramount. Most important to this transparency is the presence of comprehensive documentation. Researchers should make extensive notes including location, time, information given, props or equipment used, questions asked, and answers given (Dewing 2007). A detailed description of how consent is obtained should be included in articles (Dewing 2002). To ensure that the individual was not adversely affected by the experience, feedback after the experiment is conducted might be provided from staff, caregivers, or parents. As further assurance that protocols are being followed, a third party could monitor how participants are run and decisions are made, or the consent/assent (or even entire experiment) could be videotaped if confidentiality is appropriately maintained.

Studies that purport to protect the rights of their nonhuman research participants should establish a protocol for ensuring the transparency of study participation. As with studies of

NAHs, this may include careful documentation, independent monitors, and/or videotaping. If video recordings are made, these recordings could be available to IRB committees so they could check to see that consent and assent procedures were being properly executed and that animals' and caregivers' decisions were being respected. Similarly, any documentation either by the research team or an independent monitor should be available to the institution's IRB for periodic oversight. By instituting these procedures, researchers would likely be more careful in adhering to protocols.

These guidelines for insuring transparency would be different from those currently used for IACUCs as part of AWA enforcement. As animals would not be housed in an experimental setting, there would be no need to focus on their care as that would not be provided by the researchers. Instead, the emphasis would be on the actual running of the experiments. First, attention would be paid toward obtaining consent from guardians or other proxies and assent from the animals. In addition, the inquiry would focus on adherence to approved written protocols. This could be accomplished through checklists where researchers or their qualified assistants would indicate follow through on every element of the procedure from participant recruitment, to consent and assent, to assessments and interventions, and finally debriefing (if appropriate). Alternately, some or all of these procedures could be videotaped. It would be incumbent on the IRB to decide, based on the level of risk inherent in the experiment, whether videotaping was necessary.

Compensation

Although there is no law prohibiting compensation for research participation to non-agent humans or their adult proxies, there are ethical concerns that need to be addressed. Most notably, compensation cannot be so substantial as to represent an "undue inducement" (Grady 2005, p. 1683) and threaten the voluntariness of informed consent. With children, there are special considerations, as payment to their parents presents a risk of making a child a "commodity." Instead, payment to parents should be limited to either reimbursement for expenses (e.g. childcare, travel) or remuneration for time and inconvenience. Giving money or non-cash gifts to children can be challenging as developmental considerations impact how children might perceive them. Indeed, for very young children, even small gifts might represent an undue inducement if they are highly valued.

Translating these guidelines for animals, researchers need to steer clear of offering undue inducements to proxies for their animals' participation in research studies to avoid the temptation to use animals as commodities. As with children, any monetary compensation paid to a proxy should not exceed a reasonable approximation of expenses related to time, travel, and inconvenience. To offer higher sums would risk compromising informed consent. Further, as animals may highly value even small rewards (such as treats), these may be seen as undue inducement for gaining their assent and, therefore, should be avoided in this context.

Therapeutic Research

Therapeutic research typically involves the prospect of medical or psychiatric improvement through participation in a research study and requires decision-making for NAHs. In most countries where this research is performed, the medical and legal systems endeavor to maintain patient autonomy by requiring the proxy to use "substituted judgment" in their evaluation (Oberman & Frader 2003). Hence, the surrogate must infer what the individual would choose to do if s/he were able. Because this criterion is not easily applied to children, in their case, the "best interests" standard is used. However, considering parents' desperation and the potential conflict of interests when researchers are also medical providers, there is a question whether parents can, in fact, act in their children's best interests. Assent is less critical in these studies as there is the possibility of improvement in medical or psychiatric conditions. Consequently, the US and the International Conference on Harmonization of Technical Requirements for Registration of Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH) allow the override of the child's lack of assent if it can be shown that participation will result in some health benefit (Blake et al. 2011).

In the U.S., a large number of children with cancer participate in clinical trials including Phase I clinical trials that are designed to determine toxicity and the maximum dose that is tolerated for new drugs (Oberman & Frader 2003). At best, 3% to 17.7% of children enrolled in Phase I studies of cancer drugs achieved either complete or partial remission. On the other hand, the drugs rarely proved fatal. Less than 1% of participants were believed to have died due to drug toxicity. Phase III trials tend to have better outcomes as the drugs (or other intervention) have already some level of demonstrated safety and potential for therapeutic benefit. Indeed, studies

show that children in these trials have superior outcomes to children receiving similar treatments outside of research protocols.

The animal analogue of therapeutic research is veterinary research. As with children, if the animal research participants have medical conditions that would likely benefit from research participation, then assent could be waived. Similarly, in studies where animals did not have a medical condition, but the benefits of participation were judged by proxies to outweigh the risks (e.g. preventive care) assent could be waived also. In these cases, where the animal is incapable of understanding the full implications of his/her condition and/or the risks and benefits of the medical intervention, human companions might be better able to weigh the pros and cons and make the ultimate decision as is done when veterinary care is sought in non-research settings. This decision-making scenario mirrors what is typically done with young children who have serious medical conditions and whose parents elect for them to participate in clinical trials (Oberman & Frader 2003).

Risk

For research involving children, U.S. federal law (HHS Human Subject Protection Regulations) stipulates conditions under which studies posing greater than minimal risk may be conducted. In all cases (research involving minimal risk or greater than minimal risk), consent from parents or guardians as well as assent from children must be obtained. In addition, for studies posing greater than minimal risk, a cost benefit analysis to the research participants must be undertaken that shows that the potential benefits to participants justifies the risk they undertake and that the potential benefit is at least as desirable as other available approaches. If there is no foreseeable benefit to individual participants, investigators must show 1) that study participation incurs only a small increase over minimal risk, 2) that the interventions are comparable to those that they would otherwise receive in a non-research setting, and 3) that the study is likely to yield important findings about the participant's condition that is generalizable to others. There is a final category of risk that necessitates review by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) after that of the local IRB. If the local IRB determines that the research does not meet the aforementioned criteria, it can refer the matter to HHS if it determines that the study presents "a reasonable opportunity to further the understanding, prevention, or alleviation of a serious problem affecting the health or welfare of children" (HHS

Human Subject Protection Regulations, p. 13). In these cases, the Secretary (or his/her designee) after consulting with a panel of experts and allowing for public comment must determine that the research either meets the requirements in CFR 46.404-406 or there is a reasonable chance to further the understanding of the condition the child has and there are assurances that the researchers will adhere to sound ethical principles in conducting the research.

If we were to apply these provisions to animals, there would be several implications. First, in all cases, informed consent from an appropriate proxy and assent (if the animals were capable of understanding what the intervention entailed) would need to be obtained. Second, for studies of specific disorders or conditions, only animals that were already afflicted could be included in protocols. The current practice of inducing illness or injury in healthy animals to study veterinary interventions would cease. Instead, researchers would need to recruit sick or injured animals from the community for their studies. Third, if applying the interventions involving more than minimal risk, the investigators would have to demonstrate that these risks were commensurate with other treatments available to the participants. Fourth, only investigations of interventions likely to yield information that would further the knowledge of that condition would be allowed.

In considering these issues, it seems feasible that laws created for NAHs can be applied to animals. To do so would mean that the greatest care would be taken to make certain that the rights of nonhuman participants were respected. Studies would only be approved if both consent and assent (if indicated) were obtained and they were justified by the risk/benefit analysis. Ideally, to increase the likelihood that these guidelines are applied, there is transparency and accountability in the conduct of the research through some combination of extensive documentation, feedback from guardians, third party monitoring, and video-taping if indicated. This stands in contrast to how animals currently are treated in research.

Examples of Research Studies

If newer guidelines that ensured the rights of animals involved in research studies were to be adopted, what types of research would be permissible under this new system? The following are some examples of categories of research studies that could be conducted:

Unobtrusive observation of animals in their natural habitats. Scientists undertake many studies all over the world involving observing animals in their natural environment. As

there is no interference, there is no infringement on the animals' lives, and certainly no decline in their quality of life. That's not to say that the animal would be unaware of any humans that are present. However, as humans have long been a part of the natural environment, the mere presence of observing humans would not be a valid reason for declining approval of the study. As there are no direct interventions performed on these animals, consent and assent may be waived.

Interspecies Collaborative Research (ICR; Marino & Frohoff 2011). In describing ICR, Marino and Frohoff use the example of cetacean research to underscore the problems inherent in conducting research on captive subjects. ICR emphasizes respect for the animal participants while performing these studies in their natural habitats. This offers the advantage of reduced stress on the animal and improved ecological validity. However, the authors also caution that there are special considerations (such as susceptibility to pathogens) that should be addressed before undertaking this type of study.

Research on human companion animals.[7] There are studies undertaken of animals that are not kept in cages, but live with their human companions and only come to the laboratory for their research participation (for examples of these studies, see Miller, Rayburn-Reeves & Zentall 2008 and Horowitz, Hecht & Dedrick, in press). There have been studies of dog cognition undertaken at Barnard College, Duke University, Eckerd College, the University of Kentucky and other institutions from around the world. In these studies, dogs residing in the community were brought in by their human companions to participate in activities that allowed the researchers to better understand how they think. In most if not all cases, these activities did not cause the animals any discomfort, pain, or distress. And, as they were with their human companions who loved and cared for them, there was additional assurance that the animals interests were being safeguarded as the dogs were only included in the study with their companions' permission.

Archival data. Archival research could be conducted on data that were gathered by other researchers using methods that did not violate the animals' rights. For example, at the Department of Evolutionary Anthropology at Duke University, studies are being conducted using Jane Goodall's data from her years studying primates. Because Dr. Goodall conducted her

studies by observing primates in the wild, her research could not be considered a violation of these animals' rights; therefore, her data could be used in archival studies.[8]

Studies involving animals in which they are not the research subjects. In some cases, animals are included in research studies although they are not research subjects. One example of this type of research is studies of dog phobia. In these cases dogs are involved in the research, but they aren't the subjects of research. In dog phobia studies, people volunteer their dogs (typically people who know the investigator) to act as the phobic stimulus. The dogs' participation requires them to be brought to the setting where the study is being conducted and held in place by a friendly person (often their human companion) while the phobic individual approaches them. There is no discomfort or pain. In this case, animal assent should be obtained as not all dogs would like this experience.

Veterinary research. Just as humans with untreatable conditions volunteer for clinical trials in an effort to find a new effective treatment for their illness, it is conceivable that caring people would volunteer their sick animals for clinical trials if existing treatments failed or if there were no known cures for the condition. In these cases, the human companions of these animals would be required to give their consent just as parents of children included in clinical trials give their consent. These trials would have other stipulations similar to those of their human based counterparts such as medical clearance from a veterinarian.

Drug trials. If veterinary medicine is to progress, then new medications will need to be tested on the nonhuman species for which they are intended. In the current scheme, these tests are done on captive animals, many of whom end up dying in toxicity tests. In the new scheme, drugs intended for veterinary use would first be tested using replacement techniques (e.g. computer modeling of effects on animal systems, tests using tissue samples). Then, those shown to be safe at this stage would be tested in animals whose guardians volunteer them (just as parents volunteer their children for drug studies). Special care would need to be taken to reduce the risk as much as possible, for example, by using micro-dosing protocols. In a sense, animals would function as humans do in phases 1-3 of current drug trials.[9]

Conclusion

Will we ever live in a world where standards that govern the use of nonhuman animals in research are analogous to those that govern studies of human participants? Several factors

suggest that we are moving in that direction. First, with the advent of new technologies, the use of animal models has become, in some fields, a less utilized method of study (Rusche 2003). For example, newer brain imaging techniques have permitted researchers to investigate questions in human participants that they previously could not study. Rather than studying animal models with highly questionable generalizability (Greek & Greek 2000; Ruesch 1983; Shapiro 1998), researchers can now address many questions in the population of interest (humans) using subjects that actually have the problem being studied (e.g. alcohol dependence) instead of relying on animal models with artificially induced versions of that problem.[10] Second, with increasingly tight budgets at universities and intense competition for government funding of research projects, the maintenance of costly animal laboratories has become financially untenable in many institutions (Ra'anan 2005). Third, with the activities of animal rights activists and even the depiction of animal experimentation in some movies, there has been a shift in the beliefs of many people such that animal experiments are seen in an unfavorable light (von Roten 2008). In the U.S., a Gallup Poll (Wilke & Saad 2013) has documented a steady decline in support for animal experimentation from 2001 to 2013, especially among young adults. In some locations, the number of people who view animal experimentation unfavorably exceeds the number that views it favorably (Pifer, Shimizu & Pifer 1994).[11]

As the conflict between animal rights activists and animal researchers continues, resolutions to the dispute remain elusive. Efforts to develop replacement tests for animal research have been largely successful, yet the technology is not used as widely as it could be despite evidence of superior utility to research performed on animals. As we move toward a world where fewer and fewer animals are used in research, there may be some settings that opt to abolish animal research that infringes on the rights of animals. In these cases, there may still be studies undertaken that respect animal rights. In this paper, we have discussed guidelines for conducting studies with animal participants that respect their rights in the same way that the rights of non-agent humans are respected. Broadly defined, these guidelines would require that animals be afforded the same protections as NAHs, that they not be bred in captivity to serve as research subjects, and that they be housed predominantly in their natural environments. In doing so, we have introduced a new concept, Animal Assent, that reflects the idea that an animal must

affirmatively engage in the research activity and any effort to withdraw from a research activity, as indicated vocalizations, affect or behavior, should be respected.

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Notes

1. There are many animal advocates who have not adopted a rightist stance. However, since the focus of this paper is on applying a philosophical tenet (The Argument from Marginal Cases) derived from philosophical writings that form the basis of the animal rights movement, consideration of how other advocates might view animal research is deemed beyond the scope of the discussion.

2. AMC uses higher mammals in making the case for their morally significant equivalence to some groups of humans, Nonetheless, it leaves open the question as to where to draw the line to determine which species may be rights holders, as there is no agreed upon basis for determining moral equivalence. In other words, should it be based on perception, cognition, sentience, autonomy, the experience of pain, some combination of these, or another quality altogether. Chan (2011) argues for ethical extensionism as there is a non-zero probability of species sentience, meaning that we should extend rights to lower animals. If we follow this logic in determining which species would be covered under the new research guidelines under consideration, the implication is that all mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates would be included.

3. Although there is not universal agreement regarding the definition of vulnerability (Ruof 2004), for the purposes of this discussion the characteristics that make certain groups of humans "vulnerable" in research settings are that they are unable to give informed consent and/or are susceptible to coercion (Kopelman 2004). In the U.S., legislation governing human subjects' research participation has identified pregnant women, prisoners, and young children as vulnerable groups.

4. Applying the term "vulnerable" to groups of humans is controversial as some consider it demeaning (e.g. Danis & Patrick 2002) or in the case of pregnant women, sexist (DeBruin 2001). Others note that the term is useful (Blacksher & Stone 2002; Nicholson 2002) in identifying groups at greater risk for harm or being taken advantage of, and therefore in need of additional protection. Because this paper refers to U.S. federal law that specifies particular groups of vulnerable humans, the term has been retained. For a more detailed discussion of the issues surrounding the use of the term "vulnerable," the reader is referred to Ruof 2004.

5. Haraway (2008) discusses the concept of animals having rights equivalent to humans in a research setting. However, she has a very different perspective, focusing on relational issues without discussing AMC or how IRB guidelines might apply to animals.

6. In other parts of the world, there may be other options besides appointing an advocate to act as proxy. In instances where family members are not available to act as proxies, the Australian Society for the Study of Intellectual Disability has indicated that "collective professional decision-making" could be effective in safeguarding participants' best interests (Dalton &

McVilly, 2006). For studies of nonhuman animals, this could be applied in cases (where there is no *de facto* guardian) with the proviso that that these professionals come from a variety of backgrounds representing a commitment to animal protection, expertise in the species being studied, and knowledge of the type of research being conducted. In addition, they should be independent of the researcher and his/her institution and act to safeguard the nonhuman animal's best interest. These individuals may be solicited on an ad hoc basis whenever these studies are proposed.

7. The term "companion animals" usually refers to people's pets, but in this case we would include all animals who are companions to humans including service dogs, therapy dogs, and other working dogs.

8. Although Dr. Goodall's studies were primarily observational, there were interactions between researchers and chimpanzee subjects. Consequently, it is reasonable to question how the conduct of research might have impacted the chimpanzee population. The presence of humans may have resulted in the chimpanzees becoming less afraid of humans leading to conflicts between the two species. In addition, closer contact between humans and chimpanzees increases the risk of disease spread to native chimpanzee populations, the leading cause of death in this species (Williams et al. 2008). On the other hand, the presence of the researchers afforded protection from poachers of the species they were studying (Pusey, Wilson & Collins 2008), and there are steps researchers can take (e.g. immunizations, quarantine periods, increased distance between observers and subjects) to reduce the risk of inter-species disease transmission. Moreover, the international fame that Goodall achieved was instrumental in prompting the Tanzanian president to afford the Gombe reserve National Park status (and consequently additional protections), contributing to habitat preservation of the chimpanzees under study. An analysis of population change for the region under study revealed that the number of chimpanzees remained stable over the 50 years they were studied by Dr. Goodall (Williams et al. 2008).

9. Drug trials pose a challenge for the development of guidelines to protect the rights of animals. If people believe that medications can be useful in veterinary settings, then they must be tested on the species for which they are ultimately intended to be used. Among humans, there are healthy adult volunteers willing to participate in Phase 1 drug trials, for which they are well compensated. They can understand the risks and benefits of participating in these trials and give consent. Animal species are not capable of this understanding and therefore cannot give consent. Children also cannot give consent; however, they only participate in clinical trials of drugs shown to be safe in adults. Typically only sick children volunteer (or are volunteered by their parents) as there is the possibility that taking the drug will improve their conditions. Consequently, if we are to make progress with veterinary medicines, it would probably be sick animals that participate in Phase 1 trials (as is the case with children) because these are likely the only animals whose guardians would volunteer them.

10. This point would not apply to veterinary research which involves study of the same species to which the findings are intended to apply.

11. There are several variables that effect attitudes toward animal experimentation including, among others, gender, location, level of harm done to the animal, species used in the experiment, and disease severity (Henry & Pulcino, 2009; Swami, Furnham & Christopher, 2008).

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Intersectionality and the Nonhuman Disabled Body: Challenging the Neocapitalist Techno-scientific Reproduction of Ableism and Speciesism

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INTERSECTIONALITY AND THE NONHUMAN DISABLED BODY: CHALLENGING THE NEOCAPITALIST TECHNO-SCIENTIFIC REPRODUCTION OF ABLEISM AND SPECIESISM

Abstract

Gregor Wolbring's "Ableism and Energy Security and Insecurity" positions ableism as a socio-cultural process defining the relation of humans to the natural world. This article aims to resolve the tension-filled relationship between Wolbring's essentialist disability studies based methodology and the wider lens of critical animal studies by suggesting a reinvention of the concept of intersectionality to further study the overlaps between ableism and speciesism.

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Neomarxian criticism of neoliberal capital begin this effort through conceiving of coalitional nodes of resistance through concepts such as "the multitude." These coalitional means of resistance are analyzed to more deeply understand the varying means through which disabled and nonhuman critical standpoints can challenge the structures which devalue such identities. Furthermore, this article argues that speciesism and ableism assume their most problematic form when resulting from the dictates of capitalist directed forces of techno-scientific knowledge production. This post-ableist and post-speciesist intersectional methodology notes moments of slippage: when disabled individuals are subjected to speciesism through being rendered nonhuman and when nonhumans are disabled and thus constructed in unique contexts by knowledge producers. In embracing an intersectional framework, this article avoids essentialisms which deny the experience of multiple oppressions. Multiple oppressions must be read as the base experience of intersectionality and crucial to the coterminous relations between ableism and speciesism. In conceiving of an intersectionality that approaches both disability and animal rights justice, this article critiques previous forms of intersectionality for abjectifying both speciesist and ableist systems of oppression, thereby positioning them within the realm of the unthought.

In Wolbring's "Ableism and Energy Security and Insecurity (2010)," the author advances a relationship between disability studies and critical animal research which privileges ableism as being formative of speciesism. He states: "Ableism leads to an ability-based and ability-justified understanding of … one's body and one's relationship with others of one's species, other species and one's environment" (2010, p. 14). Wolbring ably notes that such a relationship exists; however, he errs in the assumption that said relationship is merely one-sided. The subject positions of disability and nonhumanity are co-dependent. The tension in Wolbring's (2010) attempt to assimilate critical animal research within an expanded disability studies frame can be resolved through an intersectional approach. The feminist concept of intersectionality is useful for understanding this co-dependence because it provides a framework for viewing disability and species oppression as inter-related and parallel.

Intersectional theorizing has been less successful, however, at locating and addressing the moments in which oppressive systems do not separate, but are justified by the same reasoning. Marxian criticism fills this theoretical gap through its successful macro-level analysis of the historical fluctuations of the capitalist system. In his introduction to *The Global Industrial*

Complex, (2011) fills this gap, highlighting how "the rationalization, quantification and abstraction processes of science…[are] paralleled in dynamics unleashed by capitalism in which all things and beings are reduced to exchange value and the pursuit of profit" (p. xi). Following Best's analysis, this article analyzes nonhuman and disabled bodies from their continuous epistemic production via the scientific processes of abstraction and classification within the sciences to their more material confinement and commoditization within corporate institutions. But before this research into how speciesism and ableism collude with capitalism and modernist rationalities, one needs to properly frame the work accomplished within the intersectional framework that this essay claims as a major influence on its methodology.

In the Combahee River Collective Statement (1983, n.p.), one reads a powerful critique of capitalism and an intersectional statement that reveals an "essential agreement with Marx's theory as it applies to the economic relationships he analyzed" combined with doubt over "whether a socialist revolution that is not also a feminist and anti-racist revolution [would] guarantee [their] liberation." With such a Marxian position, Combahee was successful in critiquing the position in labor of black women while attending to both race and gender as factors in that analysis. This essay uses a similar Marxian analytic structure and set of objects of analysis that shows where speciesism and ableism meet within in certain experiential positions that will be described later.

Mierek's (2010) critique of Darwin's epistemic framing of animals in her graduate dissertation offers a very important start to a wider interrogation of how nonhuman and disabled bodies are labeled within a capitalist-positivist epistemic framework. Mierek explains that "Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection implies cross species continuity … Darwin wrote in 1871 of 'numberless gradations' separating all animals" (2010, p. 3). Darwin's work functions as an important site within the techno-scientific apparatus of biology, wherein numerous forms of life become located according to a normative and technical knowledge based network of classification. The gradations in Mierek's commentary reveal an implicit hierarchical taxonomy in scientific knowledge of nonhuman animals. The nonhuman is transfigured into an object of study or, as mentioned elsewhere by White (1974), a resource to be used for human improvement. Similarly, within Western positivist taxonomies, disabled bodies are transformed

from their feudal status of magical variation to monstrous abnormality that must be cured, studied, or isolated (Foucault, 2006; Davis, 2006).

> Soldatic and Biyanwila (2006) help to position this analysis of the foundations of modern Western constructions of disabled and nonhuman bodies within a wider intersectional scope; they explain that Western anthropocentric perspectives of science … deploys a 'natural' hierarchy of species and the notion of a sub-species. In this hierarchy of species, humans are situated as superior to nature but certain human beings are closer to nature than others. The idea of the sub-species conveys how human biology can be measured and layered into a 'hierarchy of being' (Perry and Whiteside, 1995: 5). At the pinnacle of this hierarchy are white western men where women, black and impaired bodies are located close to nature.

The gradations that Mierek (2010) reveals, as previously noted, exist as rungs on Biyanwila and Soldatic's (2006) hierarchy of being. In positivist terms, the rungs are recorded within a Biological and Medical lexicon whose main purpose is the explication of life forms which are not privileged either by humanness or able-bodiedness and are thus rendered unintelligible within privileged knowledge constructions. Mastery over animals and sickness count as founding achievements for the industrial and scientific forces of capital accumulation. The materialist, positivist epistemology is maintained *precisely* because of its power of explanation, a power that assimilates any abnormality and operationalizes all forms of life outside of easy understanding.

In situating this advocacy for nonhuman and disabled bodies in a critique of the scientific institutions, one must make the distinction that in the case of the nonhuman, factory farms postdate animal experimentation and vivisection. In terms of disabled bodies, which are now denied access, they were first pathologized and rendered disturbing through materialist scientific knowledge. The argument now takes on an epistemic scale. Taxonomy is not a physical violence, but a violence of labeling and placement. Positivist science sets the terms of engagement with the very idea of disability and animality. Taxonomies in Medicine and Biology proliferate misunderstandings of disabled and nonhuman agency, most significantly in situations when symptoms, capacities, habits, and ranges of actions are falsely projected by positivist based

knowledge production. Mierek's comments on the implications of scientific misunderstandings of animal consciousnesses are valuable.

Mierek (2010) explains that the practice of ascribing human traits to nonhuman animals is considered to be "a dangerously unempirical return to mysterious causes and unfounded superstition" (p.15). However, this capacity to locate emotions normally attributed only to humans in the nonhuman must be recognized as crucial to inter-species empathy. The sociologists and anthropologists Mierek (2010) cites within her research embrace their capacity to recognize the expression of emotion in nonhuman animals even though empirical sciences claim that such empathy is illogical. This refusal to recognize emotion and experience in the nonhuman body must be seen as the base reason supporting vivisection as a justifiable scientific practice and for why meat eating is tolerated at all.

Elsewhere, in a field known as critical affect theory, the structuring and regulation of emotion or affect is a central topic. "Affect" is defined by loosely by Gregg and Seiggworth (2010) as "those intensities that pass body to body, in those resonances that circulate about, between and sometimes stick to bodies and worlds" (p. 2), and can be understood as the emotional resonance attached to various objects, bodies, and situations. In Berlant's (2011, p. 24) *Cruel Optimism* is a concept—indeed, it explains the book's title—that describes the connections between affective attachments, duties, requirements, and expectations on to a body or bodies. Put more simply, cruel optimism constitutes the attachments, demands, and dictates of the system determining how decisions are made. In the fourth chapter, Berlant (2010, p.122) describes the struggles of young women traumatized by a fat-shaming culture; the self-hatred that said culture inscribed upon their bodies is an example of cruel optimism's compulsion. Likewise, affective structuring of bodies through the imposition of either cure-based or resource-based development terminates opportunities for disabled or nonhuman bodies to develop their own affective agency. The medical model effects this loss of agency through assuming and imposing a desire for cure upon the patient (Zola, 1987). Once more, a vivisectionist model cannot afford to grant independent emotion to the nonhuman. The animal must act irrationally for the techno-capitalist regime to carry forward; the instantiation of affective agency in the nonhuman disrupts the commodity usage of said animal because its valuelessness is questioned according to a sociability based measure.

To once more engage the scientific-capitalist construction of disability, one can recognize that medicalization, science, and capitalism have long assumed that medicine would be the sole useful way of knowing disability and disabled bodies. It is thus a central task for disability activists to critique the medical model for otherizing bodies outside the norm. In Davis' (2006) analysis of the foundation of normalcy in the wake of industrialism, it becomes clear that the force most prominent in rendering disability objectionable is a relatively modern invention linked both to statistics and eugenics. To expand on my earlier allegation that the medical model imposes a desire for cure upon patients, Zola (1987, p. 63) explains that the perniciousness of medicine is the rendering of sickness as something that should always necessarily be eliminated. This implies a power relationship that renders impaired or sick bodies incapable of making decision over their own lives and grants power to medical experts to lock disabled subjects into the cruel optimistic attachments of "compulsory able-bodiedness" (Campbell, 2009; McRuer, 2006). This imposition of structured feeling causes disabled subjects, even those who might not seek a cure, to constantly live in the shadow of the able-bodied ideal and be unable to accept their bodies as impaired and socially oppressed (Campbell, 2009). Such devaluation of the abnormal can be seen as the basis for the genocidal mass abortion of 94% of known developmentally disabled fetuses, the inaccessibility of many cities and towns to disabled individuals, and the proliferation of substance abuse as a coping mechanism, even for physically disabled people who must manage the psychological effects of inaccessibility (Stowe et al., 2006).

An image of the nonhuman and disabled other occupying parallel isolation cells in the heart of the white coated positivist research institution emerges. The reflection of each face behind the glass window projects out of the scientific institution and on to the street where medical and biological explanations form social and institutional interactions, where the image of a wild other haunts our ableist anthropocentric society. In these parallel holding cells of materialist positivism, one finds that animality and disability are no longer stably attached to their signifiers. Rather, each label becomes a synonym for indeterminability and wildness so elusive to empiricist science that its taxonomies are constantly re-written and revised.

This containment is here imagined metaphorically to better our understanding of the similar placement of debilitated and nonhuman bodies within Western scientific thinking, but

containment exists in a very real sense in several of the industries that must manipulate the bodies of disabled people and nonhumans for continued profit—indeed, for their very existence.

In Gleeson's (1999) sketch of the "socio-spatial" disablement that occurs simultaneously through physical inaccessibility and through institutionalized care, people with disabilities experience "brutalizing and depersonalizing care" and a "lack of privacy and individual freedom" (pp.139-140). Similarly, within the speciesist institutions described by Nibert (2011, pp. 201-204), one finds that nonhuman bodies are equally sequestered; hundreds of thousands of cows are packed into small areas and are largely kept in cages. On this basis, one recognizes that technological confinements as well as staff abuse are both hallmarks of the processing methods by which nonhuman and disabled bodies are handled by speciesist and ableist techno-capitalism. The inaccessibility of cities, a common talking point among disability activists, takes on a new meaning when one recognizes that urbanized and developed human environments are entirely inaccessible for nonhuman bodies. Thus, the techno-capitalist institution, for both the disabled and nonhuman, is a locale designed to keep such identities from achieving an empowered existence so that the machinations of profit can play across their bodies. The categories blur when one recognizes that accessibility is cultivated only for certain types of embodiments, and the bodies that do not fit the paradigm for "normalcy" will not thrive without mandatory assimilation. Like their parallel epistemic cells in which flesh is reduced to study material, nonhuman and disabled bodies must also live in parallel levels of inarticulability and dependency.

The final stage of the process is the capitalist transmutation of suffering into material privilege on behalf of those privileged both by able-bodiedness and humanity. To fully understand commoditization and the rendering of disabled and nonhuman bodies as profitable commodities by health institutions and slaughterhouses, it is useful to return to Lenin and his concept of empire. While Lenin (1917) analyzes empire in terms of how it manifests economically across core, peripheral international actors, the concept has equal value elsewhere insofar as it plays out across and species and able/disabled populations. Empire is, of course, an expansion of economic monopoly. As part of the terms of such an expansion, all of that expanding territory's population become parts of the market because, according to Lenin (1917), in other markets the bourgeoisie has already depleted the market through its process of turning

all wealth into either capital (a commodity required for the production of surplus value) or surplus value itself. Since the development of massive modern health and meat processing businesses, the aids and nurses carrying out the will of health and meat have always gotten short shrift. For example, a central aspect of Nibert's (2011, pp. 205-208) analysis of the animal food industry is the wage exploitation and racism against immigrant employees in slaughterhouses. Gleeson (1999, pp.139-140) also argues that staff working with those with disabilities are not treated well, and care workers are often underpaid.

This lack of economic benefit is compensated for through the discursive construction of the difference between staff at slaughterhouses and care institutions and the bodies they manage. Staff are notoriously allowed to abuse their subjects and often make horrible comments to re-intrench their social status of privilege and demean oppressed nonhuman and disabled populations. The similarity of this treatment within institutions is a key illustration of those situations in which speciesism and ableism blur and intersect. The privilege of care and slaughterhouse workers arises because of their power positions over subject-bodies, and because they control the condemnation and development of such bodies, an image of superiority and subordination is upheld. Ableist and speciesist privilege exists primarily in a relational sense, but it also exists through the freedom to access a city and varying bodily and social privileges which are not offered to nonhuman and disabled others. Care attendants and slaughterhouse workers are thus compensated through being located on a tier above the disabled and nonhumans which they assist. To finish this analysis, I reflect on what the process described in this article means for Marxian politics.

The situation imagined above, which links the oppression of nonhuman and disabled bodies, cannot achieve the political meaning it deserves if the intersectional frame rejects bodies whose oppressions take place outside of those historically studied within the black feminist lens that forms the core of intersectional study. In fact, much can be learned from the theoretical debate that took place between intersectionality and queer theory. In Warner's (1993) introduction to *Fear of a Queer Planet*, he critiques the "alliance politics" of "race, class and gender" for "reducing power to a formalism of membership" (p. xix). The problem in intersectional thought that Warner approaches is the difficulty of assimilating a wider variation of forms of life within a coalition defined rigidly by the experiences and ranges of identification

offered by its authors. Disability theory and critical animal studies both offer an opportunity for activist work to stretch beyond merely "focusing on our own oppression" and to relate to bodies whose own liberation struggle is made problematic by material as well as social constraints (Combahee River Collective, 1983, n.p.). While embodied theorizing is encouraged heavily in disability studies, in critical animal studies, it is impossible. Regardless, in both radical fields of study, the justice demanded requires coalition work that reaches across barriers of embodiment. For critical disability studies, that means empathizing with disabled individuals whose impairments differ from our own. In critical animal studies, that means empathizing with nonhuman realities and extending our imaginations to grasp a world in which humanity and human motivations occur as an absurd and destructive force. Through both theoretical filters, empathy for othered bodies whose experiences are different from our own are placed at a premium. Intersectionality has much to learn from the empathetic undercurrent in both critical animal and disability studies.

If intersectionality will have much work to do in approaching the dual problematic figures of disability and species, Marxism will have to do even more. In "Multitude, are you there?," Robbins (2010) reviews Hardt and Negri's Empire series and in some sense comments upon the entirety of the careers of both intellectuals. Robbins's conclusions are souring for former fans of either the Marxian sub-genre of autonomism or Hardt and Negri themselves. But what Robbin's hard-hitting criticism does make possible is the *re*conceptualization of Hardt and Negri's concept of the multitude to more properly follow the autonomist thread of widening definitions of work to expand the movement in resistance against capitalism through acknowledging workers who are already opposing it. But before that reconceptualization can be accomplished, it is important to gauge what autonomism has already done. Lazzarato's work offers some of the finest examples in which autonomism has succeeded. While classical Marxism typically conceives of labor as the back-breaking physical and menial variety, in Lazzarato's (1996) "Immaterial Labor," work is redefined to include scientific labor. Correspondingly, in Hardt's (1999) "Affective Labor," the familial duties imposed and forced upon women are added to Marxian concepts of work. Despite the poststructuralist roots of the multitude, it must include many forms of labor and the task of listing them must be possible.

This article then suggests that the final form of labor that will better include disabled,

queer, and nonhuman embodiments is the labor of having one's body developed—a form of labor I term "transmorphic" in reference to the transition in morphology or form that a commoditized nonhuman, disabled, fat, queer or trans* identifying body is either mandated to perform or not to perform. Of course, this is not so different from Berlant's cruel optimism, but here we are attached to form and consider how the dominant forces of production either mandate or prohibit bodily transformations. Then and only then, once transmorphic labor has been added to the lexicon of autonomist constituents, will the multitude truly exist in every area of society and widespread coalitionally based resistance becomes reasonably possible. This is not an end to the studies of eco-ability and the intersections between ableism and speciesism, but it is its culmination. This article has focused on the transformations that take place through technocapitalism upon the nonhuman and disabled body. Consequently, this study in transmorphology can join the expanded autonomist canon as part of an effort to acknowledge labor and resistance everywhere it exists.

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Animal Crips

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ANIMAL CRIPS

Abstract

Sunaura Taylor's "Animal Crips" examines the question of disability in nonhuman animals. By exploring numerous cases of disability in both wild and domesticated animals, Taylor asks how assumptions about disabled animals are informed by human ableism. Industrialized farmed animals not only live in such cramped, filthy, and unnatural conditions that

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disabilities become common, but they are also literally bred and altered to physical extremes, where udders produce too much milk for a cow's body to hold, where turkeys cannot bear the weight of their own giant breasts, and where chickens are left with amputated beaks that make it difficult for them to eat. That so many of the animals exploited in the food industry (as well as in other animal industries) are quite literally manufactured to be disabled, raises many complex questions for both critical animal studies and disability studies. Taylor demonstrates the need to consider these issues through a lens of disability studies, and shows how an analysis of ableism helps to expose not only how disabled nonhuman animals are treated, but how all nonhuman animals are treated. "Animal Crips" is excerpted from *Beasts of Burden*, forthcoming from the Feminist Press. All rights reserved.

A few years ago I found a story about a fox with Arthrogryposis, which is the disability I was born with. The fox was shot by a hunter because "it had an abnormal gait and appeared sick." (McBurney 2009, p. 9). The animal, who had quite significant disabilities, had normal muscle mass and the stomach contained a large amount of digested food, "suggesting that the limb deformity did not preclude successful hunting and foraging" (p. 10).

The shooting was presented as a mercy killing. (Of course, a hunter would have shot a normal fox too, just for less sympathetic reasons). However, this fox was actually doing very well. The hunter's assumptions about the fox's quality of life were formed by stereotypes of disability as a struggle, as pain, as something worse than death. The concept of a "mercy killing" carries with it two of the most prominent responses to disability: destruction and pity. The fox was clearly affected by human ableism, shot dead by someone who believed disability equaled only suffering.

In her book *Contours of Ableism* (2009), Fiona Campbell writes: "From the moment a child is born, he/she emerges into a world where he/she receives messages that to be disabled is to be *less than*, a world where disability may be *tolerated* but in the final instance, is *inherently negative*" (p. 17). Ableism at its simplest is prejudice against those who are disabled and against the notion of disability itself, but more than this ableism is the historical and cultural perpetuation of discrimination and marginalization of certain bodies labeled disabled, and the simultaneous privileging of bodies labeled able-bodied. Ableism breeds discrimination and

oppression, but it also helps form the very ways in which we define which embodiments are normal, which are valuable and which are understood as "inherently negative."

The assumptions and prejudices we hold about disabled bodies run deep—so deep that we project this human ableism onto nonhuman animals. They are subject to some of our most prominent ableist narratives. For instance, the "better off dead" narrative, which led to the shooting of the fox, is a common thread in discussions of pet euthanasia and in animal farming. There is also the inspirational animal and the disabled animal who overcomes great odds. This last is perhaps a more surprising narrative, but it seems to be gaining in popularity. Consider for example the movie *Dolphin Tale* (Smith 2011), a true story of a dolphin who loses her tail and learns to swim with a prosthetic. Or consider the fantasy film *How To Train Your Dragon* (2010), which has a similar storyline involving a dragon who gets a prosthetic tail. Then there are stories like Faith's, a dog who was born with only her two hind legs and who has learned to walk bipedally. Faith has appeared on many television shows, including *Oprah* (2010), and become an "inspiring" symbol. In fact "cute" and "inspiring" disabled animal stories seem to be all the rage on social media and various memes and websites tell the stories of disabled animals who "triumph" and "overcome" obstacles.

We not only project ableism onto nonhuman animals, *but the notion of disability itself*.[3] We really have no idea how other animals comprehend physical or cognitive difference within their species. Does a dog comprehend something is different about another dog if she has three legs? Can a monkey tell that she is different if she limps? Can animals know to help other disabled animals? Can animals recognize disability across species? A lot of fascinating evidence suggests that some animals can and do understand when another animal is different in some way.

Primatologist Frans de Waal (1996) tells the story of Yeroen, the oldest adult male chimpanzee in the Arnhem chimpanzee colony. Yeroen hurt his hand in a fight with a young rival. De Waal writes the Yeroen "limped for a week, even though his wound seemed

[1]Despite the challenges presented by the word disability, I use it throughout the remainder of this essay when discussing differences among nonhuman animals. I am drawn to the breadth the word disability has come to have within disability studies. However, I recognize the innate challenges in using this word to describe nonhuman animals and I use it acknowledging its limits.

superficial." The scientists soon discovered that "Yeroen limped only if he could be seen by his rival." Did Yeroen think that faking a limp would make his attacker more sympathetic to him? De Waal writes: "The possibilities that injuries inhibit aggression by rivals may explain Yeroen's attempt to create a false image of pain and suffering" (p. 44).

Consider another example: "A chimpanzee known as Knuckles—from the Centre for Great Apes in Florida—is the only known captive chimpanzee to suffer from cerebral palsy, which leaves him physically and mentally handicapped. Scientists have found that other chimpanzees in his group treat him differently and he is rarely subjected to intimidating displays of aggression from older males" (Center for Great Apes 2013).

However, the term and meanings of "disability" are still uniquely human[1]—created and defined by human cultures over centuries. Knuckles, it is interesting to note, is described as "suffering from" cerebral palsy, and on his website two of the three words used to describe his character are "special" and "inspirational." These trite and patronizing descriptions are regularly critiqued within disability studies for the way they present disability as simply negative—as something that needs to be "overcome" through strength of character and individual perseverance.

We read various interpretations of disability onto disabled animal bodies. As I write this, there is a new internet sensation: Chris P. Bacon (*Huffington Post*, 2013, May 22). Chris is a pig who was born in January 2013 with very small hind legs that he cannot walk on. He set the internet on fire when a video of him using a homemade wheelchair went viral. The tiny piglet, who was rescued by a veterinarian (a woman brought him in to be euthanized) has now gone through multiple wheelchairs and weighs over 70 pounds.

Chris the pig both inspires and horrifies people. Many commentators on articles about Chris want him euthanized, saying it's cruel to make him live like that. Others find him heroic, so heroic that he is invited to attend muscular dystrophy events for children. Chris is raising awareness—not about the plight of pigs, but about disability. After all, no matter how much Americans on the internet love the pig, we are still constantly reminded by his name of what he *really* is: bacon.

The language we use to discuss disabled animals is telling. One of the most well known disabled animals is Mozu (British Broadcasting Company [BBC] 1995). Mozu was a snow monkey (a Japanese macaque) who was born in Japan's central highlands with profound abnormalities of her hands and feet, it is thought from pesticide pollution. Snow monkeys spend a large amount of their time moving through trees. In the winter months this allows them to avoid wading through the thick snow that covers the ground. Because of Mozu's disabilities she was mostly unable to move through the branches; instead she traveled the nearly two miles the troop covered everyday in search of food by alternately walking on her abnormal limbs and crawling and sliding on the forest floor. When Mozu was born researchers who had been watching this troop feared she would not make it past infancy. To their surprise, Mozu lived for nearly three decades, rearing five children of her own and becoming a prominent troop member.

In an episode of the program *Nature* (BBC 1995) which tells Mozu's story, she is again and again referred to as inspiring, as suffering, and as a "very special monkey." The dramatic music and voiceovers that describe in vivid detail the struggle and suffering Mozu must be going through make it nearly impossible (even for someone like me) to watch her move through the snowy forest floor, a baby clinging to her belly and the other monkeys flying by above her, without thinking "poor Mozu!"

At the same time, I am aware of how the piece is edited. There are few shots of Mozu not struggling (very few of her getting groomed, for instance), and I question the effect the videographers had on her and on the situation. There are details such as x-rays of Mozu's hand that indicate that this was not a fully hands-off research study; and in one scene her desperation seems to stem from being chased by the cameraperson. At the very least, I question to what extent the human music and voiceovers give a sense of struggle to Mozu's story.

Yet I have no doubt that life was hard for Mozu. I find myself desperate to know what she was thinking. Was her instinct to reach for the trees unquenchable? Was she always in pain, exhausted or fearful as she moved slowly through the forest floor? Did she wonder why she was different from her companions? I cannot help but ask these questions, wondering how she felt when she saw her companions swiftly moving above her. I also realize how similar these ponderings are to the tired questions that have been reiterated again and again to me about my

own life, my own disability. However, my desire for Mozu's life to not be seen as one largely of suffering and struggle is also a projection—a projection that wishes a sort of disability empowerment onto my fellow primate. In either case, our human perspective shapes how we interpret Mozu's experience.

Mozu and the other members of her troop lived largely in a nature reserve that included manmade hot springs, used by the macaques for rest and recuperation. There was also an area of the reserve where small amounts of food were left out for them to eat, especially during the extreme winter months. Sometime after the film about Mozu was made, when she was around 18 years old, her troop split in two. The dominant monkeys took claim of the territory that included the hot springs and the area that had the free food. Mozu and her family were not dominant, and were forced to leave the territory they had known and the comforts it offered. Mozu seems to have come to the conclusion that the move was too risky for her, and she made the highly unusual decision to leave her family, so that she could try to be accepted in the dominant pack. Mozu was eventually accepted, and was allowed to have access to the free food and the hot springs. The dominant monkeys' acceptance of a lower ranked macaque was unusual. Researchers believe she was likely allowed to stay because of her disabilities (de Waal 1996). Although this may be the case, in some ways this interpretation gives Mozu no credit. It is an interpretation that seems to think it only possible that the other monkeys were acting out of charity to Mozu, rather than considering the possibility that Mozu offered something valuable to the troop.

Many of our ideas about animals are formed by our assumption that only "the fittest" animals survive, which negates the value, and in many ways even the naturalness of such things as vulnerability, weakness, and interdependence. We assume that when disabilities occur "nature will run her course," in effect saying that the natural process for a disabled animal is to die, rendering living disabled animals not only aberrational, but unnatural.

But how true is this? Mozu lived for twenty-eight years, raising children and grandchildren (de Waal 1996). Recent research offers numerous examples of disabled animals surviving, as well as a surprising number that seem to show that animals can recognize when another animal is different and needs support. There are countless stories of apes, elephants,

dogs, pigs and even ducks, geese and chickens helping their disabled companions. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, author of the best-selling book *When Elephants Weep: The Emotional Lives of Animals* (1996) writes: "It is something of a cliché among animal behaviorists that wild animals do not tolerate disabilities, and that animals who are unfortunate enough to be born with a deformity or fall ill rarely last very long. I am dubious" (p. 82). It is known, for example, that male Silverback gorillas will slow down their troops so that elderly, ill and disabled members can keep up (Prince-Hughes 2005). Other species, such as elephants and wolves, have been shown to do this as well (Bekoff 2009).

One remarkable story is that of Stumpy (Stenersen & Similä 2004), a baby orca who was first spotted in 1996. Researchers believe Stumpy must have been hurt during a run in with a boat, as the baby whale's spine and dorsal fin were seriously damaged. During the first season of observation the baby clung to his mother and scientists didn't think he would make it. When he wasn't seen for many years it was assumed he had died. Then in 2002 he was spotted again. Stumpy had survived and, remarkably, he was being included and cared for by at least five different groups of whales. Since then, these whales have been seen bringing Stumpy food and protecting him from predators. He was last seen in 2008 (Evans 2013). For anyone who thinks Stumpy's situation is an isolated anomaly, scientists believe that wild orcas often care for disabled members of their pod. David Kirby (2013) writes: "Rather than killing their disabled offspring, or simply letting them perish, wild whales go to great lengths to preserve the lives and welfare of all their members. Pods with a disabled member are known to travel more slowly than other pods." This support also seems to cross species divides. Scientists recently found an adult dolphin with a "malformed" spine who has been adopted by a group of sperm whales, a species that rarely shows interest in interspecies affection. In fact, dolphins and sperm whales are known to usually have an ambivalent if not antagonistic relationship. Tellingly, at least one behavioral biologist interviewed warned that: "We should be careful not to ‘overread’ the whales’ motivation as pity for the dolphin." It is interesting that the scientist is at once warning about anthropomorphizing the whales, but is simultaneously assuming that if the whales did feel some sort of compassion that it would be "pity" (Sullivan 2013).

Stories of disabled animals appear regularly in mainstream news outlets and are usually presented simply as heartwarming narratives of overcoming; but what do these stories tell us

about animal relationships? Many ethologists are now recognizing that some animals have a sense of justice, and much of the research animal scientists use to explore animal justice relies on examining how animals treat other wounded, elderly or disabled animals in their social groups. What do we make of stories like Babyl's for instance, an elephant who lived in the Samburu Reserve in Northern Kenya? Ethologist Marc Bekoff (2008) writes that Babyl, was "crippled" and "couldn't travel as fast as the rest of the herd." He continues: "The elephants in Babyl's group didn't leave her behind; they waited for her. When I asked our guide, the elephant expert Iain Douglas-Hamilton, about this, he said that these elephants always waited for Babyl, and they'd been doing so for years. They would walk for a while, then stop and look around to see where Babyl was. Depending on how she was doing, they'd either wait or proceed. Iain said the matriarch even fed her on occasion." Bekoff asks why the other elephants in Babyl's herd would act this way: "Babyl could do little for them, so there seemed no reason for or practical gain in helping her. The only obvious conclusion we could draw was that the other elephants cared for Babyl, and so they adjusted their behavior to allow her to remain with the group" (p. 3).

These examples are not limited to elephants, apes and whales. Consider Baks's, a large Boxer who was blinded in an accident. A four-year-old goose named Buttons took it upon herself to begin leading the dog "around everywhere either by hanging onto him with her neck, or by *honking* to tell him which way to go" (Animal Planet 2011, April 25). There's the story of Bobcat, a blind cat who was kept alive during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina by following the sound of her companion, a dog named Bobbi. The dog had broken free after the storm, dragging a chain along the ground, which the cat was able to follow. Bobbi was protective of Bobcat and would growl at anyone who tried to approach her. The two survived together on the streets for months before being taken to a shelter (Holland 2011). These examples are indeed sweet stories of companionship. But they also raise critical questions about empathy, vulnerability, interdependence, adaptation and animal experience.

Primatologist Frans de Waal (1996) suggests that when interacting with disabled individuals animals go through a process of what is called *learned adjustment*. "Healthy members do not necessarily know what is wrong, but gradually become familiar with the limitations of their less fortunate mates" (p. 48). In other words, an animal may recognize over

time that the way another animal is moving or acting makes them more vulnerable to danger. Thus they begin to support that animal in ways that will aid in their protection, or they may treat the animal with less aggression, as they are not seen as a threat. Scientists argue that learned adjustment is different from *cognitive empathy*, which is the ability "to picture oneself in the position of another individual" (de Waal, p. 48). Research into animal empathy is still young, but it seems evident that numerous other species including wolves, apes and elephants and possibly many others, have the capacity for cognitive empathy (Bekoff & Pierce 2009).

It is interesting to note that a response to learned adjustment could go in multiple directions. Animals could learn that another animal is vulnerable and then take advantage of, abandon, or kill her, which no doubt does happen. De Waal (1996) writes: "Special treatment of the handicapped is probably best regarded as a combination of learned adjustment and strong attachment; it is the attachment the steers the adjustment in a positive, caring direction" (p. 48). So what is this attachment, then? Is it friendship or love? Is it empathy? De Waal acknowledges that learned adjustment leaves some questions unanswered. For example, it does little to explain the care and protection an animal can have for an injured or disabled animal they've had no time to adjust to (such as if a troop member suddenly becomes injured).

What strikes me about the whole conversation about disability and animals is how little research there is. Perhaps this should come as no surprise though, as disability has often been neglected as a legitimate area of study (Longmore & Umanski 2001). As we have seen, a substantial portion of the work that does exist on disability in other species focuses on the effect the disabled animals have on the able-bodied animal population they are a part of, versus paying attention to the insights about animal behavior offered by the disabled animals themselves. We should be wary of this human tendency to assume that it is the nondisabled population's response to disability that is most worthy of critical examination. Disabled animals are repeatedly presented as offering nothing back to their communities. But perhaps we need to broaden our understanding of contribution. Disabled animals raise important questions about adaptation, creativity and self-reflection that could expand our understandings of animal consciousness. We should also bear in mind that as tempting as it is to see disability as engendering either empathy and compassion or neglect and violence in other animals, these narratives also reify the roles disability is assigned to play in many human cultures. In these

narratives disabled people are either perceived as engendering compassion in able-bodied populations, or as burdens upon our communities who inspire animosity. This does not mean these narratives are always untrue, only that we should be careful not to simply read human stereotypes of disability onto other species.

One of the most common places to find stories of animal disability is at sanctuaries for farmed animals, as there is an extremely high incidence of disability among animals used in food production. Visiting these sanctuaries one is confronted by a variety of animals who limp, scoot, are blind, or are missing limbs. There is also an impressive amount of assistive technologies designed for these animals, including the occasional prosthetic. The words "lame, "crippled," "mutilated," and "blind" recur with frequency in the literature about these organizations, pointing to the reality that animal agriculture is a leading cause of disability among animals.

Industrialized farm animals live in such cramped, filthy, and unnatural conditions that disabilities become common, if not inevitable. They are often kept in virtually endless darkness, are cramped into cages with cement, wire, or metal grated floors, and live in their own feces. But the disabilities that arise from these toxic environments are often secondary to the ones they are already made to have. Farmed animals are bred to physical extremes, where udders produce too much milk for a cow's body to hold, where turkeys and chickens cannot bear the weight of their own giant breasts, and where pigs are left with legs that cannot hold their own weight. Chickens, turkeys, and ducks are also physically harmed with processes such as debeaking, which is done without anesthetic and which can leave them prone to serious infection, and make it very difficult for the birds to eat or preen themselves. All of this says nothing of the bruises, abscesses, sores, broken bones, vaginal and reproductive disorders, chronic illness, and psychological issues that farmed animals are commonly reported to endure.

Masson (2003) reports: "Nearly a quarter of all commercially reared birds are lame and experience excruciating chronic pain" (p. 67). To satisfy the increasing demand for cheap meat and eggs, chickens have been bred to grow twice as fast as they usually would, leaving them with bones and joints that cannot bear the weight of their massive forms. A battery hen, whose sole role it is to lay eggs, produces around 250 eggs a year, far more than the few dozen or so her body is meant to handle (Davis n.d.). The constant egg production, mixed with her complete inability to exercise, make her prone to osteoporosis and broken bones. Masson writes:

"Scientists, like the veterinary Professor John Webster of the University of Bristol School of Veterinary Medicine, who exposed this situation, have been accused of being speculative, or worse, anthropomorphic" (p. 68).

More recent studies have supported these scientists' findings by showing that if offered a choice between regular feed and a feed that includes an anti-inflammatory and pain-reducing drug, that disabled hens will choose the enhanced feed, leading researchers to conclude that "the lame broiler chickens are in pain and that this pain causes them distress from which they seek relief" (Weeks et al. 2000, p. 311). The accusation of "anthropomorphic" is telling, as if acknowledging that humans aren't the only creatures who experience physical difference and illness is too close for comfort. If humans can share this sort of vulnerability with nonhuman animals, what else might we share?

It is not only chickens who experience these sorts of disabilities and health concerns. At least 60% of dairy cows experience lameness, and 35% experience udder mastitis—potentially fatal inflammation of the udder tissue. Cows used for milk production are kept either continuously pregnant or milking, their calves taken away within hours or days. They produce ten times as much milk as their calves would need. As with battery hens, this overproduction leaves cows susceptible to osteoporosis and broken bones, as they must walk with an unusual gait to carry such large and heavy udders (Masson 2003).

Pigs as well are prone to disabling conditions. Most upsetting to the pork industry is Porcine Stress Syndrome, which costs the industry an estimated $90 million a year. The condition is genetic, bred into these animals as a consequence of a decade's worth of selective breeding for large and lean muscles. The condition essentially makes pigs extremely susceptible to heart attacks if they are stressed out, which is an inevitability on industrialized pig farms. The pigs live in cramped and filthy conditions, but once again it is the female animals who are in many ways the worst off. These pigs are kept continually pregnant or nursing, in cages so small that they often cannot even sit up, and are forced to lie on their sides until the next breeding cycle begins (Casau 2003).

Pigs also experience disabling leg conditions because of the unusual weight they are bred to carry, and a lack of physical exercise. They are prone to a wide variety of disabilities and diseases, including severe arthritis that affects their ability to walk (People for the Ethical

Treatment of Animals, n.d.). This is how one slaughterhouse employee describes what happened to the "crippled hogs" at John Morrell & Company, a slaughterhouse in Sioux City Iowa that has the capacity to slaughter seventy-five thousand hogs a week (one pig every four seconds). "The preferred method of handling a cripple at Morrell's is to beat him to death with a lead pipe before he gets into the chute. It's called 'piping.'" (Eisnitz 2006, p. 82). Another says, "If a hog can't walk, they scoop the son of a bitch up on a dead run with a Bobcat [small tractor]. Whupp! Right up in the air. If he stays in the bucket, he stays in. If he falls out, you run him over or pin him against the wall, finish busting the rest of his legs so he can't run any further" (p. 100). Comparing this reality to the general enthusiasm over Internet sensation Chris P. Bacon, one begins to see just how conflicted human beings are about how we should treat and feel about animals.

Disabled animals regularly appear in the media in a way other than as overcoming narratives. Outbreaks of Mad Cow disease, Swine Flu, E-coli and other industrialized farmed animal diseases have led to countless headlines over the past few years, many focusing on the question of downed animals and whether or not they can be sent to slaughter. Downed animals, or nonambulatory animals, are simply animals who for numerous reasons are unable to walk. Although this could be due to a serious illness, more often than not it is due to exhaustion, dehydration, weak and fragile bones, complications after childbirth, or simply falling. Horrific videos by various animal advocacy groups including the Humane Society for the United States (HSUS 2008) and Mercy for Animals (MFA n.d.) have shown animals being dragged by a single limb, or kicked and beaten in an attempt to make them stand and walk to slaughter—activities which are often legal. The MFA footage shows "crippled" pigs being hung to death by chains in Ohio, which again is not against the law. Other animals are picked up alive by human beings or by equipment such as bull dozers, and thrown in dumpsters where they are simply left to die in "dead piles." Often all these animals need to recover is patience and water. Vegan Outreach (n.d.) reports: "The number of downer cattle on U.S. farms or feedlots or sent to slaughter facilities is difficult to ascertain, but estimates approach 500,000 animals per year." Most of these are dairy cows, many of whom have just given birth.

Although the media does often mention the cruelty inflicted on these animals, it is the potential health risks posed to human beings if they become a part of the food supply that has

sustained interest in this issue. In 2009 President Obama banned the slaughter of downed cattle because of the health risks they imposed on the public. Rather than be slaughtered, sick and disabled downed cattle are now supposed to be "humanely" euthanized. (Euthanasia is defined as a "single blow of a penetrating captive bolt or gunshot" or as "chemical means that immediately renders the animal unconscious with complete unconsciousness remaining until death" (Animal Welfare Institute, [AWI] n.d.).

However, as AWI reports, there are loopholes. "Young calves 'unable to rise from a recumbent position and walk because they are tired or cold' may be held for slaughter. Because slaughter of these animals is permitted, slaughter plants have an incentive to attempt to get downed calves to rise, sometimes employing inhumane methods like kicking and the use of electrical prods." Currently there are no regulations for the treatment of any nonambulatory animals during transport or at market. AWI writes that the federal ban on the slaughter of nonambulatory adult cattle "was enacted for reasons of food safety, not animal welfare, and applies only to adult cattle."

Downed animals bring up historical associations of disability with the fear of contamination. The downed animal becomes the symbol of what is sick, dirty, and dangerous about industrialized farming. Separating the downed animals out reinforces the idea that the rest of the practice is safe, healthy, and even compassionate, despite the obvious reality that the industry itself is clearly the creator and perpetuator of these problems. Disabled, ill and otherwise nonambulatory animals are hardly the reason why industrial animal agriculture is dangerous and harmful. Countless articles and studies have shown that the system is cruel, toxic, and terrible for the environment, the workers and human health in a number of serious ways.

There is a sort of pity for these animals, but only at a distance, and only if it is clear they will not mix with "normal" and "healthy" cows (who as we have seen are actually neither "healthy" nor "normal"). In the end they must be euthanized, a sort of mercy killing that, like the fox with arthrogryposis shot by a concerned hunter, allows human beings to still kill animals as we would anyway (upholding speciesism), while also fulfilling two of the most prominent responses to disability—attempting to both destroy it, while also pitying it (upholding ableism).

As the downed animals show, the sympathy directed towards disabled farmed animals is secondary to a concern over human needs—and these needs are usually over profit. The advice given to animal farmers to protect their animals from disease and disability is nearly always financial. Disabilities are spoken of as costing this or that much to the industry. In one instructional video I found on what to do with animals born with birth defects such as congenital blindness, "hermaphroditism," or my own disability arthrogryposis, there's no mincing of words or euphemistic disability-pitying. The advice is always to "destroy" them before they contaminate your gene pool and damage your profits.

Profit has always been the number one reason farmers shouldn't abuse their farmed animals. No one wants to eat damaged or bruised meat (as evidenced by the fact that battery hens are only used in dog food or ground up in canned products, and dairy cows for cheap hamburger meat, where their unsightly bruised flesh won't be noticed). In a bizarre early but undated pamphlet by Swift & Company (n.d.) this is made abundantly clear. The pamphlet, which is really better described as a comic, is filled with anthropomorphized, Warner Brothers-inspired drawings of smiling animals getting beaten by slaughterhouse employees—slapped, thrown, prodded and whipped. The first page reads, "By midnight tonight, almost 100 tons of beef, lamb, and pork will have been destroyed today . . . destroyed or wasted because of someone's carelessness in handling livestock." It continues: "Directly or indirectly, every pound of meat lost because of bruises and crippling costs you money." The most fascinating page is the last. A cartoon pig stands on two legs with a pair of crutches and his head wrapped up as if he has a head wound. Next to him stands a cow with her front leg (which resembles an arm as she is on two legs as well) in a sling. With her uninjured hoof the cow pushes an old-fashioned wheelchair in which sits a young lamb. All three of them stare out at the viewer. No longer smiling, they look distraught and exhausted—but it's hard to imagine it's over the loss of profits.

It seems impossible to consider the disabling effects that farmed animals experience as separate from their environments. The mother pig is made utterly immobile, not by physical difference or disease, but by the metal bars of her gestation crate. The hen suffers from pain, but whether it's due to a broken leg, overcrowding, complete darkness, or the death of her cage mate in many ways seems irrelevant. The dairy cow is euthanized, not because she can't walk, but because she has become a symbol of contamination. The environments no doubt disable them

even more than their physical and psychological disabilities do—a fact that supports the social model of disability.

Trying to pinpoint disability and disease in these environments is no less challenging than trying to ascertain what disability is and isn't among human beings. What does it mean to speak of a "healthy" or "normal" chicken or pig or cow when they all live in environments that are profoundly disabling? Indeed, when they are all bred to be disabled? The Belgian Blue is a bull bred for double muscling, for more and leaner meat. They are so huge that they have a hard time walking, and the females must have caesarians, as vaginal births are nearly impossible. Even so-called heritage breeds are often bred for characteristics that, in human beings, would no doubt be labeled disabilities or abnormalities. Consider the Midget White turkey or the Tennessee fainting goat, which "keels over when startled," and which Slow Food USA (2013) says "sounds more like a sideshow act than the centerpiece of a barbecue." The issue of breeding itself raises all sorts of complex questions about normalcy, naturalness, and the boundaries between disability and enhancement. These animals are enhanced, but enhanced for whom?

Of the tens of billions of animals that are killed every year for human use, many are literally manufactured to be disabled: bred to be "mutant" producers of meat, milk, and eggs. And none of this says anything of other animal industries. According to the Global Action Network, the animals who are subjected to lives in fur factory farms (foxes, minx, chinchillas, and numerous other species) "are inbred for specific colours, causing severe abnormalities such as deafness, crippling, deformed sex organs, screw necks, weakened immune systems, anaemia, sterility, and disturbances of the nervous system." Animals in research labs, circuses, and zoos experience a variety of different conditions and issues as well that are due largely to captivity, poor care, abuse, or breeding. What do we make of the fact that circus elephants are subject to severe arthritis because they are forced to stand, often chained, in cramped cages and boxcars with little opportunity to exercise? People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA 2010) reports that "foot disorders and arthritis are the leading reasons for euthanasia in captive elephants." What about the huge numbers of animals from factory farms to zoos to research labs to circuses who show signs of mental illness, stereotypy, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression or madness? Autistic writer and primatologist Dawn Prince-Hughes (2007) writes of

how she saw her own symptoms of exclusion and marginalization in the animals she watched and studied at the zoo. She says:

> I would see this kind of behavior with gorillas in captivity. They had nervous tics, similar, if not identical, to mine: hair plucking, picking at scabs, scratching, rocking, chewing on themselves, and other repetitive and self stimulating behaviors. One gorilla spun in tight, fast circles. Another bobbed her head up and down. (Prince-Hughes 2007, p. 37)

No doubt all of this raises profound ethical concerns over the ways nonhuman animals are treated—or, more aptly, mistreated—by human beings. It is hard even to begin to consider what disability means in these instances, because of how inseparable it becomes from captivity, from abuse, from neglect, from breeding, and, yes, from suffering. What does disability mean for a hen who is in an environment where her every movement and desire is neglected? What does a physical limitation or difference mean when you are given no opportunity to move in your body, to explore it, because your environment is already limiting *everything* about you? Perhaps, as with many disabled human beings, these animal's disabilities are the least of their worries.

Unlike with Mozu, Stumpy, or the fox with Arthrogryposis, there is no projected disability empowerment here. Not in these environments. I cannot find it anywhere, because as soon as I imagine these animals embodying their disabilities in ways other than suffering, or imagine them fostering new ways of interacting or perceiving, I have imagined them out of the factory farm or research lab. This shows the extent to which so much of the suffering and marginalization of disability is social, is built, is structural.

But what happens to these animals when by some sheer stroke of luck they escape or are removed from these environments? I asked Jenny Brown this question. Brown is founder of the Woodstock Farm Sanctuary (WFS), author of *The Lucky Ones: My Passionate fight for Farm Animals* (2012), and is a disabled person herself. WFS is home to dozens of chickens, cows, pigs, turkeys, ducks, sheep, and goats who have been rescued from neglect, abuse and abandonment. The animals come from large scale farming operations as well as from small family run farms. Brown's response to my question was that it really depends on the extent and variety of the disability. She told me about Emmet and Jasper, two male baby goats who came

from a goat dairy operation. They both were diagnosed with Caprine Arthritis Encephalitis, which causes painful arthritic joints that can be debilitating. Jasper eventually was euthanized. Brown writes: "After pain meds and rounds of acupuncture we finally let him go because of the severity of his pain and physical debilitation." Jasper's brother Emmet has arthritis in his stifle and barely uses his leg but is doing well. Emmet has free range around the sanctuary, because as Brown writes: "When we did put these boys in with the goat herd, they would get rammed and taunted by the other, more dominant goats." (personal communication, 2012).

However, many disabled animals who are rescued adapt to their differences on their own, or are supported by other nonhuman animals with whom they have bonded. In these instances we see just how little we know about animals and about disability.

Stories of interspecies support between farmed animals abound. There are stories of mobility-impaired animals choosing to spend most of their time with other animals of different species. There are blind animals who are guided by other animals in their social group. Masson (2003) tells the story of Hope and Johnny, two pigs who became attached after meeting at Farm Sanctuary. Hope had been rescued from a stockyard with a badly hurt leg that would not heal. She learned to scoot around a little bit and was making do when she met Johnny, a younger pig who for whatever reason became extremely attached to her. Johnny would sleep with her at night and spent nearly all hours of the day with her. When it was time to eat he'd guard her food from the other pigs to make sure they did not interfere with her eating. These two pigs, who had both experienced neglect and confinement, were inseparable. When Hope died of old age, Johnny, who was still young and healthy, died soon after.

Jasper and Emmet's stories, as well as stories like Hope and Johnny's, raise many questions for disability scholars and advocates. How are we to consider animal euthanasia, for example? What does interspecies interdependence tell us not only about animal emotion, but about nonhuman experience of disability? These stories also raise questions about accommodation and access. What are our responsibilities to accommodate and support these animals who we have made disabled? What does accommodation and access even mean for different species?

Brown told me about Boon, a turkey who lives at WFS. He was born with his tongue in his throat instead of in his mouth. Boon has difficulty eating and so the sanctuary staff feeds him

a few times a day away from the other birds so as he can take his time and not be bothered. There are many examples of animals who need simple accommodations like this to survive. Perhaps they need to eat their meals away from the group, or be put in a living space with less dominant animals (even of another species), or perhaps they need to be fitted for some sort of mobility device.

Animal prosthetics are becoming more common. Prosthetics have been made for elephants, dogs, cats, dolphins, and goats to name a few. At WFS there is Albie, a goat with three legs who can be seen gamboling about everyday in the sanctuary's fields, sometimes with a prosthetic leg and sometimes without. Brown, an amputee herself, asked her own prostheticist if he would be willing to make a special prosthetic for the goat and he obliged (personal communication, 2012). The unique and innovative accommodations that are realized for these animals are all the more intriguing because of how similar they are to various common accommodations made for humans (prosthetics, ramps, wheelchairs, and so forth). However, in an anthropocentric and speciesist world, accommodating farmed animals takes on a whole other meaning. WFS is in many ways an accommodation in and of itself, as the vast majority of farmed animals don't have access to environments in which they can go about there life in a species typical way, let alone thrive, regardless of disability. They are almost always forced into environments that limit and harm them. In this way we return to environment, to the ways in which these animals are debilitated by human domination and exploitation.

The disabilities created in these animal industries, disabilities born of speciesism and cruelty, complicate my understanding of disability. I am left with questions about suffering, a topic that disability scholars have rightfully tried to move away from. Disability activists and scholars have worked for decades to challenge the notion that disability equals suffering. Rather, we have argued that much of the suffering around disability stems from the discrimination and marginalization that disabled people face. This has not been done to erase suffering, but to broaden the conversation around what the experience of disability can be.

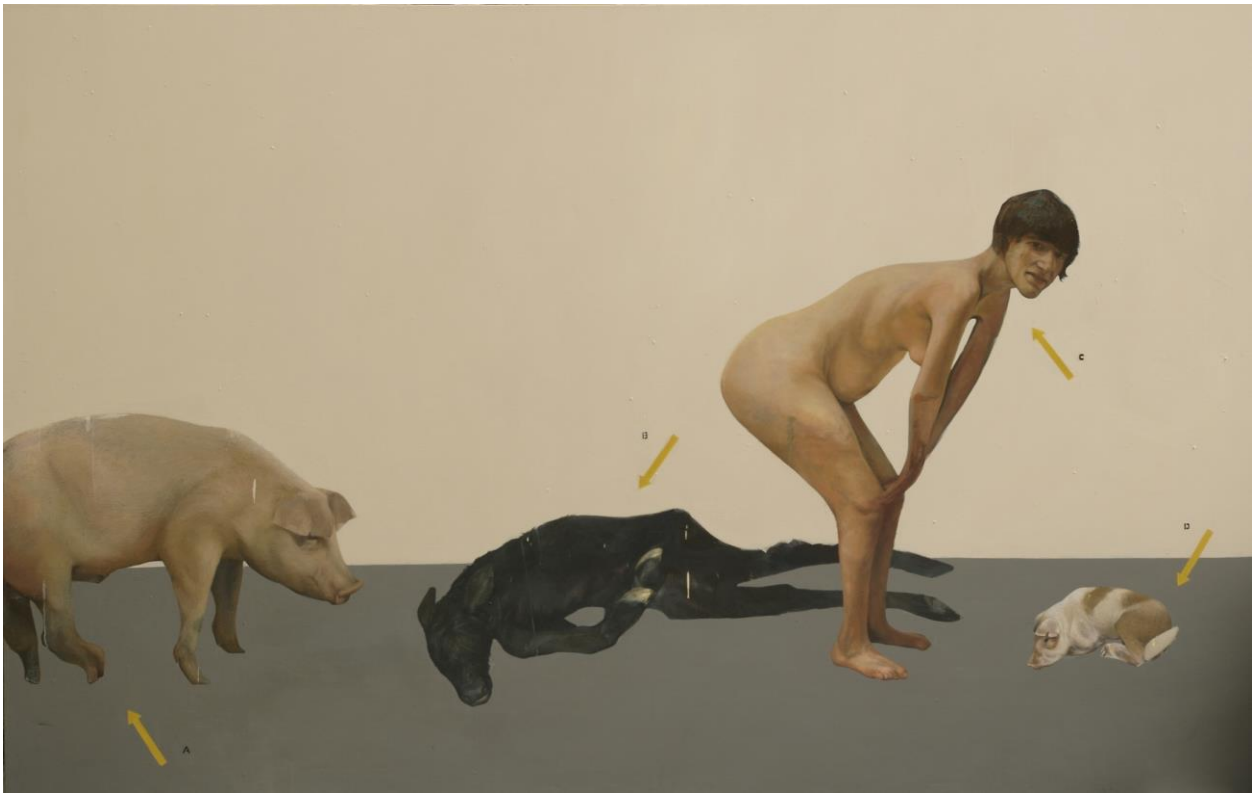
While disability advocates have often pushed away from narratives of suffering, it is everywhere within animal ethics scholarship. A huge amount of work has been done by animal activists simply to prove that animals *can* suffer, and much more work has sought to explain why human beings should care about this fact. Suffering is an inevitable part of the conversation

around animal industries, as well as around disability within these industries, and for good reason. However, animals are too often presented simply as voiceless beings who suffer. Exploring these issues through the lens of disability studies can help us to ask who these animals are beyond their suffering. It asks us to consider how the very vulnerability and difference these animals inhabit may in fact embody new ways of knowing and being.

The title of this article is *Animal Crips*. But what does it mean to call an animal a crip? Can animals be crips? The word "crip" (of course from cripple) has been adopted by disability scholars and activists in a way similar to how LGBT scholars and activists have reclaimed the word "queer." Many disabled people identify as "crips." To crip something does not mean to break it, but instead to radically and creatively invest it with disability history, politics and pride, while simultaneously questioning paradigms of normalcy and medicalization. To disabled scholars, activists and artists, crip has become an action, a way of radically altering meaning. We talk of crip time, crip space, crip culture and crip theory.

To call an animal a crip is no doubt a human projection, but it is also a way of identifying nonhuman animals as subjects who have been oppressed by ableism. Naming animals as crips is also a way of challenging us to question how bodies move, think, and feel, and our ideas of what makes a body valuable, exploitable, useful, or disposable. It means questioning the assumptions we have about what a cow or a chicken is capable of experiencing. And it means stopping to consider that the limping disabled fox you see through the barrel of your rifle may actually be enjoying her animal crip life. Animal crips challenge us to consider what is valuable about living, what is valuable about the variety of life.

In the end, it is not only disabled animals who could be called crips. All animals—both those whom we human beings would call disabled and those whom we would not—are treated as inferior, devalued, and abused for many of the same basic reasons disabled people are. They are understood as incapable and different. They are, in other words, oppressed by ableism. The abled body that ableism perpetuates and privileges is always not only non-disabled but non-animal.







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Ability Privilege: A Needed Addition to Privilege Studies

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Key words: male privilege, white privilege, consumerism, competitiveness, science and technology

ABILITY PRIVILEGE: A NEEDED ADDITION TO PRIVILEGE STUDIES

Abstract

Ability privilege describes the advantages enjoyed by those who exhibit certain abilities and the unwillingness of these individuals to relinquish the advantage linked to the abilities especially with the reason that these are earned or birth given (natural) abilities. Privileges linked to various groups (e.g. male, race, class, gender) are discussed in the literature. I submit that ability privilege, a dynamic pervasive in society, ought to be discussed. The lens of ability privilege allows for analyzing the dynamic of what ability advantages are seen as earned vs. unearned not only across traditional social groups (e.g. race, class, gender) but also between the social group dualistic of the ability-have and ability-not-have which allows one to look at ability

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privileges as they play themselves out in human-human, human-nature and human-animal relationships. Ethics ought to give us guidance how to act. I submit that the concept of ability privilege, and which ability privileges we envision as earned or unearned is worthy of ethical deliberations. I cover in this paper ability privileges related to disabled people, human-nature and human-animal relationship, the ability of competitiveness and consumerism, and I highlight emerging new forms of ability privileges made possible through science and technology advancements and the role of ethics.

Introduction

The introductory article of the March 2012 issue of the 'Journal of Social Issues' which was dedicate to the field of privilege studies (Case et al., 2012) stated that "privilege is defined in relational terms and in reference to social groups, and involves unearned benefits afforded to powerful social groups" (Case et al., 2012). Privileges, the advantages that people benefit from based on exhibiting certain characteristics, are discussed in the literature and linked to various groups (e.g. male, race, class, gender) (Kruks, 2005, McIntosh, 1989, Swim and Miller, 1999, Pinterits et al., 2009, Schaumberg and Lowery, 2010, Mindrup et al., 2011, Case, 2007, McIntosh, 2003b, Case and Stewart, 2010, Neville et al., 2001, Holland, 2008, Bennett, 2012, McIntosh, 2003a). I intend to contribute with this paper to what Peggy McIntosh calls "the growing academic field of Privilege Studies"(McIntosh, 2012) by introducing the concept of ability privilege which I submit is a dominant dynamic present in society that ought to be discussed. Ability privilege is based on the *reality* that one has certain advantages if exhibiting certain abilities, and individuals enjoying these advantages are unwilling to give up these advantages. Ability privilege manifests itself through structural and governmentally perpetuated ability privilege (systemic (conscious), along with individual or interpersonal forms of ability-privilege (psychological unconscious). Which privilege is seen as acceptable changes over time and will continue to change (Kruks, 2005, Holland, 2008). Similarly which ability privilege is classified as earned or unearned constantly changes and is not only culturally constructed, but exhibition and acceptance or rejection of different ability privileges also are one aspect that shapes a culture. Ability privileges can play themselves out between traditionally defined social groups (e.g. race, gender, social class). However at the same time social groups are also formed

based on ability privileges whereby the social group is defined by whether its members have or don't have a given ability (the ability-have and the ability-non-have social groups). I submit that ability judgments exhibit themselves as justifications of certain assumptions, and behaviors of the ability-have providing ability-have group members with privileges with often disabling consequences for the ability non-have. I submit further that it might be beneficial for the 'ability not have groups' or people working on behalf of certain 'ability not have' biological entities such as animals and nature to investigate the usefulness and limitation of the privilege discourse for their agenda.

Hill Collins suggests that one of the effects of privilege is that marginalized groups are denied the ability to articulate their own experiences (Beck et al., 2001). The concept of ableism was developed by the disabled people's rights movement (Various, 2006) to question species-typical, normative body ability expectations (Harris, 2001, Watson, 1997, Duke, 1972, Carlson, 2001, Finkelstein, 1996, Mitchell and Snyder, 1997, Olyan, 2009, Rose, 2003, Schipper, 2006, Overboe, 2007) and the ability privileges (i.e. ability to work, to gain education, to be part of society, to have an identity, to be seen as citizen) that come with a species-typical body (although they did not use the term ability privilege). Disablism conceptualized within this meaning of ability privilege suggests that people with expected, normative body abilities are not willing to give up their ability privileges.

The cultural phenomenon of Ability privileges, however, can be employed beyond the social group of disabled people and their encounter with the 'ability normative' person. Every societal entity, from an individual to a country, cherishes and promotes numerous abilities. Some people cherish the ability to buy a car, some the ability to climb mountains , some the ability to perform academic work, and others manual work (Wolbring, 2011b). Some societies are structured around 'GDPism' (the ability to produce a GDP), efficiency, productivity, competitiveness and consumerism (the ability to consume) (Wolbring, 2008b, Wolbring, 2008a). Others may be organized around equity, empathy, or any other set of abilities (Wolbring, 2010a). These ability expectations lead to the exhibition of various forms of ability privileges (Wolbring, 2012c, Wolbring, 2012a) leading to various forms of disablement. Question is whether ability

based privileges are justifiable or not and on what argument the justification or denouncement of justification are based on?

I highlight in this paper various forms of ability privileges. I cover ability privilege as it unfolds in regards to disabled people and an emerging ability privilege that is based on changing ability expectations of the human body made possible through advancements of science and technology. I outline ability privilege exhibiting itself in regards to human- nature and human-animal relationships (eco-ability privilege linked to the existence of eco-ableism (Wolbring, 2012a)). I submit that a) policies and procedures can be examined in terms of what abilities are being privileged, what ability privileges are seen as earned or unearned and what criteria are used to justify the sentiment; b) that which ethics theory is used to give guidance is linked to whether its ability expectations are privileged (Wolbring, 2012b) and c) the ability privilege lens gives a means to address the intersectionality of oppressive practices which are highlighted by others outside of the ability context (Hankivsky et al., 2007, Case et al., 2012, Kendall, 2012). As to the structure of this paper I start by introducing ability privileges through the lens of disabled people which is followed by a section that looks at eco-ability privilege covering human-nature and human-animal relationships. I then look at the ability privilege linked to biological entities (humans, nature and animals) exhibiting beyond biological entity-typical abilities which is followed by another section which briefly explores the privilege discourse through the lens of the abilities of consumerism and competitiveness. I will then look at ethics theories, code of ethics and privilege and conclude with some thoughts around future research agenda's. I want to contribute to the critical animal studies field and the eco-ability field (linkage between disabled people environment and animal (2012)) the lens of ability privilege. We know that the One health framework is used to advance the human-animal relationship within the health discourse whereas the Eco-health discourse does the same for the human, animal and nature relationship (Wolbring, 2013). I submit that the ability privilege could be used to further the social justice discourse between humans and animals, humans and nature and humans, animals and nature.

Ability Privilege and Disabled People

In respect to disabled people at least four forms of privileges (systemic (conscious), psychological unconscious, earned and unearned) discussed in the literature are evident.

Structural and governmentally perpetuated ability privileges (systemic, conscious) are evident in the use of legal terms, such as 'reasonable accommodation' and 'undue hardship', that suggest that powerful social groups including governments, employers and educational institutions are only willing to give up ability privileges *they* see as reasonable. Legislations that are generated to improve the situation of disabled people, such as the United Nation Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2007), are much less absolute in their demands and have more qualifiers as to what are reasonable actions than similar laws against sexism or racism. In this it mirrors "Reasonableness" which is seen for example to preserve male privilege in law(Paetzold and Shaw, 1994) against women. However there is also the issue that many do not see themselves as still having the privilege that they felt in need of being solved. A recent study performed around access to water and sanitation for various social groups found that respondents felt that in regards to high income countries disabled people had better access to clean water and sanitation than ethnic minorities or indigenous people (Wolbring et al., 2012). The finding suggests a form of unconscious ability privilege that comes to pass not because of ones lack of awareness of one's own ability privilege of having access to a washroom but because one simply believes that the access issue has been solved for the 'others' and as such no ability privilege exists as everyone has access. In the case of the study, this misreading of the reality might be due to the proliferation of wheelchair signs on in this case washroom doors as to whether they are really accessible or not. Other examples are to label a parking stall with a disabled sign even if the size is the same as the stalls without the disabled sign. One could say that governments through their lax rules as to the use of the 'disabled' ticker and the non-existence of enforcement of even the lax use of them generates illusions of a structural reality that make individuals misjudge the privilege they have.

Another example of spinning numbers leading to a skewed perception by the ability privileged is how unemployment numbers of disabled people are reported. The numbers reported for example by the media highlight the people who look for work but cannot find work. Giving this form of reporting the unemployment numbers for April 2013 for the USA are 12.9% for disabled people vs. 6.9% for non-disabled people. Although the number of unemployment of disabled people in this way are still double than the unemployment numbers of non-disabled people, people might see these numbers as progress as people assume that like 100 years ago

disabled people were not employed. However the numbers reported in the media do not give the real story. Numbers also exist as to participation in the work force; for 2013 these numbers are 20.7% for disabled people and 68.8% for non-disabled people. If one calculates the unemployment number in the following way Total Rate Civilian population- not in labor force-unemployed (meaning not getting a job or not looking for a job) the employment/ unemployment numbers for April 2013 are 18.04%/81.96% for disabled people and 64.06%/35.94% for non-disabled people (United States Department of Labor, 2013). These numbers are quite different and indicate much less progress in regards to diminishing the employment privilege of so called non-disabled people. These numbers are not much different in other countries (Buckup, 2009, Noga and Wolbring, 2012); the numbers for China (2009) are for the full population unemployment number of 3.8% and not looking for work 23.2%. However the numbers for disabled people range between 3.9-4.2 unemployed based on 'severity' and not seeking employment between 35.2%-71% (Buckup, 2009). Chinese numbers are segregated by severity which begs the question who is severe and who isn't. The questions used to classify severity (not just in China) are "Do you have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses? Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid? Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps? Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating? Do you have difficulty (with self-care, such as) washing all over or dressing? Because of a physical, mental, or emotional health condition, do you have difficulty communicating (for example, understanding or being understood by others)? If one answers one or more of the questions with "unable", one is classified as 'very severe'(Buckup, 2009); meaning blind people, deaf people, many wheelchair users, many so called cognitive impaired people all would be listed under severe meaning that 71% of them do not look for work. Let's have a look at deaf people and the improvement in employment. In a New York Times article from 1906 one finds that 38,5 per cent of the deaf were gainfully employed, as compared with 50.2 per cent among the general population. Of the deaf who were gainfully employed 39.7 per cent were found in occupations in which perfect, or even partial, hearing is not essential (New York Times, 1906). As to the deaf 60% are unemployed in the USA(Netsignnews, 2008). In Canada 20.6% are fully employed(Deaf, 2007). Only 30% of the blind are employed in the USA today(PRESS, 2008). According to a 2007

report from Vision Australia, of the total population of blind or vision-impaired people, 69 per cent are not employed.(matters, 2007)

Cole and others talk about "how arguments based on claims about what is natural, privilege some relationships while stigmatizing others and justifying discriminatory policies toward sexual minorities"(Cole et al., 2012). The same dynamic can be seen in regards to disabled people. Disabled people still fight to be seen as natural, because to be less able than normal is seen as unnatural. To quote the UK bioethicist John Harris, "I do define disability as a physical or mental condition we have a strong [rational] preference not to be in" and that it is more importantly a condition which is in some sense a "'harmed condition'"(Harris, 2000). I contend that this privileges so-called 'normal' sets of abilities.

As to the discussion around what is an earned or unearned privilege disabled, people constantly question what others see as earned privilege. Privileges linked to be born with certain abilities are seen as earned or natural (birth given) by many. Indeed many question laws that gives disabled people certain considerations, for example, who gets employed (affirmative action). Affirmative action is called by the ones who see their birth given abilities as earned as reverse discrimination. Reverse discrimination is extensively debated within the framework of disabled people (Hamilton and Koshan, 2013, Colker, 1997, Blanck, 1996) and also other social groups (Newton, 1973, Taylor, 1973, Dutton, 1976, Fullinwider, 1980). Ability privilege presented in this section is linked to the narrative of ableism a term coined by the disabled people rights movement and one of the cornerstone of disability studies scholarships (Wolbring, 2012c) however ability privilege and ableism is a much more widespread phenomenon(Wolbring, 2012c). In the next section I introduce eco-ability privilege reality which is linked to eco-ableism(Wolbring, 2012a).

Eco-ability Privilege and Human-Nature/Human-Animal Relationship

Currently, two main schools of thought pertaining to the human-nature relationship exist, both with vastly different ability expectations. The anthropocentric school is human-centered in its interpretation of the relationship between humans and nature (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2008, Verhagen, 2008). This behavior could be labeled as disabling for nature (Wolbring, 2011a) and as exhibiting anthropocentric privileges (Gunkel, 2007). Within an

anthropocentric view of human-nature relationship humans are unwilling to give up the ability privilege of using nature for their goals. Therefore, proposed anthropocentric remedies to ecological problems do not often attempt to give up ability expectations and the ability privilege set out by humans who caused the problem in the first place but to find ways to maintain human ability privilege through modifying nature. The eco- or biocentric school is eco- or biosphere-centered, and humans are seen to have to live in harmony with the needs of the biosphere (Wolbring, 2011a). This view allows for giving up anthropocentric ability privileges and moving away from a negative rights framework putting the onus on humans for decreasing their privilege. Some believe that there are signs that the structural and governmentally perpetuated privilege is diminishing in some areas. Verhagen states: "evidence of an emerging biocracy in the modern Western world is legislation about endangered species and the representation of other life forms during political assemblies when persons or organizations become spokespersons and keepers of rivers, forests etc"(Verhagen, 2008). Ecuador could be construed as the first country to become a legal biocracy and ecocracy as their constitution gives a new set of rights to nature. However how biocentric is the Ecuadorian approaches? Articles 71-74 of its new constitution describe the relationship of humans to nature. Article 71 can be interpreted as giving rights to the 'entity' nature. Article 72 talks about nature's right to an integral restoration and Article 73 talks about what actions against nature are prohibited. However article 74 retains anthropocentric reasoning: "Persons, people, communities and nationalities will have the right to benefit from the environment and form natural wealth that will allow wellbeing"(Wolbring, 2011a). As Bordessa states, "the removal of arguments for human privilege and the granting of moral status to nature do require the construction of a moral system that takes nature's claims for respectful treatment seriously" (Bordessa, 1993). Bordessa also perceives the Brundland report and the sustainable development agenda as an anthropocentric one (Bordessa, 1993).

As to human-animal relationships arguments are evident that defend an anthropocentric or biocentric view of human-animal relationships (Taylor, 1983, Watson, 1983, Taylor, 1991, Attfield, 1993, Jacob, 1994, Dobson, 1995, Michael, 1996, Ingensiep, 1997b, Singer, 1997, Ingensiep, 1997a, Sterba, 1998, Taylor, 2008, Watson, 2008, Attfield, 2009, Sterba, 2011, Tuohey et al., 1992, Cavalieri and Singer, 1995, Taylor, 1996, ONeill, 1997, Bekoff, 1997, Recarte Vicente-Arche, 2001). Furthermore various arguments humans use in regards to animals

generate ability privileges (e.g. based on level of cognition; ability to experience pain or be self-aware) for some animals over other animals and in some cases for some animals over some humans (e.g. as severely cognitive impaired labeled people). I submit that the utility and limitation of ability based privilege within the framework of animal rights and human-animal relationships could be investigated further. Beyond ability privileges other forms of privileges are seen to influence the discussion around human-animal relationships (Wrenn, 2012). Katrina Fox outlines the interplay of various forms of privilege (Fox, 2011) and thematizes how to build bridges something which is solely needed and which demands that one has to be careful about which ability privilege one exhibits and perpetuates in ones arguments for a given group given its impact on another entity. In the next section I will cover some emerging issues enabled by emerging science and technology products and visions of science and technology research agenda's.

Enhancement Version of Ability Privilege Intrinsic to an Entity

As much as body-ability expectations are an issue for people who are perceived as sub species-typical, body-related ability expectation dynamics and issues also are appearing for people who are, to-date, privileged because of their as 'normal' as sufficient perceived bodies and sets of abilities.

Many forms of ability privileges are linked to the advancement of technoscience and its products. We see the appearance of an enhancement form of ability expectations that expects beyond species-typical abilities of humans; indeed some ethicists already push the argument that one is obligation to enhance oneself beyond the species-typical (Wolbring, 2012b). This form of ableism will become more prevalent the more ways exist to obtain beyond species-typical abilities. I submit that the same ability privilege dynamics that disadvantage disabled people to-date will also disadvantage those who will not want, or cannot access, enhancement products that lead to beyond species-typical abilities (Wolbring, 2006).

The term morphological freedom coined by Sandberg to support one's right to modify oneself highlights the ability privilege in a conscious albeit not necessarily government driven way. Sandberg states:

> What is morphological freedom? I would view it as an extension of one's right to one's body, not just self-ownership but also the right to modify oneself according to one's desires. Morphological freedom is the right to modify oneself. Morphological freedom can of course be viewed as a subset of the right to one's body. But it goes beyond the idea of merely passively maintaining the body as it is and exploiting its inherent potential. Instead it affirms that we can extend or change our potential through various means. It is strongly linked to ideas of self-ownership and self-direction. Morphological freedom is, like the others, a negative right. It is a right to be able to do certain things, but it does not in itself imply others are morally obliged to support exercise of it. It would after all be unreasonable to demand others to support changes in my body that they would not see as beneficial or even ethical according to their personal moral. If I want to have green skin, it is my own problem – nobody has the moral right to prevent me, but they do not have to support my ambition. Of course, other ethical principles such as compassion would imply a moral obligation to help, but I will here mainly concentrate on the skeletal rights framework. (Sandberg, 2001)

The ability privilege is evident in this quote by recognizing that morphological freedom is a negative right (meaning that it is seen as a right for someone not to be hindered in their desires but that they have no obligation to help others to obtain the same). As such this negative rights framework fits with perpetuated ability privileges (systemic, conscious) and suggest that the non-enhanced impaired and disabled of the future will face the same problems the as sub species-typical and impaired labeled people of today namely that any interventions to decrease the enhancement linked ability privilege gap will come based on what the ability privileged see as reasonable.

In the future, ability privileges gained through accessing beyond species-typical ability enabling bodily assistive devices and genetic interventions will create numerous policy challenges. There is an urgent need to engage with beyond species-typical ability expectations and the ability privileges linked to them through the lens of whether they are unearned or earned. If these new ability privileges are perceived as earned privileges we will see less impetus on dealing with the appearance of the techno-poor disabled and impaired and ability-not-have

people (whether because they cannot afford the enhancements or whether they do not want them) who will not have access to certain privileges open to the enhanced people.

The drive for beyond typical abilities is not only impacting human-human relationships. It also impacts human-nature and human-animal relationships. To start with human nature relationships; human adaptation to climate change is linked by some to the ability to modify the human body to cope with harsh or disruptive climates. Within the article "Human Engineering and Climate Change"(Liao et al., 2012), the authors propose human engineering that has the end goal of changing bodily abilities in order to enable them to fight the impacts of climate change. The authors propose that human engineering is a potentially necessary alternative to geo-engineering because they believe that efforts to change the ability expectations of humans (for example modifying aspirations towards consumerism through educational programs) is not working and geo-engineering might be too dangerous. Geoengineering which is about modifying the abilities of nature (Boyd, 2009, Corner and Pidgeon, 2010, Gardiner, 2011, Porter and Hulme, 2013, Heyward, 2013, Preston, 2013, Low et al., 2013) to deal with human behavior is indeed a growing area of interest which impacts how humans relate to nature. One could say it further instrumentalizes nature and is anthropocentric.

Ability enhancement is also proposed to reshape human-animal relationships such as enhancing animals cognitive abilities as a solution to the negative treatment of animals (Chan, 2009); thereby applying an enhancement form of ableism to animals (Wolbring, 2008a). Above I introduced ability privileges through the lens of four biological entities (disabled people; nature; animals and people who do not have beyond species-typical abilities). Below I explore briefly the privilege discourse through two abilities (consumption and competitiveness) privileges that influences many other discourses around other privileges.

Ability Privilege of Consumption

As to the ability privilege of consumption structural perpetuated privilege can be observed as well as some psychological privilege where some people are not aware of their privilege of consumption ability. Question is whether the ability privilege of consumption is seen within an earned or unearned privilege and whether different forms of consumption are seen

differently as to whether they are earned or not. A recent blog piece on Pachamama by Gregory Mengel (Mengel, 2012) looked at race and class privilege in the culture of white, middle-class environmentalism. Mengel highlighted that "certain forms of consumption, such as buying local, driving a hybrid, or even voluntary simplicity, are often conferred moral weight, despite the fact that the ability to make such choices relies on the systemic unearned privileges that go with being white and middle-class in the U.S" (Mengel, 2012). Mengel stated further," So-called "green consumption," as a response to ecological concerns, is similarly bound up with race and class privilege" (Mengel, 2012). These two quotes highlight the interrelationship between different ability privileges in this case consumption, environment, and monetary ability. Katerina Fox outlined the linkage between consumption, animal rights and monetary abilities (Fox, 2011). Both Mengel and Fox also mention disabled people. Mengel uses the term 'ability privilege' to highlight the ability privilege of physical access in regards to the environment (Mengel, 2012) and Fox uses the term ableist to highlight that not everyone can perform the same level of activism whether due to income or body ability realities(Fox, 2011). Given the high level of poverty among disabled people their reasoning around consumption also is of relevance to disabled people as green and vegan consumption pattern need more money as they outline.

Ability Privilege of Competitiveness

Maintaining or achieving competitiveness is a cherished ability (The Bernard L.Schwartz Forum on Competitiveness, 2006, Pezzini and Kamal-Chaoui, 2006, Lisbon European Council, 2000) on the individual and state level(Wolbring, 2010b, Fagerberg et al., 2007). Whether one feels competitive (from a nation to the level of the individual) depend among others on past achievements and current aspirations and is constantly changing (Aiginger, 1998, Önsel et al., 2008). Even more than in the case of the ability to consume, the question arises whether being competitive is seen as an earned or unearned privilege. An athlete who wins a highly competitive race will see his or her win as an earned privilege due to hard work. Interscholastic sports is seen as "a character-building privilege earned by showing respect, playing fair, and striving to win while keeping winning in perspective" (Lumpkin and Stokowski, 2011) and being part of school sport teams is seen as an earned privilege (Lumpkin and Favor, 2012). He or she would not see it as an unearned ability privilege due to having access to equipment, support or training

opportunities. A country that sees itself as highly competitive might see it as an earned privilege. Other 'less' competitive countries might not agree and might have a line of reasoning that leads them to see it as an unearned privilege.

Given the prevalence of the different privileges where should guidance come from? Ethics is often put forward as a field that ought to give guidance but what guidance can the field give?

Ethics Theories, Code of Ethics and Privilege

Holland looked at privilege employing Martin Heidegger's concept of inauthenticity (Holland, 2008). She believes that one can "make a distinction between those who live their privilege because they are unaware of it and those who assert and experience that privilege as an entitlement" (Holland, 2008). Hollander states further that once people are 'told' the 'unaware' path is closed to them and two others are only open namely to see the privilege as an entitlement or the "alternative to entitlement is to avoid the exercise of such privilege where one can and, where one cannot, to adopt and use one's privilege, to the extent possible, in ways that benefit, or at least do not harm, those who do not have it" (Holland, 2008).

However "awareness of privilege is not about feeling guilty about one's unearned privilege as much as it is about recognizing ways to use privilege to benefit the marginalized and disadvantaged" (Cook et al., 2012). However in the end whether one has to act on one's awareness is based on the ethics theory one adheres to. Liberation ethics (Ellison, 1993), one can argue, actively uses privilege to benefit the marginalized and disadvantaged. Pattons and Townsend reason that ethic of critique illuminates power and privilege inequities and through combining this ethic with an ethic of justice positive change can take place (Patton and Townsend, 1999). They further argue that ethics of critique and justice must be complemented by an ethic of caring an ethics that requires that the sanctity, dignity, and worth of each individual is valued and becomes the basis for all decisionmaking (Patton and Townsend, 1999). Superson employs Kant to claim "that the privileged have an obligation to attend to the basic facts about humanity in the nonprivileged, despite the fact that arrogance, self-interest, and failure to accept responsibility lead them not to do so" (Superson, 2004). She argues that "the

Principle of Humanity requires not just that a person understand these facts about himself, but that a reasonable person put himself in another's shoes—step out of his position of privilege and put himself in the position of the oppressed— in order to know his obligations" (Superson, 2004). According to Superson Kant's Universal Law Formulation "requires that a privileged person imagine himself not being in a privileged position and having the maxim in question apply to him" (Superson, 2004). Callicot discusses anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric schools of environmental ethics which come with different actions in dealing with the privilege humans exhibit toward animals and nature (Callicott, 1984). I contend that some ethics theories (egalitarianism, socialism, psychological altruism, female based care ethics,) lend themselves to generate a climate of obligation to diminish the negative consequences of ones privilege on others, or use ones privilege to diminish the negative situation of others or try to diminish ones privileged position, others don't (libertarianism, individual relativism, psychological egoism). Some such as consequentialism, utilitarianism, deontology, psychological hedonism, normative ethics, could go both ways. Furthermore some ethic theories exhibit ability privileges (e.g. Merit-Platonism exhibits intelligence privilege; Merit-Seniority seniority privilege; Merit-Effort exhibits effort privilege and Merit-Output exhibits output privilege)(Wolbring, 2012b).

Ethics theories are one instrument to be used to influence ones action. Codes of Ethics are another instrument. As to disabled people I submit that many Code of Ethics might lend themselves to generate a climate of obligation to diminish the negative consequences of ones privilege on others, or use ones privilege to diminish the negative situation of others or try to diminish ones privileged position. Code of Ethics of professions linked to disabled people strongly suggest that professionals have to be involved in decreasing the negative consequences of privilege experienced by disabled people; to give excerpts of three Code of Ethics. The American Counselling Association (ACA) *Code of Ethics*, states in the Preamble: "Association members recognize diversity and embrace a cross-cultural approach in support of the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of people within their social and cultural contexts" (American Counseling Association, 2005). The Canadian Code of Ethics for rehabilitation professionals states among others, "Rehabilitation professionals are committed to facilitating the personal, social, and economic well being of persons with a disability and/or disadvantage" (Canadian Association of Rehabilitation Professionals, 2002). Code of Ethics of the National Council of

Rehabilitation Educators (NCRE) states among others, "the primary obligation of rehabilitation counselors is to clients, defined as individuals with or directly affected by a disability, functional limitation(s), or medical condition and who receive services from rehabilitation counselors"(Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification, 2010). **Elsewhere (Wolbring, 2011c) the codes of ethics from the American Academy of Audiology**, Academy of Doctors of Audiology®, Audiological Society of Australia, College Of Audiologists and Speech Language Pathologists, Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA) and the Standing Liaison Committee of E.U. Speech and Language Therapists and Logopedists were investigated and the themes identified in all suggests that professionals of these organizations have to involve themselves in decreasing the disablism linked to exhibitions of ability privileges and have to use their ability privilege for the improvement of the people they serve.

As to whether action that decreases anthropocentric privilege is mandated from environmental professionals is much less clear. The Environmental Professionals NREP Code of Ethics (National Registry of Environmental Professionals, 2013) states the following, "To use the best principles of environmental science, health, safety, and technology in planning and management to protect and enhance environmental quality", "To cooperate with all levels of government in the furtherance and development of appropriate public policies supportive of environmental quality, occupational health and safety", "To comply with applicable environmental quality, occupational health and safety, and product safety laws and regulations", " To fully disclose in writing to employers/clients all known positive and negative impacts to the environment of assigned activities, duties and/or responsibilities". Some of the wording may be could be used to demand action on anthropocentric privilege other not. The code of ethics of the National Association of Environmental Professionals (National Association of Environmental Professionals, 2013) states among others, "The objectives of an Environmental Professional are: 1. To recognize and attempt to reconcile societal and individual human needs with responsibility for physical, natural, and cultural systems. 2. To promote and develop policies, plans, activities and projects that achieve complementary and mutual support between natural and man-made, and present and future components of the physical, natural and cultural environment," and "As an Environmental Professional I will: "I will incorporate the best principles of the environmental

sciences for the mitigation of environmental harm and enhancement of environmental quality", "It is their duty to interest themselves in public welfare, and to be ready to apply their special knowledge for the benefit of mankind and their environment", "Recognize that total environmental management involves the consideration of all environmental factors including: technical, economical, ecological, and sociopolitical and their relationships", "Incorporate the best principle of design and environmental planning when recommending measures to reduce environmental harm and enhance environmental quality". As to whether code of ethics of professional groups linked to animals require a decrease in the anthropocentric angle is also not clear; the code of ethics of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, 2013) could be read by some to diminish the anthropocentric angle but it is not quite clear from the wordings how far this decrease is envisioned to go if at all. There are various other codes of ethics which suggest an adherence to an anthropocentric view. If we look not at a social group but at specific ability privileges such as consumerism and competitiveness the utility of a code of ethics is even less certain as no profession is linked to these abilities.

Conclusion

I submit that the lens of ability privilege provides opportunities to investigate positive and negative effects of existing and emerging ability privileges on numerous societal dynamics and discourses; for example what is the effect of the understanding of one's ability to consume or be competitive as an earned ability privilege on global climate change negotiations. It especially allows deconstructing what is seen as earned and unearned privilege whether birth given or later in the life cycle. I submit research is needed to understand ability privilege hierarchies (of individuals and social structures) and the reasons for them and an ability expectation conflict map is needed to understand which ability expectations are irreconcilable and which might be reconcilable, for whom conflict resolutions might work allowing one to better understand how far a given discourse might go given the ability expectations of the players involved. I posit that so far privilege dynamics are mostly discussed within social group binaries (male/female; white/non-white…). Ability privilege is a lens that has a binary the ability have/ability non-have) that allows for different configuration of discourses as various biological entities (social groups and animals and earth) in existence might be on the same ability-have or ability-non-have side.

Furthermore for example science and technology advancement and other societal advancements might shift which biological entities are part of the ability-have or ability-non-have side and we might even have new biological entities appearing that are seen as ability haves (such as humans or animals that are enhanced beyond the normal or robots). As such the ability privilege lens is able to engage with emerging or anticipated ability expectations that might be based on existing ability privileges or unravel new ability privileges appearing and allow for anticipatory governance and anticipatory advocacy.

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Review: *As the World Burns: 50 Simple Things You Can Do to Stay in Denial* (2007)

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REVIEW: *AS THE WORLD BURNS: 50 SIMPLE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO STAY IN DENIAL* (2007)

We see them on magazines while waiting in line at grocery stores, on pamphlets at farmers markets or even at the end of movies such as Al Gore's *Inconvenient Truth* — ubiquitous lists that offer simple, quick, and convenient ways for individuals to stop global warming. In their satiric graphic novel, *As the World Burns: 50 Simple Things You Can Do to Stay in Denial*, authors Derrick Jensen and Stephanie McMillan re-examine these simplistic approaches and instead offer a narrative far more revolutionary and cognizant of deep-seated cultural ideologies concerned with capitalist interests over environmental and animal protection. Combining humor and cultural critique, *As the Word Burns* is an eco-ability polemic that exposes our social constructs of what constitutes a human over a machine, acts of terror over empathy, and critical thought versus delusion.

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The graphic novel consists of several characters whose subplots are loosely interwoven throughout to demonstrate a larger conversation about environmental protection. Among the characters include two girls named Kranti (whose name means revolution in Hindi) and Bananabelle; a one-eyed, revolutionary rabbit named Bunnista; Ed, the green-washing politician; the US president; the media; a reflective man who resembles Derrick Jensen; a new-age hippy; an environmental group; non-human animals, and finally robotic extraterrestrials whose excrement consists of gold bars. Cartoonist Stephanie McMillan portrays this cast of characters with minimalist-style illustrations that communicate via inconspicuous details. The President's tie, for example, is littered with dollar signs indicative of his desires; the businessman's vampire incisor teeth suggest he feeds off the hype of sustainability; the three eyes of a frog indicate a sick environment, and so forth. To segue from one plot to another, McMillan offers single-page panels of individual characters surrounded by ample white space to emphasize their internal dialogue. Among the segues includes Bunnista illuminated by a crescent moon and starlight carrying a mysterious parcel while thinking, "I've got ideas. I've got ideas" — a phrase echoed throughout the novel (p. 97).

The novel begins with the typical parley between friends Bananabelle, a young girl who wants desperately to believe in lists that prescribe simple solutions to global warming, and her friend the raven-haired, cynical Kranti. After watching a movie, presumably Al Gore's *Inconvenient Truth* about global warming and what individuals can do about it, Bananabelle shares with Kranti a list of simple solutions. Among her solutions include purchasing fluorescent lights, planting trees, keeping tires inflated, adjusting thermostats, and avoiding overly packaged products. Despite these seemingly quick and easy solutions that will reduce tons of carbon emissions, Kranti calculates that when combined, these solutions equal "about a 21 percent reduction in carbon emissions" (p. 15). The implications for the so-called solutions are dire; however, Kranti suggests, "all we need to do is dismantle the industrial economy," which Bananabelle finds silly (p. 7). Kranti retorts with "why not dream so big that everybody takes out the dams that are killing the rivers in the first place?" (p. 21). Spurred by this rhetorical question addressing economic change, Bunnista says the conversation "gives [him] ideas" (p. 21).

The parley continues with Banabelle presenting to Kranti a new book, which this time contains 365 things to save the earth rather than a mere fifty. Again, Kranti responds to each suggestion with her characteristic wry comments. Furthermore, she indicates the movie simply offers suggestions for *individuals* when primary culprits are corporations and governments. In response, Bananbelle characterize her friend as being angry and suspicious and thus recommends therapy.

Kranti visits a therapist who wants to prescribe her medication to become "well adjusted," which Kranti defines as the ability "to tolerate whatever the norms of their society are, without being constantly upset and angry" (p. 46). The therapist asks Kranti to focus on the present rather than abstractions such as "the system," but Kranti explains she is concerned about systemic cultural issues such as factory farming and vivisection. In typical Jensen and McMillan dry humor, the therapist turns to cliché psychologism such the father complex, denial, projection, and obsessive fantasies. The therapist ultimately argues individuals are "helpless" against such issues and to "just lie back and enjoy what you can" (p. 56). Finally, he diagnoses Kranti as "clearly paranoid, and a danger to self and others" and prescribes her medication (p. 57).

Turning away from Bananabelle and Kranti, another conversational thread includes robot extraterrestrials who are flying toward Earth to colonize the universe and eat the earth. The aliens keenly understand human greed and find it convenient that humans have "already set up the infrastructure for [them] to eat the planet" (p. 26). They are aware that agencies operating under the guise of protecting resources are merely fronts for environmental extraction. The aliens finally meet with the President to obtain permits to legally exploit the environment. They easily obtain the permits because they bribe the President with their gold bar excrement. After obtaining their permits, the aliens drink the Great Lakes and eat the Appalachian Mountains. Despite constant updates about the environmental devastation, the President simply asks if any complainers were arrested. It is only until Ed the green politician visits the President that he becomes concerned. With their permits, the aliens are encroaching upon the profits of the corporations. Finally, Ed concludes the government must fight the aliens. Although the aliens are machines, so too are corporations which "are nothing but a type of social machine, a social organization that is machine-like" who "serve machine-like ends, for machines" (p. 167).

After meeting with several non-human animals who lament that humans are psychopaths, Bunnista brings various animals together who declare they must stop the environmental destruction. One animal asks if humans will join the fight; however, others reply, "humans have made themselves into machines" who "hate life" (p. 87). More animals join to initiate a revolution against the aliens. Meanwhile, Bunnista departs to bomb a dam as well as a vivisection lab. Prior to bombing the lab, Bunnista enters the lab and frees countless mice, dogs, cats, and primates. Although a rabbit of few words and thoughtful action, Bunnista nonetheless empathetically says "oh kitty" when he sees a caged cat whose skull is implanted with an electrode (p. 120). Moreover, he double-checks the lab to ensure no one remains behind.

The President wants to punish Bunnista because he did not have a permit and the dam belongs to a corporation. The president declares, "cutting into corporate profits is terrorism, pure and simple" (p. 106). As such, all rabbits, rabbit supporters and suspected terrorists are arrested including, Bananabelle and Kranti who are subsequently sent to a detention center. The police must simply fill arrest quotas and serve as unthinking tools that support the repressive state apparatus.

The Monsanto and Exon Mobile sponsored fear network responds to Bunnista's bombings by declaring him a terrorist. Moreover, they repeatedly report that Bunnista could have killed "beautiful innocent children" and that he blew up a vivisection lab dedicated to the important "research of cosmetics, forced smoke inhalation, […] and erectile dysfunction" — all research areas that serve capitalistic interests (p. 127, 128). Echoing Kranti's marginalization, Bunnista is likewise labeled a social threat. In addition to sensationalized news, the networks air a talk panel show called "Listen to the Experts: They're Experts, and You're Not," who offer so-called diverse opinions regarding the terrorist roundup.

Other subplots address minor characters who supposedly support the environment such as an activist group and a new age hippy. These environmentalists nonetheless support the very actions they seek to contest. Jensen and McMillan are particularly irreverent in their portrayal of the hippy who castigates a fox yet fails to critically self reflect and understand how navel gazing can be socially isolating. Much like the lists that focus on what *individuals* can do, Jensen and McMillan suggest that capitalist forces want isolated individuals rather than collectivities of

resistance. The critique does not stop there — the massive petitioning, fundraising, mass letter writing, press releases, and celebrity-studded events of the environmental group are equally useless.

Prior to getting arrested, Kranti advises Bananabelle to rethink who she asks to solve the earth's problems — seeking advice from the very corporations who perpetuate unsustainability is counterproductive; however, asking the animals is a simple and viable alternative. Upon asking how to help, a ram maintains, "if you don't have a good relationship with [the natural world], you'll die" (p. 149). Animals and indigenous people offer numerous ideas suggesting ecological thinking over the analytical thinking of ineffectual, simple lists. Among the suggestions include "stop dumping toxic garbage all over the place"; "stop the military from using poisonous weapons like depleted uranium" to "fight with all your heart," and "do whatever it takes" (p. 151, 152).

Rather than suggest that readers evade responsibility or become nihilists, McMillan and Jensen offer readers hope and expose a weakness of the robots — they are threatened by the wild: "wild hearts, wild blood, wild sap, wild soil, wild water, wild leaves, wild blades of grass, wild flesh, wild wills, wild thoughts, wild dreams" (p. 181). In short, a robot explains they are fearful of "those [they] can't threaten. Those [they] can't domesticate. Those [they] can't control." The *wild* collectivity of animals, Bunnista, undomesticated and critical thinking humans such as Kranti and Bananabelle, the sentient wind, trees, "and water and sand and rocks" fight the bioblaster-equipped aliens. Rather than join the bloody fight, the new age hippy finds it more important to meditate "on peace and love and compassion for all beings, including alien machines" (p. 204). Furthermore, the President and his cronies ask how will they "maintain [their] lifestyles" if "the wild terrorists don't let [them] consume the planet" (p. 219).

Analysis

Much like the interpretive conclusion of Friedrich Nietzsche's (1881) *Daybreak,* Jensen and McMillan seem to leave the conclusion open and invite readers to form wild collectivities and initiate liberatory action(s) against capitalist ideology. Although they eliminated the aliens,

their fight has "hardly even started" (Jensen and McMillan 2007, p. 218). The last page is a single panel of the various warriors walking determinedly along seashore toward an unknown path. The panel depicts blackbirds flying above the sea toward the unknown who echo the concluding aphorism "We aeronauts of the spirit" of Nietzsche's *Daybreak*. Nietzsche views his targeted and future readers as brave birds who and fly farther and farther suggesting how we never stop becoming. He questions if it is "our fate to be wrecked against infinity" yet concludes the book with "or, my brothers. Or?" (Nietzsche 1881, p. 229). Much like Nietzsche, Jensen and McMillan do not attempt to give us a final solution, but invite us to become yes-sayers and determine our own alternatives. We must become artists and draw our own conclusions about what forms of resistance to enact and embrace infinite possibilities. Upon looking closely at some of the humans, however, many of them are carrying weapons, which is suggestive of violence as a viable option.

When considering Bunnista's actions and the bloody battle against the aliens, it may seem Jensen and McMillan are advocating violence. Furthermore, if the non-human animals represent Jensen and McMillan's position, they argue to "do whatever it takes" to promote change (p. 152). A fox likewise suggests a violent position when he questions, "Why do you hate violence that frees the victims of greater violence, even more than you hate the original violence?" (p. 34). Moreover, a skunk exclaims, "fight like our lives depend on it" (p. 87). Despite these implications, however, violence may serve as just *one* possible form of resistance. It is too simplistic and easy to reduce their suggested resistance to violence exclusively. We would do well to consider *As the World Turns* as a polemic to adopt disruptive and socially transformative eco-*thinking* and *eco-ability* that influences and enacts agency. The key is to be active rather than a passive recipient to ideology. If we *think* differently, we experience and act differently.

Upon considering the intended audiences for *As the World Burns*, the inside cover explains examination copies are available for college professors. Among the audiences may include rhetoric and composition professors and students whose freshman-level writing classes address sustainability. This may seem an unlikely audience when considering how Jensen and McMillan criticize the efficacy of the environmental group's politicized writing; however, *As the*

World Turns attacks *analytical thinking*. After all, their multimodal graphic novel is a form of resistance. Jensen and McMillan suggest that when considering how to save the environment, culture privileges analytical thinking over more eco-logical approaches. Bananabelle's itemized lists of individual and isolated directives such as recycling more or dropping the thermostat just two more degrees, for example, are divorced from the idea of ecological interconnectedness.

Perhaps the earliest mention of eco-logic and rhetoric is from Richard M. Coe (1975) in "Eco-Logic for the Composition Classroom." Coe focuses on logic because the "process of writing often forces recognition of faulty thinking or inaccurate perception" (p. 233). Coe argues the way we teach rhetoric applies more of an analytical logical approach, which basically separates the whole into components and then approaches each component in turn in an isolated way (p. 232). The lists that Bananabelle references, for instance, are representative of this line of thinking. Coe maintains this approach is useful when considering those wholes that are similar to the sum of their parts; however, compositionists "should teach rhetorical modes based on eco-logic as well as on analytic logic" (p. 233). If students exclusively adopt analytic logic, their arguments about pressing environmental issues can become unsound.

Rather than employ analytical thinking, which undervalues the importance of interconnectivity, *As the World Turns* is a polemic for eco-logical thinking when considering its inseparable form and content. Jensen and McMillan provide snippets of conversations from various key players. From the Latin word *contexere*, which denotes a weaving together, the authors invite the audience to weave different conversational threads and cartoon panels together to understand how environmental problems are systemic and interconnected. Timothy Morton (2010) explains context well when he states, "thinking interdependence involves thinking difference. This means confronting the fact that all beings are related to each other negatively and differentially, in an open system without center or edge" (p. 39).

In terms of content, the animals must remind Kranti and Bananabelle about eco-logical thinking. When Bananabelle has to ask a crow "what should we do, to save the planet," he brings a collectivity of diverse sentient life including animals, plants, trees, who remind her about interconnectivity when they state, "you are a part of us. Let go of your destructive culture and you'll remember how to live with us, and how to be happy (p. 155)" and "you made the error of

separating yourselves from the rest of us" (p. 154). Upon listening to the eco-logic of the animals, and subsequently challenging speciesism, Bananabelle points to her lack of interconnectivity when she states, "we've forgotten […] our relationship" (p. 154).

As the *World Burns* is not limited to rhetoric and Coe's notion of eco-logic — it demonstrates Anthony N. Nocella's (2012) disruptive notion and practice of eco-ability, which "is a philosophy that respects differences in abilities while promoting values appropriate to the stewardship of eco-systems" (p. 5). A concept that intersects animal advocacy, ecology, and dis-ability studies, eco-ability "is the theory that nature, nonhuman animals, and people with disabilities promote collaboration, not competition; interdependency, not dependence; and respect for difference and diversity, not sameness and normalcy" (p. 9). Eco-ability draws upon the differential moves of dis-ability studies that disrupt the binaries of ability/dis-ability, normal/abnormal, and individual/collectivity. By displacing prioritization of the previously subordinated term, new formations result in which dis-ability, abnormality, and collectivity are no longer inferior to the logos.

According to Nocella, dis-ability studies points to how "every being has differing abilities. Each being plays an important role in the global community and is valuable within the larger ecological context" (p. 5). Jensen and McMillan, for example, suggest that those who society deems dis-abled and abnormal such as the mad Kranti and terrorist Bunnista are perhaps the most abled in exposing the disastrous ecological consequences of analytical thinking; accordingly, their difference is threatening. Because Kranti does not conform to society's notions of what constitutes normal, for example, the therapist suppresses eco-ability in terms of his diagnosis and prescribed therapy. Jensen and McMillan suggest Kranti's psychological diagnosis is simply a construct aimed to characterize difference as a disability to control. Nocella explains, "if you are not labeled normal by society, you are inherently viewed as abnormal, a threat that must be controlled, disciplined, and punished (p. 5). The therapist clearly views Kranti as a threat and prescribes her medication as a form of social control. Nocella (2009) explains, "medication is often prescribed to model the student or individual to the value of normalcy, average or above average, and a rational and sound person. These drugs are tools of conformity, in a capitalistic driven industrialized society" (p. 155). Jensen and McMillan also point out that because

Bunnista's revolutionary actions are threatening, the government not only labels him a terrorist, but also controls his body by brute force and locks him in a detention center. Rather than marginalize dis-ability and perpetuate the violence of the same, Jensen and McMillan challenge what constitutes normality thereby strengthening the struggles between ecology and dis-ability studies.

Dis-abilty studies also challenges the construct of social independence and "is in *favor* of educing for people their collective dependence upon one another and in fostering collaborative efforts rather than competitive ones" (Nocella 2008, p. 81). These collaborative efforts are not limited to people; eco-ability takes this notion of interdependency and extends it to critical animal studies to include "*all* life, sentient and nonsentient" thus challenging the debilitating dualism of humans and non-human animals (Nocella 2012, p. 3). *As the World Turns* is a polemic exposing the dangers of privileging the individual and human over a collectivity of *all* life.

In terms of applicability, professors whose classes employ the lens of sustainability would do well to adopt *As the World Turns* as more than a primer in ecological thought versus analytical thinking; it is rich in pedagogical implications. The novel, for example, is an exemplar model for students to recognize how different key players involved in an issue may indeed have the very same position regarding sustainability, but for very different reasons. Understanding the motivations of different key players can aid students with effective persuasive argumentation. It is worth noting, for example, both the government and non-human animals declare war on the robot aliens, yet their rationales differ.

Furthermore, the novel easily introduces students to how both ideological and repressive state apparatuses operate in culture. Students could investigate and critique parallel instances of ideology at work in contemporary events. In addition, the novel is rich in allusions — from aliens eating the Appalachian Mountaintops to drinking the Great Lakes dry. Students could investigate the numerous allusions and learn about ecological devastation such as Appalachian

mountaintop mining.[6] More than learn, they could use writing to inform the public, spur public debate, and prompt social change. Like the animals who found explosives at a construction site who will "use the master's explosives to dismantle the master's prison," so too can socially minded individuals radically disrupt the master's logic by favouring eco-logic and eco-ability over analytical thinking for liberatory ends both in and *out of the classroom* as well as across disciplines (Jensen and McMillan 2007, p. 176).

Outside the classroom, critical citizens would do well to adopt the eco-logical and eco-ability moves of *As the World Burns*. Rather than become caught in false dilemmas such as using paper or plastic, perhaps we could consider if the very cosmetics, cigarettes, and erectile dysfunction products we purchase negate life. Are these products, for example, simply addictive tools of capitalism to push socially constructed norms of what is beautiful or desirable? Do the vivisected bodies in *As the World Burns* demonstrate that capitalism privileges some forms of dis-ability yet stigmatizes others such as Kranti who pose as threats to the system? When considering the destabilizing efforts of eco-ability, which promotes challenges to social constructs, socially transformative liberation is possible for all.

In the wry spirit of *As the World Turns*, here are five simple ways to destabilize capitalism:

1. Think and live eco-logically
2. Consider how analytical thinking and lists can divorce the whole into isolated components
3. Interrogate simple solutions. Do they unwittingly support the very ideas they seek to contest?
4. Think for yourself
5. Act abnormal; act wild.

[6] I use the word *learn* because many freshmen students in my Fall 2013 Rhetoric and Writing courses, for example, were unaware of factory farming until they had read Cathy B. Glenn's (2004) article "Constructing Consumables and Consent: A Critical Analysis of Factory Farm Industry Discourse."

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Review: *Avatar* (2009) and *District 9* (2009) - Animals, Aliens, and (Dis)abled Bodies: A Post-structural, Comparative

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REVIEW: *AVATAR* (2009) AND *DISTRICT 9* (2009) - ANIMALS, ALIENS, AND (DIS)ABLED BODIES: A POST-STRUCTURAL, COMPARATIVE

In 2009, James Cameron's epic visual orgy, *Avatar*, dominated attention in popular media and at red carpet events. While conflicting reports heralded the film as a powerful representation of indigenous and ecological issues, and alternatively as a tragic and ignorant codifying of white, Western sovereignty, subsequent months nevertheless saw Palestinians, Dongria Kondh Indians, and other disenfranchised populations painting themselves blue in identification with environmental and indigenous destruction by military, government, and corporate forces. Earlier that year, Neill Blomkamp's equally relevant and thematically identical film, *District 9*, slipped quietly into and out of theaters, hardly noticed. Despite these film's

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similarities, no protestors dressed themselves in crustaceous antennae or arthropoda exoskeletons in identification with the *District 9*'s alien population to demonstrate the plight of immigrants and transplants. At first glance, the films bear such similarity to one another in theme, structure, and aim that it would be difficult to articulate the reasons for such disparate public responses. However, in the following critical comparative analysis, I suggest the different receptions are due to the (un)intelligibility of the terms through which the films' characters and political statements are made legible to the public.

To question whether or not a body, idea, or identity is intelligible is to ask whether or not it conforms to normative categories used to create knowledge or to think about and understand life. Intelligibility refers to both the conditions for and limits to knowledge; it is the conceptual grid, the conditions for recognition, through which bodies and identities are simultaneously captured and made legible (Butler, 2004).[8] While *Avatar's* characters and narrative become legible precisely by conforming to certain normative ideas about bodies and heroism (e.g., able-bodied, heterosexual, carnivorous, masculine), *District 9*'s characters and narrative move further and further from those norms throughout the film.

But filmic popularity and identifiable heroes are not the only things at stake in conversations about intelligibility. The juxtaposition in these films mirrors a question at the heart of contemporary ethical and cultural philosophy: does an identity or body have to be intelligible, understandable, or recognizable, does it have to conform to norms, in order to be the recipient of ethical action or participate in ethical narratives?

The answer is characterized by two alternative perspectives: humanism and post-structuralism. Philosophies of humanism rely on norms, intelligibility, and sameness in order to espouse ethical action. While there are many traditions of humanism, I here refer to humanism as the collection of post-renaissance, post-enlightenment philosophical traditions that take the human as something given (natural) and universal (everywhere the same), and then

[8] Butler, Judith (2004) *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. New York: Verso 2004. p. 34. "the first effacement [of the other] is through occlusion; the second is an effacement through representation itself."

subsequently focus on this human as the center of the ethical and meaning-making universe.[9] This version of humanism is born from the metaphysics of presence—a philosophical position that believes each body has an essence that is ontologically (or definitionally) prior to its actions and attributes, and considers this essence the primary means of determining value (Butler 1990, pp. 23-31). Ethical humanism attempts to disrupt the self/other paradigm—where the other stands for the disenfranchised, misunderstood, deprivileged member of the hierarchy—by understanding the other as the same as the self. For example, human rights paradigms rely on the existence of a universal human whose inherent value, agency, demands, and desires are generally the same regardless of nationality, religion, race, sex etc. In addition to problematically making the ethical value of any body dependent upon its conformity to dominant norms, the universal human and its supposed rights have served as justification for a number of colonizing transnational actions, including U.S. military intervention in Iraq, Afghanistan, now also in Syria, and in many other theaters of global conflict. It is not a coincidence that this same, military interventionist paradigm is justified in *Avatar* by constructing the *Na'vi* as quintessentially human-like victims also in need of salvation and humanitarian aid.

As the swashbuckling environmentalism of *Avatar* clearly demonstrates, humanism has recently begun to lay claim to identities beyond the *Homo sapiens*.[10] In the animal liberation philosophy advanced by Peter Singer, ethics and protection ought to be accorded to bodies based on their inherent abilities, traits, and value (Singer, 2009).[11] This framework has led to lengthy and unresolved discussions about which non-*Homo sapiens* bodies have consciousness or self-consciousness, are capable of feeling pain, or generally possess traits that render them worthy of the right to life without suffering. If a creature is understood to lack certain traits, as are the

[9] This humanism, and the humanist subject, is the dominant tradition in western liberalism. While many thinkers of gender, race, post-colonialism, rights, animality espouse the kind of metaphysics I suggest, they do not consider themselves humanist philosophers per say. Rather, their arguments simply conform to a line of reasoning that assumes identities are whole, given, and essential to bodies.

[10] To clarify, *Homo sapiens* is the singular form of the species designation. So when I refer to "the" *Homo sapiens*, I refer to an identity, not a natural biological organism, that is the product, not the cause, of constant processes of differentiation, articulation, archaeology, policing, etc.

[11] Singer (2009), p. 71. Peter Singer disavows rights based approaches, suggesting that different abilities afford creature's different rights. He prefers to draw lines of ethical value around innate characteristics.

bodies they have not yet proven that they can feel pain or suffer in ways measurable by or comparable to humans, they fall beneath the line of intelligibility that Singer draws somewhere between shrimp and oyster (p. 171).[12] Like rights discourses, animal liberation relies on and extends humanism by 1) promoting ethical consideration of others based on traits first viewed by and associated with *Homo sapiens* value or ability, 2) hierarchically organizing bodies in moments of human/non-human conflict, and thus 3) remaining inherently anthropocentric.

In contrast to humanism, post-structural ethical models arose as a critique of the reliance on sameness and intelligibility. While these models also deal with the paradigm of self/other, they do not require the other to look like or fit into dominant ideas about bodies and identities. Instead, they affirm the irreducible, often unintelligible and inarticulable differences and multiplicity of bodies. Post-structuralism generally suggests that every body or person is a singular, unique, irreducible entity, whose identity, needs, and goals are not reducible to those of any other creature, nor are they universalizable into abstract categories like "human," "animal" or even species like "crab" or "prawn." While humanism relies on the similarities between bodies to justify the extension of ethics, post-structuralism affirms heterogeneity and difference, and advances action even in the absence of sameness or knowledge of the other's inherent traits and value.

I argue that the characters and ethical models of *Avatar* and *District 9* can be better understood by viewing them through the humanist and post-structural philosophies to which they respectively correspond. With this in mind, this review compares these films on their use and misuse of paradigms of 1) otherness, 2) becoming other, and 3) postcolonial salvation. In the first section, I trace the construction of the lovely and grotesque alien others through the concepts of orientalization and the fetish. In the second section, I draw on identity theory of Judith Butler to demonstrate how these films' protagonists—otherwise unheroic, rather dislikable individuals—are made (il)legible as heroes through their transformation out of (*Avatar*) and into (*District 9*) disability, species, and heterosexuality, and the discourses indigeneity and immigration. I argue that Avatar problematically reproduces the very symbolic, discursive, and cultural regimes that

[12] Singer absolutely does suggest that there are ecological consequences of eating certain creatures, even if the creature does not have certain rights as an individual.

make possible the violation the film claims to contest. On the other hand, *District 9* successfully troubles those cultural and symbolic orders by denaturalizing them, and exposing any enjoyment and fetishizing of the other to the gruesomeness of colonial desire. In the third and final section, I draw upon the work of Jacques Derrida and Gayatri Spivak to argue that *District 9* demonstrates a theoretically sophisticated alternative to the neo-liberal, humanist paradigms of philanthropy in *Avatar* which reinforce the infantilization of the other, and encode the omnipotence and power of the Self.

Comparing these two films in this way not only helps to clarify their vastly differing receptions, but also furthers the discussion between humanist and post-structuralist ethical models. While *District 9* refuses to capture or domesticate the other in order to offer rights, protection, and ethics—bearing out paradigms critical to post-structural ethics such as Derrida's differed future (1987, p. 60; 1992, p. 25) and Spivak's irreducible other (2008, pp. 22-24)—the public at large did not relate to, understand, or find the film compelling enough to incorporate into public discourse. On the other hand, even though *Avatar* essentialized, undressed, infantilized, and subjugated practically every identity it could find to the privileged Western, able-bodied, heteronormative subject, it made a much larger splash in public discourse. *Avatar*'s troubling success as a relatable, indigo colored paradigm of protest challenges less flashy, post-structural logics to produce greater, more accessible resources for political resistance. The following analysis draws attention to this challenge, and attempts to meet it by demonstrateing teachable, interesting ways to draw forth the post-structural ethics and accessibility of films like *District 9*.

Materialization Of Otherness: Na'vi and Prawn Representations

Avatar and *District 9* enact two kinds of othering, visually represented in the figures and operations of the indigenous *Na'vi* and the alien Prawns. In the former, the viewer finds an idealized species—a lovelier, bluer version of the human form. In the later, the viewer finds a visually grotesque creature, more closely associated with those bodies humans eat and squash than those they love. Without even addressing major plot points, one can see how otherness is materialized in the bodies and perceived habits of the alien other. In both films, the other is constellated primarily according to familiar and troubled frameworks of intelligibility, including

language, gender, sex, able-bodiedness, and species. But if in *Avatar*, these frameworks capture the other, in *District 9*, the other disrupts all discourses of legibility.

To begin with, the Na'vi have a self-appointed proper name, lending a pretense of legitimacy to their tribal sovereignty. Their ability to speak perfect English further renders them linguistically recognizable, as almost the entire film takes place in the language of the English-speaking colonizer. The English viewer need not worry about gaining total access to the other's thought.

Physically, the *Na'vi* are tall, turquoise, hyper and ecologically sexualized, romantically indigenous, supremely able-bodied, perfected models of the human—sharing anatomical similarities as minute and obvious as breasts, ears, hair, etc. *Na'vi* are clearly gendered bodies, with recognizable hetero-normative gender and sexual roles for men and women. But in addition to these intimacies, they are physically and psychically able connect to all other creatures on their planet through a tentacle found in their hair. Further, like most indigenous groups thrown onto the Hollywood screen, the *Na'vi* are constructed as exceptionally mindful and spiritual while also militarily and technologically "primitive;" they are represented as more physically advanced but intellectually simpler than their human counter-parts.

Alternatively, *District 9* aliens have a very different relationship to language, body, and sex. Firstly, they only ever called Prawns—a name derogatorily bestowed them because of their similarity to both ugly, edible arthropods and the local king cricket (Parktown Prawn), indigenous to Johannesberg, the film's setting. The viewer never finds out if Prawns even have a proper name, let alone sees it used. Despite Prawn ability to understand English, their clicking language only further alienates them from immediate recognizability. Unlike the *Na'vi*, Prawn language is only available via subtitle, confirming their difference.

While the Na'vi are beautiful, better specimens of the *Homo sapiens*, Prawns are grotesque, and humanoid only in the strictest of senses. As the *Na'vi* have extreme able-bodied qualities, capable of not only meeting but exceeding each human "ability," Prawns are hunch-backed, slouching, slower but brutishly strong creatures. While Prawns are not physically impaired, they do posses traits that have been rendered brutish and abnormal, even impairing, on the spectrum of "appropriate" human or hominid variation known as "able-bodied."

While the *Na'vi* are highly sexualized beings, physically and intimately connected even with other species, Prawns are completely asexual, laying and fertilizing their own egg sacks. While *Na'vi* are rendered spiritually intelligent if simpler creatures, Prawns are constructed as unrefined, unspiritual, brutish, aggressive, and unlearned cat-nip addicts, who's technology, while obviously more advanced, is less important to them than the meeting of their temporary desires and needs as they wallow in a state of submission in the camps.

Avatar takes a decidedly neo-orientalist approach to othering. Orientalism, first coined by Edward Said in a book by the same name, is the name for the dual relationship of desire and subjugation between a dominant subject and the other (Said, 1997). In *Avatar*, the viewer's interest relies on a fascination with the other's construction as sexualized, mysterious, idealized, and also in need of protection, rights, and salvation. At the same time as the Western subject constructs "the native," the *Na'vi*, as a sexy if terrifying constitutive limit that threatens the dominant subject's legitimacy and sovereignty, the *Na'vi* also possess things lacked by the Western subject—things that subject romanticizes—so the *Na'vi* also become an object of curiosity and desire. This, the structure of the fetish, allows dominant subjects to both covet and overpower the other (Krips, 1997). Materialized in the figure of the *Na'vi*, paradigms humanism and empire intertwine. Constructing the *Na'vi* as an other in need of protection and salvation justifies writing them into law, state, and political imagination in ways that compromise their sovereignty. In the humanist ethics espoused in *Avatar*, the motivation to help the *Na'vi,* the means by which help is given, and the terms under which it is rendered are all controlled by the dominant subject. Just as claims about universal human rights and images of abused Arab women have been used to justify U.S. military and economic intervention in theaters of global conflict, *Avatar* relies on the exposure, appeal, sexualization, and victimization of the *Na'vi* in order to accord them so-called human rights, and then subsequently, to justify the film's epic military action sequences.

If *Avatar's* construction of the other (as desirable) makes possible the fetish, then *District 9* successfully exposes and denaturalizes any fetishizing of the other precisely by not offering the viewer the cultural and symbolic norms needed to construct the fetish.

District 9's paradigm of othering, materialized in the figure of the Prawn, keeps the

sexuality, culture, motives etc. entirely undiscovered throughout the film. Unlike *Avatar*, in which the other is slowly revealed throughout the film, *District 9* never offers access to Prawn essence in a way that might either justify or make despicable their containment and abuse. The only things revealed are the actions of governmental officials, street protestors, and military personal. As the focus of intelligibility remains on Wikus, and on the governmental and human figures that stand in for the dominant subject, the audience is unable to latch onto the symbolic norms needed to reproduce the meaning of self/other. The audience is unable to transfer desire, fetish, or anything else. While *District 9* and *Avatar* both emphasize the other's vulnerability, the prohibition of harm, and the need to act ethically toward the other, reasons for that prohibition are left deferred, in *District 9*.

Heroism and Becoming Other

Despite the different constructions of otherness, the differences between humanist and poststructuralist approaches to ethics are better represented in the transformation of the films' protagonists into the alien other. In both *Avatar* and *District 9*, I consider this transformation by examining how race, gender, species, disability, sexuality, and culture are solidified through the interplay of villainy and heroism.

In *Avatar*, the protagonist, Jake Sully, is a white, homegrown, American, ex-marine, who was paralyzed in a war. His twin brother was a scientist, part of a program to create Avatars of the *Na'vi*—a native alien race on a planet from which humans are trying to mine unobtanium. Jake sully can transport his neurological functions into the body of the avatar, and function in the *Na'vi* body. He is tasked by an extremist military commander to learn the ways of the *Na'vi* so that they might be more easily persuaded to give up their home and riches.

In *District 9*, Wikus Van De Merwe is a white, middleclass, geeky, well-liked, passive-aggressive kind of guy. He is a census clerk for the government tasked at the film's opening with moving a large group of aliens to a new settlement. During the "relocation" process, Wikus accidentally comes into contact with an alien fuel source that slowly transforms his body into a Prawn. He eventually teams up with a Prawn named Christopher and his son, after Christopher promises to help Wikus reverse the "degeneration" process. To do this, Wikus must help Christopher get to the mothership. Chaos ensues.

If humanist paradigms of ethical action rely on what is the same, what is universal, what is essential in and shared between each being, then *Avatar* grants these gifts to the wishing audience in abundance. Sully's transformation into a *Na'vi* reiterates the normativized, humanist ethical paradigms and identity.

While *Avatar* has been criticized for its use of a white, powerful male hero to save the romanticized and infantilized native, this criticism fails to get at the heart of the issue; it fails to recognize that whiteness and masculinity are not just two predicates of a unified subject, but discourses which render subjects and their heroism legible in the first place. From the post-structural perspective—one to which *District 9* corresponds—a more thorough critique requires undermining the normativized subject construction that rendered the other outside in the first instance. For it is one thing to say that Sully *is* a white, militarized, sexualized, able-bodied male and he ought to be otherwise; as though whiteness and heroism are simply two predicates of the identity Jake Sully. It is another thing to claim, as Judith Butler's identity theory suggests (2009, pp. 5-7), that his character only comes to be recognized *as a* hero through the legitimizing discourses of whiteness, militarization, and masculinity. Sully is only recognizable as a hero when he conforms to our ideas about what makes a proper subject.

But further still, the existing critical attention to race, gender, and nationality in *Avatar* has left the far more insidious discourses uncontested. As argued below, the audience's ability to understand Sully as a hero has more to do with his conformity to interrelated, normative discourses of disability, heterosexuality, and animality, than his conformity to norms of gender and race. By focusing on charismatic, obvious, and dominant arenas of discursive contestation (like man and white), most reflections on *Avatar* have overlooked the subtler, perhaps more insidious discourses whose strategic forgetting holds together the integrity of colonial identity even after and beyond gender and race have been interrogated. In other words, changing Sully's race and gender would not change the fact that he must be able-bodied (running and leaping), humanoid (possessing speech) and heterosexual (sleeping with *Na'vi* royalty) to be the hero. The construction of heroism vis-à-vis disability, sexuality, and animality is what I contest here.

In *Avatar*, the story begins when a wheel chair bound Sully jumps at the chance to become able-bodied. Throughout the first moments, Sully frequently reiterates that able-

bodiedness is his foremost goal and the primary reason he decides to fill his brothers place as a *Na'vi* avatar. From the very beginning, *Avatar's* narrative and hero gain their intelligibility through troubled definitions of the human body that subjugate variety and difference to particular norms. When Sully focuses on gaining back certain bodily traits, constructing his wheel-chair bound form as a disenfranchised, imperfect deviation from a more desirable human model, he appeals to medicalized and humanist definitions of able-bodied and disabled.[13] In such definitions, "able-bodiedness… masquerades as a nonidentity, as the natural order of things" (McRuer 2006, p. 1). From medical journals to non-accessible school classrooms, from on-screen film performances to the legal institution of the Americans with Disabilities Act, humanist discourses of disability treat certain bodies as variation of what is better and normal, and suggest that disabled bodies deserve rights *because* they are human and *despite* the fact they do not fit the norm.[14]

Critical of this definition of disability, feminist and post-structural theorists define disability instead as a cultural interpretation of human variation born out of invalid assumptions about what is normal (Garland-Thomson, 2005). According to feminist disability scholar, Rosmarie Garland-Thomson, disability is not "an essential property of bodies that supposedly have something wrong with them," but a system, or what Michele Foucault would call a symbolic "economy" of representation that stigmatizes bodily difference and marks particular bodies as subordinate (Garland-Thomson 2005, p. 1557; Foucault 1978, p. 11). From this perspective, one cannot say that Sully is disabled and becomes a better body or becomes able-bodied—as though able-bodied were a real, physical category of body one could inhabit by possessing certain traits. Rather, one must say that Sully's body and activities become more

[13] As an example, consider a recent article on the website of The Humanist Community at Harvard. The article advocates making the community's facilities and events accessible to, extending equal rights to, and "standing up for" people with disabilities, but does not recognize that both disability and ability as such are fictions which they themselves perpetuate. Creating a more inclusive humanism in an ableist world." http://harvardhumanist.org/2012/02/17/creating-a-more-inclusive-humanism-in-an-ableist-world/.

[14] According to the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, the legal definition of the disabled is a person who: (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or (2) has a record of such an impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment." Physical impairment is defined by the act as "any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory (including speech organs), cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, hemic and lymphatic, skin, and endocrine."

intelligible, more heroic, to the viewer as they increasingly conform to the symbolic framework of able-bodiedness.

Additionally, if able-bodiedness is only a construction representing the most desirable possibilities within culturally authorized interpretations of physical variation, then the *Na'vi*, like Marvel superheroes, extend the discourse of able-bodied into the realm of the fantastic. In so far as the *Na'vi* possess extraordinary physical abilities that exceed those of human forms, the *Na'vi* perhaps represent a paradigm of radical able-bodiedness that even the able-bodied viewer can desire. Now, in order for Sully to become hero, he must not only leave his wheelchair and walk, but also run, jump, fall, copulate, fly on dinosaur-like birds and psycho-physically connect to the global consciousness available in the Pandoran trees. While the line between ability and disability is highlighted early on in the film in a scene when seated Sully is accompanied by walking humans as he roles along in his wheelchair, the discursive juxtaposition between mere disability and supreme able-bodiedness is best visually captured in one of *Avatar's* final scenes. In this scene, the tall, perfect form of the *Na'vi* princess, *Neytiri*, holds the broken, human body of Sully. It is only by occupying this other form (*Na'vi*), only by rising from disabled to radically, idealistically able-bodied, that Sully can become intelligible as a hero to the viewer.

In *District 9*, on the other hand, it is Wikus' degeneration that allows his rise to heroism—if a hero is even what he is. While I do not claim that Wikus actually becomes disabled in order to become hero, I do suggest that the transformations and bodily affects that enable his heroism are predominately understood through the cultural lens of disability. As Sully grows softer, kinder, more hero-like as he experiences the radical able-bodiedness of the Na'vi, Wikus becomes even less likable, almost detestable, increasingly violent, and aggressive during his transformation. From the start, Wikus was a fairly neutral, if even unlikable character. But it grows worse as his body becomes deformed, unable to function according to strictly human or Prawn norms, grotesque in its unfamiliar shape and abilities. His hand slowly turns into a claw-like Prawn limb, he begins to hunch over, and he cannot control even his most basic bodily functions. In one scene, he walks into his house yelling for his wife, "Honey, I think I crapped my pants." As his body loses almost all of its previous abilities, neither his form nor character seem heroic. He does not even seem like a protagonist in any strict sense of the role. Yet this

bodily transformation, the fall into what one might be tempted to "disability" is precisely what enables Wikus' heroism, if that is even its proper name.

In a sense, Wikus' "disability becomes the positive, indeed enabling, condition for a powerful experience that crosses the line not only between self and other, but also organic and inorganic, the biological and mechanical" (Wolfe 2010, p. 136). The bodily differences one might be tempted to understand as disabling, inhibiting, etc, become not only acceptable but even helpful variations. Wikus's perceived (dis)abilities—his degenerating ability to walk, hold things in his hands, stand up straight, think clearly, even control his bowel movements—catalyze the necessary break down of the barriers between himself and the other, human and non-human, biological and technological. The breakdown between himself and the other is especially enabling, since it allows him to fill a critical and compassionate role at the film's climax.

But this other break down between biology and technology is also quite interesting, and situates Wikus' so-called disabilities firmly in the realm of the posthuman. If philosophical posthumanism rejects the classic humanist divisions of self and other, mind and body, society and nature, human and animal, organic and technological, then *District 9's* hero relies on the terms of this new space of becoming for his success and his intelligibility. Unlike *Avatar*, which draws upon inaccurate if popular notions of the nature/technology—dividing protagonists and antagonists along the lines of biological and technological—*District 9*'s post-human landscape reveals alien creatures who have a mysterious and unexplained organic connection to their inorganic machines. Only Prawn biology can fire Prawn weapons or operate Prawn technology. So as Wikus looses the unique dexterity of the primate hand, he gains, among other things, the ability to connect with alien technology. A so-called disability becomes an ability. In one of the film's final scenes, this (dis)ability allows Wikus to defend Christopher and his son (as they escape from earth) by both climbing into an alien armor suite and firing alien weaponry. Here, our despicable hero blurs lines between disability and ability, between the human and non-human species, between biology and technology, thoroughly immersing the viewer in a post-human world where disability "positively makes a mess of the conceptual an ontological coordinates" upon which our identity recognition and ethical actions rest (Wolfe 2010, p. 136).

But the discourses of disability and ability do not stand on their own, either in these films or off screen. They are closely related to heteronormative frameworks of sexuality. The relationship between able-bodiedness and normative sexuality consists not only in terms of reproductive disability and infertility, but also the perception that normal bodies have normal, hetero sex, while paralyzed, quadriplegic, autistic, and handicapped bodies must undertake non-normative sexual interactions, if they chose to participate sexually at all. In *Avatar*, Sully's bedding of the native princess is not an act merely consistent with his sexuality, or the neutral result of the condition of bodies who happen to be sexed. Rather, it is through the act of copulation that his heterosexuality, virility and *ability* make him visible as "hero." This able-bodied avatar, a mate suitable even for a princess, lies in stark contrast to the wheelchair bound, sexless form of Sully's human body.

In *District 9*, on the other hand, Wikus loses the heterosexuality and other qualities that marked *Avatar's* hero as such. While beginning scenes show Wikus proudly displaying his wife's "angelic" and "beautiful" image to a camera crew, later scenes reveal a confused and grief-stricken Wikus who is unable copulate with or even remain in the same house with this partner. Wikus slowly turns into an other whose sexual and domestic identity is, at the very least, uncertain, and at worst, dysfunctional. Additionally, when Wikus' father-in-law, a high-ranking government official, creates the cover-up that turns Wikus into a fugitive, he claims Wikus is an adulterer who had sex with the aliens. At another point in the film, a lieutenant in a human gang vying for power within Prawn camps questions Wikus about his newly formed Prawn arm by exclaiming: "How did you do this one, my man? It's doggy-style with a demon. You're one brave white man. Were you wearing a condom?" That Wikus' decline into perceived physical dysfunction and disability is explained, if falsely, as a result of non-normative sexuality again ties the concepts of heterosexuality and disability intimately. It plays on a popular fear that strange sexualities can mysteriously lead to physical problems (see McRuer 2003, 2006). In one scene, Wikus protests to his wife on the phone, exclaiming, "Honey, you have to believe me. I never had sex with a creature. I would never have sex with any fuckin' creature." Here, the unparalleled value of normative sexuality is revealed when Wikus' literal, painful physical transformation is overwhelmed by his need to suspend any suspicion of interspecies sexuality.

The association of the Prawns with animals, the accusation of interspecies sexuality, and Wikus' growing physical impediments suggest that the construction of heroism and otherness is tied to yet a third interrelated discourse of othering: animality.

Despite the fact that Avatar marketed itself as a "green," ecological film, its hero only becomes legible by taking on identities associated with domination of nature—including but not limited to domesticator, consumer, killer, viewer, knower. *Avatar's* supposed message of interspecies connectivity culminates in Sully's prayer to the Na'vi gods, which subsequently unites all Pandoran creatures in a final battle against their human foes. Yet while this may seem romantically ecological, the film suggests this is possible only because Sully has first proven his respect for these creatures through traditional *Na'vi* acts of relationality—acts that dominate and domesticate fellow creatures. While the *Na'vi* are not rendered through the discourse of animality—as the Prawn and many off-screen indigenous populations often are—they are instead understood as recognizably and properly "native" precisely through their mystical dominion over these creatures. For example, in one of the primary *Na'vi* rituals, a warrior must wrestle a winged creature to the ground and then physically bind to it with the their follicle-like tentacle before it successfully kills them and after which it is bound to them for life.

In addition to bending creatures to there will through physio-phsycic connections in strikingly rape-like scenarios, viewers see that the *Na'vi* also kill and eat animals. *Avatar* not only reinforces a hard and fast line between those who are edible and those who are not, but suggests that Sully's acceptance by the *Na'vi* and recognizability by the audience is dependent upon who he eats, who he hunts, and who he domesticates. As the humanoid *Na'vi* and their non-human counterparts remain distinct and hierarchically organized, the audience more easily understands the hero and the other as identifiable characters.

In stark contrast, Wikus' transformation is everywhere marked by an association with rather than domination of non-human animals. Wikus loses his intelligibility by becoming substitutable with the eaten, the domesticated, the killable, the known. From his close encounter with vivisection at the hands of military personnel, to his rumored sexual intercourse with Prawns, Wikus is treated like and compared to animals—like a body whose species is more

significant and more telling of its value than its personal and irreducible feelings, cares, and thoughts.

In addition to the linguistic association of the *District 9* aliens with creatures consumed or exterminated, the substitutability of the other and the animal is made especially clear in a disturbing scene at a government testing facility. In this scene, Wikus' body has fused with Prawn DNA to the extent that he can fire Prawn weapons. It has by now become quite clear that the continued residence and confinement of the Prawns helpfully prolongs the weaponry research of human governments; this is the primary reason Prawns have found no help reaching their mothership, which sits close by, presumably disabled, on the skyline. Placed on a firing range, Wikus is forced to try out various weapons by shooting them at dead pigs. After several pigs are successfully exploded, charred, and pierced, and despite many protests from Wikus, Wikus is physically forced to shoot the live, terrified, adult Prawn brought before him on the firing range. This scene, with the silent figure of the shaking and terrified Prawn, is a central point around which the film's themes and characters all turn. I will return to this scene in the following section to suggest it serves as a strong visceral representation of the post-structural ethical models of vulnerability and singularity. But at present it is important only to highlight that the substitutability between pig and Prawn, and now also between Wikus and pig and Prawn, demonstrates how thinly guarded, how subjectively produced these identity categories are.

The replacement of the dead pig with the live Prawn provides one of the starkest, most telling images in the film. As Wikus slips from one category to the other seamlessly—occupying animal/other and human/self simultaneously—the viewer is asked to question what defines Wikus—or any of the other creatures—at any given moment. Is Wikus defined by the creature he shoots, the creature he is, the creature he becomes, or the creatures he eats? For the government officials, there is no difference between them. The cows and pigs consumed throughout the film by both humans and Prawns become one with their consumers when Wikus and Prawn become likewise killable. Perhaps Wikus himself, by being made animal, is rendered through disposability and edibility as well. This makes clear that treatment of the other is dependent not on what the Other is, but on how the dominant subject constructs the other within privileged

frameworks of knowledge: who is killable, dissectible, edible; who deserves life, who can be placed in slums, who can be mistreated?

And yet, this thoroughly killable, edible, trans-species figure, this disabled and enabled, sexless body is finally able to act ethically in an inglorious though important act of heroism. In a moment of collaboration with and privileging of the other over himself, Wikus gives up his own intelligibility, his chance at returning to his identity, to help Christopher and his Prawn companions escape.

Post-structural Theory and Ethics

Both *Avatar* and *District 9* attempt to motivate their viewers toward increased responsibility and consideration of the other. However, each film makes this case from within completely different symbolic universes.

In *Avatar*, audiences bear witness as the peace-loving, environmentally conscious *Na'vi* ultimately defeat the destructive military and corporate forces that would destroy them and their earth's resources. Within a symbolic economy that does not question the identities and roles of these straw characters, the desire for the environmentally astute other to beat the destructive forces of advancement is supposed to turn into ethical action against similarly thoughtless violations of Earth and native in the lives of audience members. But viewed from a different angle, something does not quite compute. There is a stain that disrupts our clean narrative.

According to Lacan, the stain, or the *object a*, is a blob that appears on the surface of our minds as immaterial, insubstantial, without shape (Zizek, 2007). It is a spot of confusion which, when one views it from the front, is nothing at all, but when viewed from the side, suddenly acquires a definite shape and becomes recognizable (Ibid). The most famous example of this is in Holbein's painting, *The Ambassadors* (Lacan 1997, p. 86). When looking at the painting from head-on, there is a dark, amorphous spot in the middle of the painting; it is as though someone spilled coffee, or perhaps there is a shadow cast by an object outside the scene painted. However, when viewed from a side angle, that stain turns into a scull. Likewise, a symbolic stain is an unrecognizable and undecipherable desire, figure, or sign that does not fit and cannot be

reconciled with the rest of a symbolic system. Yet, the very fact that it can be neither reconciled nor erased makes it crucial for understanding the structure of a symbolic universe.

In *Avatar*, the stain is this: though the viewer hopes for the *Na'vi*'s victory over the military industrial complex, enjoyment of the film actually comes from the unique violence made possible by the clashes between and rescue of the primitive by the advanced, rather than an objective viewing of any victory as such. These clashes are especially enjoyable when the dominant, Western subject can be both siding with—or, in *Avatar's* case, sleeping with—and saving the primitive. As the *Na'vi* are revealed to be precisely what audiences thought they were and needed them to be—always and already less-than and in need of assistance—Jake Sully stands in as one of the guilty, and is not only forgiven by the oppressed, but asked for help. Only after the *Na'vi* have been stripped of their privacy, exposed to the gaze of Sully, and forced into dominant frameworks of intelligibility are they able to be the legitimate recipients of the rescuing they so need. The enjoyment of this simultaneous clashing with and rescuing of cultures props up the Western identity as the universal, normal, advanced subject and secures for the West its sovereign subject status. Post-structural feminist, Meyeda Yegenoglu calls this a "cultural representation of the West to itself by way of a detour through the Other" (Yeğenoğlu 1998, p. 1). *Avatar* assuages colonial guilt and justifies colonial interest precisely through a narrative in which privileged subjects can be both better than the other native, and also a better native than the native. Meanwhile, the very real, very tragic oppression and domination of both Pandoran and Earth resources and indigenous populations is not visible as such in *Avatar*; the film does not confront the viewer with that subject-undoing bleakness. Instead, it offers a simple, salve-like reversal of the colonial paradigm, first allowing the Western subject to feel guilty, then transforming them into saviors. What first appears to the privileged, modern subject as a delight in heroism and the success of the underdog is revealed to be a stain that does not make sense: it is the delight that he is not guilty, that the other needs aid, that the planet and her natives are in his hands and he is their defender. This is the fetishizing at the heart of globalization and colonization.

The humanist paradigm represented in this particular stain—dependent as it is on simultaneous undressing, subjugating, and rescuing of the other—is a problem not only for those

made legible through frameworks of indigeneity and environmentalism, but also those materialized through frameworks of species. In the inherent value paradigms now being extended to other creatures by animal liberationists, one can only properly determine whether or not a body is worthy of ethical consideration after the intimacies and capabilities of their species are revealed—only once it is clear whether or not they have the ability to speak, have agency, resist power, form social bonds, or have self-consciousness. Naturally, as new, scientific information makes clear the existence of pain, sentience, and consciousness in creatures previously denied such faculties, Singer's line between shrimp and oyster seems all the arbitrary and culturally enforced (Singer 2009, p. 71).[15] The stain within the humanistic economy advanced by rights and liberation movements is this: the more creatures it uncovers, bodies it determines, or rights and values it distributes, the more the human secures its own identity and intelligibility as the sovereign knower and beholder of ethics. Subsequent identities such as protector, defender, companion etc. rarely question the human's own value and intelligibility within a hierarchy that places the human unquestionably at the top of an ever expanding if still deprivileged base. The humanism shared between *Avatar* and animal liberation movements sacrifices the very subject it wishes to save precisely when it constitutes them a) through capturing and effacing discourses, and b) as less than and in need of saving.

But in *District 9*, as in the post-structural theories of Derrida and Spivak, ethical consideration of and action toward the other occurs without capturing her in troubled frameworks of knowledge. As noted with Lacan, constructing the other through discourses of disability, species, indigeneity makes possible the structure of desire and fetishization, and perpetuates colonial interest (Krips 1997, p. 123). Post-structural, cultural theorist Judith Butler resists ethical action undertaken in response to an other who is legitimized as part of our ethical communities through troubled matrices of similarity and difference, qualifying her as recognizable or similar enough to a proper subject that she can be given or denied citizenship,

[15] While the Prawns in *District 9* obviously meet Singers criteria of ethical merit—the ability to feel pain—they are derogatorily constituted as "animal" and disposable precisely by discursive association with crustaceous and insectoid bodies who fall well below the shrimp to oyster line Singer draws. The question is, to what extent do the lines drawn between ethical bodies become merits—rightly or wrongly—for other kinds of exclusion and violence? In other words, it is not only perceptions of the inherent abilities of bodies, but also culturally authorized lens through which we see them that determines how one acts toward an Other.

rights, or care (Butler 2004, p. 45).

District 9's paradigm of ethical action requires neither certainty of the other's essence and nor the total intelligibility of one's own identity. The Prawns remain unknowable throughout the entire film. The fact that the only name given to them in the film is one created by the humans indicates that the only access to them is through the language and symbolic order of the colonizer. Their identity, purpose, social order, internal life, sexuality, reproduction…everything remains obscured. The other is always escaping—it is never captured, nor rendered under normative terms. It is an other that remains other.[16] Yet, as grotesque and unfamiliar as the situation may be—and Blomkamp certainly underscores this undesirability through the grotesque form of the other, the grotesque and ungallant image of Western subjects found in Wikus, and the inability to be ethical in sexy, heroic ways—it is also, for Spivak (2008, pp. 22-24; 205, p. 101) and Derrida (1987, p. 60), the beginning of new kind of ethics of singularity or irreducibility.

This ethic is perhaps best illuminated by returning to the scene in which Wikus is forced to shoot a Prawn. Though the audience knows very little about the Prawns, and though Prawn skirmishing and bickering have far from endeared them to the viewer in the romantic ways of most humanist discourses, the cowering, confused and terrified Prawn challenges the viewer to feel empathy and care anyway.[17] The scene places the Prawn's vulnerability and precarity at the center of the ethical matter, and any intellectual case for the Prawn's right to life is superseded by the visceral, gut-wrenching feeling that the terrified creature simply does not want to die.

For Emmanuel Levinas, as for many other post-structural theorists who build from him (like Derrida, Butler and Spivak), ethics never begins knowledge of the other (her inherent rights or values), but with the vulnerability and precariousness of her bodily life (Levinas 1978, p. 49). This precarity is represented for him in the figure of the face, an irreducible figure that communicates both the precariousness of life and the forbidding of violence (1985, p. 89). If, for

[16] If anything, the Prawns are portrayed as leaderless, hive-minded beings with more interest in cat food and resource squabbles than freedom and equality. This paradigm of Othering is more akin to contemporary constructions of the "dangerous brown, Arab man" (Bhattacharyya 2008, p. 96)—a violently constructed figure that also requires deconstruction even as its real-world corollaries require careful reading and ethical responsibility.

[17] Here I cite the three times I saw the film in theaters, and the multiple times I have watched it in the company of friends and companions.

Levinas, the face signifies the unrepeatable, historically specific, contingent other whose existence is marked outside of knowledge and language—a social being that nevertheless is not intelligible to us—then the responsibility to this other includes prohibitions of both physical and discursive violence (1998, pp. 9, 30, 89, 125 144). This represents the impossible challenge of encountering the other without reducing her through structures of similarity and difference to the same as myself or my aims (1998, p. 29). Finally, since the face is always-already a face-to-face relation, it always implies the bonds (helpful and harmful) between lives and thus the vulnerability that is the foundation for Levinasian ethics (1978, p. xv).

In this poignant scene with the shaking Prawn, the prohibition of violence comes not from anything the viewer knows about the other, but from the sheer fact of its vulnerability. This is somewhat different than Bentham's ethical paradigm, which suggests suffering, or the ability to feel pain, is the barometer for ethical action (Bentham, 1823). While compelling, this model relies on the actual capacities of any given creature—capacities the viewer or researcher is not always privy to and must guess at, just as each viewer guesses that the Prawn's shaking, cowering, and speechless body indicates a vulnerability keenly felt even if not proven. Similarly, post-structural ethic relies on the visibility of vulnerability, and not capability.

In his essay, *Memoirs of the Blind*, Derrida hints at this ethical imperative to witness and act on the other's vulnerability instead of capability when he speaks of the ability and disability of the eye (1993). If vision has historically corresponded to unmitigated knowledge and access to what is seen, then the metaphor of blindness conveys an intellectual in- or dis-ability. Yet for Derrida, vision is veiled, darkened, and blurred by more than supposed impairments: it is also veiled by tears. He states,

> Now if tears come to the eyes, if they well up in them, and if they can also veil sight, perhaps they reveal, in the course of this experience…an essence of the eye…The eye would be destined not to see, but to weep. For at the moment they veil sight, they unveil what is proper to the eye. The truth of the eyes….is to have imploration rather than vision in sight, to address prayer, love, joy, or sadness rather than a look or a gaze….The revelatory or apocalyptic blindness, the blindness that reveals the very truth of the eyes, would be the gaze veiled by tears. (Derrida 1993, pp. 126-127).

Where vision was central to knowledge and ethics, now non-vision, blurred vision, and tears are central. The state which is proper to the ethical eye is a state of dis-ability; just as "Nietzsche's compassion for a horse led him to take its head into his hands, sobbing…" the "apocalyptic blindness" essential to the eye is compassion for the vulnerability of the other, instead of certainty of perception about essence (Ibid.). Even as many of the things which inspire weeping are apprehended through sight—just as the compelling vulnerability and despicable violence enacted in the scene with the cowering Prawn enable a shedding of tears—the cause of the tears is not vision or knowing itself, but a visceral sense of compassion.

If acting ethically toward an other one refuse's to name or reduce seems impossible, I think Derrida would agree. For Derrida, affirming ethical actions not limited by prescriptive systems and frameworks of recognition leaves one in a space of unwieldy and uncertain ethics (Derrida 2002, p. 364). But refusing the desire to capture the other in limited frameworks of knowledge also requires opening oneself to ethical possibilities that sacrifice one's own intelligibility and aims for those of the other. If, as Spivak suggests, and as Wikus's character demonstrates, obsession with the other is, in the first instance, driven by the desire to understand one's own identity, then giving up one's own intelligibility can be the first step toward ethical action and the refusal to capture the other (2003, pp. 4, 26).[18]

[18] Spivak's work largely addresses Western, liberal academics and educational institutions whom she argues are focused on either learning about or saving the Other in order to fix their identity as benevolent, cosmopolitan subjects. This theme is in almost all of her books and essays, but can be found most succinctly in *Death of a Discipline*.

Again, *Avatar* and *District 9* present two different perspectives on this; if the plot and ethics of *Avatar* are driven by a discovery of the other's essence, by the justification for her ethical treatment, by the resultant certainty of human or Western, identity, then *District 9* is driven entirely by Wikus' obsession with his own intelligibility. He spends almost the entire film trying to gain back the identity he has lost, to fix himself in a network of signifiers he understands. If, for Spivak, acting in the interests of the other, refusing to capture her in troubled discourses, must also include a willingness to relinquish one's own identity, then *District 9* ends fittingly in Wikus' forsaking his own intelligibility for the sake of the other (2003, pp. 12, 134).

In the final scenes of *District 9*, the audience finds Wikus and Christopher running with fuel toward their escape module. When Wikus—by now almost fully Prawn— must choose between attempting to accompany Christopher to his ship, thereby retrieving the anecdote for his transformation, and helping Christopher escape, he chooses the latter. Wikus literally deprivileges his own intelligibility, giving up his chance to return to "himself" in order for Christopher to escape. Christopher and his son do make it to the ship and take off for home planet, promising to return for his fellow aliens and for a disheartened Wikus who, in the final scene, has fully transformed into a prawn.

Further demonstrating the Derridian ethical paradigm of deferral (1987, p. 60), one could say that this ending is only a partial success, at best. The real ending everyone waited for is deferred, left on the horizon as something that may one day come. This deferral of completion troubles liberal dreams of philanthropy and salvation, and helpfully exposes the viewer to the possibility of ethical action without guarantees. Wikus is finally able to sacrifice his quest for his own intelligibility without the guarantee that Christopher will come back. He does this, not because he has some certainty about Prawn technology, Prawn ethics or promises, Christopher's intentions, or even the likelihood the mothership will be able to return. The irreducibility of the Prawns is never sacrificed, and the alien characters, at the end of the film, remain just as obscured as they were in the beginning. By this, *District 9* shows a moment of ethical action toward an other without capturing the other through normative, hegemonic signification. This action happens within paradigms of uncertainty and the deferral of completion, and cinematically re-imagines ethical alternatives to the humanist model (Derrida, 1992, p. 25).

The post-structural ethics visualized in *District 9* challenges its viewers to greater and more complex individual responsibility than do humanism and animal liberation. In this more radical, dare I say more compassionate approach, no body, identity, or individual falls outside the scope of protection and care, and none can be systematically and universally subjugated to any other based on any principle whatsoever, regardless of how scientific it appears. What animal liberation claims to do for so-called animals, post-structuralism actually does: it liberates them. Post-structural methods reveal that animality and species are only ideas used to understand bodies, rather than a real category of beings. These methods then also allow ethical action toward these bodies based not on any limited if scientific "knowledge' about them, but based on that singular bodies vulnerability, needs, desires, and goals. Post-structural paradigms liberate speciesed bodies not only from actual cages, zoos, testing facilities, and circuses—as animal liberation also strives to do—but more importantly, from the discursive cages that rendered these bodies other and less-than in the first place; it opens the discursive cages that are smaller, more violent and more insidious than any lab or plate might seem. The success of post-structural ethics is built not on large battles or relatable heroes, but one the ethical fine-tuning, re-doing and subtle risk-taking that changes how each viewer lives and acts with other real, fleshy, hairy and hairless lives.

If Avatar's success as a relatable paradigm of protest poses a challenge to post-structural ethics—a challenge to make themselves visible and relatable in provocative, compelling ways—then *District 9* begins to show us how to do that. I have argued that *District 9* is a teachable, post-structural lesson on ethics in and through uncertainty. If each of its viewers can learn to calculate ethics in the midst of uncertainty—without the guarantees (Spivak 2003, p. 45) that anything has been achieved or the assurance that Wikus' gamble pays off—then they'll have reached the impossible ethics Derrida proposes. Of course, these are not conditions the American public is used to; these are not the conditions under which humanism operates. Humanism does not gamble. It only knows, captures, calculates. Post-structural ethics, on the other hand, certainly do gamble; the challenge I pose to its advocates—including myself—is to demonstrate that the gambling does not happen at the expense of the emancipatory, ethical goals that humanists as well as animals rights and liberation advocates are currently engaged in. If anything, post-structural ethics reframe all that is at stake, reaching to include even more bodies

and greater freedoms than existing discourses have yet imagined. Precisely for these reasons, *District 9* becomes a lens through which dominant Western subjects can not only theorize, but narratively and personally relate to a new kind of ethics. Just imagine how much more compassion could be extended; how much of the other's agency could be preserved; how much care and freedom each subject could offer the other if every viewer learned to recognize the daily moments when they could risk their own certainty and identity for the sake of that other. Films like *District 9* are the beginning of learning how to teach that. After the humanism of *Avatar*, and while restlessly gambling in the post-humanism of *District 9*, each viewing subject has a chance to practice questioning their own intelligibility: who among us is prepared to give up their own identities as saviors, companions, humans, and knowers in order to actually achieve the radical ethics we call for?

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Journal for Critical Animal Studies

ICAS
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JCAS: Submission Guidelines

Editorial Objectives

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

Suggested Topics

Papers are welcomed on any area of animal liberation philosophy from any discipline, and presenters are encouraged to share theses or dissertation chapters. Because a major goal of the Institute for Critical Animal Studies is to foster philosophical, critical, and analytic thinking about animal liberation, papers that contribute to this project will be given priority (especially papers that address critical theory, political philosophy, social movement analysis, tactical analysis, feminist, activism and academia, Continental philosophy, or post-colonial

perspectives). We especially encourage contributions that engage animal liberation in disciplines and debates that have received little previous attention.

Review Process

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

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JCAS is currently reviewing its style guide requirements. Please contact the editorial board for further information. The manuscript should be in MS Word format, in 1.5 line spacing and 12 point Times New Roman. Good electronic copies of all figures and tables should also be provided. All manuscripts should conform to American English spelling.

As a guide, we ask that regular essays and reviews be between 2000-8000 words, and have limited endnotes. In exceptional circumstances JCAS will consider publishing extended essays *Journal for Critical Animal Studies*, Volume 12, Issue 2, 2014 (ISSN 1948-352X) 175 (up to 15,000 words). Authors should supply a brief abstract of the paper (of no more than 250 words).

A brief autobiographical note should be supplied which includes full names, affiliation, e-mail address, and full contact details.

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