

We, Animals: Parallel Stories of Nonhuman and Human-Animal Oppressions

by

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Abstract

We, Animals is an assemblage of vignettes comprised of observations and reflections of urgent ethical issues concerning our relationship to nonhuman-animals, human-animals and more broadly to Mother Earth. Its aims are to explore and expose our paradoxical relationship with nonhuman-animals, to explore the intersections of animal ethics and veganism with other forms of oppression and exploitation such as misogyny, sexism, racism and colonialism, and to draw parallels between the oppression of nonhuman-animals and human-animals.

We, Animals deviates from standard animal ethics by exposing rampant and persistent institutionalized violence in our relations with nonhuman-animals through parallel stories of Nonhuman and Human-Animal oppressions.

Keywords: Nonhuman-Animals; Veganism; Violence; Oppression, Patriarchy; Capitalism

Dedication

To Kaslo, the unwitting catalyst for my veganism, for which I am eternally grateful.

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Preface

We, Animals is an assemblage of vignettes comprised of observations and reflections of urgent ethical issues concerning our relationship to nonhuman-animals¹, human-animals and more broadly to Mother Earth. Its aims are to explore and expose our paradoxical relationship with nonhuman-animals, to explore the intersections of animal ethics² and veganism with other forms of oppression and exploitation such as misogyny, sexism, racism and colonialism, and to draw parallels between the oppression of nonhuman-animals and human-animals.

Like feminism, veganism is not a monolithic concept³ although it is often portrayed solely as such, and correspondingly, criticized as an ineffective non-political consumer-based activity.⁴ My veganism is expressed through a rejection of animals and animal-by-products as food, clothing and beyond, whenever possible. My veganism is a form of resistance to the oppression and commodification of nonhuman-animals, and a rejection of the implied cultural and social thinking that creates a hierarchy of nonhuman-animals as 'lesser' than human-animals. My veganism is also an adherence to a political philosophy that is congruent with my personal ethics, grounded in *ahimsa*⁵, of minimizing harm to others and to my surroundings, and which recognizes the autonomy of nonhuman-animals, rather than as mere means to human-animals' ends. Veganism is

¹ I use the terms 'nonhuman-animals' and 'human-animals' to highlight that we, too are animals. While the term 'nonhuman-animal' is problematic in creating a sharp division between our species and others, the alternate term 'other animals' is also problematic as it may not be clear to those outside of the animal ethics realm, who the 'other animals' refer to.

² Francione (1996) posits that animal welfarists seek to regulate animal exploitation (e.g. through campaigns to ban tail docking while continuing to legitimize the production of pork) while animal rightists seek its abolition (p. 1). I refrain from using the term 'animal rights', preferring 'animal ethics' as the former is highly problematic and (mis)used in broad terms synonymously with 'animal welfare' and 'animal abolition' despite Francione's assertion otherwise.

³ A quick search on vegan or animal ethics social media forums will yield plenty of animated and heated disagreements between vegans on tactics and priorities!

⁴ This denigration of veganism mirrors the attack on feminists who proclaim that the 'personal is political' by revealing its critics' inability to make connections between personal experience within larger structures of oppression and exploitation.

⁵ The principle of nonviolence towards all living beings based on Jain, Hindu and Buddhist traditions.

an engaged theory culminating in a praxis that makes sense to me in my urban environment, in which consumption of nonhuman-animals and their by-products are not necessary for my survival or well-being.

Traditionally, animal ethics scholars have utilized discursive reasoning or principles to advance their arguments. They have also tended to engage in a single disciplinary and/or theoretical framework, particularly from a Western-centric perspective.⁶ While I acknowledge and am immensely grateful for such works, which have informed my understanding of animal ethics, this project deviates from standard animal ethics by attempting to problematize rampant and persistent institutionalized violence in our relations with nonhuman-animals through literary identification⁷, encouraging the reader to try on different viewpoints. Some of the vignettes are unsettling and distressing. They embed the reader in the unmasked violence of banal scenes, some of which are imagined, while others are based on actual lived experiences.

The project does not follow a linear plot and is instead organized around themes or concepts, with a fictional vignette per chapter followed by a commentary. The project compels the reader to traverse frequently between the main text and the heavy use of footnotes, which act as academic annotations to the fictional pieces and to the commentaries, but also as an 'inner voice' of the author. The seemingly disparate vignettes, commentaries and footnotes are intended to be polyphonic and dialogical in nature. The project is a process of the author's continual internal dialogue and hence does not offer proscriptions, conclusions or solutions to complex problems.

Inspired by Coetzee's *Lives of Animals* in its use of fiction to discuss animal ethics and borrowing from Benjamin's assemblage technique in *Berlin Childhood*, this project utilizes a blend of fact and fiction to bridge the gap between abstract theories with

⁶ e.g. Francione writes a comprehensive theory of animal rights from a predominantly legal/rights-based perspective. Singer engages animal liberation from a utilitarian philosophical standpoint. While I recognize that these scholars do draw from multidisciplinary perspectives, they nonetheless write from within their narrow disciplinary framework. My aim is to break free of such narrow frameworks, in the interdisciplinary spirit of the Graduate Liberal Studies program.

⁷ "Sad and sentimental stories [...] have done, will do, more moral good than another distillation of Kantian universal laws" (Rory as cited in Woessner, 2010, p. 239).

modern animal ethics controversies, through constructed representations that affect, shock and provoke the reader into noticing that something is *very, very wrong* with our relationship with nonhuman and human-animals. Treating nature⁸ as raw resources for profit is not working. Competition as a framework for living and relating to each other is not working.

Individuals and locales have no names in this project. This is not because individuals and locales do not matter, for they *do* matter. Rather, they have been omitted to draw attention to the ethical issues, which affects us all, regardless of our privilege (or lack thereof), or of our locale. We cannot say ‘that is happening over there’ for it is happening *everywhere*. We are all in this together. Willed ignorance *cannot* remain as a choice.

In this project, ‘we’ is not used as a totalizing, all encompassing, homogenous ‘we’ but rather a ‘we’ in which, we are all in some sense, complicit in and responsible for the suffering of nonhuman and human-animals, as well as of the destruction of Mother Earth.

Our troubled relationship with nonhuman-animals teach us about our (in)humanity and speaks volume to the increasing destruction of Mother Earth and of ourselves in the process, critical to the struggle for social justice for human-animals and nonhuman-animals alike. It is my hope that this project will shift our collective perspectives on our relationship with nonhuman-animals (and more broadly with Mother Nature) beyond that of mere objects to subjects worthy of justice and of ethical consideration.

It should be made clear that this project is not intended to rehash any one specific political or moral theory of animal ethics, although it does rely heavily on Carol J. Adams’ eco-feminist perspectives. Nor is its aim to debate the different schools of thought within the field of animal ethics.⁹ Instead, it is a personal vegan narrative, to show how one

⁸ Including humans and non-human animals.

⁹ “I am impatient with questions that imply that creatures have to pass some kind of test concocted in a philosophy department before they can be permitted to live” (Coetzee as cited in Dawn & Singer, 2010, pp. 113-114) sums up my sentiments on mainstream debates on animal ethics in academia.

individual, myself, makes sense of one's own rage, resistance and complicity, and correspondingly, one's feeling of helplessness and despair in our relationship with nonhuman-animals.

In the spirit of Benjamin, I invite the reader to take a stroll with me, to take the chance of becoming disoriented or lost, to observe carefully, and to be a animal ethics *flâneur* for the day – at the end of which, I hope the method to my madness in this project will become apparent.

Chapter 1.

1.1. I am Vegetable!

As night falls, a small group of mirthful Human-Animals dressed in colourful and creative vegetable costumes gather in the forest.

The vibrant hues of Pumpkins, Eggplants, Onions, Carrots, Red Peppers and other dazzling Vegetables complement the verdant forest beautifully.

A few Eggplants and Pumpkins build a small fire in a clearing. Kale raises her Sugarcane spectre to the full moon. The others nod in acknowledgment.

They hold hands and begin to walk

faster and faster

around the fire, repeating the words

'I am Vegetable!'

over and over again,

louder and LOUDER each time,

finally bursting into laughter.

So full of beans!

The Nonhuman-Animal inhabitants of the forest watch the vegetating Human-Animals with great interest and curiosity.

1.2. Reclaiming Vegetable

Although the original sense of the word 'vegetable'¹ meant to 'be lively and active', today, a complete co-optation and reversal of its original definition has occurred with the word typically carrying negative connotations. 'Vegetable' or 'to vegetate' signifies dullness, passive existence or inactivity' (Adams, 2010, p. 60). Atrociously, the word 'vegetable' is widely used in a derogatory manner to describe persons with severe and incapacitating mental and/or physical disabilities.

On the other hand, the word 'meat', associated with death and decay, curiously carries positive connotations. 'Meat'² denotes 'substance' as in 'the meat of the matter' and 'to beef up' is slang for 'to improve' (Adams, 2010, p. 60). The animal herself remains unacknowledged and becomes an "absent referent" (Adams, 2010, p. 13) in 'meat'.³

Adams (2012) notes that "the function of the absent referent is to allow for the moral abandonment of a being while also emptying violence from the language" (p. 117). This allows us to deny that the flesh on our plate was once an individual living being who had to be killed violently. She is instead applied symbolically to humans in derogatory ways, particularly to women (e.g. cow, chick, bitch), people of colour (e.g. monkey, cockroach), and perceived unsavoury persons (e.g. pig, sheep, snake, vulture, rat).⁴ Adams (1994)

¹ From Old French or from late Latin *vegetabilis* which means 'animating' and from Latin *vegetus* meaning 'active', from *vegere* meaning 'to be active' and from *vegetat* meaning 'enlivened'.

² The origin of the word Old English word *mete* referred to a broad category of foods, flesh and plant based.

³ While this is true in the naming of pork (the absent referent being the pig) and beef (the absent referent being the cow), this is not true for chicken, fish or lamb. Nor does it ring true in some non-English languages. For example, in Chinese, the word for beef is 'cow meat' and pork is 'pig meat'. That said, there is still a deliberate disassociation of the living being with the end product that she becomes (e.g. the word 'meat' is used instead of 'flesh' or 'corpse').

⁴ In relating to 'food' animals, I use the pronoun 'she' instead of 'it' to draw attention to the fact that most of the flesh and all of the secretions which we consume are derived from female bodies (Adams, 2010, p. 103). This exploitation and consumption of nonhuman female bodies parallels our consumption of human female bodies metaphorically, through the objectification of female bodies in popular culture and literally, through prostitution. In both cases, human and nonhuman female bodies are often depicted as disembodied parts only (e.g. legs, thighs and breasts (Adams, 2010, p. 73).

notes that the animalizing of gender and race still fuels misogyny, sexism⁵ and racism⁶ today (pp. 73-74).

This tongue-in-cheek vignette is an attempt to revert 'vegetable' back to its original meaning and intent – to show that for one individual, myself that is, being vegan is *very much* about being a *lively being* as well as a *political being* who has spent and continues to spend a lot of time ruminating about human-nonhuman-animal relations.

⁵ People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is an organization notorious for their misogynist and sexist campaigns in defense of nonhuman-animals. In a campaign to promote a plant-based lifestyle, their 'Boyfriend Went Vegan' video shows a young woman in a neck brace, limping and covered in bruises due to the 'great sex with her boyfriend who went vegan'. Promoting violence against women as a positive effect of a supposedly compassionate vegan lifestyle is dangerous and unacceptable. The spectacle of PETA's often pornographic campaigns eroticizes and objectifies women, a group that has historically been oppressed. Such tactics, pitting the oppression of one group over another have no place in the realm of social justice.

⁶ e.g. Two White Chicago police officers posed with a Black man sometime between 1999 and 2003 with antlers placed on his head, in the stance of a hunted (dead) buck (Thompson, 2015). 'Buck' was also a derogatory term applied to Black male slaves who dared to resist and rebel against their 'masters'. Historically, women have been thought of as lesser humans who are more emotional than rational, and people of colour as subhumans or nonhumans altogether. These myths persist into the twenty first century manifested in the actions of the police officers, implying that Black lives are unimportant and dispensable just like the lives of nonhuman-animals.

Chapter 2.

2.1. A Rat

A plump furry Rat scampers over to a discarded banana peel that Human-Animal just tossed on to the subway tracks and nibbles daintily at it. One Animal's waste becomes another Animal's sustenance.

A rumbling sound in the distance.

A grey metallic train approaches the station at full speed.

Unfazed, Rat remains on the tracks enjoying her evening snack.

Run, little friend, run!

Quickly, before the train approaches!

On the platform, Human-Animal's heart skips a beat at the thought of Rat's impending demise, for a mere few inches separates the train's wheels from Rat's behind. Rat darts off the tracks *just* in the nick of time to live for another night.

Spirits lifted, Human-Animal sighs a breath of relief and gets on her train.

Huddled in a torn sleeping bag in the corner of the westbound train platform, a frail Human-Animal beckons Rat over to share his meagre supper consisting of a discarded small loaf of bread and three packets of single-serving peanut butter. Rat happily obliges.

2.2. Parallel Stories

Analogies between nonhuman and human-animal oppressions have always been contentious inside and outside of the nonhuman-animal defense realm.⁷ It is important to note “a comparison is not necessarily an equation” (Singer quoted in Coetzee, 2001, p. 86).⁸ McJetters (2014) accurately pinpoints the pertinent information to pay attention to in such analogies – that “a comparison between like systems of oppression is not a comparison between two species of animal(s).” That said, it is important to provide context and to use language tactfully in vegan advocacy as certain words or phrases may be triggering for others.

This vignette purposely written as *parallel stories* rather than as analogies, showcases two different species living UnderGround – a rat, typically considered a pest that most humans would like obliterated from existence⁹ and a human without an abode or sufficient means of subsistence, living off the food we waste¹⁰ and whom we have symbolically obliterated from existence (our AboveGround) may be misconstrued by some as animalizing or denigrating the human to a rat.

Rather, the aim of this vignette is to highlight unwanted beings, both nonhuman and human, who have been deemed to be ‘redundant’ by an arrogant human-animal society

⁷ Practices in nonhuman-animal agriculture are often likened to the treatment of humans in the Holocaust and in slavery by nonhuman-animal defenders.

⁸ In Coetzee’s *Lives of Animals*, Abraham Stern takes great offense at Elizabeth Costello’s comparison of the treatment of food animals to the treatment of victims of the Holocaust as though “Jews died like cattle, therefore cattle die like Jews” (Coetzee, 2001, p. 49. This is a gross misunderstanding of Elizabeth Costello’s point when she compares the genocide inflicted upon Jewish people and other minority groups to the endless slaughter of food animals. Coetzee is drawing parallels between systems of oppression. I took Costello’s Holocaust ‘analogy’ as a commentary on the efficiency with which we process nonhuman and human-animal bodies with little care or thought to what this does to our own humanity as well as to the tightly controlled nonhuman and human-animals’ lives. It is after all “from the Chicago stockyards that the Nazis learned to process [human-animal] bodies” (Coetzee, 2001, p. 53).

⁹ The rat here addresses the dispossessed spirit of the urban dweller. (Scholtmeijer, 1993, p.143).

¹⁰ It should be made clear that it is not my intention to romanticize humans (or nonhumans) who have been dispossessed. Rather, this is an acknowledgment and a testament of their ability to survive and manage in difficult and meagre situations.

that does not know what to do with them and despite their persecution, continue to thrive and share a moment of solidarity in a simple meal.

Walter (1988) notes that zones of exclusions and enclosures are deliberately planned and “are not a universal characteristic of urban life” (p. 37). The sheer number of humans in the Metropolis socializes us to distrust each other and to render us strangers to each other (Simmel, 1903, p. 15). AboveGround inhabitants magnify their importance over those UnderGround – the individual, the ‘I’ emphasized while relegating our commonality as humans, the de-emphasized “we” to the back (Mumford, 1961, p. 69).

‘Society’ or ‘community’, in the true sense of the word is bound by mutual aid and cooperation but AboveGround society operates with mutual hostility and competition as a framework for living and governance (Walter, 1988, p. 33) – *is this really living?* Furthermore, AboveGround society is wilfully blind to the artificial creation of scarcity (Mumford, 1961, p. 36) and instead, spends exorbitant amount of time and resources to ostracize members of the UnderGround community.

Chapter 3.

3.1. Pilgrimage

Sun-drenched, Human-Animals retreat to lush forests in bright-eyed blaring odiferous monsters.

Once parked on a neat and manicured site, Human-Mama, Human-Papa and their Children emerge from Cougar and Grizzly Bear.

Famished from idle sitting for the long ride from the Metropolis, they immediately begin preparing their meal. The stench of propane and large slabs of sizzling flesh on the barbecue fills the air while the hum of the generator kills what little 'tranquility' there is.

All this to enjoy so-called Mother Nature while Cougars, Grizzly Bears and a variety of other Animals who call this forest home are nowhere to be seen or heard.

Sentient Cougars and Grizzly Bears displaced by Cougar and Grizzly Bear machine-monsters.

Disposable cups, plates, utensils and plastic-everything become daily practice in this annual summer pilgrimage. Sometimes, offerings of empty or partially empty food and beverage containers are left out for Mother Nature.

Never has false worship been so brazen.

3.2. Mythical Consciousness

Mythical consciousness activates the spiritual energy that links us to our environment and co-inhabitants of our planet (Walter, 1988, p. 70). This form of consciousness breaks the false dichotomy of human versus nature.¹¹ Nature is not something to be merely used, abused and conquered, as is drilled into us in the Metropolis.

As children, we viewed the world with a sense of awe. We marvelled at rainbows, at the existence of other creatures, at snow, but these become mundane to us as we become adults and enter the 'rat race'. We can return to this world again.

We do not mean a world in which we merely marvel at nature but a world in which we also comprehend and respect the power with which nature holds over us¹² – to bring *meaning* into our relationship with Mother Earth again.¹³

¹¹ Noske (1997) notes “that modern Western society more than any other emphasizes the ‘Otherness’ of the non-human” (p. 40). Human-animals are perceived as belonging to the realm of culture while nonhuman-animals are perceived as belonging to the realm of nature. In contrast, the mythical consciousness of Australian Aboriginal’s Dreamtime emphasizes a unity and interdependence of human and nonhuman-animals, plants and the landscape. Humans *are* part of nature and “humankind’s relationship with the rest of the universe is one of symbiosis, both practical and spiritual” (Noske, 1997, p. 42).

¹² Walter (1988) calls this a sacred place or an ambiguous place, “one that leads the mind somewhere else” (p. 72). I took this to mean a sublime place – sublimity, not in a metaphysical sense (e.g. beauty as a gift from a god in the sky) but as in the deep feeling of awe, of Mother Nature and of our own insignificant existence as merely one of billions and billions of creatures on this planet, that we must coexist and depend on each other for our mutual survival.

¹³ Kimmerer (2015) argues that language can act as a transformative and revolutionary tool (para. 26). Borrowing from Anishinaabe language, she suggests using the pronouns ‘ki’ (singular) and ‘kin’ (plural) when referring to the natural world rather than the usual ‘it’. This language transforms the earth and earthly beings (including the landscape) from object to subject, “reflect[ing] the life-affirming world we want. A new language, with its roots in an ancient way of thinking” (Kimmerer, 2015, para. 18).

Chapter 4.

4.1. Three Bags Full

It has been almost an hour since the last rockets were fired into the outdoor market. Merchants, shoppers and passers-by lucky enough to have survived the attack relatively unscathed tried their best to salvage what is left of their belongings.

Wounded survivors moan and wail in pain, waiting in vain for assistance from an incapacitated medical system.

The stench of scorched flesh mingled with chemical odours from burnt plastic, plywood and other building materials fills the shell of the outdoor market.

In the vegetable section of the market, one Human-Animal with dishevelled hair is trembling uncontrollably as she picks up two very full and large plastic bags with her blood stained hands.

A young man driving by notices the woman. He parks his car, walks up to her, and hands her a small brown bag.

Still shaking, she looks vacantly into his eyes.

The young man beams at her compassionately and motions for her to take the bag.

“Food for you and your family, ma’am. There is no charge. Please take it.”

Clutching her own bags to her chest, she takes the brown bag from the young man and opens it.

“Ground beef, very fresh!”

The woman shrieks with horror as her legs crumple to the ground.

The contents of all three bags spill on to the ground – an indistinguishable mess of bloody flesh.

She had just finished picking up what remained of her infant son.

4.2. Mass Killing, Mass Term

The remains of cows¹⁴ and a human, devoid of specificity or individuality lay on the floor of the market. They have become a mass term¹⁵ – a mess of blood, entrails and dead flesh.

The mass killing of both nonhuman and human-animals is usually hidden from our view. Industrial slaughterhouses, factory farms and animal laboratories are off limits to the general public.

In the United States, authorities have even taken steps to criminalize actions by activists to expose the horrific treatment of nonhuman-animals in factory farms and slaughterhouses.

Even for those who work in slaughterhouses, only *one* worker out of a hundred and twenty is in charge of killing, of pulling the trigger on the living animal and witnessing her visceral reaction.¹⁶ The other workers disassemble and process bodies of once living

¹⁴ Industrial ground beef may comprise of flesh from one hundred cows.

¹⁵ ‘Adams (2003) notes that in the context of nonhuman-animals, ‘mass term’ signifies the objectification of beings converted to ‘meat’ (p. 22). When you add beef to beef, you just have more beef. But when there is one cow and another cow comes along, there are two cows in total. In the latter example, the cows remain as subjects but in the former, beef remains as one generic object.

¹⁶ Imagine what this does to a person psychologically.

beings. In one slaughterhouse alone, the kill rate is at 2,500 cows per day, or one every twelve seconds (Pachirat, 2011, pp. 82, 159-160).

Pachirat (2011) notes the distancing of killing in which he and other workers rationalized that the work that they performed in the slaughterhouse is morally unrelated to the killings: 1 + 120 (p. 159).

Similarly, the media rarely broadcasts the mass killing of humans, many of them by today's empires or aided by them.¹⁷ When they are broadcast, we merely see grainy videos and images of aerial bombings or shootings. Only with the advent of social media and cellphone use do we start to see on-the-ground videos and images of tortures, rapes and killings in seemingly distant and abstract conflicts.¹⁸

"In the abstract, we may be able to count to a million, but we cannot count to a million deaths" (Coetzee, 2001, p. 19).

This vignette aims to compress the perceived distance and to bring home the very real suffering involved in violent practices.¹⁹

¹⁷ Videos and images of the 'savagery of our enemies' (e.g. ISIS) abound in media however.

¹⁸ Caught in middle of human conflicts, nonhuman-animal victims are often forgotten and if they are mentioned at all, it is usually in the context of economic loss of 'livestock' to humans. Nonhuman-animals held captive by human-animals in a Gaza zoo suffered just like their human counterparts during the bombardment of Gaza by Israel (Akram, 2014). Sometimes, the nonhuman herself is used as a weapon as in the case of a 'suicide donkey bomber' (Tait, 2014).

¹⁹ The irrational belief that sacrificial victims are needed to save the community is still upheld today (Mumford, 1989, pp. 41-45). Soldiers killed during conflicts are hailed as 'heroes' while civilian deaths are merely 'collateral damage' and forgotten quickly. Nonhuman-animals are sacrificed for trivial human interests or because they are perceived to be 'encroaching on our resources'.

Chapter 5.

5.1. Masquerade

Human-Child coos over Robot-Dog while stroking its forehead in a sterile living room.

Robot-Dog rolls over and wags its tail.

Human-Child shrieks with laughter while Human-Mama looks lovingly at her Child's interaction with Robot-Dog.

Older-Human-Child rolls her eyes at her younger sibling.

Understandably, Robot-Dog barks disapprovingly at Older-Human-Child.

Louder barks from outside were returned to Robot-Dog.

Human-Family peeks from behind the curtains at the commotion outside. Judging from her play stance, a boisterous German Shepherd appears to be inviting Robot-Dog to play with her outside.

Human-Mama clicked on Robot-Dog's off button²⁰ as she motions with her finger for her children to be quiet.

The silence from the sterile living room is deafening.

²⁰ I am reminded of an important line from Data, the sentient android in *Star Trek: The Next Generation* after revealing the location of his deactivation switch to the ship's doctor, Beverly Crusher – "If you had an off switch, doctor, would you not keep it secret?" (Roddenberry, Lewin, Hurley & Bowman, 1988).

German Shepherd sniffs around the perimeter of the house and finally lets out a disappointed whine at the lack of a response from Robot-Dog. She relieves herself by the flower pots near the entrance of the house and trots on her merry way.

Horrified, Human-Mother scurries outside and pours a large bottle of bleach on the *very small* stained area.

Just as Human-Child squeaks “I hate dogs! I hate dogs!”, a Seagull flying overhead pronounces corporeally that today is a very good day to defecate on Human-Mama’s elaborately coiffed hair.

5.2. Mutual Immanence

In the Metropolis, connection to the natural world is often contentious. We create and live with plastic trees and flowers, and representations of nonhuman-animals in the form of robots and toys.

Urbanization seeks to isolate human-animals from most nonhuman-animals, except for those whom we arbitrarily judge to be worthy of life, love and care.

Even ‘man’s best friend’, the beloved dog and the ennobled cat are not immune from our usual wrath towards the rest of nature. An estimated 1.2 million dogs and 1.4 million cats are killed at animal shelters in the United States alone annually (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals [ASPCA], n.d.).²¹

Mechanized versions of our beloved nonhuman-animals are sterile, unable to get sick or to expel bodily secretions, have no behavioural problems and even comes with the ability to be turned off, rendering them as ‘ideal pets’.

²¹ The statistics from ASPCA indicate an estimated 3.9 million dogs and 3.4 million cats entering shelters annually, and a combined total of 2.6 million killed, 2.7 million adopted and 642,000 returned to their humans but yet 1.358 million dogs and cats remain unaccounted for in the figures (ASPCA, n.d.). I shudder to think about what happens to these beings.

In truth, “human settlements cannot survive without the hidden presence that help to render soil, air, and water into a biosphere” (Walter, 1988, p. 46) nor can we survive without multispecies of plants and animals.

We have conveniently ‘forgotten’ that human-animal lives are intertwined with multispecies at all times.

Walter (1988) coined the term ‘mutual immanence’²² to describe an amalgamation of historical conditions, both natural and manmade that creates an effective place and/or community (p. 47). The loss of this critical way of viewing and living in this world is manifested in the caricature of the characters in this vignette.

²² Mutual immanence is a process of “interdependence among creatures, things, heavenly bodies, and cosmic forces – an inseparable oneness of the universe” (Walter, 1988, p. 47).

Chapter 6.

6.1. Clambering 'I'

Monday: feathers are in this season – wear them in your hair, wear them as earrings!

Tuesday: ditch those feathers – leather boots, belts, jackets and headbands are in! Buy one, get one free!

Wednesday: never mind about leather – wool is the new leather! Socks, sweaters, blazers and even underwear – get yours now!

Thursday: suede strap watches matched with suede high top sneakers – the new cool!

Friday: no longer relegated to the wealthy only – now, everyone can enjoy soft luxurious silky everything!

Saturday: feeling exhausted but a pair of fur-lined boots, jackets and hats run is a must!

Sunday: finally, a day of rest – patiently waiting for the vicious cycle of the clambering 'I' to start all over again.

6.2. Generic 'We'

Underneath this overconsumption²³ farce, lies a certain level of self-deception.

²³ Perhaps the joy is not in the accumulation of new things but in the “expelling, discarding [and] cleansing [...] of a recurrent impurity” (Calvino, 1974, p. 114). Except that the unsustainable exponential growth of our heaps of ‘impurity’ will eventually tumble – causing a landslide, crashing back down on us. What then?

For how unique can one really look if we are all buying the same mass produced goods produced by slave labour, sporting the same hairstyles, eating the same packaged processed foods and living in identical cramped concrete boxes in the Metropolis?

Corporate advertising and mass culture dictate how we should look, eat and behave, and we obediently obey.²⁴ Siegfried Kracauer (1998) points out that the “I” is very much a generic “we”, a standardization of human-animals in which we are all starting to look and think the same (p. 39).

²⁴ It irks me that leather shoes and wool suits are the expected norm for business attire. Canvas versions of Oxford shoes and cotton, linen or hemp versions of suits are somehow not ‘professional’ enough. Says who? And *why* do we all obey?

Chapter 7.

7.1. Indulgence

Somewhere in a swanky restaurant, a young Human-Animal couple is on a romantic date.

She displays herself in a crimson silk (worm) dress, pearl (oyster) earrings and necklace, blood red (snake) skin stilettos, (mink) fur stole and her hair in a perfect bun flanked by colourful (peacock) feathers.

He parades around in a black cashmere (goat) wool suit, the softest black (fetal calf) leather shoes, an indigo merino (sheep) wool bowtie and a white silk (worm) cotton blend dress shirt.

While dining on a variety of exquisite foods including foie de gras (engorged fatty duck liver), veal tartar (anaemic baby male cow), rack (ribs) of lamb, caviar (fish eggs from a killed mother) and quail eggs, they giggle at each other's irrelevant anecdotes and discuss what to do on their next date in the Metropolis – an excursion on a horse carriage? A visit to the zoo to ogle at captive depressed and bored animals? A fun-filled Gatsby-themed afternoon at the horse races?

The world is their oyster.²⁵

²⁵ The city can be an exciting place *if* you can afford it.

7.2. Distractions, Artificial Scarcity

According to the United Nations, there are 795 million undernourished people in the world today (World Food Programme, 2015). On the extreme end of the spectrum is perverted greed and debauched overconsumption by the elite few.

Let's be clear – there is no food shortage.

Rather, there is an artificial creation of scarcity in which elites²⁶ hoard food supplies and who would prefer to throw out perfectly edible foods rather than to give them to the hungry (Mumford, 1961, p. 36).

A recent article in *The Globe and Mail* titled 'Milk surplus forcing Canada's dairy industry to dump supply' (McKenna, 2015) is instructive. While I am not a proponent of dairy due to the inherent cruelty to nonhuman-animals necessary for its production, the wastage of perfectly edible food while many humans go hungry is irresponsible and unethical, yet there are no repercussions. Such business practices are 'legitimate' and perfectly legal. Written in passive language²⁷, the article deflects responsibility and blame from the perpetrators.²⁸

Correspondingly, while many humans are without even the basic necessities of life, elites partake in leisure activities and consumption of material goods involving the exploitation of nonhuman and human-animals alike.²⁹ The manufactured demand for luxury goods is a false need (Marcuse cited in Nibert, 2002, p. 83). Such leisurely distractions become duties in the elite's quest to maintain their class status (Mumford, 1961, p. 377).

²⁶ Read corporations and their lobby groups.

²⁷ *Who* is forcing the industry to dump milk onto farms and sewage systems? Was it *really* necessary to do so? 5.4 million litres of skim milk was just dumped in Ontario in May 2015 alone (McKenna, 2015).

²⁸ I would retitle the article 'Cows subjected to continuous sexual exploitation via rape racks; their babies taken away for human consumption of butter with the unwanted 'by-product', skim milk, thrown out while 795 million humans go hungry'.

²⁹ Three alligators are killed just to make one luxury Hermes handbag which retails for an average of USD \$53,000 (News.com.au, 2015).

Chapter 8.

8.1. Field Trips

In an effort to reconnect Human-Children to the source of their food, one teacher arranges a field trip for her first grade class to the local urban petting zoo. Upon arrival, the Human-Children squeal with delight at the cute piglets, goats, calves, lamb and chickens.

Some children even murmured sweet “I love you’s” into the unsuspecting animals’ ears while stroking them gently.

Come evening, these same children (and the teacher) obliviously and happily dine on pig, goat, cow, lamb and chicken corpses and bodily secretions with gusto. The teacher happily concludes that the good children now know where their food comes from.

Another teacher decides to approach the matter more faithfully. She arranges a field trip for her first grade class to the local slaughterhouse.

The stench of the slaughterhouse overcomes the Human-Children in the school bus even though they are still two kilometres away from their destination. Upon arrival, the Human-Children squeal with horror at the blood soaked building containing mangled and dismembered body parts.

Some even murmured acrid “I feel sick” into the cognizant teacher’s ears while clutching her waist tightly.

Come evening, no one dines on pig, goat, cow, lamb and chicken corpses or bodily secretions.

No one.

The teacher sincerely concludes that the good children now know where their food comes from – all in a day's work.

8.2. Masked Violence

In the same manner that distance and concealment mask violent practices inherent in wars³⁰, so too is the case with industrialized animal slaughter.³¹ The industrial slaughterhouse is a “zone of confinement, a segregated and isolated territory, [...] invisible and on the whole inaccessible to ordinary members of society” (Bauman as cited in Pachirat, 2011, p. 4).

This invisibility enables us to consume neatly dismembered flesh in cellophane wrapped Styrofoam packages³², and eggs and milk in packages featuring pictures of happy looking hens and cows in meadows, when their reality is the polar opposite. Paul McCartney proclaims in a PETA video that ‘if slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be vegetarian’ but as meat eaters point out, this is simply not true since most slaughterhouse and factory farm workers consume meat.

To put things in perspective though, *only one person* in the slaughterhouse is tasked with killing.³³

³⁰ E.g. Grainy videos of killing by drones or other aerial methods do not do justice to the horrors of those being bombed on the ground. The ‘invisibility’ of violence is also implicated in the manufacture of weapons and the contracting of terrorist activities to mercenaries and ‘security’ firms like Academi, formerly Blackwater (Pachirat, 2011, p. 4). Such activities are often portrayed as benign and ‘good for the economy’.

³¹ In the disassembly line of the slaughterhouse, the animal is treated not as a sentient being – a subject. Rather, she is treated as “an inert, unthinking object, whose creative, bodily, emotional needs are ignored” (Adams, 2010, p. 80).

³² Note how most ‘sanitized’ packaged meats do not even contain a single drop of blood.

³³ The knocker alone is responsible for pulling the trigger that takes away an animal's life (Pachirat, 2011, p. 160).

Visibility of killing is limited to *one person* on the kill floor of the slaughterhouse. The other hundred or more workers perform single tasks and will only see ‘objects’ – disembodied parts (liver, skin, heart) of what was once a living being at their respective station in the slaughterhouse.

This efficient mass killing and dismemberment in staggering volumes is hardly conducive for human workers, many of whom are marginalized themselves³⁴ to think of the parts as once living, feeling animals (Pachirat, 2011, p. 72). Overcoming the struggle over the monotony that disassembly line work entails and just making ends meet end up taking precedent over the animals who once were (Pachirat, 2011, p. 238).

³⁴ People of colour and women have the most undesirable jobs, with the lowest pay in slaughterhouses (Nibert, 2013, p. 114). Many of whom are undocumented, subjected to the structural violence of neoliberal capitalism and forced to flee from their own homeland as corporations take over their collective land from which they subsisted (Nibert, 2013, pp. 224-225). In the United States and Canada, the hypocrisy of anti-immigration sentiments continue to rise yet none of us really want the dirty work of factory farms or slaughterhouse either. We want to have our steak but not the people who do the dirty work necessary for the production of said steak.

Chapter 9.

9.1. Women's Memorial March

On this beautiful day of love, the sun is shining brightly on Human-Animals of all ages and backgrounds gathered downtown to honour and remember the lives of murdered and missing Indigenous Women, and to call attention to institutionalized racism, gendered violence and poverty.

An Eagle is observed flying overhead in the Metropolis during a prayer recited by an Elder for the lives lost.

"It is a good day for our relations have come back to visit us." said the grieving Sister of one of the murdered Women.

"It is a good day to walk with Them."

One of the community leaders motioned for people to take back the streets. The crowd solemnly follows behind the community leaders leading the march. Stops will be made at locations where the murdered and missing Women were last seen or found.

Along the march, the crowd passes by a poultry processing plant in an industrial and low-income residential area of the city, populated mainly by people of colour.

The fetor of death, of eviscerated bodies is undeniable.

One Human-Animal begins to feel nauseous and gags.

Her overactive imagination begins to fill her head with images of dismembered Women's bodies. She gasps for air and momentarily sits down on the sidewalk but the odour

continues to overpower her. Unable to cope, she quickly marches ahead. Finally, the crowd reaches the end point of the march, a healing circle.

The nauseous Human-Animal gradually begins to feel better. The images in her head finally dissipate.

She declines the invitation of her kind hearted friends who just caught up to her to grab a quick bite to eat. Her appetite lacking; she just wants to be alone. She hugs her friends and bids them adieu. She knows that they will be going to their local haunt to chow down on female flesh served with deep fried potatoes. This does not sit well with her at all.

She finds this disconnect between the violence inflicted on female Humans and Nonhumans disturbing. For the sake of remaining diplomatic, she keeps the thought to herself.

9.2. Patriarchy, Gendered Violence

The butchering of women's bodies is not just a figment of someone's lurid imagination but a reality as in the cases of women raped, murdered and dismembered by Robert Pickton and countless other perpetrators. This is not an isolated case but one of *many* horrific cases of violence towards women by non-State and State actors.

Metaphorical butchering of women's bodies also occur in pornography and in popular culture in which women's body parts are shown as fragments only (Adams, 2003, p. 25). Women and nonhuman-animals are treated as inert objects by a patriarchal society – women are stripped of individuality, fragmented and treated as disposable, consumable and easily replaceable – reduced to breasts, legs, buttocks or rump, and genitalia.

To draw connections between fragmented women's bodies and fragmented nonhuman female bodies whom we consume is to draw attention to the parallel oppressions of bodies violated for their femaleness.

“Consumption is the fulfilment of oppression, the annihilation of will, of separate identity”
(Adams, 2010, p. 73).

Chapter 10.

10.1. Broken Legs

A small Puppy jumps off a Human-Animal sized bed. Regrettably, she breaks her front legs in the process. Her Human-Animal guardians rush her off instantly for medical care. It's the humane thing to do.

A Human-Animal participating in a cycling tournament collides with another cyclist. Regrettably, she breaks her left leg in the process. Onsite Human-Animal paramedics rush her off instantly for medical care. It's the humane thing to do.

A frisky cat decides to jump off her seventh-storey balcony to explore the world beneath her. Regrettably, she fractures her front legs. Her Human-Animal guardians rush her instantly off for medical care. It's the humane thing to do.

A Horse trips over a small rock during a race at the tracks. Regrettably, she sustains several fractures to her front legs. An Onsite Human-Animal veterinarian assesses her condition and instantly kills her on the spot. It's the humane thing to do.

A calf is unable to get up. No one knows how she fractured her front right leg. Her Human-Animal owner instantly sends her off for slaughter. It's the humane thing to do.

10.2. False Hierarchies, Playing God

Arbitrary hierarchical ranking of nonhuman-animal species by human-animals and the nature of the relationship of the human-animal guardian to the nonhuman-animal determine who deserves to live and who doesn't.

While it is true that leg injuries in large animals such as horses and cows have more detrimental effects than when they occur in humans or smaller animals, missing from the narrative are the exploitative conditions in which human-animals place the nonhuman-animals in unnecessarily, for their own profit, causing them the injuries in the first place.

The Calgary Stampede provides a case in point. Each year, nonhuman-animals die in a spectacle billed as ‘the greatest outdoor show on earth’ by its promoters all while romanticizing the American icon of the White cowboy. Since 1986, more than 82 nonhuman-animals and 2 human-animals have been killed in the Calgary Stampede (Vancouver Humane Society, 2013). Most of the nonhuman-animals were killed just because their legs were broken during races or while terrorized under extreme duress.³⁵ Cows are routinely “chased at speed, lassoed, jerked backward and slammed to the ground”, practices which would constitute animal cruelty if done to dogs or cats (VHS, n.d.).

These violent and unethical practices masquerading as entertainment are reminiscent of violent and unethical Roman Colosseum and circus spectacles in which both nonhuman-animals, disabled humans and humans of colour were exhibited or forced to perform or fight for human entertainment purposes (Nibert, 2002, p. 49).³⁶

³⁵ The VHS (2013) notes that the definition of ‘stampede’ from Webster’s dictionary is ‘a sudden flight or rush of a number of frightened animals’.

³⁶ While many of us have no qualms labeling the activities in which captive human-animals are forced to fight with other human and nonhuman-animals for entertainment in the Roman Colosseum as cruel, we remain willfully blind to the cruelty inherent in stampedes, rodeos, circuses, safaris and other ‘nonhuman-animals as entertainment’ practices today.

Chapter 11.

11.1. No Pain, No Gain

One male Human-Animal is admiring his naked torso in the full-length mirror in the gym's locker room.

He gently kisses his left bicep, then his right bicep.

He declares, "I am a god!"

Five minutes ago, he was bragging to his gym buddies about bench-pressing his entire body weight without a spotter. His goal is to be able to bench press one and a half times his body weight by next month.

To help him with this goal, he consumes enormous amounts of meat and whey protein power³⁷, mixed with skim milk twice a day, once in the morning and again after his daily workout. His favourite flavours are chocolate and cappuccino. The consumption of whey causes the Human-Animal to experience stomach cramps, bloating and reduced appetite. 'No pain, no gain' is his motto. The pain is totally worth all the chicks that he meets and bags. And after all, looking buff and sexy doesn't come easy. It requires hard work and dedication.

Humans may just be the only animal species on this planet whose mating strategies include stomach cramps, bloating and reduced appetite.

³⁷ A 'by-product' in the production of cheese.

11.2. Conquest; Me, Me, Me

Hunting metaphors of sexual conquests of women and the animalizing of women abound in our language and imagery.³⁸ This patriarchal communication normalizes aggression and domination of women and nonhuman-animals alike (Adams as cited in Kemmerer, 2011, p. 18).

In our hypermasculinized culture, human and nonhuman-animal female bodies are exploited – objects to be used by men.³⁹ Whey, the ‘by-product’ of mammary secretion, produced from female bodies, often packaged in ‘manly’ black containers featuring grotesquely muscular men, sometimes posing with scantily clad women is touted to bulk up and masculinize men. The irony of consuming ‘baby’s food’ (milk) to become ‘manly’ is likely lost on most men.

The self-centering of the man in this vignette mirrors the self-centering of human-animals as though we are the only species that matters on our collective planet.

³⁸ E.g. ‘Bagging a deer’ refers to hunting and killing a deer while ‘bagging a chick’ refers to sexual conquest of a woman.

³⁹ The term ‘animal husbandry’ is telling of our control and ownership of nonhuman-animals as well as of women, who were considered property of their husband until recently (Kheel, 2004, p. 333). Women’s body parts are consumed metaphorically through pornography and prostitution. Nonhuman-animal body parts are also consumed, literally and fetishized. Women who have been sexually assaulted or objectified sexually often report being treated like a piece of meat (Kheel, 2004, p. 334).

Chapter 12.

12.1. My Judas is My Shepherd

Sheep is distressed as she just woke up and cannot find her child.

Shepherd has thoughtfully taken Sheep's baby away quietly during the night while she was asleep so as to minimize Sheep's anxiety of discovering that her child is missing. Now, Sheep is anxious and pacing around the barn.

Shepherd tries to calm Sheep down by offering her some hay but to no avail. Sheep is apprehensive around Shepherd – she ought to be.

Shepherd may provide food and water to Sheep, land to graze on, protect Sheep from Nonhuman-Animal predators and extreme weather, and even play with them. But ultimately, Shepherd will sell off Lamb under the age of one year old, some as young as six weeks old for slaughter, for profit, for the gustatory delights of Human-Animals.

A protector who leads me to the guillotine, mercy!

My Lord is my Shepherd?

Nay, my Judas is my Shepherd.

12.2. Betrayal, Domesecration

The analogy of human-animals as sheep and God as our shepherd has always struck me as misguided.

The conventional interpretation of Psalm 23 is that God is our protector and caretaker; that God keeps us from going spiritually astray ("What does it mean that the Lord is my Shepherd (Psalm 23)?", n.d.).

My aim here is not to debate the merits or demerits of this interpretation. Rather, my aim in this vignette is to expose the familiar representation of the shepherd who is more akin to a betrayer than to a protector.

Domestication of nonhuman-animals by humans is often touted as a natural partnership and a co-evolutionary process between nonhuman and human-animals with mutual benefits (Budiansky as cited in Kazez, 2010, p. 15).⁴⁰ Yet the reality is that humans care and protect 'food-animals' only insofar as it is in their economic interest to do so.⁴¹

Ducos (as cited in Nibert, 2013) states that "domestication can be said to exist when living animals are integrated as objects into the socio-economic organization of the human group, in the sense that, while living those animals are objects for ownership, inheritance, exchange, trade, etc., as are other objects [...] with which human groups have something to do" (p. 11).

This definition of 'domestication' accurately reflects the experiences and the objectification of nonhuman-animals rather than the celebrated, benign and human-centric definition of domestication as one of the major factors enabling the advancement of human 'civilization' (Nibert, 2013, pp. 1-11).

⁴⁰ The assumption behind the 'natural partnership' myth is that nonhuman-animals willingly came to human-animals for shelter and other necessities and in return, their lives are to be cut short in order to provide bodily secretions and flesh for human sustenance. The 'evidence' of this 'fair bargain' is supposedly reflected in the sheer number of 'livestock' in existence. The fact that most of them lead tortured meaningless lives, never seeing sunshine, never stepping on dirt or to have the ability to do things that are instinctual to themselves is not taken into account. Kazez (2010) accurately notes that the reasons for the proliferation of chickens are the same reasons for the proliferation of computers (p. 16), in other words, for profit motive. In the same manner that some Indigenous Peoples created myths and rituals to assuage ambivalence or guilt in killing nonhuman-animals for subsistence, we too, have create myths of 'natural partnerships' to justify our violent practices (Kazez, 2010, pp.10-18).

⁴¹ Terms such as 'livestock' and 'cash cow' are telling, reducing living individual beings to mere commodities to be bought or sold.

In the pursuit of profit through extraction of 'natural resources' and the selling of body parts or secretions of domesticated animals, Indigenous peoples were and continue to be displaced and murdered by land grabbing colonizers and corporations (Nibert, 2013, pp. 71-72).

Nibert (2013) coined the term 'domeseccration'⁴² to describe "the systemic practice of violence in which social animals are enslaved and biologically manipulated, resulting in their objectification, subordination and oppression" (p. 12).

⁴² Presumably a combination of the words 'desecrate' and 'domesticate'.

Chapter 13.

13.1. The Great Outdoors

Just a perfect day.

Sipping sangria in industrial park.

Escaping the concrete jungle.

Eating happy meat and cheese sandwiches while making out mythical animal shapes from the clouds of smoke billowing out from the power plant.

Admiring psychedelic multi-coloured manure lagoons – magnificent hues of fiery red, iodine purple, cobalt blue, sulphurous yellow and Agent Orange orange – thank goodness for factory farms.

Bird-watching at the tailing ponds – identifying the breed of bird covered in tarry bitumen is quite the mental workout.

Oh but I do enjoy me a good challenge in the great outdoors.

13.2. Abbau

“Misery at the bottom [is] the foundation for luxury at the top” (Mumford, 1961, p. 432).

Treated as colonial possessions, outlying rural areas and its inhabitants, both nonhumans and humans, were and continue to be sacrificed to provide the necessary resources for cities to ‘prosper’” (Mumford, 1961, p. 539). Country is shunned while city is revered. Yet, the Metropolis does not acknowledge its dependence on country.

Of course, not all inhabitants of the Metropolis benefit from this predation.

Marginalized persons, dispossessed from their homeland due to land grabs and resource robbing by corporations with aid from powerful nations⁴³ are exploited for low paying dangerous jobs in slaughterhouses, in factory ‘farms’, in extraction industries and in myriads of other undesirable jobs.

“Without the spur of poverty and famine, they could not be expected to work for starvation wages” (Mumford, 1961, p. 432).

“*Abbau*, or un-building” (Mumford, 1961, p. 452) of Mother Earth is taking place at an unprecedented rate with tar sands projects, oil pipelines, nuclear and other power plants, factory ‘farms’⁴⁴, slaughterhouses and resource extraction mines proliferating seemingly infinitely.

Our earth, air and waterways are being polluted and/or depleted; all while the sixth mass extinction is taking place (Center for Biological Diversity, n.d.). Yet, this human-animal-made ecological crisis barely registers as a concern with leaders of ‘developed’ nations’ nor with corporate leaders whose hands are dripping with blood.

⁴³ Together, these two entities are an extension of the empires of the past. Today’s empires rarely have to resort to force with their own citizens – except with their perceived ‘devalued’ citizens. We, in the ‘developed’ nations acquiesce willingly. It is in our interest to do so. After all, we are the main benefactors of the exploitation of nonhuman and human-animals in ‘developing countries’. Without said rampant exploitation and thievery, we would not have cheap labour, flesh and other goods. Awareness of our complicity is traumatizing. And *what do we do* with this awareness is the important question to ask ourselves collectively.

⁴⁴ The co-optation of the words ‘farm’, ‘lagoon’, ‘jungle’, ‘park’ and ‘plant’ by corporations act to diffuse their crimes of pollution and desecration of Mother Earth.

Chapter 14.

14.1. Black and Blue Burger

A husband comes home after a long day at work. He did not meet his sales quota for the week and has just been reprimanded by his supervisor. His wife senses that something is amiss with her husband and promptly sets up supper for the evening.

Beaming proudly at her husband, she puts out a kale chickpea Caesar salad, spiced peas, and a lentil and nut loaf for dinner – unusual dishes for this typically meat and potatoes household.

She has been prepping and cooking food for hours in the afternoon.

'I hope you like it.'

The husband looks down at his plate and smashes his fork into the loaf. A few spiced peas roll off his plate.

He looks up at his wife angrily, yelling

'There's no meat in my dinner!'

and puts his fist to her face,

sparing neither the left

nor right cheek.

The force of his punches knocked her to the ground.

'Be still, my throbbing heart – compose yourself'

the voice inside her head commands.

She pulls herself up, straightens her clothes and silently wipes away the tears streaming down her bruised cheeks.

She heads to the fridge and pulls out a couple of frozen blackened burger patties and fries them in a pan. She assembles the usual works for a burger – lettuce, tomatoes, onion and mayonnaise and tops them off with crumbled blue cheese. She serves the meal to her husband.

He gorges himself on the burgers without making eye contact with his wife or saying a word to her.

She quietly takes her veggie meal into the nursery,

locks herself in,

and cowers in a corner,

breaking into uncontrollable tears.

14.2. Sexual Politics of Meat

In this sexual politics of meat vignette, the masked violence of the flesh-based meal is juxtaposed with the flagrant violence towards the wife.⁴⁵

Adams (2010) defines the sexual politics of meat as “an attitude and action that animalizes women and sexualizes and feminizes animals” as well as “the assumption

⁴⁵ The inspiration for this vignette comes from seeing an ad for a pack of frozen black and blue burgers which I later understood to be blackened burgers with blue cheese but my initial reaction was one of horror in which images of horrifically bruised cows were being grounded up swirled inside my head. It should be made clear that I am not using violence towards women as a metaphor for violence towards nonhumans although it may be misconstrued as such. Rather, it is an attempt to link patriarchal violence towards both human (women) and nonhuman-animals, and “to acknowledge the strong historical alliance between feminism and vegetarianism” (Adams, 2010, p. 72).

that men need meat, have the right to meat, and that meat eating is a male activity associated with virility” (p. 4).

Women perpetuate the sexual politics of meat by placing men’s request for meat over their own desires in part due to the false notion that it is the duty of a wife to serve the ‘needs’ of her husband (Adams, 2010, pp. 22-23).

Attacks on women by a patriarchal culture also take on a non-corporeal level. “Sexist attacks [are directed at] “welfare queens” but not on the “cowboy welfare kings” whose cattle raising is subsidized by the federal government [read taxpayers]” (Adams, 2010, pp. 18-19).⁴⁶

⁴⁶ “According to the Environmental Working Group (EWG), livestock subsidies in the United States totalled \$4.1 billion from 1995-2012.

Chapter 15.

15.1. Strangers

In the Metropolis,

we pass each other on the street without making eye contact,

without ever

uttering a word.

We truck along on our daily routine in silence while

thumping music blares loudly into our ears.

In the Metropolis, residents in the same apartment building do not know each other's names

and a simple 'good morning' greeting in the elevator the other day to a fellow neighbour was met with a shrug.

We have become suspicious of each other.

But something magical happens when Strangers with Dogs pass each other on the streets.

We still truck along on our daily routine but somehow, we take time out to stop – to converse with one another – even if only about Dogs,

to listen,

to connect,

to love,

and to share love

in the presence of Nonhuman-Animals.

Giddiness takes over us when we see our Nonhuman-Animal friends again on a different walk. We remember the Dogs by name but we never bother to ask what their Human-Animals' names are.

In our vacuous city interactions with other Human-Animals, Nonhuman-Animals teach us how to be Humans again.

15.2. Cogs in Cities, Union with Beasts

The neoliberal expression of capitalism commands in a rational and calculating manner, reducing "individuality and quality to a quantitative level" in which problems are assumed to have mathematical solutions through the money economy (Simmel, 1903, pp. 12-13). Emotional relationships are placed on the back burner and rational approaches are to be adopted. Trust no one and fear everyone. Simmel (1903) contends that "this dissociation is in reality [...] one of the elementary forms of socialization" in the city due to the large number of persons that we come in contact with, increasingly within fleeting moments only, hence the reserved and cold attitude that we necessarily put on as a survival mechanism (p. 15).

Mumford (1989) posits that the early inhabitants of the city can be defined as a permanent captive population (p. 47). I believe this to still be true for our modern Metropolis today for many of us would not know how to survive outside of cities, to subsist off the land. Bound by the money economy and trapped as cogs in the monotonous machinery of the city, most of our lives are spent generating profits for corporations unwittingly, both as workers and consumers (Walter, 1988, p. 188).

The symbols of our ancestors point to “a prevailing sense of interdependence among creatures” and “a longing for union with the beasts” (Walter, 1988, pp. 93-94). Having artificially removed ourselves from the realm of animals and nature in the Metropolis, I believe that this longing for a connection with nonhuman-animals has been cultivated into relationships with dogs, cats and other nonhuman-animals whom we have selectively permitted to live, and with whom we share our homes with.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Sometimes, this relationship is corrupted into a consumeristic and self-serving one. Unable to form meaningful relationships with our fellow human-animals, we instead, develop relationships with companion animals, namely, cats and dogs. We fool ourselves into thinking that we have a deep relationship with our companion animals and no doubt, many of us do, but many of us do not, even with our best intentions. After all, the relationship between a dog or a cat, and a human is a lot like that of a master-slave relationship. This is not to deny the agency or the autonomy of the nonhuman-animal as they too, influence how we behave and live. But it is a fact that we control every aspect of their lives from their food, to their physical and mental health, to their mobility (or lack thereof). And for this, we expect their unconditional love. Beware, non-human-animal friends! Obedience and complicity is expected of you or you will be discarded like yesterday’s fashion, gassed in chambers with other ‘problem’ (non-complicit) dogs and cats.

Chapter 16.

16.1. The Fix

Monday morning and it is back to the daily grind.

There are long line-ups at the ubiquitous doughnut'n'coffee franchise.

Hordes of Human-Animals lining up for

breakfast sandwiches

comprised of

salty,

greasy

tortured dead flesh,

eggs

and congealed mammary secretion from sexually manipulated bodies,

to be washed down with sugar and caffeine.

Many Human-Animals purport to get very angry and are unable to function properly without their morning fix.

There is more greasy tortured dead flesh, sugar and caffeine to be had in the afternoon.

A note on the Bureau's wall reads:

'Have a heart: if the pot is empty, please brew another.'

Human-Animals pumped full of legal and socially acceptable drugs to be productive at work – their only connection to Nature is the dead tortured animals whom they consume recklessly.

All this, just to get through one of many, many more workdays to come.

Zombies without coffee;

zombies of another kind with coffee.

16.2. Life Not Worth Living

The 'right to coffee' in the workplace and increasingly in schools as well is so entrenched that many of us cannot even fathom starting a work (or school day) without this drug.

The consumption of this drug has been normalized as part of employee culture (Kracauer, 1998, p. 32) which benefits the employer more than the employee. Drugs to promote productivity at work are encouraged while the panacea for the maladies of work is nowhere to be found, at least not in the workplace.

You're on your own.

'Food animals' are also pumped full of drugs, antibiotics specifically. The animals are drugged not for their well-being but so that they may gain weight at a faster rate and thus be ready to be slaughtered for human profit sooner. The meat industry euphemistically calls this troubling process 'feed efficiency'.

For the animals, there is no panacea.

And to say that they have maladies would be an understatement.

They are living zombies –

treated as corpses,

as objects,

as commodities by humans for *every second of their lives* –

painfully defining

'life not worth living'.

Chapter 17.

17.1. Stairway to Heaven

She has been toiling in the farm ten hours a day, seven days a week for ten years now. So it is no surprise that she is really looking forward to retirement tomorrow.

Having completed her last shift of plowing the fields, she returns to the barn exhausted for the last time and promptly slumbers in her haystack just as dusk falls.

Vivid dreams of frolicking in the fields, sunbathing, general lollygagging and eating lush green grass swirl in her head,

inducing a wide smile on her face that lasted the whole night.

Before sunrise, she hears the barn door creak.

Her guardians arrive with two strangers.

They must be bringing me breakfast!

One of the strangers walks up to her and places a rope around her neck and leads her forcefully into a large truck outside.

She resists at first, looking desperately at her guardians for help only to find them refusing to make eye contact with her.

After the stranger tightens the rope around her neck repeatedly, choking her, she reluctantly yields to him.

Spirit and body crushed.

After ten years of hard service, she is recompensed with a trip to the Stairway to Heaven⁴⁹.

Sleep sweetly forever. Sleep sweetly.

17.2. Highway to Hell

Rudy (2011) argues that using nonhuman-animals in rotational farming with crops on small farms is a benign and unproblematic activity; that the problem with animal agriculture lies with Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) due to the extensive pollution which they produce (p. 100). She contends that most beings must “make some contribution to justify their place in the world” to be assigned merit (Rudy, 2011, p. 99).

She claims that ‘farm-animals’ and ‘food-animals’ contribute their labour, bodily secretions (eggs and milk) and flesh – that this is the ‘sacrifice that nonhuman-animals must make for the ‘sacrifices’ that human-animals in turn make in order to provide a good life for them (Rudy, 2011, p.100).

This goes back to the stale and unconvincing ‘natural partnership between humans and non-humans-animals’ argument (Budiansky as cited in Kazez, 2010, p. 15).

To expect an individual to pay someone back with her own life just because that person provided the necessities of life hardly seems like a fair, let alone, natural partnership. Nonhuman-animal workers cannot clock out or go ‘home’.

Freedom of movement and meaningful interactions with members of their own species are rarely allowed (Noske, 1997, p. 17).⁵⁰ The cow in this vignette is a worker, a colleague.⁵¹

⁴⁹ ‘Stairway to heaven’ is the nickname that Temple Grandin provided for the serpentine ramp which she designed to lead cows to their deaths in slaughterhouses (American Radioworks, n.d.). The callousness in the choice of name is appalling.

Do we kill our colleague after years of service?

Do we eat our co-worker?

Do they not deserve a life of rest after a long life of hard work and service to us?

And for Rudy (2011) to suggest that cows, chickens, pigs and other 'food animals' or humans for that matter must somehow "earn our so-called station in life" (p. 99) is rather colonizing.⁵² She fails to take into account structural violence that affects humans and nonhumans, which prevents them from ever having a fair chance to earn their so-called station in life.

⁵⁰ 'Food-animals' especially cows in dairy industries and chickens in egg industries are some of the most exploited animals. Their entire existence revolves around the exploitation of their bodies and reproductive cycles to generate profits for human-animals (Noske, 1997, p. 17). Female animals become oppressed by their reproductive cycles, that is, for their ability to produce feminized protein (milk and eggs) and when their productiveness declines and becomes 'unprofitable', they are butchered and become 'animalized protein' themselves (Adams, 2010, p. 112). As women age, they are also devalued by a patriarchal society which labels them with negative connotations such as 'spinster' or 'old maid'. They too are considered 'spent' like dairy cows. At age 37, award winning actress, Maggie Gyllenhaal was informed that she is 'too old' to play the love interest of a man of 55 (Child, 2015, May).

⁵¹ While some may argue that I am anthropomorphizing the cow, I am doing no such thing. In our dog-loving society, most would not claim that an assistance dog is a 'tool'. We typically acknowledge dogs as sentient beings, as workers (e.g. herders, assistants) yet there is resistance to calling a cow a 'worker' because we have been brainwashed into accepting the cow mainly 'just as food' or as a 'tool for plowing'.

⁵² Presumably, Rudy does not apply such speciesist principles to the lives of cats or dogs since she does not expect these animals to justify their existence by providing their flesh and bodily secretions to humans.

Chapter 18.

18.1. Veiled Veal

They thought that they were finally going to get a much needed shower –
what a relief.

We thought that we were finally going to go home –

yes,

home, sweet, home.

Comforting terror,

terrorizing comfort.

Caretaker or tormentor?

It's confusing these days.

18.2. Rationalist Fallacy, Retrograde Humanism

Temple Grandin (2012) rationalizes the so-called 'humane' killing of nonhuman-animals by human-animals by noting that (1) "nature can be harsh", (2) that animals eat other animals, (3) that natural phenomenon such as droughts can cause much suffering and (4) that humans have a necessity to consume flesh for optimum health (p. 210). The

latter despite living proof of many healthy vegan humans (and nonhumans).⁵³

While I agree with Grandin that “nature can be harsh” and that there may be aspects of the natural world that we cannot rank as moral or immoral⁵⁴, I observe her contradictory rationalist fallacy in her ranking of animals with so-called “greater intelligence and social-emotional complexity such as apes, dolphins, elephants and parrots” having higher moral value over other nonhuman-animals and thus should not be consumed by human-animals (Grandin, 2012, p. 209).⁵⁵

Pollan argues that “what’s wrong with animal agriculture – with eating animals – is the practice not the principle” (as cited in Grandin, 2012, p. 207), a sentiment that Grandin echoes. Thus, she works to improve the slaughter conditions for ‘food-animals’, to reduce pain and suffering.

Grandin has received hateful and violent messages⁵⁶, and has been accused by some animal rights activists of being a Nazi for aiding corporations in the killing of nonhuman-animals for human consumption. She speculates that had she been alive during Hitler’s reign, she would have been killed “as a mental defective” and that Hitler may have valued the life of a dog over hers (Grandin, 2012, p. 214).

⁵³ The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics asserts that an “appropriately planned [...] vegan diet can be healthful, nutritionally adequate, and may provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases” (Caspero, 2014, January).

⁵⁴ While it is true that we should not assign moral judgment to coyotes who must hunt to survive, to apply this logic to humans’ so called ‘right’ to flesh and bodily secretion foods is fallacious. According to Lackner (as cited in Kheel, 2004) only 20% of nonhuman-animals are predators of other animals (p. 336). Why then do we infer that we should follow this paradigm of what is ‘natural’ when 80% of nonhuman-animals do not kill to eat (Adams, 1994, p. 99)? Most human societies do not need flesh foods or bodily secretions (milk and eggs) for their survival. And those who have the best access to plant based foods are usually the first to claim this ‘natural right to meat’. We selectively choose ‘natural animal traits’ to apply to ourselves (e.g. the ‘right to eat meat’) just because some animals eat other animals yet we do not accept the ‘natural animal trait’ of sexual aggression and forced sexual intercourse widespread in the animal kingdom as applicable to humans. No, we conveniently turn a blind eye to it – unless we are the military (CBC, 2015).

⁵⁵ Grandin (2012) asserts that “grazing animals often appear to be stupid given their strong flocking instincts” (p. 212) but she does not take into account that humans have selectively bred these animals to be stupid and submissive. She incorrectly assumes that this is their natural state and her ranking of nonhumans by human standards is highly problematic.

⁵⁶ This is most unfortunate and is something that I would never endorse.

She argues that as such, she “cannot place the moral value of other animal species equal to [her] own species [and that] the people who do run the risk of becoming Nazis themselves (Grandin, 2012, p. 214).

Grandin is erroneous in her belief that animal defenders prioritize nonhuman-animals over human-animals. While this may be true for some misanthropic animal defenders such as Gary Yourofsky, many animal defenders care deeply and also work for human social justice issues.

Adams (2012) developed the concept of “retrograde humanism” to describe the “knee jerk reaction prompted by defensiveness” by consumers of flesh most often by “accusing animal activists of neglecting some form of human suffering when they learn that we are vegan” (p. 127). She correctly points out that retrograde humanists haven’t made the connection that nonhuman suffering entails much human suffering (e.g. poor labour conditions in factory farms and slaughterhouses mainly performed by people of colour, many of whom are undocumented (Joy, 2010, p. 79), using prison labour to create consumer goods and (Moore, 2014) and to do the dirty work of killing and disposing of animal bodies infected with diseases as a result of unethical practices of factory farming (Huffstuffer, 2015)) and that *all* social justice issues are connected, human and nonhuman (Adams, 2012, p. 128).

While I disagree with and am repulsed by Grandin’s collaboration with nonhuman (and by extension human) exploitation, I would never call her a Nazi nor do I think that she is evil as she has been accused by some.

Ironically however, the so-called ‘humane’ serpentine ramp, designed by Grandin which calms ‘food-animals’ down by deceiving them into thinking that they are going home but which in actuality leads them to their deaths (Grandin, 2011) is eerily reminiscent of Hitler’s ‘humane’ or ‘mercy’ killing of Jews and other perceived ‘undesirable’ humans in gas chambers disguised as showers complete with fake nozzles in order to deceive victims into thinking that they will finally be able to clean themselves (Jewish Virtual

Library, n.d.) – a poignant detail seemingly oblivious to Grandin.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ It is fraudulent to label Temple Grandin as an animal rights activist when she actively participates in the slaughter of nonhuman-animals. Ingrid Newkirk, president of PETA analogizes nonhuman-animal slaughter in a different manner than most other animal defenders. She proclaims that “[i]n war, real choices, not lofty philosophical positions, are what count. Ask me which I would prefer: my mother frogmarched by guards into a concentration camp gas oven, or having her led gently in without allowing her to realize fully what lies ahead, and the answer is simple. If wishes were horses, my mother and the cow would both be out in a flower-filled meadow—one grazing happily, the other gathering mushrooms for soup” (Newkirk, 2014, para. 5). Newkirk’s Holocaust’s analogy is illogical, perverted to advance animal welfarism as the norm. While I understand that she is speaking from the perspective of the nonhuman-animal, in reality, as human-animals, we are ‘on the side’ of the oppressor. Thus, the correct analogy would be to ask ourselves, ‘In times of war, do we want to be complicit – to be the ones who murder others ‘humanely’ or do we want to be war resisters/liberators?’

Chapter 19.

19.1. Blurred Lines

Her flesh,

so tender,

juicy

and delicious.

She asked for it.

She made me do it.

I had no choice.

19.2. Controlling Female Bodies

Meat, dairy and egg production in a capitalist system requires total control over nonhuman female bodies (Adams, 2003, p. 147).

The control of nonhuman female bodies parallels men's control over women's bodies. In 2013 alone, American legislators introduced 694 provisions on women's reproductive health and rights while *not a single provision* was introduced to control men's bodies (Guttmacher Institute, n.d.).

Consider that "all forms of dairy farming involve forcibly impregnating cows. This involves a person inserting his arm far into the cow's rectum in order to position the

uterus, and then forcing an instrument into her vagina [in order to insert the semen]. The restraining apparatus used is commonly called a rape rack” (Humanemyth.org, n.d.). Semen from a select few bulls “is typically collected with the use of castrated males as stand-ins for females, because the musco-skeletal structure of females cannot handle the stress of being mounted over and over by the bull for the collection process” (Humanemyth.org, n.d.).

Chickens fare no better as human-animals must “break a hen by holding her breast down, legs up, tail up so that her cloaca or vent opens. This makes it easier for the inseminator to insert the tube and deliver a shot of semen” (Adams, 2003, p. 148).

Born into captivity, with most having never stepped on to grass or experienced sunlight, the animals are forcibly impregnated (or castrated with no painkillers if they are male) numerous times throughout their short miserable lives until their bodies are ‘spent’, at which time, they will be sent to be slaughtered.

The animals exist only for human consumption.⁵⁸

“It is the speciesist version of keeping females barefoot and pregnant” (Adams, 2003, p. 148).

Replace the word ‘cow’ or ‘chicken’ with ‘human’, ‘dog’ or even ‘cat’ in the sentences above and few would contest that these acts are heinous crimes.

Sexual assault *is* sexual assault even if we mute the violence by calling it ‘bestiality’ or ‘animal husbandry’.

⁵⁸ The myth that the animals want to be consumed is perpetuated through the meat, egg and dairy industries portraying happy animals on food packaging (e.g. Laughing Cow cheese) or animals enticing us to consume them (e.g. Dave’s Sticky Pig restaurant in Kentucky which has a logo of a smiling pig with her hands in a jar of barbecue sauce, sitting next to a wood burning fire). This parallels the misogynistic myth that women who dress a certain way, who stay out late, who are poor or who are a spouse as somehow at fault for their rape. In both myths, attention, blame and shame are directed at the victims rather than at their perpetrators. It is assumed that ‘they asked for it’. Furthermore, vegans are often charged with anthropomorphizing nonhuman-animals but in this particular example, and there are many more out there – it is the meat industry that is doing the anthropomorphizing.

When sexual violence is perpetrated by humans on to 'livestock', it is merely 'business as usual'.

Lines which are normally very clear, with *no* possibility of ambiguity, are suddenly blurred for our mere gustatory pleasure.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ We have rationalized the myth that nonhumans do not suffer sexual violence trauma in the same manner as humans do hence why it is 'okay' to violate their bodily integrity constantly. The Cartesian view of animals as biological automatons persists today.

Chapter 20.

20.1. Digital Distractions

Smart Pig solves puzzle in record time. Gentle Pit Bull nurses abandoned kittens. Hungry Hamsters eating tiny burritos. You won't believe what this Dog does when her Humans are away at work. Amputated Turtle gets a new lease on life with special wheelchair. Snoring Kitten ignores wake-up calls. Rectal rehydration and waterboarding: the CIA torture report's grisliest findings. Video shows chickens being punched, thrown and plucked alive in welfare-certified US farm. Sleepy Puppy is the cutest thing you will ever see. View the best Dog Halloween costumes here. Donkey cuddles up with unlikely best friend, Rescue Fox. Squirrels sunbathing next to swimming pool. Fuzzy Rabbits sharing a kale salad with Husky. Playful Cat surprises young Beagle from behind. Pug lives the high life and surfs on California beaches.

20.2. Wilfully Blind, Comfortably Numb

It is astounding that there are Internet celebrity cats and dogs with millions of hits on their online video and photo streams. Lost in the sea of feel-good individual nonhuman-animal stories are urgent and important accounts of widespread torture, abuse and killings of both nonhuman and human-animals.

The mass entertainment of cute and sensational nonhuman-animal videos and images obscures critical truths of the violence towards nonhuman and human-animals alike. We

profess love for (nonhuman)-animals and yet news of the torture of nonhuman-animals barely elicits a response.⁶⁰

News of the torture and killings of human-animals are rationalized as 'necessary' for homeland security. And we revel in the assassination of another human⁶¹ even though we profess to believe and adhere to a fair justice system in which all are innocent until proven guilty.

Beyond an initial reaction of horror, we turn a blind eye, shut off the abhorrent news and maintain faith in our country's leaders – that they are doing good – all while chewing on dismembered body parts of tortured 'food' animals unquestioningly.

Wilfully blind, comfortably numb.

⁶⁰ A recent exception to this rule is the killing of Cecil, a protected lion in Zimbabwe by a wealthy American tourist. The mass outrage over one dead lion is difficult to grasp given that most of those expressing the outrage are complicit in the torture and deaths of thousands of animals through their life time consumption of meat and bodily secretions. Trophy hunting is particularly abhorred since the killer kills merely for pleasure and because they can afford to pay huge sums of money to kill 'exotic' animals like lions and polar bears. Trophy hunting by wealthy White Westerners is a continuation of colonial practices of killing, stealing and collecting 'exotic specimens' for display in private homes and museums. Would the killing of Cecil be more palatable if the American distributed Cecil's flesh to Zimbabweans for sustenance? Or does the issue pertain specifically to the fact that Cecil was a protected animal? But then, this implies that killing unprotected lions is perfectly fine and I doubt that many would agree. Cecil had a name, a unique personality as attested by the human-animals who knew and loved him dearly. He was not 'just a lion'. Contrast this with nameless cows whom we consume so unreservedly, relegated to the mass term of 'beef'. Where *is* the outrage for the 58 billion nonhuman-animals killed for our gustatory pleasure? Beyond petty quibble over arbitrary ranking of nonhuman-animals, how *is* killing for gustatory pleasure different from one man killing for pleasure? Outraged human rights activists ask – 'where *is* the outrage for the torture and murders of Blacks, Indigenous, LGBTQ, poor persons, other people of colour, women and children? This *is* a legitimate question to ask in our uncaring society. However, the implication of such a statement is that we should only care about human-animals. That human-animals should always come first. This creates a false dichotomy. Human and nonhuman social justice issues can be worked on in tandem. All oppressions are intertwined and should be framed as such. Social justice is not a competition.

⁶¹ What gives governments the 'right' to go around assassinating people?

Chapter 21.

21.1. So Trigger-Happy Together

Imagine me,

Conservation Officer and you,

Police Officer,

I do.

I think about us day and night, with fright.

So-called protecting the ones we love,

it's only right

yet so trigger-happy together.

It's either us

or them.

We have no choice

except to kill,

it had to be.

It's the only way to maintain peace

and harmony.

You have no right

to tell us otherwise.

You are not in our shoes.

If you are,

oh we would be so trigger-happy together.⁶²

21.2. 'Balance'

The new argument from nature informs us that ecological process and balance is paramount. Nature *just is* and thus morality has no applicability in ecologically processes (Taylor, 2008, p. 182). Cougars kill and eat other animals because it is natural for them to do so and by inference, it is also 'natural' for humans to kill and eat other animals and we are neither moral or immoral in our actions.

Yet, humans repeatedly kill nonhuman-animals just because they are trying to eat to survive and to do what is instinctual to them.

In June 2015, 'conservation officers' killed a cougar in North Vancouver because she was preying on cats and raccoons (CBC News, 2015). There are mass killings of predator animals such as cougars, wolves and coyotes all over Canada and USA because they dare to hunt 'livestock' (North, 2015). Sea dwelling creatures fare no better with 346 seals murdered for trying to eat (farmed) salmon off the coast of Scotland (McKim, 2013).

If nature *just is* and humans claim that ecological processes are paramount, then why

⁶² The title of this vignette is adopted from the song 'Happy Together' by The Turtles, released in 1967.

are these predators not allowed *to just be*, to eat and live?

The new argument from nature makes bold claims about natural processes and ecological balance but in truth, its proponents cherry-pick which animal is allowed to be 'natural' (humans) and punishes nonhuman-animal species, often obligate carnivores or large omnivores, who are only trying to survive in a world that is continuously encroached upon and taken over by humans for their exclusive use.

“An ecological philosophy that tells us to live side by side with other creatures justifies itself by appealing to an idea, an idea of a higher order than any living creature [...] which no creature except [human] is capable of comprehending” (Coetzee, 1999, p. 54).

We admire nonhuman-animal predators for their stealth and prowess and make them into symbols of bravery, courage and strength⁶³ yet we kill them so willingly for the same reasons that we admire them for.

The predators are scapegoated in our never-ending quest for gluttony of profit but also because *we are prey*⁶⁴ and thus fear them – a seldom-acknowledged truth.

'Conservation' officers⁶⁵ likely sometimes kill because they fear the predator animals that they are supposed to protect. Who after all, would not be terrified to be in the vicinity of a 150-pound carnivore?

The murders of Black men and women in the USA eerily reminds us that police officers have an irrational fear of Blacks who have historically been portrayed falsely by racist State and non-State actors as dangerous – as rapists, murderers and criminals. Why else would they be so trigger-happy? Why else are Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin and countless other Blacks murdered so expeditiously by police

⁶³ e.g. wolves, bears, lions, tigers, etc.

⁶⁴ Human-animals boast about being at the top of the food chain but “a chain by definition doesn't have a top, and [even] if it did, it would be inhabited by carnivores, not omnivores” (Joy, 2010, p. 108).

⁶⁵ *Who* are they conserving? *Whose* interests are they protecting? Time and again, Human-Animal interest seems to take precedent over Nonhuman-Animal interest.

with no consequences for their actions?⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Who are they protecting? Whose interests are they serving? Time and again, White lives take precedent over Black lives.

Chapter 22.

22.1. Fundraiser

Animals are at the mercy of Humans. So many are neglected, abused and killed needlessly each year.

Animals deserve our care and love. They count on us to provide for them.

Your contribution will go a long ways towards the daily care of our rescued animals – all while you have a good time and a delicious meal!

One hundred dollars will provide for a Chicken for an entire year and you will enjoy our succulent slow roasted pulled Pug sandwiches.

One hundred and fifty dollars will provide for a Turkey for an entire year and you will enjoy our scrumptious German Shepherd Pie.

Three hundred dollars will provide for a Goat for an entire year and you will enjoy our tender barbecued Basenjjs.

Four hundred dollars will provide for a Sheep for an entire year and you will enjoy our flavourful curried Cocker Spaniel on rice.

Five hundred and fifty dollars will provide for a Pig for an entire year and you will enjoy our finger-licking-good deep fried Fox Terriers and tasty Schnauzer Soup.

Last but not least, for lucky eight hundred and eighty eight dollars, you will provide for a Cow for an entire year and you will enjoy juicy Pomeranian chops, cooked to your liking, served with mouthwatering Yorkshire Terrier pudding.

Get yours now while they last!

22.2. White-Savior Industrial Complex

Joy (2010) asserts “we love dogs and eat cows not because dogs and cows are fundamentally different [...] – but because our *perception* of them is different. And, consequently, our perception of their meat is different as well” (p. 13).

A common explanation of why some flesh foods are ‘disgusting’ while others are not is that disgust is socially constructed. Cats and dogs are typically treated as family members in Western society and as such, we do not eat them – that would be ‘disgusting’! ‘Food-animals’ on the other hand are often denigrated as lesser beings⁶⁷ and this acts as a justification to consume and use them. Therefore, eating the flesh from these animals would not be disgusting (Joy, 2010, pp. 16-18).

The flipside of this analysis is that the absence of disgust when eating flesh is *also* learned but this is rarely discussed.

Furthermore, just because our ancestors ate flesh does not necessarily entail that we should since our context, both local and global is different from theirs.

Fingers are usually pointed at cultures that consume dog flesh as particularly cruel⁶⁸ yet many are silent on the cruelty inflicted upon the animals consumed in the West. Humane Society International promotes animal welfarism and a reduction in the consumption of cows, chickens, pigs and their bodily secretions but they do not appear to have the same stance on dog flesh consumption in South Korea. They have instead flown dogs in South Korea’s meat industry to the United States to be adopted whilst compensating South Korean dog ‘farmers’ for their economic loss and helping them to grow peppers instead (Gale, 2015).

⁶⁷ When was the last time we heard positive views of cows, chickens and pigs from someone who isn’t a vegan? Similarly, when was the last time we heard positive views in the context of humans being called a ‘chicken’, ‘cow’ or ‘pig’?

⁶⁸ I assume that most who read this particular vignette are appalled by the consumption of dogs.

This differential treatment of dogs versus cows, chickens and pigs reinforces a false hierarchy of dogs as being more valuable than cows, chickens and pigs.

The whole stunt stinks of White-Savior Industrial Complex.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ White-Savior Industrial Complex refers to persons or organizations going to 'fix' the problems of People of Colour typically in developing nations without any understanding of their own privilege, or of the context of the people they are trying to 'save'. In this vignette, Westerners are 'saving' animals destined for food in Korea but yet they do not do the same in their own country.

Chapter 23.

23.1. Price to Pay

AboveGround, a whole block of the city razed in a flash.

Cinder,

ash,

rubble,

dust,

dismembered body parts,

and bloodied Human-Animals and Nonhuman-Animals

litter the streets.

All this to 'neutralize' key members of the insurgent group, they say.

For our freedom, they say.

For our rights, they say.

For our children and our grandchildren, they say.

In turbulent times,

some innocent people must die, they say.

'Collateral damage'

this is the price that we must pay, they say.

Below the surface, the equivalent of a few city blocks of ocean floor razed in a flash.⁷⁰

Centuries old coral reef, sponge beds, turtles, sharks, dolphins, whales, seals, birds caught in the web of hell –

suffering slow,

suffocating,

agonizing

painful deaths.

All this for our demand of cheap seafood, they say.

For our economy, they say.

For our gustatory delight, they say.

For our children and our grandchildren, they say.

In hungry times, Nonhuman-Animals must die, they say.

'Bycatch' – this is the price that we must pay, they say.

⁷⁰ "If this was happening on land, there would be more of an outcry. It's a question of out of sight, out of mind with the destruction of these beautiful ancient undersea worlds - and all for just a few fish." (Greenpeace, 2006, June 7).

23.2. Disavowal, Unmasking

Derrida (2008) notes the extent to which our collective disavowal of the violence towards nonhuman-animals occurs (p. 26) and this is reflected in the language we use.

We say ‘harvesting’, ‘culling’ and ‘destroying’ rather than ‘killing’ nonhuman-animals, ‘veal’ rather than ‘anemic baby cow flesh’, and ‘bycatch’ referring to non-target marine species killed by human-animals while attempting to catch/kill a specifically targeted marine species for profit.⁷¹

Bycatch is often described as an unintentionally consequence of industrial fishing practices but there is nothing unintentional about it. It is a *necessary* effect of industrial fishing much like ‘collateral damage’⁷² is to the violence of wars.

Bycatch’ and ‘collateral damage’ negate the victims of unethical violent practices.

Language matters.

Our use of language masks and makes palatable our violence towards both nonhuman-animals and human-animals alike (Nibert, 2002, p.xiv-xv).⁷³

It is time to remove our masks.

⁷¹ “According to some estimates, global bycatch may amount to 40 percent of the world’s catch, totaling 63 billion pounds per year” (Keledjian et al., 2014, p. 5).

⁷² As of November 24, 2014, attempts by the Obama administration to assassinate 41 militants in Pakistan resulted in the deaths of an estimated 1,147 people, most of whom are civilian women and children (Ackerman, 2014).

⁷³ ‘Milking the system’ may be an exception. Implied in the statement is that milking *is* an exploitative practice yet the expression is so common place and used only as a metaphor, with the cow being the absent referent that the violence inherent in the dairy industry is obscured.

Chapter 24.

24.1. Ruminations (Postscript)

It should be made clear that the vignettes and commentaries in this project are *not* meant to be absolute truths. Nor are they a critique on communities who need to hunt to live. Instead, the project expresses the point of view of *one specific* vegan who is trying to come to terms with the collective and individual violence inflicted upon nonhuman and human-animals alike, particularly in the context of a neoliberal capitalist system. Two major guiding questions in this project remain unresolved for the author, which she leaves for her readers to ruminate over.

24.2. Nature versus Culture

The tension between nature versus culture in the context of nonhuman-animal lives remains strong. Can we claim cultural right as a guiding principle on who deserves to live and who deserves to die? What about claims of 'natural rights'?

24.3. Dialogue

How to communicate meaningfully with those with opposing viewpoints? Is it ever possible for vegans and non-vegans to see eye-to-eye, or at least to understand each other's point of view even if disagreements remain?

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