Routledge Advances in Critical Diversities

DISABILITY AND ANIMALITY

CRIP PERSPECTIVES IN CRITICAL ANIMAL STUDIES

Edited by
Stephanie Jenkins, Kelly Struthers Montford,
and Chloë Taylor

Disability and Animality

The fields of critical disability studies and critical animal studies are growing rapidly, but how do the implications of these endeavors intersect? *Disability and Animality: Crip Perspectives in Critical Animal Studies* explores some of the ways that the oppression of more-than-human animals and disabled humans are interconnected.

Composed of 13 chapters by an international team of specialists plus a Foreword by Lori Gruen, the book is divided into four themes:

- Intersections of ableism and speciesism
- Thinking animality and disability together in political and moral theory
- Neurodiversity and critical animal studies
- Melancholy, madness, and misfits

This book will be of interest to undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as postdoctoral scholars, interested in animal studies, disability studies, mad studies, philosophy, and literary analysis. It will also appeal to those interested in the relationships between speciesism, ableism, saneism, and racism in animal agriculture, culture, built environments, and ethics.

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How They Teach Us to Be Human (Columbia 2009); *Women as Weapons of War: Iraq, Sex and the Media* (Columbia 2007); *The Colonization of Psychic Space: A Psychoanalytic Theory of Oppression* (Minnesota 2004); *Noir Anxiety: Race, Sex, and Maternity in Film Noir* (Minnesota 2002); and, perhaps her best known work, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* (Minnesota 2001). Her work has been translated into eight languages. She has been interviewed on ABC news, appeared on CSPAN Books, and published in the *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times*, among other appearances and publications in popular media. Most recently, she has published four novels in The Jessica James, Cowgirl Philosopher, and Mystery Series (which have won the IPPY award for Best Mystery, Finalist for a Foreword Magazine Award for Best Mystery, The Silver Falchion Award, and The Claymore Award). Her novels, *WOLF*, *COYOTE*, *FOX*, and *JACKAL* are fast-paced mysteries that take up women's issues such as campus rape, human trafficking, domestic abuse, prostitution, and new reproductive technologies.

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Acknowledgments

This volume is one of two that is emerging simultaneously from a conference that Kelly and Chloë organized, and in which Stephanie participated, that took place in June of 2016. The pendant volume, *Colonialism and Animality: Anti-Colonial Perspectives in Critical Animal Studies*, is also being published with Routledge. We would like to thank all of the participants, student helpers, and audience members who made this conference such an overwhelming success. We would also like to express our gratitude to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta, the Kule Institute for Advanced Studies at the University of Alberta, and the Department of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Alberta, whose financial support made the conference possible.

Chapter 1, Sunaura Taylor's "Animal Crips," was previously published in Taylor's book, *Beasts of Burden* (The New Press 2017). A shorter version of the chapter first appeared in the *Journal of Critical Animal Studies* (May 2014). Chapter 6, Kelly Oliver's, "Service Dogs: Between Animal Studies and Disability Studies," was previously published in *philoSOPHIA: a journal of continental feminism* (2016). We are grateful for permission to reproduce these chapters.

We would also like to thank Dr. Eloy LaBrada, for their careful reading and insightful feedback on the entirety of this text.

Foreword

Over 15 years ago, I met a chimpanzee named Knuckles, who lives at the Center for Great Apes, a sanctuary for chimpanzees and orangutans in Wauchula, Florida. Knuckles has cerebral palsy. Mari, an orangutan who lost her arms in an accident as an infant while living in a cognition laboratory, also now lives at the sanctuary. Mari moves around easily (even though the sanctuary has taken care to make structures safe for her while also insisting that she doesn't "need concessions"). She uses her legs and her chin to get around and manipulate objects and she lives happily with other orangutans. Knuckles requires more elaborate care, particularly when he was younger, but after physical and occupational therapy, he is able to feed himself, climb up and down, and play. He too is now able to live with others of his kind who recognize that he is different. The other chimpanzees alter their behavior when interacting with Knuckles. Meeting Knuckles and Mari challenged my way of thinking about what is "normal," what is "natural," and how one of the central arguments in animal ethics, referred to as the AMC (the poorly named "argument from marginal cases"), rests on a category mistake.

Some of the chapters in this volume discuss in greater detail the problems with the AMC argument, and even in the chapters that don't directly discuss it, we are provided with more illumination that helps us see the category mistake at the heart of the argument. In short, the AMC rests on a concept of "normalcy" that cannot be sustained.

Meeting Knuckles and Mari also had me thinking again about the complexities of the social model of disability—Knuckles and Mari are, in ways that Sunaura Taylor so forcefully argues, disabled by their captivity. But they are also "crips" in ways that other captives aren't. They aren't subjects of disabling apparatuses of power in the same ways that disabled humans and typical non-humans may be. Ironically, both are living and enjoying their lives as a result of their disabilities. Knuckles would have been killed if not for the offer to care for him for life at the sanctuary, where the creative founder saw the value in Knuckles' life as it is and the compassion of volunteers helped him to thrive, and laugh, and enjoy his life, albeit in captivity.

I have since met other disabled animals. At Woodstock Sanctuary, there is a goat named Albie, who had a terrible infection in his hoof when he was found wandering in Brooklyn not far from a slaughterhouse. After he arrived at the sanctuary they guessed that his legs had been tied together before he escaped and this caused permanent damage to his hoof that led to infection. They tried, unsuccessfully, to treat the infection but it spread and his front leg was amputated. Contrary to the idea that four-legged animals will not be able to live good lives without one of their legs, a notion based on an essentialist understanding of happiness or well-being, Albie seems to have a great life and is even a leader of his flock.

The humans at the LGBT run sanctuary for formerly farmed animals, VINE Sanctuary, some of whom are neuro-atypical, believe that Domino, a neuro-atypical alpaca, is able to connect and extend friendship and care to sanctuary residents of other species, because of his disability. He also welcomes human visitors and delivery people in ways that open up imaginative possibilities. I like to think that he is gently forcing people to rethink animals and ableism, much like this engaging volume will do for those of us who are able to read, listen, and reflect on its profound contents.

Analyzing disability, as the chapters that follow do so well, sheds new light on the way that animality is structured as inferior and other. What it means to be "an animal" is a notion that is naturalized and seemingly immutable. Humans are "not animals," although of course in some sense of the term we are. One of the many problems with both the concept of the animal and the concept of the human is that they are thought to pick out a unified, identifiable being. But who is the animal? Chimps are different from cheetahs, cheetahs are different from chickens, and chickens are different from chihuahuas. Knuckles is different from another chimp I know named Emma, who is different again from chimpanzee Juan. And who is the human? As scholars working on species oppression and combatting ableism are bringing to light the ways that generalizing involves elevating the biases and privileges of those thought to be "normal," we are provided with more opportunities for rethinking our categories and valuing difference—in species terms, in terms of individual abilities, and in terms of race, class, gender expression, as well as in our relationships with each other.

There is growing excitement in animal studies and animal activism about the implications of dismantling totalizing categories of "human" and "animal." Important critiques of the ways that ableism reinforces speciesism and is implicated in a range of oppressive arguments and practices are made forcefully and often poignantly in the chapters that follow. This book is a much needed catalyst for grappling with the entangled forces of violence and marginalization that animals and those who fall outside able-bodied norms continue to experience at the hands of those who often are well-meaning, but who are failing to address problems at their roots.

— Lori Gruen

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Disability and animality

Introduction

Stephanie Jenkins, Kelly Struthers Montford, and Chloë Taylor

Scholars working at the intersections of critical animal studies and critical disability studies have argued that the oppression of more-than-human animals and that of disabled humans are interconnected. Humans who love animals, defend animals, and refrain from eating animals have often found themselves labeled as mentally ill or "crazy," and psychiatrists have proposed diagnoses for animal activists and vegans, such as "anti-vivisection syndrome," "selective eating disorder," and "orthorexia nervosa." Disabled humans, like people of color, have been put on display along with more-than-human animals in the history of "freak" shows, and disabled humans and more-than-human animals continue to have their bodies objectified and their interests sacrificed for the purposes of medical training and scientific knowledge. Disabled humans are continually compared to more-than-human animals, not only in insults but also in medical terminology, with effects that are oppressive because of speciesism.

In the realm of moral philosophy, the same claims about what makes human life ontologically distinct and morally valuable—that humans have reason, language, and autonomy—have been deployed to justify the exclusion of both more-than-human animals and cognitively disabled humans from moral consideration. Stigmatizing attitudes towards dependence have been used to justify the oppression of physically disabled humans who are considered "dependent" and to justify the oppression and slaughter of more-than-human animals. Figures at the intersection of critical disability studies and critical animal studies include the service dog, the pathologized animal activist or animal lover, the disabled more-than-human animal, and the animalized disabled human. The aim of this volume is to bridge the scholarship between critical disability studies and critical animal studies in order to engage with figures such as these and with the ethico-political questions that they raise.

Part I of this book consists of four chapters exploring the "Intersections of Ableism and Speciesism." Chapter 1 is a reproduction of "Animal Crips," a chapter from Sunaura Taylor's groundbreaking book, *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation*.[1] This chapter argues that humans project ableism onto non-human animals, viewing them through the lens of many of the same stereotypes forced upon disabled humans. Like disabled humans, the lives of disabled non-human animals are seen through a double-bind of pity and inspiration; they are deemed to be either "better off dead" or "super crips." To demonstrate this point, Taylor uses a number of illustrative examples: the popularity of videos featuring "inspiring" disabled animals on the Internet and social media; the widespread assumption in animal behavioral research that disabled wild animals are less "fit" for survival and burdens on their communities; and the treatment of sick or injured animals in industrialized animal agriculture as dispensable, potential contagions, or candidates for mercy killings. In addition, Taylor challenges us to consider disabled animals from the perspective of the social model of disability. She demonstrates how the unnatural, abusive conditions and breeding practices of modern animal industries are inherently disabling; animal crips' disabilities cannot be understood outside of the environments that produce them. In fact, Taylor argues that all non-human animals—because they are devalued by both speciesism and ableism—are crips; the species-typical bodies and minds that ableism values are always already human. This chapter includes reproductions of four artworks by Sunaura Taylor—"Self-Portrait Marching with Chickens," "Animals with Arthrogryposis," "Chicken Truck," and "Downed Dairy Cow"—that resonate with the chapter's arguments.

Chapter 2, "Productive Bodies: How Neoliberalism Makes and Unmakes Disability in Human and Non-human Animals," takes up the creation of impairment—through engineering or environment—as a matter of justice. Neoliberalism, Kelly Somers and Karen Soldatic argue, reduces the value of life to economic efficiency and dissembles the bodies and minds of workers of all species to increase pace, production, and efficiency. As evidence for this claim, the authors analyze four case studies involving the work of human and more-than-human animals to make the relationship between disability and productivity explicit. The first two examples demonstrate how factory farms simultaneously obscure the institutions' disabling of non-human animals for profit while killing those whose bodies cannot be transformed into profit; non-productive animals, such as dairy cows deemed low producing, are slaughtered for failure to manufacture expected bodily outputs. Disabled, injured, and ill animals are culled from the herd out of fear of contamination. At the same time, Somers and Soldatic show that the agricultural and food industries rely on and naturalize disability within farm animals, exploiting their impairments for profit. Non-human animals are bred and maimed for profitable traits (e.g. debeaking and tail docking) and disabled by unnatural, unhealthy, and painful living conditions. Neoliberalism's reduction of disability to matters of production and profit impacts human animals as well, they argue. Low-paid human workers are exploited in slaughterhouses, where unyielding pressure for rapid and efficient killing creates some of the most dangerous workspaces on the planet; the high rates of impairment from workplace injury reveal the devaluing of human life, in addition to more-than-human animals, in the intense workplace violence of the abattoir. Finally, their analysis of disability policy, particularly in Australia, reveals the erasure of disability as a classification and opportunity for welfare assistance and its replacement with capacity to work and other productivity assessments.

In Chapter 3, "Zoos, Circuses and Freak Shows: A Cross-Movement Analysis," Sammy Jo Johnson brings critical disability studies' analyses of freak shows into dialogue with critical animal studies' examinations of zoos and circuses, challenging academics in both fields to critically reimagine and expand notions of agency. Arguing that these three "institutions of display"—the zoo, circus, and freak show—must be understood as interconnected, Johnson puts two previously distinct scholarly conversations together. Resulting from this lack of dialogue is a common narrative of non-agency, in which exhibited animals and non-human animals alike are viewed as lacking the capacity to express themselves or influence their lives. Both critical animal studies and critical disability studies, Johnson argues, criticize institutions of display as oppressive and violent mechanisms for enforcing speciesism and ableism, respectively, while also identifying counter-narratives enabling an account of exhibition beyond victimhood. Significantly, this cross-movement analysis reveals limitations on how agency is understood in both fields: critical animal studies equates agency with physical resistance, while critical disability studies defines it as rational decision-making. When agency is defined in these terms, performers who are intellectually disabled or were forced into freak shows through processes of colonization are only represented as victims in existing literature. Examining the ways zoos and circuses freak animals and freak shows animalized disabled humans is necessary, contends Johnson, for developing more nuanced accounts of agency.

In Chapter 4, "Disability and the Ahuman: A Story About Dogs, Ducks, and Women," Agnes Trzak shares her experience of caring for two disabled animals, a dog and a duck, and analyzes her caretaking through Schüssler Fiorenza's notion of kyriarchy as well as Luce Irigaray's account of specularization. Both the dog and the duck were dependent on Trzak for their health and well-being; they could not autonomously care for themselves. Due to a stroke, the dog had limited mobility and could not fulfill the expected canine role of an entertaining and loyal companion, resulting in criticism that Trzak was keeping her alive without purpose. Injured in a predator attack while living in Trzak's backyard, the duck was quarantined and cared for in Trzak's bathroom. Reflecting on the power she exercised over both animals and how her relationships with them were read as symptoms of madness, Trzak struggled with numerous ethical questions throughout these experiences: How can she, as a human, recognize and respond to the needs of animals who live and communicate in more-than-human ways? How can she know what is best for them when ableist and speciesist norms inextricably impact her assessment of the dog, duck, and her role as their caretaker? Could they consent to treatment, or was she using their disabilities as a means to give purpose to her own life? These inquiries lead her to propose that we need to explore new ways of relating to and communicating with domesticated, non-human animals. Even further, she argues that we must become what she calls "ahuman" to dismantle the oppressive power relationships of the human. She concludes by imagining an ahuman future in which humans renounce and abandon their control over other animals, creating the possibility of interspecies coexistence in direct, attentive, and empowering ways.

As the first four chapters in this volume establish, speciesism and ableism intersect. For this reason, as Sunaura Taylor has argued, the paths to animal liberation and disability liberation intersect as well. It is thus an unfortunate fact that, to date, speciesism has often characterized disability movements as much as ableism has saturated animal rights discourses and animal ethics. While some disability activists have rallied in favor of biomedical research using animal test subjects, and philosophers of disability such as Eva Feder Kittay have expressed outrage over comparisons between cognitively disabled humans and non-disabled animals,[2] animal ethicists such as Peter Singer and Jeff McMahan have regularly devalued the lives of disabled people and dismissed the experiences of disabled people regarding the value of their own lives.[3] In recent years and more productively, however, animal ethicists and political theorists such as Sue Donaldson, Will Kymlicka, Sunaura Taylor, and Kelly Oliver have borrowed from critical disability studies scholarship to argue that the dependency and vulnerability of domesticated animals should not be a reason to devalue their lives; indeed, far from removing a human or another animal from the realm of moral concern, (inter) dependency and vulnerability are the animal—and thus human—condition.[4]

As this scholarship demonstrates, anti-ableist approaches to animal ethics and multispecies political theory are possible and imperative, as are anti-speciesist interventions in disability studies. Part II of this book, “Thinking Animality and Disability Together in Political and Moral Theory,” consists of three chapters by moral and political theorists that respond to this theoretical need. In Chapter 5, “Against Performance Criteria,” co-editor Stephanie Jenkins argues that critical disability studies and critical animal studies share the common objective of challenging normative conceptions of the human circulating in ethical discourse. Moral theory assumes a performance-driven understanding of moral status that is produced through the interaction between speciesism and ableism. As a result, the neurotypical adult human functions as the prototype for moral subjectivity and associated capacities, such as rational thought and speech, serve as preconditions for inclusion in the moral community. Jenkins identifies, outlines, and rejects two common accounts of moral status—the Capacities Criterion and the Species Affinity Approaches—in ethical philosophy, while simultaneously unpacking the ways both critical disability studies and critical animal studies scholars rely on these models. Arguing that the Species Affinity Approach is the Capacities Criterion Approach in disguise, Jenkins concludes her chapter with a call to abandon the speciesist, ableist aspiration for an absolutist account of moral considerability. Instead, she suggests a Precautionary Principle of Moral Status that practices epistemic humility and reverses the evidentiary standards for moral status.

In Chapter 6, “Service Dogs: Between Animal Studies and Disability Studies,” Kelly Oliver explores tension between the fields of animal studies and disability studies around membership in the moral community. Animal studies scholars, like Peter Singer, tend to emphasize the importance of intelligence and functionality, Oliver observes, while disability studies scholars, such as Eva Feder Kittay, ground moral responsibility in interdependence and vulnerability. Oliver examines service dogs as a case study at the intersection of both fields, arguing that they reveal problematic assumptions in animal studies and disability studies alike. Specifically, Oliver wishes to avoid reducing service dogs to functional equipment and property like wheelchairs or other assistive devices. To this end, she agrees with Kittay that our shared dependence on other beings generates ethical obligations for recognition and care but also criticizes Kittay's limited application of her feminist ethics to humans only. Rejecting what she calls the disavowal of human dependence on more-than-human animals, Oliver notes that humans are just as dependent on non-human animals as we are on our own species. Relying on the works of Julia Kristeva and Cynthia Willett, Oliver concludes by advocating for an interspecies ethics based on interdependence, proximity, and companionship. This expanded ethics of interdependence complicates the legal "function" of service dogs and makes explicit the important emotional labor and companionship they provide beyond trained tasks.

In the final chapter of Part II, Chapter 7: "Veganism as Universal Design: Accommodation and Inclusion in Social Justice Praxis and Law," co-editors Chloë Taylor and Kelly Struthers Montford argue that veganism could be considered a crip identity and should be the standard for universal design in institutional settings. As evidence of these claims, the authors argue that in contemporary Western society, veganism and disability are historically, socially, and politically connected as abnormal identities that have been stigmatized and medicalized; vegans and disabled people are targets of techniques of marginalization, oppression, and exclusion. At best, the authors note, vegans and disabled people are tolerated through accommodations. Vegans may be provided a "special" meal at dining events; a disabled student may be able to negotiate extended time on an exam with required medical documentation. Yet, in a society built for and organized around species-typical humans and carnist eating practices, being disabled or vegan means living as an ongoing disruption and inconvenience to others; one must continually ask for exceptions to the expected ways of living, doing, and eating. Combining research in critical animal studies and critical disability studies, the authors explore what political, social, and legal strategies vegan activism can gain from disability activism. After analyzing accommodation legislation and campus dining as case studies, the authors conclude that veganism should be a "default practice of inclusion" because it keeps the planet accessible to all life. Informed by disability politics, veganism as universal design focuses on structural and institutional transformation and accessibility rather than individual consumption and alimentary retrofitting.

Neurodiversity is a significant topic in critical animal studies since more-than-human animals, like neurodiverse humans, are frequently oppressed because of their cognitive differences from normate humans. Part III of this book thus brings together three chapters on "Neurodiversity and Critical Animal Studies." A figure who looms large at the intersection of neurodiversity studies and animal studies is Temple Grandin. At a public level, Grandin is one of the most widely recognized spokespeople for autism, with a popular memoir[5] and Golden Globe-winning

HBO biopic,[6] and frequent speaking engagements. Grandin is also a designer of slaughterhouses for industrially farmed animals, and she attributes her success in this career in part to her autism. Making numerous factually and politically problematic claims about autism, Grandin asserts that her neurodiversity enables her to think like more-than-human animals, which purported insight, chillingly, she uses to design more expedient ways to kill them. Grandin describes the slaughterhouses she has designed as superior because they result in less fear and struggle on the parts of the animals, which enables more efficient slaughter, increased profits for the animal agriculture industry, and better-tasting meat for consumers. Because of the supposedly decreased fear on the part of animals in Grandin's slaughterhouses, she is widely understood as an animal welfarist, while, because of her professional success, Grandin is taken as a role model for autistic children. From a critical animal studies perspective, however, thinking and caring for animals is antithetical to designing slaughterhouses, while from a critical disability studies perspective, comparing autistic children to animals whose deaths one is engineering should give pause. The first two chapters in Part III of this book thus provide much needed critiques of Grandin's work from anti-speciesist and anti-ableist perspectives.

In Chapter 8, "Lost in Translation: Temple Grandin, Autism, and the Myth of Consent," Vasile Stănescu and Debs Stănescu offer a close reading of Grandin's writings about autism and animals and, in particular, her assertion that as an autistic person she is uniquely positioned to think like animals. As a result of her purported ability to translate the desires and needs of non-human animals, Grandin works as a highly visible and sought-after consultant for factory farms, instructing the industry on how to kill animals "humanely." Not only is there no evidence for Grandin's claim that autistic people are closer to more-than-human animals than neurotypicals, Stănescu and Stănescu argue, but this comparison also enacts a double violence and silencing of both animals and other autistic people by claiming to speak for them. As the leading spokesperson for the factory farm industry, Grandin is culturally significant because her self-proclaimed ability to translate for animals and approval of slaughterhouse practices manufactures the appearance that farmed animals consent to their living conditions, treatment, and death. As the authors note, "myth of consent" is a theme shared by all advocates of "humane" farming. Yet, Grandin is unique in her claim that she alone can directly translate animal experience into human language. Relying on the stereotype of the supercrip, Grandin's supposedly "magical connection" to animals dangerously exoticizes both non-human animals and autistic people. Using textual evidence from Grandin's own writings, the authors demonstrate that factory farms are not—and cannot be reformed to be—humane sources of meat production.

In Chapter 9, "Disrupting Temple Grandin: Resisting a 'Humane' Face for Autistic and Animal Oppression," Vittoria Lion challenges the uncritical acceptance of Temple Grandin as a spokesperson for autistic people and non-human animals. Rather than disrupting ableism or speciesism, Grandin's acceptance of the medical model of disability and justification for the consumption of animal products conceal capitalist violence against non-normative bodies and minds, both human and non-human. As Lion explains, Grandin's work upholds what Barbara Noske calls the "animal-industrial complex" and what Anne McGuire terms the "autism industrial complex." In other words, Grandin's support for factory farms and biomedical treatments to "cure" autistic people transforms both meat and autism into commodities that silence the suffering of non-human animals and autists. Writing as someone "assigned the label of 'autism,'" Lion rejects the ubiquity of Grandin as role model for autistic youth and champion for animal and autism advocacy groups. Lion concludes her chapter by describing her own experience disrupting a lecture that Grandin delivered at the University of Guelph in 2015. Responding to criticisms of direct action, Lion remarks on the embodied significance of protesting through non-normative behavior, movements, and noises that autistic people are disciplined to repress. Lion's chapter concludes with a reproduction of a painting by the artist, *The Stuff of Heaven*, which provokes further reflection on some of the themes of the chapter.

The final chapter in this section on neurodiversity, Chapter 10, is Hallie Abelman's "Cripping Mad Cow Disease." In this chapter, Abelman analyzes the historical phenomenon of "mad cow disease," or bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), including the incineration of several million cattle in the UK, through a mad studies lens. Combatting the speciesist accounts of the epidemic that focus on the risks to human health and economic impacts of the disease, Abelman returns our attention to the deaths of cattle and argues that the mad cow diagnosis made them vulnerable to sanist violence similar to the treatment of humans labeled as mad, making incarceration a multispecies concern. Abelman explores how BSE induced neurodivergent symptoms in cattle that disrupted their existence as commodities. Terming these acts a "refusal to cow," Ableman concludes by considering how these acts of resistance open possibilities for Mad, decolonial, and anti-speciesist activism and scholarship.

By exploring the discourses and practices surrounding so-called mad cow disease, Abelman's chapter brings mad studies into conversation with critical animal studies. This topic is taken further in the final section of the book, with an emphasis on literature. Part IV, "Melancholy, Madness, and Misfits," consists of three readings of literary works that explore the intertwined themes of animals, madness, and disability. Like and alongside the disability rights movement, anti-psychiatry and mad pride activists have resisted the biomedical assignment of impairment, medical and social pronouncements of inferiority, and responses to disability and madness that individualize, pathologize, and segregate those who are assigned diagnoses. Disability rights activists, anti-psychiatry activists, and mad pride activists make closely related arguments for increased patient autonomy in medical treatment plans, encapsulated in the disability rights slogans "Nothing About Us Without Us" and "No Forced Treatment Ever." The term "mad" is embraced by the anti-psychiatry and mad pride movements because, unlike "mental illness," it is a non-medical term with a history of positive connotations. "Mad" moreover has fewer pre-existing connotations in the North American context than "mental illness" and, thus, like "crip" and "queer," is broad in scope and has a potential to be liberatory. Mad movements are of particular interest to critical animal studies perspectives on disability since animal advocates and vegans have so consistently been pathologized as mentally ill. The final three chapters of this book thus explore the confluences of animal advocacy, animalization, madness, and disability through close readings of literary works and memoir.

In Chapter 11, "Vegan Madness: Han Kang's *The Vegetarian*," Chloë Taylor revisits the literary theme of the mad vegetarian woman, most recently incarnated in Han Kang's protagonist, Yeong-hye. In Kang's novel, Yeong-hye's flouting of carnist dietary norms coincides with her rejection of the social restrictions of femininity and marriage. The familial and medical responses that ensue from Yeong-hye's combined violations of gender, sexual, and alimentary norms lead to her subjection to gendered violence, her institutionalization in a psychiatric hospital, and, ultimately, her death. In this chapter Taylor argues that Han Kang's novel raises the question of whether it is familial, marital, and social oppression as well as psychiatrization itself that led to Yeong-hye's demise, which is constructed as madness. Had Yeong-hye been left free to live the life she wanted, it seems possible that her story would not have ended in madness, violence, and premature death. Against the impulse to critique Kang's abnormalizing description of veganism as mad, however, Taylor proposes a queer, crip, anti-normative, and mad studies reading of the novel.

Nobel Prize in Literature- and Man Booker Prize-winning author J.M. Coetzee has been the focus of a considerable body of commentary by animal ethicists and critical animal studies scholars, particularly for his novels *Elizabeth Costello* and *Disgrace*. While *Disgrace* is a gripping but arguably deeply problematic exploration of the interlocking of racism, sexism, and speciesism in post-apartheid South Africa, the autobiographical figure of Elizabeth Costello offers a powerful portrait of the pathologized animal advocate and her insights into speciesism. With the edited collection, *After Coetzee: An Anthology of Animal Fictions*, A. Marie Houser responded to what she saw as Costello's call for an anti-anthropocentric literature.[7] In Chapter 12, " 'There, there': Disability, Animality, and the Allegory of Elizabeth Costello," Houser provides a new reflection on Coetzee's work, adding a disability perspective that has been absent in most considerations of his writings to date. Houser contends that Costello is a crip character whose disabled embodiment elucidates her lectures and their rhetoric. Engaging a body of philosophical literature that pathologizes Costello, Houser demonstrates the ways Costello is misread. The novel anticipates misreadings of Costello, Houser argues, and uses them to allegorize misrepresentations of animals. As Houser concludes, allegorization allows the novel to represent these issues yet avoid a repetition of anthropocentrism.

Chapter 13, Chloë Taylor's "Of Gimps, Gastropods, and Grief: Feminist New Materialist Reflections on Elizabeth Tova Bailey's *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating*," completes the volume. In this chapter, Taylor combines two feminist new materialist approaches to disability—Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's "Misfits" and Elizabeth Wilson's "Gut Feminism"—to conduct a close reading of an illness memoir that doubles as a thank-you letter to a snail. Reading *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating* through Garland-Thomson's theory of misfitting, this chapter analyzes Bailey and her companion snail as misfits in their new worlds. Combining Wilson's "Gut Feminism" with the disability studies' concept of "crip time," Taylor then weaves her own experience with depression into her analysis of Bailey's memoir, emphasizing the role of grief. She concludes by urging critical disability studies and critical animal studies theorists to engage with biology with the same rigor and curiosity that Bailey exhibits for snails.

Notes

1 Sunaura Taylor, *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation* (New York: The New Press, 2017).
2 Eva Kittay, "On the Margins of Moral Personhood," *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry* 5 (March 2008); Eva Kittay, "The Personal Is Philosophical Is Political: A Philosopher and Mother of a Cognitively Disabled Person Sends Notes from the Battlefield," *Metaphilosophy* 40, no. 3–4 (2009).
3 Peter Singer, "Speciesism and Moral Status," *Metaphilosophy* 40, no. 3–4 (2009); Jeff McMahan, *The Ethics of Killing: Problems at the Margins of Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
4 Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Taylor, *Beasts of Burden*.
5 Temple Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures: My Life with Autism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995). Expanded edition published in 2006.
6 Mic Jackson, *Temple Grandin*. HBO Films, 2010.
7 A. Marie Houser, *After Coetzee: An Anthology of Animal Fictions* (Minneapolis: Faunary Press, 2017).

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Part I

Intersections of ableism and speciesism

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Chapter 1

Animal crips

Sunaura Taylor

A few years ago I found a story about a fox with arthrogryposis, which is the disability I was born with. According to the Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre, a wildlife conservation and management organization, the fox was shot by a resident of the area because "it had an abnormal gait and appeared sick." The animal, whose disabilities were quite significant, had normal muscle mass, and his stomach contained a large amount of digested food, which suggested to researchers that "the limb deformity did not preclude successful hunting and foraging."[1]

The resident seems to have shot the animal out of pity (a sort of mercy killing) and fear (perhaps assuming the fox was sick with a contagious disease). People shoot normal foxes too, of course, but for less purportedly altruistic reasons. However, this fox actually seemed to be doing very well. Did the resident assume the fox's quality of life was unacceptable? Did the person view the animal's disabilities as dangerous or as a fate worse than death? The concept of a mercy killing carries within it two of the most prominent responses to disability: destruction and pity. The fox was clearly affected by human ableism, shot dead by someone who equated disability only with suffering and fear of contagion.

The assumptions and prejudices we hold about disabled bodies run deep—so deep that we project this human ableism onto non-human animals. They are subjected to some of our most familiar ableist narratives. For instance, the "better off dead" narrative, which led to the shooting of the fox, is a common thread in discussions of pet euthanasia and animal farming. There is also the inspirational disabled animal who overcomes great odds, which is perhaps a more surprising narrative but one that seems to be gaining in popularity. Consider for example the 2011 movie *Dolphin Tale*, a true story of a dolphin who loses her tail and learns to swim with a prosthesis, or the animated fantasy film *How to Train Your Dragon*, which has a similar story line involving a dragon who gets a prosthetic tail. Then there are stories like that of Faith, a dog who was born with only her two hind legs and who has learned to walk bipedally. Faith has appeared on many television shows, including *Oprah*, and become an inspiration for viewers. "Cute" and "inspiring" disabled animal stories seem to be all the rage on social media these days, and various memes and websites tell the stories of disabled animals who "triumph" and "overcome" obstacles. Television shows are also beginning to catch on to this burgeoning market: a *Nature* episode titled “My Bionic Pet” aired on PBS in spring 2014, exploring animal prosthetics. Their promo declares, “Sometimes miracles do happen.”[2]

Clearly we project ableism onto non-human animals; do we also project the notion of *disability* itself? If the category of disability is a social construction, then what does it mean to say an animal is disabled? We have no idea how other animals comprehend physical or cognitive difference. Does a dog perceive that something is different about another dog if she has three legs? Can a monkey tell that she is different if she limps? Can animals know to help other disabled animals? Can animals recognize disability across species? The animal world is filled with such an incredible and seemingly infinite variety of difference that trying to assess the difference disability makes almost seems futile. And yet a lot of fascinating evidence suggests that some animals can and do recognize something akin to disability.[3] Primatologist Frans de Waal tells the story of Yeroen, the oldest adult male chimpanzee in the Arnhem chimpanzee colony. Yeroen hurt his hand in a fight with a young rival. De Waal writes that Yeroen “limped for a week, even though his wound seemed superficial.” The scientists soon discovered that Yeroen was only limping if he could be seen by his rival. Did Yeroen think that faking a limp would make his attacker more sympathetic to him? Or does that interpretation too quickly read Yeroen’s actions through human assumptions about disability and the sort of response it should engender?

The meanings of the word “disability” are uniquely human, created and contextualized by human cultures over centuries. Despite this, I have chosen to use it here when discussing differences among non-human animals. I am drawn to the breadth of meaning the word has within disability movements, and I’m interested in what happens when we consider how disability as lived experience and as ideology impacts non-human animals. How do non-human animals relate to physical and cognitive difference themselves? How do human understandings of disability affect the ways we interpret what animals are experiencing?

That animal disability both inspires and horrifies people is clearly evident in discussions surrounding Internet sensation Chris P. Bacon. Chris is a pig who was born in January 2013 with very small hind legs that he cannot walk on. He “set the Internet on fire” when a video of him using a homemade wheelchair went viral. The tiny piglet, who was rescued by a veterinarian after a woman brought him in to be euthanized, has now gone through multiple wheelchairs and weighs more than seventy pounds.[4]

Many commenters on articles about Chris want him euthanized, saying it’s cruel to “make him live like that.” Others find him so heroic that he is invited to attend muscular dystrophy events for children. Chris is raising awareness—not about the plight of pigs, but about disability. After all, no matter how much Americans on the Internet love this pig, his name constantly reminds us what people think he really amounts to: bacon.

A telling example of the impulse to project human stereotypes of disability onto other animals can be found in the story of Mozu, a snow monkey (a Japanese macaque) who was born in Japan's central highlands. Mozu was born with abnormalities of her hands and feet thought to have resulted from pesticide pollution. Snow monkeys spend much of their time moving through trees, which allows them to avoid wading through the thick snow that covers the ground in the winter months. Mozu's disabilities meant she was mostly unable to move through the branches; instead she traveled the nearly two miles that her troop covered every day in search of food by alternately walking on her abnormal limbs and crawling and sliding on the forest floor. When Mozu was born, researchers who had been watching this troop feared she would not make it past infancy. To their surprise, Mozu lived for nearly three decades, rearing five children of her own and becoming a prominent troop member.

In an episode of the program *Nature* featuring Mozu's story, she is again and again referred to as "inspiring," "suffering," and a "very special monkey."[5] The dramatic music and voice-overs that describe Mozu's struggle in vivid detail make it nearly impossible to watch her move across the snowy forest floor, a baby clinging to her belly and other monkeys flying by above her, without thinking, "Poor Mozu!"

At the same time, I am aware that the piece was edited to elicit this reaction. There are few shots in which Mozu is not struggling, and I question the effect the videographers had on her and the troop. In one scene her desperation seems to stem from being chased by the cameraperson. The music and voice-overs of course also add a sense of struggle to Mozu's story.

Yet I have no doubt that life was hard for Mozu, and I find myself desperate to know what she thought of her situation. Was her instinct to reach for the trees unquenchable? Was she always in pain, exhausted, or fearful as she moved slowly across the forest floor? Did she wonder why she was different from her companions? I cannot help but wonder, although I realize how similar these thoughts are to the tiresome questions I have been asked again and again about my own life, my own disability. My desire for Mozu's life not to be seen as one of suffering and struggle is also a projection, one that wishes disability empowerment onto my fellow primate. Our human perspective shapes how we interpret Mozu's experience.

Many of our ideas about animals are formed by our assumption that only the "fittest" animals survive, which negates the value and even the naturalness of such experiences as vulnerability, weakness, and interdependence. When disabilities occur, we assume that "nature will run her course," that the natural process for a disabled animal is to die, rendering living disabled animals not only aberrant but unnatural.

How true is this? Mozu lived for 28 years, raising children and grandchildren. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, author of the bestselling book *When Elephants Weep: The Emotional Lives of Animals*, writes that "it is something of a cliché among animal behaviorists that wild animals do not tolerate disabilities, and that animals who are unfortunate enough to be born with a deformity or fall ill rarely last very long. I am dubious."[6] Recent research offers numerous examples of disabled animals surviving and sometimes thriving, as well as evidence that animals can recognize when another animal is different and needs support. There are countless stories of primates, elephants, dogs, pigs, whales, ducks, geese, and chickens helping their disabled companions. It is known, for example, that male silverback gorillas will slow down their troop so that elderly, ill, and disabled members can keep up. Other species, such as elephants and wolves, have been shown to do the same. What do we make of animals such as Babyl, an elephant who lived in the Samburu Reserve in northern Kenya? Ethologist Marc Bekoff writes that Babyl was "crippled" and "couldn't travel as fast as the rest of the herd" and describes how the other elephants in Babyl's group would wait for her instead of leaving her behind. The elephant expert Iain Douglas-Hamilton told Bekoff that the elephants had been doing this for years; that they "always waited for Babyl. . . . They would walk for a while, then stop and look around to see where Babyl was. Depending on how she was doing, they'd either wait or proceed."[7] The matriarch would even feed Babyl on occasion. Bekoff asks why the other elephants in Babyl's herd would act this way since there was no practical reason to do so: "Babyl could do little for them." The only conclusion Bekoff and his companions could draw was that the other elephants cared about Babyl. As important (and radical) as it is to suggest that animals who are not directly related can care for each other in such a way, from a critical disability perspective it is also important to keep open the possibility that Babyl did offer something useful to the troop—something that may be hard for us to recognize if we understand disability only as a drawback or limitation.

Such examples of disability survival, adaptation, and care in the animal world are not limited to elephants and apes or even mammals. Consider Baks, a large boxer who was blinded in an accident. Unprompted by humans, a four-year-old goose named Buttons began leading the dog around. Buttons became a veritable guide-goose, hanging on to the dog with her neck or directing his movements by honking at him.[8] Examples such as this are indeed the kind of sweet stories of companionship popular on the Internet, but they also raise critical questions about empathy, vulnerability, interdependence, adaptation, and animal experience.

De Waal suggests that animals go through a process of what is called *learned adjustment*: "Healthy members do not necessarily know what is wrong, but gradually become familiar with the limitations of their less fortunate mates."[9] In other words, an animal may learn to recognize *over time* that the way another animal is moving or acting makes her more vulnerable to danger, supporting and protecting her, or treating her with less aggression because she is not seen as a threat. De Waal contrasts this to another response considered to be more complex, cognitive empathy, the ability "to picture oneself in the position of another individual." Cognitive empathy allows us humans to understand what sorts of limitations another being has simply by seeing them, as we are immediately able to imagine ourselves into their situation.[10] Research into animal empathy is still young, but it seems likely that humans are not the only species capable of cognitive empathy, as numerous animals, including wolves, apes, and elephants, have been shown to have the capacity for empathetic response.

A reaction to learned adjustment could go in multiple directions—if animals learn that another animal is vulnerable they might take advantage of her, abandon her, help her, or accept her and learn to accommodate her. The concept of learned adjustment, however, and the distinction between it and cognitive empathy leave important questions unanswered. De Waal writes, "Special treatment of the handicapped is probably best regarded as a combination of learned adjustment and strong attachment; it is the attachment that steers the adjustment in a positive, caring direction."[11] What is this attachment, then? Is it friendship or love? Is it empathy? De Waal acknowledges the concept's limitations—for example, it does little to explain the care and protection an animal can have for an injured or disabled animal they have had no time to adjust to, as when a troop member suddenly becomes injured.[12]

To unpack these terms further it might be helpful to look at an example de Waal gives. He asks us to picture a human being who has lost his arms in an accident:

> Just from seeing his condition, or hearing about it, we will grasp the reduction in physical ability he has undergone. We can imagine what it is like to have no arms, and our capacity for empathy allows us to extrapolate this knowledge to the other's situation.

He goes on to say, "Our friend's dog, by contrast, will need time to learn that there is no point in bringing her master a stick to fetch, or that the familiar pat on the back is being replaced by a foot rub."[13] Again, because it involves being able to imagine oneself into the life of the other, cognitive empathy is deemed more complex than learned adjustment.

A critical disability analysis, however, exposes something troubling about the distinction between learned adjustment and cognitive empathy. In the scenario de Waal offers, he describes cognitive empathy as "grasping" what a body with no arms won't be able to do; we human beings are immediately able to imagine what is lacking for a person with no arms. But this imagining may not be accurate, and more important, it is only possible with disabilities and injuries with which we ourselves are familiar—ones that are diagnosable and recognizable within our culture. If we encounter someone with a disability or illness we have never heard of and know nothing about, our interaction with them would arguably be one of learned adjustment. Thus de Waal's description of cognitive empathy naturalizes disability as a predictable diagnosable fact as opposed to something that is inextricably situated in our own cultures and histories. In contrast, he frames learned adjustment as a process of learning how another being moves and acts without prior assumptions or stereotypes. The limits of these definitions and distinctions are evident in de Waal's assumption that someone with no arms won't be able to play fetch with his dog. The dog may learn that fetch can still be played, as her human companion may use his mouth or feet to throw the stick. Which being—the dog or the presumptuous human observer—understands disability more accurately?

De Waal's framing shows how easy it is to assume an animal's behavior is less complex than a human's behavior. It also exposes how human assumptions about disability invariably shape the way animal behaviorists interpret it.

What stands out for me most, though, in the conversation about animal disability is how little it is discussed by those who study animal behavior. Perhaps this should come as no surprise, given that disability is often neglected as a legitimate area of study. What work does exist often focuses on the effect the disabled animals have on the able-bodied animal population of which they are a part rather than the insights into animal behavior offered by disabled animals themselves. We should be wary of this human tendency toward ableism, which assumes that it is the nondisabled population's response to disability that is most worthy of critical examination. Disabled animals are repeatedly presented as offering nothing back to their communities, but is this true, or are scientists neglecting to watch for more nuanced behavior because of their preconceived views on disability? We should also bear in mind that as tempting as it is to see disability engendering either compassion or neglect in other animals, these narratives also rehearse reactions common to disability in many human cultures. In these narratives disabled people are perceived either as inspiring compassion in able-bodied populations or as burdening communities and triggering animosity. This does not mean these narratives are always untrue, only that we should be careful not to simply read human stereotypes of disability onto other species. Disabled animals raise important questions about adaptation, creativity, and self-reflection. If scientists of animal behavior would look to disabled animals with an open mind—watching for more than what ableism teaches us to expect—than we quite possibly would find that disability plays a far more complex role in animal lives than has previously been thought.

Thus far we have thought mainly about wild animals, but what of those who are domesticated? What does disability mean to the domesticated animals we breed and profit from? As I learned from the chicken truck photographs I spent so many hours with, disability is ubiquitous among animals used in food production.

Industrially farmed animals live in such cramped, filthy, and unnatural conditions that disabilities become common, even inevitable.[14] They are often crammed into cages with cement, wire, or metal-grated floors, covered in their own feces and kept in virtually nonstop darkness. But the disabilities that arise from these toxic environments are often secondary to the ones they are made to have from birth. Farmed animals are bred to physical extremes: udders produce too much milk for a cow's body to hold, turkeys and chickens cannot bear the weight of their own giant breasts, and pigs' legs are too weak to support them. Chickens, turkeys, and ducks are also physically harmed by processes such as debeaking—done without anesthetic—which can leave them prone to serious infection and make it difficult for the birds to eat or preen themselves.[15] And then there are the bruises, abscesses, sores, broken bones, vaginal and reproductive disorders, chronic illnesses, and psychological issues that farmed animals are commonly reported to endure.

Masson reports that “nearly a quarter of all commercially reared birds are lame and experience excruciating chronic pain.”[16] To satisfy the increasing demand for cheap meat and eggs, chickens have been bred to grow twice as fast as they usually would, leaving them with bones and joints that cannot bear the weight of their massive forms. A battery hen, whose sole role is to lay eggs, produces around 250 eggs a year, far more than the 60 or so her body is meant to handle.[17] The constant egg production combined with her complete inability to exercise make her prone to osteoporosis and broken bones. Scientists who expose such situations have been accused of being anthropomorphic.[18] The use of the word *anthropomorphic* is telling, as if acknowledging that humans aren’t the only creatures who experience physical difference and illness brings animals too close for comfort. If humans can share this sort of vulnerability with non-human animals, what else might we share?

It is not only chickens who experience disabilities and illness on industrialized farms. At least 60 percent of dairy cows experience lameness, and 35 percent experience udder mastitis, a potentially fatal inflammation of the udder tissue.[19] Cows used for milk production are kept either continuously pregnant or milking, their calves taken away within hours or days of birth. They are bred to produce far more milk than their calves would need. As the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) reports,

> On average, a U.S. dairy cow produced 9,193 kg (20,267 lb) of milk in 2007, more than double the per-cow milk yield in 1967 and 47% more than the per-cow milk yield in 1987. . . . Even though the number of cows in the dairy industry declined from 1987 to 2007, the total production of milk increased by 30%.[20]

As with battery hens, this overproduction leaves cows susceptible to limping, weak limbs, and broken bones, as they must walk with an unusual gait to carry such large and heavy udders.[21]

Pigs are prone to disabling conditions as well. Most upsetting to the pork industry is porcine stress syndrome, which costs the industry an estimated $90 million a year.[22] The condition is genetic, resulting from half a century of selective breeding for large and lean muscles. The condition makes pigs susceptible to heart attacks if they are stressed, which is inevitable on industrialized pig farms. All of the pigs live in cramped and filthy conditions, but it is the female animals who are the worst off. They are kept continually pregnant or nursing in cages so small that they often cannot even sit up and are forced to lie on their side until the next breeding cycle begins.

Pigs also experience disabling leg conditions because of a lack of physical exercise and the unusual weight they are bred to carry. They are prone to a wide variety of disabilities and diseases, including severe arthritis that affects their ability to walk. A slaughterhouse in Sioux City, Iowa, John Morrell & Company (which closed in 2010) had the capacity to slaughter 75,000 hogs a week, or one pig every four seconds. This is how one employee described it: “The preferred method of handling a cripple at Morrell’s is to beat him to death with a lead pipe before he gets into the chute. It’s called ‘piping.’”[23] Another said,

> If a hog can’t walk, they scoop the son of a bitch up on a dead run with a Bobcat [small tractor]. Whupp! Right up in the air. If he stays in the bucket, he stays in. If he falls out, you run him over or pin him against the wall, finish busting the rest of his legs so he can’t run any further.[24]

Comparing this reality to the general enthusiasm over Internet sensation Chris P. Bacon, it becomes apparent just how conflicted human beings are about how we should treat and feel about animals.

One need not look past the daily newspapers to realize the impact of industrial farming on animal health. Outbreaks of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (mad cow disease), foot and mouth disease, swine flu, avian flu, and other diseases of industrially farmed animals have led to countless headlines over the past few years. In the spring of 2015, the worst outbreak of avian flu ever to hit the United States spread across a dozen states and, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, led to the death of more than 48 million birds. These birds did not die of the flu. If avian flu infects even one bird, the whole flock is killed. And these are not flocks of a few dozen animals. *The Guardian* reports that in Iowa, the worst hit state, an egg farm holds anywhere from 70,000 to 5 million chickens. In such a scenario, “infection means slaughtering an unimaginable number of animals.” If the affected birds are egg-laying hens, they are “euthanized” with carbon dioxide gas. Because carbon dioxide isn’t effective in the enclosures that house broiler chickens and turkeys, they are suffocated to death with water-based foam, a process that can take three to seven minutes.[25]

In 2001, a highly publicized outbreak of foot and mouth disease—a virus that is not lethal to humans or animals—swept through the United Kingdom. Pyres of burning cattle carcasses could be seen across the English countryside and all over the international media. The fires were to dispose of the bodies of more than 10 million adult and baby cows, pigs, and sheep who were shot, burned, and then bulldozed into mass graves.[26] Reports described terrified animals running over each other in an attempt to escape their executioners. Millions of these animals did not have foot and mouth disease, which is preventable and can be easily treated with veterinary care. They were killed because trade policies required it.[27]

All of these animals—the 10 million cows, pigs, and sheep and the 48 million chickens and turkeys—were destined for early and traumatic deaths regardless of these culling campaigns. What was shocking about such mass killings was the way they openly and publicly displayed the complete lack of worth these animals are deemed to have. No longer having any market value, they were viewed not only as killable but as discardable.

Industrial animal farms are widely acknowledged to be exceptional incubators for increasingly dangerous diseases like avian flu that can be infectious across species (including humans).[28] When thousands or even millions of immune-compromised animals are forced to live in tight and filthy quarters, viruses and bacteria spread like wildfire and have ample opportunity to adapt, especially with the widespread use of antibiotics in animal feed, which leads to increasingly resistant and virulent strains. Within these conditions any sort of contagious illness or sign of illness becomes a possible disaster with huge implications for profits.

As this discussion shows, any sympathy directed toward farmed animals is secondary to a concern for human needs—and these needs prove to be largely financial. The advice given to animal farmers to protect their animals from disease and disability is nearly always motivated by profit, and these profits and losses can be huge. In Iowa alone the avian flu cost $1.2 billion.[29] We can again find parallels to human situations, for example in public health framings of disability in which disabilities are spoken of in terms of their cost to industry or society. In one instructional video I found on what to do with animals born with disabilities such as congenital blindness, "hermaphroditism," or arthrogryposis (my own disability), there is no mincing of words: the advice is to "destroy" them before they contaminate your gene pool and damage your profits.

Profit has also been a leading reason given for why farmers shouldn't abuse their farmed animals. No one wants to eat damaged or bruised meat, as evidenced by the fact that egglaying hens are used largely in dog food or canned products and dairy cows for cheap hamburger meat, where their unsightly flesh won't be visible. In a bizarre undated pamphlet by Swift & Co.,[30] this is made abundantly clear. The pamphlet, likely from the 1940s or 1950s, is really better described as a comic and is filled with anthropomorphized, Warner Brothers-inspired drawings of smiling animals getting beaten by slaughterhouse employees—slapped, thrown, prodded, and whipped. The first page reads, "Directly or indirectly, every pound of meat lost because of bruises and crippling costs you money."[31] The most fascinating page is the back cover.

A cartoon pig stands on two legs with a pair of crutches and his head wrapped up as if he has a head wound. Next to him stands a cow with a sling around her front leg (which resembles an arm, as she is also standing on two legs). With her uninjured hoof the cow pushes an old-fashioned wheelchair in which sits a young lamb. All three of them stare out at the viewer. No longer smiling, they look distraught and exhausted—but it's hard to imagine it's over the loss of profits.

Nowhere is farmers' focus on profit more clear than in the extensive debate over what to do with "downed animals." Downed (or "nonambulatory") animals are animals who are unable to walk, occasionally due to a serious illness but more often as a result of exhaustion, dehydration, weak and fragile bones, broken bones, complications after giving birth, or simply falling. Because there is a chance downed animals may be seriously ill, posing a risk to humans who consume them, controversy has emerged in recent years over the question of whether or not these animals can be sent to slaughter.

It is in the immediate financial interest of the meat industry to slaughter all animals they raise for food, so extreme and violent measures are often taken to get

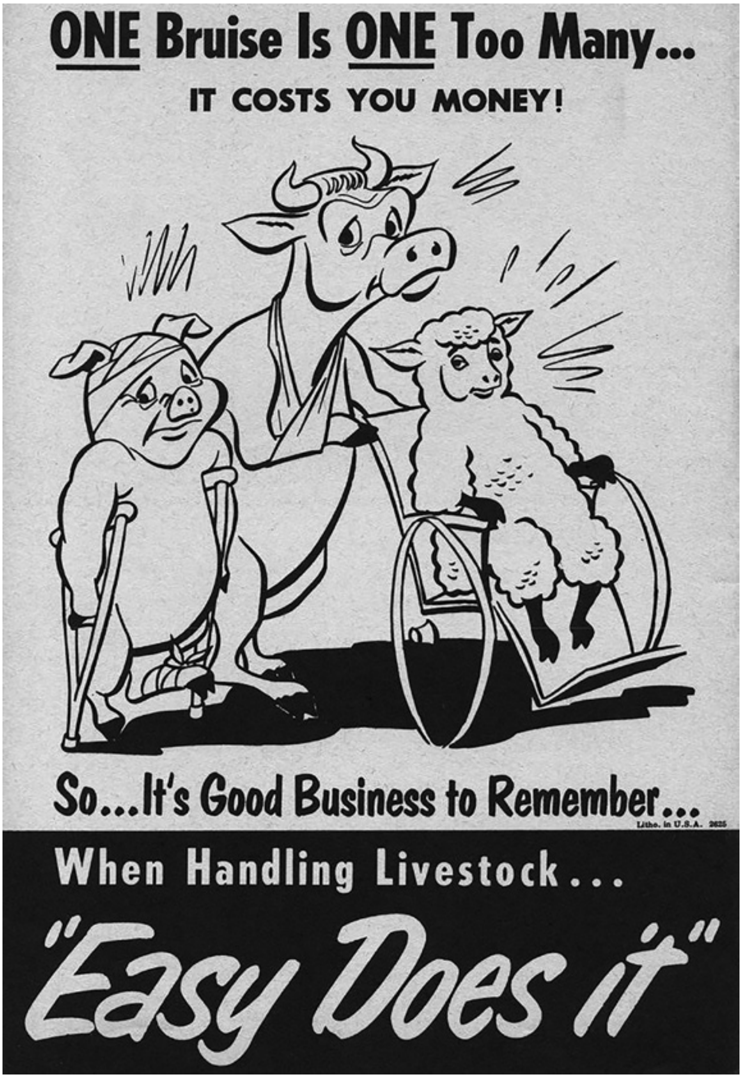
ONE Bruise Is ONE Too Many...
IT COSTS YOU MONEY!
So...It's Good Business to Remember...
Litho. in U.S.A. 2625
When Handling Livestock...
"Easy Does it"

Figure 1.1 The back cover of an undated pamphlet by Swift & Co., a meat processing plant, likely from the 1940s or 1950s. Its purpose was to warn employees to not use excessive force when handling the animals, because "crippling" and "bruising" cost the industry money. The pamphlet is filled with anthropomorphized, Warner Brothers-inspired drawings of animals getting beaten by slaughterhouse employees.

Image Courtesy: Ethan Persoff, www.ep.tc.

downed animals to stand up. Horrific videos by various animal advocacy groups, including HSUS[32] and Mercy for Animals,[33] have shown animals being dragged by a single limb or kicked and beaten in an attempt to make them stand and walk to slaughter. When an animal can't or won't walk, abusive measures are taken to discard of them. For example, another video shows "crippled" pigs being hung to death by chains. Other animals are picked up alive by human beings or by equipment such as bulldozers and thrown in dumpsters, where they are left to die in "dead piles." Often all these animals would need to recover is patience and water. *Vegan Outreach* reports that "the number of downer cattle on U.S. farms or feedlots or sent to slaughter facilities is difficult to ascertain, but estimates approach 500,000 animals per year."[34] Most of these are dairy cows, many of whom have just given birth.

Although the media does often mention the cruelty inflicted on these animals, it is the potential health risks posed to human beings that has driven interest in this issue. In 2009 President Barack Obama banned the slaughter of downed cattle in a large part because there is evidence that downed cows are more likely to carry mad cow disease.[35] Rather than be slaughtered, sick and disabled downed cattle are now supposed to be "humanely" euthanized, with euthanasia defined as a "single blow of a penetrating captive bolt or gunshot" or a "chemical means that immediately renders the animal unconscious with complete unconsciousness remaining until death."[36] But the Animal Welfare Institute reports that there are loopholes to these requirements:

> Young calves "unable to rise from a recumbent position and walk because they are tired or cold" may be held for slaughter. Because slaughter of these animals is permitted, slaughter plants have an incentive to attempt to get downed calves to rise, sometimes employing inhumane methods like kicking and the use of electrical prods.

Currently there are no regulations for the treatment of nonambulatory pigs and sheep, or any animals during transport or at market. The institute notes that the federal ban on the slaughter of nonambulatory adult cattle "was enacted for reasons of food safety, not animal welfare."[37]

The public expresses some pity for these animals, but only at a distance and only if it is clear they will not mix with "normal" and "healthy" cows (who are actually neither healthy nor normal, thanks to the ways the animals are bred and the unhealthy environment wrought by factory farms). In the end they must be euthanized, a mercy killing that, like the shooting of the fox with arthrogryposis, allows human beings to continue to kill animals as we would anyway, upholding beliefs in human superiority over other species while also fulfilling two of the most prominent ableist responses to disability: pitying it and attempting to destroy it.

Disabled and ill animals bring up historical associations of disability with the fear of contamination. The downed, sick—or even potentially sick—animal becomes the symbol of what is unhealthy, dirty, and dangerous about industrialized animal farming. Ableism operates in such cases to create psychological and emotional distance from disability through inciting fear of contagion. Separating out downed animals, like the mass killings of animals exposed to a contagious illness, creates the idea that safety, health, and even compassion are a priority on factory farms, despite the obvious reality that the industry itself is clearly the creator and perpetuator of these problems. Disabled, ill, and otherwise nonambulatory animals are hardly the reason that industrial animal agriculture is dangerous and harmful. Countless investigative reports and studies have exposed just how cruel, toxic, and terrible these industries are, not just for animals but for the environment, workers, and human health overall. This is not to say that the viruses born of factory farms are not a serious public health concern—they are—but rather that the slaughter of millions of animals is not the solution—the solution is to shut down these concentrated animal operations.

It seems impossible to consider the disability that farmed animals experience as separate from their environments. The mother pig is made utterly immobile not by physical difference or disease but by the metal bars of her gestation crate. The hen suffers from pain, but whether that pain is due to a broken leg, overcrowding, complete darkness, or the death of her cagemate is impossible to know. The dairy cow is euthanized not because she cannot walk but because she has become a symbol of contamination. Such animals' environments clearly disable them even more than their physical and psychological disabilities do—a fact that supports the social model of disability.

Trying to pinpoint disability and disease in these environments is no less challenging than trying to ascertain what does and does not qualify as disability among human beings. What does it mean to speak of a "healthy" or "normal" chicken, pig, or cow when they all live in environments that are profoundly disabling? Indeed, when they are all bred to be disabled? The Belgian Blue is a breed of beef cattle bred for "double muscling" for more and leaner meat. They are so huge that they have a hard time walking, and the females must have caesarians, as vaginal births are impossible.[38] Even so-called heritage breeds are often bred for characteristics that in human beings would no doubt be labeled disabilities or abnormalities; consider the Tennessee fainting goat which "keels over when startled" and which Slow Food USA says "sounds more like a sideshow act than the centerpiece of a barbecue."[39] The issue of breeding itself raises all sorts of complex questions about normalcy, naturalness, and the boundaries between disability and enhancement. These animals are simultaneously disabled and hyperabled—made disabled by the very enhancements that make them especially profitable to industries and desirable to consumers.

Disabling animals is not incidental to animal industries. It is essential for the work they do and the profit they create. Of the tens of billions of animals that are killed every year for human use, many are manufactured to be disabled, bred to be machine-like producers of meat, milk, and eggs. And we haven't even looked at other animal industries. According to HSUS, the animals who are subjected to lives in fur farms (foxes, minks, chinchillas, and numerous other species) "are inbred for specific colors . . . causing severe abnormalities—deafness, crippling of limbs, deformed sex organs, screw necks, anemia, sterility, and nervous system disorders."[40] Animals in research labs, circuses, and zoos also experience a variety of conditions and problems that are due largely to captivity, poor care, abuse, or breeding. Circus elephants are prone to severe arthritis because they are forced to stand, often chained, in cramped cages and boxcars with little opportunity to exercise. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) reports that "foot disorders and arthritis are the leading reasons for euthanasia in captive elephants."[41]

Huge numbers of animals from factory farms and zoos to research labs and circuses show signs of mental illness, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and madness, such as repetitive hair plucking, self-mutilation, biting the bars of their cages, pacing, regurgitation and reingestion (repeatedly vomiting and eating it), and repetitive head bobbing. Autistic writer and primatologist Dawn Prince-Hughes describes seeing her own symptoms of exclusion and marginalization in the animals she watched and studied at the zoo:

> I would see this kind of behavior with gorillas in captivity. They had nervous tics similar, if not identical, to mine: hair plucking, picking at scabs, scratching, rocking, chewing on themselves, and other repetitive and self-stimulating behaviors. One gorilla spun in tight, fast circles. Another bobbed her head up and down.[42]

Such behavior is so common in captive animals that there is actually a diagnosis for it, zoochosis—psychosis caused by confinement.[43] In fact animals in zoos are regularly put on antidepressants and other pharmaceuticals. In her book *Animal Madness: How Anxious Dogs, Compulsive Parrots, and Elephants in Recovery Help Us Understand Ourselves*, science historian Laurel Braitman exposes the widespread use of pharmaceuticals to help animals cope with captivity in zoos, aquariums, and research labs. Not surprisingly, zoos try to keep this information secret, with zookeepers often required to sign nondisclosure agreements. After all, as Braitman writes, "finding out that the gorillas, badgers, giraffes, belugas, or wallabies on the other side of the glass are taking Valium, Prozac, or antipsychotics to deal with their lives as display animals is not exactly heart-warming news."[44] What we do know is that the animal pharmaceutical industry in the United States is booming (it brought in nearly $6 billion in 2010).[45]

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

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

But what happens to these animals when by some stroke of luck they escape or are removed from these environments? I asked Jenny Brown this question. Brown is founder of the Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary, author of *The Lucky Ones: My Passionate Fight for Farm Animals*, and a disabled person herself. The Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary is home to dozens of chickens, cows, pigs, turkeys, ducks, sheep, and goats who have been rescued from neglect, abuse, and abandonment. Like many other rescue homes for farm animals, the sanctuary cares for a variety of animals who limp, scoot, are blind, or are missing limbs, as well as those who need assistive technologies, including the occasional prosthesis. These disabled and often traumatized animals are rescued from large-scale farming operations as well as from small, family-run farms.

Brown explained that the answer to my question really depends on the extent and variety of the disability. Some disabled farmed animals adapt to their differences on their own or are supported by other non-human animals with whom they have bonded. Others are "put down," raising difficult questions about the ethics of animal euthanasia. Brown told me about Emmet and Jasper, two male baby goats who came from a goat dairy operation. They both were diagnosed with caprine arthritis encephalitis, which causes painful arthritic joints that can be debilitating. Jasper was eventually euthanized. Brown wrote me, "After pain meds and rounds of acupuncture we finally let him go because of the severity of his pain and physical debilitation." Jasper's brother Emmet has arthritis in one stifle and barely uses that leg, but he's doing well. Emmet has free rein around the sanctuary, because "when we did put these boys in with the goat herd, they would get rammed and taunted by the other, more dominant goats."[46]

Jasper's and Emmet's stories raise questions about accommodation and access. What are our responsibilities to accommodate and support these animals whom we have made disabled? What does accommodation and access, or working to dismantle ableism, even mean for different species?

Brown also told me about Boon, a turkey at the Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary who was born with his tongue in his throat instead of in his mouth. Boon has difficulty eating, so the sanctuary staff feed him a few times a day, away from the other birds. There are many examples, such as this, of animals who need simple accommodations to survive. Perhaps they need to eat their meals away from the group or be put in a living space with less dominant animals (even of another species), or perhaps they need to be fitted for some sort of mobility device.

As shows like "My Bionic Pet" attest, animal prostheses are becoming increasingly common. Prostheses have been made for elephants, dogs, cats, dolphins, cows, goats, turtles, alligators, and a variety of birds. At the Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary there is Albie, a goat with three legs who can be seen running about every day in the sanctuary's fields, sometimes with a prosthetic leg and sometimes without.[47] Brown, an amputee herself, asked her own prostheticist if he would be willing to make a special prosthesis for the goat, and he obliged. The unique and innovative accommodations that are realized for these animals are all the more intriguing because of how similar they are to various common accommodations made for humans (prostheses, ramps, wheelchairs, and so forth). Yet in an anthropocentric world, accommodating farmed animals takes on a whole other meaning. The Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary is in many ways an accommodation in and of itself, as the vast majority of farmed animals don't have access to environments in which they can go about their lives in species-typical ways, let alone thrive—regardless of disability. Instead they are forced into environments that limit and harm them. In this way we return to environment, to the ways in which these animals are debilitated by human domination and exploitation.

The disabilities created in these animal industries, disabilities born of speciesism (the belief in human superiority over other animals) and cruelty, have complicated my understanding of disability. I am left with questions about suffering, a topic that many people invested in a political understanding of disability have rightfully tried to move away from. Disability activists and scholars have worked for decades to challenge the equation of disability with suffering. Many of us have argued that much of the suffering around disability stems from ableism, such as the discrimination and marginalization that disabled people face.

While disability advocates have pushed away from narratives of suffering, it is everywhere within animal ethics scholarship. Animal activists have done a huge amount of work simply to prove that animals *can* suffer, and much more work has sought to explain why human beings should care about this fact. Suffering has become an inevitable part of conversations around animal industries, as well as around disability within these industries, and for good reason. But animals are too often presented simply as voiceless beings who suffer. Exploring their lives through a critical disability analysis can help us to ask who these animals are beyond their suffering. It prompts us to consider how the very vulnerability and difference that these animals inhabit may in fact model new ways of knowing and being. Thinking through these issues also pushes disability scholars and activists to address the uncomfortable question of suffering, opening up avenues of investigation that have too often been neglected by the field.

The title of this chapter is "Animal Crips." To call an animal a crip is no doubt a human projection, but it is also a way of identifying non-human animals as subjects who have been oppressed by ableism. Naming animals as crips is a way of challenging us to question our ideas about how bodies move, think, and feel and what makes a body valuable, exploitable, useful, or disposable. It means questioning our assumptions about what a cow or a chicken is capable of experiencing.

And it means stopping to consider that the limping fox you see through the barrel of your rifle may actually be enjoying his animal crip life. Animal crips challenge us to consider what is valuable about living and what is valuable about the variety of life.

In the end, it is not only disabled animals who could be called crips. All animals—both those we human beings would call disabled and those we would not—are devalued and abused for many of the same basic reasons disabled people are. They are understood as incapable, as lacking in the various abilities and capacities that have long been held to make human lives uniquely valuable and meaningful. They are, in other words, oppressed by ableism. The able body that ableism perpetuates and privileges is always not only able-bodied but human.

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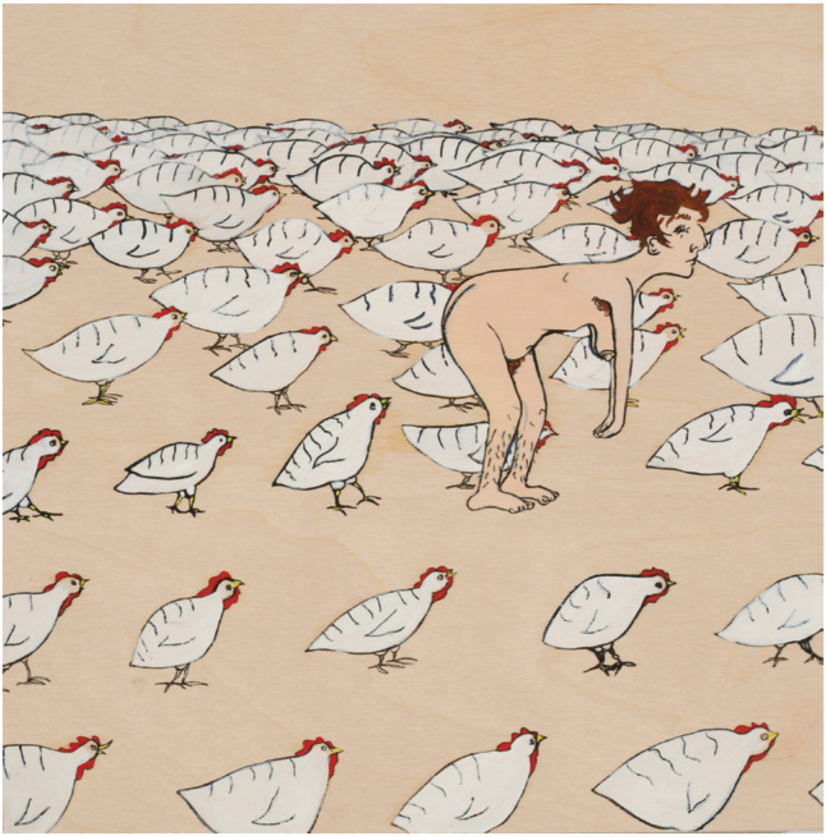

Plate 1 “Self-Portrait Marching with Chickens”
(provided courtesy of the artist)

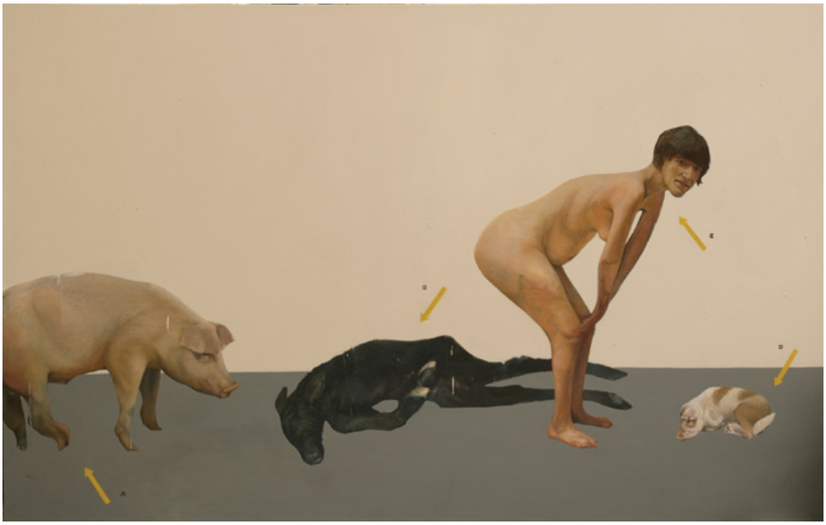

Plate 2 “Animals with Arthrogryposis”
(provided courtesy of the artist)

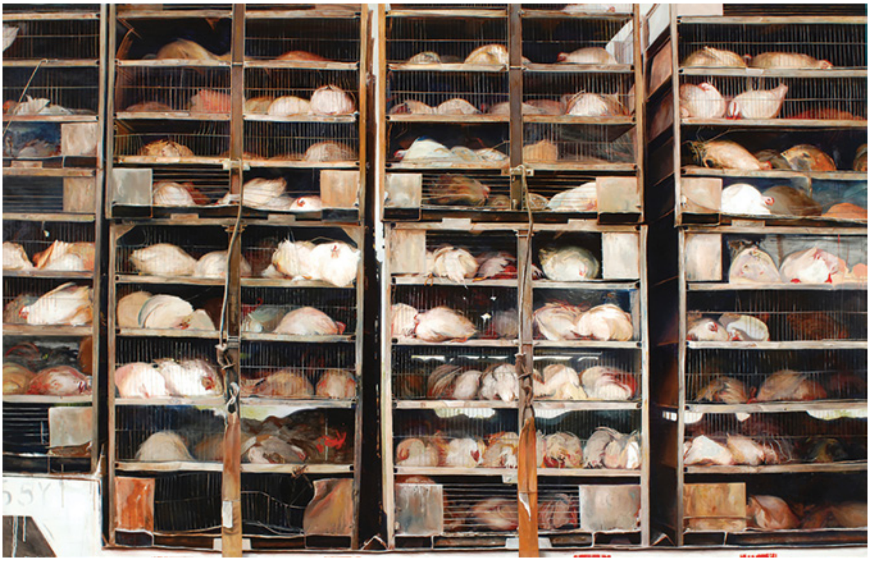

Plate 3 “Chicken Truck”

(provided courtesy of the artist)

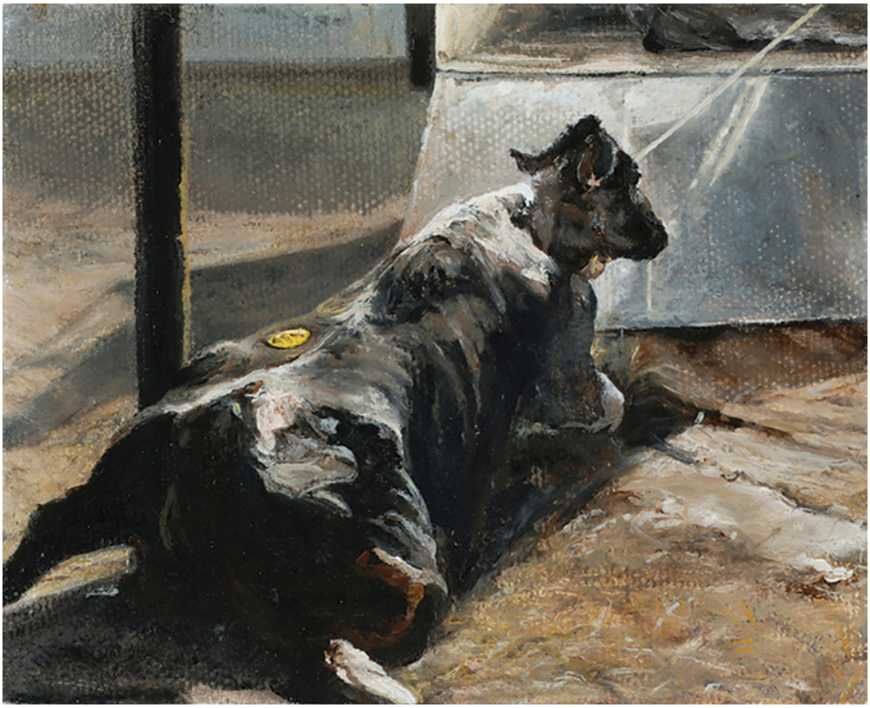

Plate 4 “Downed Dairy Cow”

(provided courtesy of the artist)

Chapter 2

Productive bodies

How neoliberalism makes and unmakes disability in human and non-human animals

Kelly Somers and Karen Soldatic

Dairy marketers have long fed consumers images of happy cows frolicking in "lush green, healthy pastures." Skinny Cows and Laughing Cows graze alongside "really cared for" cows, "fun" cows, and cows that "love WA!" (Western Australia). In brand logos, cows munch on daisies or go about with daisy chains on their heads, grazing "contentedly" beneath a windmill, their long, undocked tails swishing at flies in the air. In this determination to present an idyllic existence for dairy cows, you could be forgiven for thinking that their vast milk production happens effortlessly: 9.5 billion litres was pumped out in Australia in 2015–2016 alone.[1]

Dairy marketing is open about the animal its product comes from but obfuscates exactly where and under what conditions the cows are milked. The relentless positivity of dairy marketing is countered by the marketers of non-dairy products, who are just as wedded to cow imagery despite their products not containing animal-derived ingredients. While in the yogurt aisle you can pick up a tub of "Moo" ("filled with the *natural* goodness of fresh Australian milk"), in the freezer section you can grab a tub of "Over the Moo" ("*naturally* way better for mummy nature than ice cream made from dairy" [our emphases]). Ben & Jerry's non-dairy ice cream contains "Everything but the Cow," while Kingland claims "no cows needed making this yogurt" and Nudie's coconut yogurt has "never even seen a cow!" In these barbs flung across the chilled goods supermarket aisles, dairy cows are transformed from layabout grazers to extreme workers. Nudie says its "beloved dairy cow hasn't been on a holiday since 1995 . . . When she put in for annual leave, we had to think on our feet," despite Nudie not making any products with animal-derived, let alone cow-derived, ingredients. While dairy marketers create a picture of cows giving their maternal milk freely (or in exchange for a "happy" life), non-dairy marketers present cows as being exploited, in terms of both their flesh and their labor. But these two opposing views can agree that dairy cows, as with all farmed animals, are massively productive.

In this chapter we examine the relationship of productivity to disability in four examples involving human and non-human animals. Among farmed animals, the spectrum of biological diversity is narrowed by the killing of animals who are deemed "non-productive" or "productively disabled," while impairment is engineered through genetic restructuring and intensive farming practices to create "hyperproductive" beings, in the process normalizing impairment and rendering it invisible. In the slaughterhouse, the flesh of farmed animals is handled by highly exploitable, low-paid human workers who, in performing this work, suffer injury, ill-health, and impairment with the unrelenting efficiency demanded of low-cost, high-output production. Finally, with neoliberal reclassifications of the productive body-and-mind and the capacity to work, humans who receive disability pensions are reclassed as unemployed so they can be transferred to lower paid benefits and compelled to move in and out of low-waged, precarious work. The normative codes of farm production, the interspecies relational nature of the slaughterhouse, and welfare austerity, particularly in the policy area of disability, are deeply enmeshed with broader neoliberal regimes of the intensification of work. We follow these examples with a discussion of the processes that make visible or invisible certain types of work performed by certain types of bodies and the productive value that neoliberalism places on this work. While disability is erased from the policy sphere and from the farm to be replaced with a measure of productivity, impairment created via intensive work among human and non-human animals becomes naturalized, "absolutely invisible . . . fall[ing] outside the register of sight."[2] We conclude by asking how interspecies disability solidarity can be used to resist the neoliberal logic that renders some bodies "non-productive" and compels all bodies-and-minds to aspire to be productive.

We view these processes of "making" and "unmaking" disability as developing due to neoliberalism, simply put as the tendency to reduce all endeavors to an economic value with the aim of extracting as much economic value as possible. As Mitchell and Snyder state: "Within neoliberalism productivity measures have been increasingly used to assess human value at the individual and population levels."[3] The neoliberal world pushes the individual to realize their own ultimate economic potential—in so doing privileging the able-bodied, the white, the male—while it delegitimizes redistributive claims upon the state as being opposed to the majority interest.[4] Through neoliberalism we view our own and each other's worth in terms of work and productivity, while relentless consumption is made "synonymous with life."[5] What is more, neoliberalism mythologizes itself as an inevitable, natural, and universal truth, squeezing out alternative ways of seeing and being in the world.[6] By naming neoliberalism, we aim to expose, to "make visible," the structural processes which deem some bodies of worth and discard others.

Neoliberalism persists, mutating, in tension with (and in response to) the disability movement's struggle for rights. There are several modes of disability, and tensions between them, going on in the four examples presented here, between the medical model (which views disability as individual deficit) and the social model (wherein disability is created by barriers in the environment and by discrimination). The neoliberal concept of "productivity" draws together these manifestations of disability and impairment. Neoliberalization extracts disability identity, taking it out of the lived experience of the body and into a literal realm where definitions of what constitutes disability are always changing according to neoliberal economic policy imperatives, whereas impairment is created in the body bound by capitalist violence and labor intensification regimes, normalized through workplace accidents and occupational health and safety regulations. Looking at the creation of impairment in farmed animals and human slaughterhouse workers, we repeat the question that Sunaura Taylor asks: how can disability be viewed positively in these contexts?[7] And from Soldatic and Grech, "How can we theorize, mobilize, and organize a politics of impairment that does not undermine a progressive politics of disability?"[8]

The disability politics grounded in the social model, which has seen such gains as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, does not cohere in articulating a politics of impairment, where disability caused by violence, workplace injury, or ill-health is problematic to claim as a positive identity. Soldatic suggests a "double move" to expand the progressive politics of disability to consider where the making of impairment itself becomes an issue of justice.[9] In this chapter we argue that, just as for humans, impairment created in non-human animals due to processes of work intensification can also be considered an issue of justice. We draw from the disability movement's activism and theorizing of work to call for an interspecies disability solidarity to resist and upend the neoliberal push for hyperproductivity that results in the dismemberment of bodies.

Productivity and disability: neoliberal transformation of laboring bodies-and-minds

Productively disabled farmed animals are killed

In a competitive dairy industry of price-cutting and a market that demands cheaper and cheaper milk, there is no room for non-productive bodies. Dairy cows who are not producing or "performing" as much as their peers, or as much as they are bred to, are slaughtered, wherein at least their dead bodies reap some monetary value via the sale of their flesh as meat products. Non-productive animals are a cost burden, through lost income from their low performance and through the cost of their health care. In order to keep herds at their peak productivity, injured, diseased, deformed, debilitated, or exhausted animals are killed ("destroyed" or "disposed of" in the terminology of the industry), rather than cared for or adapted to.

Meat & Livestock Australia, the national industry body for animal farming in Australia, describes best practice for keeping productive herds: in diseased cows, look out for "weak, stunted or deformed calves"; to prevent *pestivirus*, strategies involve "[i]dentifying and culling persistently infected animal"; for *vibriosis*, "[c]ulling all empty breeders at a pregnancy test"; and for *trichomoniasis*, "[c]ulling infected bulls." Productivity here is reproductivity; the decision to cull/kill livestock can be based on: low fertility; ability to deliver and/or to rear a calf unassisted; and "production targets, including performance of offspring (there is no point in keeping animals that fail to produce themselves or that produce low value offspring)."[10] Animals must be useful: male calves are killed as waste products of an industry that cannot afford to keep them into a maturity where their bodies cannot be used. (The male calves who are kept for veal meat are suspended in a form of "bare life.")[11] In addition, culling can be based on so-called physical problems, disease susceptibility, or temperament (docility aids productivity). The advice to farmers for animals born with "birth defects . . . is to 'destroy' them before they contaminate your gene pool and damage your profits."[12] This approach to classing and culling cows assumes a status quo of able-bodiedness, a vision of normalcy where disability does appear but is closely monitored and eliminated before it can cause disruption. "Downed" animals are often thrown into and left to die in "dead piles," when recovery would be possible with "patience and water."[13] But patience and water require time and care, which are costly to provide; the presence of "downed" animals reduces productivity. Able-bodiedness translates into productiveness.

Impairment becomes a visible signifier of weakness, ill-health, and contamination, so it is erased from the farm landscape and thus does not appear to be a part of species diversity. Ill-health and impairment in farmed animals is erased even pre-emptively, before it appears (e.g. in the probability of a cow not producing "performing" offspring). The sick or impaired animal not only is not valuable but also carries the stigma of contamination, as perceived by the farmer worried about the productive value of her herds and by the consumer worried about animal disease finding its way into the human food chain. Lameness, or "downed" animals, "bring up historical associations of disability with the fear of contamination."[14] It is not the "visibly" disabled body of the animal turned into meat that creates risks to food safety, however, but the "invisibly" diseased bodies that do end up in the human food chain, sometimes with little consequence (e.g. bovine tuberculosis)[15] but sometimes with spectacular consequence (e.g. *bovine spongiform encephalopathy*, commonly known as "mad cow disease," the result of cows being fed the brains of other animals).[16] Pollution, too, has an impact on the health of human and non-human animals, but while the effects are not visible, action to address it is not taken. Visible disability does not translate into "edibility."

Keeping the farm free of impairment, ill-health, and disease itself is an impairment-creating process. Dairy cows are injected with hormones to increase their milk production, causing their udders to grow to a size many times larger, and then fed antibiotics to treat the mastitis and other infections that commonly result from such unrelenting pressure on their udders. In addition, non-therapeutic antibiotics are routinely fed to animals who are kept in close confinement with other animals and suffer from a lack of exercise.[17] A healthy animal in a factory farm is an oxymoron, hence the necessity of antibiotics. The high use of hormones and antibiotics (pre-emptively, before disease appears), along with the poor management of culled animals and inadequate disposal of their voluminous waste, often results in the contamination of feed and water supplies and, of course, the cows themselves. Waste creates further waste. In the case of BSE in Britain, slaughtered animals left to rot in poor human management systems resulted in further waste, disease, and death in the animals left behind on the farm. Cows had been fed the remains of sheep infected with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (humans "contaminating" the bovine food chain by feeding vegetarian animals with animal remains), which led to an outbreak of mad cow disease in 1989–1990, resulting in a variant of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease appearing among humans who ate infected beef.[18] The cyclical movement of bodies/meat/waste permeated the boundaries of living, dying, and death through the work of human hands and its technological inventions.

There is another place where disabled animals can be seen, aside from the dead pile, and that is at the farm sanctuary. Many of the animals at farm sanctuaries have disabilities, whether they are "waste products" of the dairy and meat industries or have endured injury while "working" that has caused impairment.[19] They are believed to have no use on an industrial farm and so they are removed from the production line into the scene of the sanctuary: they are "rescued" from the confinement of animal industrial production; from the intensive, joyless work of the farmed animal; and from early, violent death. On the farm, they are non-productive; in the sanctuary, they are disabled (the context, the "place," determines how their bodily forms are interpreted). In the sanctuary, they are able to perform the self-labor necessary to sustain their sense of well-being and for biological repair. The industrial farm remains impairment-free, with no impediments to production, while the sanctuary takes all the "waste" animals of no productive exchange value. This placement of disabled animals in the sanctuary keeps our image of "the farm" as populated by able bodies intact: bodies-and-minds that are able to perform productive work. But sanctuaries also disrupt the idea that "the natural process for a disabled animal is to die, rendering living disabled animals not only aberrational, but unnatural."[20] As the next section will discuss, the association of able-bodiedness with the farmed animals we eat "disguises the reality that the industry itself creates injury, impairment and disease."[21]

Impairment in farmed animals is engineered and normalized

Standard culling practices belie the normalization of bodily abnormality on the farm. As Sunaura Taylor observes, "animal agriculture is a leading cause of disability among animals," where animals in the food industry are "quite literally manufactured to be disabled."[22] In this sense, disability pervades the farm, but it is not visible. Disability is seen not in relation to impairment but in relation to productive value of exchange on the farm: the more "disabled" the animal, in terms of bodily alteration through genetic engineering or environmental conditions, the more productive they are deemed. In the case of dairy cows, the embodied laboring in the production of milk is transformed into production for human benefit, subjugating one species to the will of another. But this created disability is normalized, while so-called non-productive bodies in the spectrum of species variation, such as those that produce less due to aging or physical exhaustion, are removed from view. Farms make the disabled body productive, while the so-called non-productive body is killed.

The reality of farm life for dairy cows—even those we are told are contented, well cared for, free range, or well traveled (à la Ben & Jerry's brand ambassador)—is, as we should all well know, short, filled with bodily violations and without the possibility to enact species norms of behavior: forceful impregnation every 1.5 years, calves taken away from their mothers after mere days (supposedly to stop the spread of disease), with limited space to graze or even without grass to graze on, and death after four pregnancies (an average life span of 6 years, as opposed to a non-farmed cow's average lifespan of 20–25 years).[23] This is the life of the productive cow, alternately obscured by dairy marketers and made visible by non-dairy marketers, as in the examples given at the beginning of this chapter. Farmed animals are bred to have body weights so large they cannot support themselves, undergo routinized injury (via debeaking and tail docking, for example), and produce such tremendous bodily outputs (such as volume of milk or eggs) that their bodies quickly become exhausted, or "spent."[24] Factory farming involves confining animals in cages for most of their lives in dark, artificially lit sheds where they can barely move, exercise, sit, or lie down and where they are forced to stand in their own and other animals' feces, and are prevented from socializing with other animals. Animals associate cleanliness with the absence of shame, so not being able to dispose of their waste and being forced to stand in it is a form of neglect and abuse.[25] Animals in factory farms are so confined and restricted in every sense that we cannot know what their natural behaviors—that is, those outside of the farm—are. As Taylor describes, the conditions of confinement that farmed animals must endure from birth to slaughter, the lack of physical activity, and the incidence of diseases rife in the intensive environment create secondary impairments, such as chronic pain and psychological ill-health, to the ones farmed animals are bred to have.[26] Farmed animals are disabled by their environments in addition to the physical and psychological disabilities that farming creates.[27] Taylor highlights the example of the sow, the mother pig who is "made utterly immobile by the metal bars of her gestation crate."[28]

Animals are bred for particular traits valued by humans in the food industry (and other industries that exploit animal bodies), not for traits that make the animal's laboring successful in their own preferred environment.[29] As such, animals become productively "enabled" in the artificial environment of the intensive farm, whereas once transposed to outside the farm, such as to a sanctuary, the body of the animal becomes "disabled" and her work is now useless. Farmed animals are not the only ones who are bred to have disabilities. Puppies and other so-called companion animals are manufactured to have particular traits via "unnaturally selected" crossbreeding of different species and inbreeding, which creates disabling abnormalities in other areas, for example the pug dogs, who have lifelong breathing difficulties because they have been bred to have flat faces—the "breed standard."[30]

The agriculture industry and the legislation that oversees it talk about minimizing "unnecessary suffering" and upholding minimum standards of animal welfare.[31] Yet the welfare legislation relating to farmed animals is very different from the laws pertaining to our pets; a whole lot more suffering on the part of farmed animals is thought to be necessary and permissible. The crucible of pain and suffering, as policymakers perceive, is the slaughterhouse, and regulations such as the stunning of animals before their throats are slit exist to ensure "humane" treatment—although even this regulation does not apply to the majority of agricultural animals, since birds are exempt. Moreover, farmed animals can live their entire, short lives with chronic pain resulting from their engineered disabilities and environmental conditions.[32] A distinction between the companion animals with whom we live and the farmed animals whom we eat has to be engineered, and this is done by removing the realm and range of emotion in non-human animals, in terms of both the emotion humans permit other animals to feel and the emotions we permit ourselves to feel about other animals. This misconception that farmed animals do not have the capacity for positive emotion (such as maternal bonding with a calf) and that they cannot feel below an ordinarily high threshold of pain (such as the pain of being separated from her calf as well as the physical pain of confinement) is another disability that the farmer conjures to put to the use of profit. Dairy farmers create a narrative of cows having poor maternal instincts, who quickly get over the loss of their children, as evidence that they do no real harm.[33] It is the farmer, the lawmaker, and ultimately the consumer who decide what amount of suffering is "necessary," not the cow enduring the suffering.

That factory farmed animals have been shown to endure (shortened) lifetimes of inhumane conditions—confined spaces, perpetual darkness, isolation, force feeding, no exercise, and so on—all apparently without feeling pain is supposed proof that this is the kind of life for which animals have the biological capacity.[34] As Bernard Rollin says, the values of husbandry have been replaced by efficiency and productivity in intensive farming; "we are no longer constrained by the animals' biological natures. . . . Technology has . . . divorced animal productivity from animal happiness."[35]

Impairment is created in low-paid, dirty "meat work"

The slaughterhouse is a space where human bodies-and-minds enact animal death, in the process being brought into contact with the waste of those animal bodies. Slaughterhouse work is understood as "dirty work": work which has a social, moral, and physical taint.[36] Baran et al. note that slaughterhouse work is a "massive, routinized, efficient" process, involving "systematic, organized methods for slaughtering massive numbers of animals," conducted under "particularly harmful physical conditions or threatening environments."[37] It involves repetitive physical work, industrial machinery, and fast "dissembly" lines, all creating a high risk of injury, as well as risk of illness in the transmission of zoonotic disease and antibiotic-resistant pathogens.[38] In Baran et al.'s study, meat-working respondents (from Denmark) reported “a lower likelihood of being able to perform the same job in 2 years” and “a reduction in work ability due to sickness or accidents,” compared to other occupations at a similar level of “dirtiness.”[39] The Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU) notes, “The meat industry uses incredibly dangerous machinery that can horribly disfigure workers for life”; “rates of injuries and illnesses in the meatpacking industry have been notoriously high.”[40] Injuries include “workers losing fingers and thumbs to meat mixing machines or pneumatic cutters, and getting arms caught in unguarded conveyors”; being crushed in machines; “hooking their own arms, and stabbing themselves in the leg and the face.”[41] Meat work is one of the most dangerous jobs globally: in Australia in 2011, “the industry’s injury and illness rate remains twice as high as that in the construction industry, and four times the average of all workplaces,” while in the United States, “meatpacking [is] the most dangerous factory job in America, with injury rates more than twice the national average.”[42] Rates of injury are also reflected in workplace insurance premiums: meat operations paid the second-highest rate of any industry in the Australian state of Victoria in 2011.[43] Evidently it is more cost-effective for meat companies to pay these high insurance premiums than to lower the pace of production or otherwise reduce the risk of injury. The bodies of meatworkers themselves thus become bodies to be discarded in the same manner as the impaired cow who is thrown on the dead pile, their body parts severed with increasing speed to meet the rhythms of the slaughterhouse machine. In the rush to dismember “meat,” dismemberment crosses species lines.

The logic of neoliberalism always demands faster, cheaper production, creating greater risks to the human and non-human in the slaughterhouse through rapid processes of dismemberment. While “humane treatment” dictates a quick and painless death, the relentless push for efficiency on the production line can mean animals are not stunned unconscious and are still alive while being skinned and having their throats slit. The AMIEU notes that food safety and healthy jobs are threatened by “the perverse economics of our industrial meat and food production system in which narrow profit margins drive business decisions with insufficient commitment to either working conditions or food quality.”[44] Work in the slaughterhouse is

> “harder . . . longer and . . . faster” than it used to be. . . . “[Now] there’s too much emphasis on speed, and on how much production goes through, and not enough emphasis on the health and safety of the workers doing the job.”[45]

Fast mechanical movement of flesh around the slaughterhouse impedes the worker’s watchful eye and capacity to identify those assemblages of flesh and blood that may transfer disease. In addition to greater risk of contaminated meat entering the food supply, the pace of production leads to workplace fatigue, bullying, and high rates of injury.[46] The precarious worker of the slaughterhouse is forced to embody the dissembling, dismembering, and disabling that jumps across the borders of bodies historically separated via capitalist labor regimes, reinforcing class status, racial prejudices and injustices, ableist and ageist exclusions, and gendered fictitious boundaries.

The production of meat and animal products is a source of human livelihoods. The collective interspecies dissembling of human and non-human animal is intertwined with global commodity chains and patterns of consumption. In an industry subject to seasonal flows, meat work is increasingly offered on low-paid, temporary, short-term contracts or on a casual basis, with companies outsourcing their labor-hiring practices to employment agencies.[47] In Australia, "meat companies are increasingly employing migrant workers on temporary work visas," particularly in the seasonal lamb processing sector.[48] In the United States, "major companies employ vulnerable refugees and migrants."[49] The people working in intensive, industrial settings where animals are processed from living beings into dead lumps of flesh are typically on low incomes, desperate for a job, and the work they do is dangerous, menial, repetitive, and taxing manual labor.[50] In addition, there is an association of low-income earners, or the working class, with the brutal work in the abattoir, the proximity to killing and violence. "No one wants to kill cows," hence the people who are on the margins of a society—be they migrant workers and/or the very poor—are landed with the job.[51] When evidence of sadistic acts against animals emerges, it is narrated as typical of another class of people; the violence of individuals in the abattoir is disconnected from the violence of a society that permits industrialized slaughter of animals.[52] Those who are oppressed in a society in turn will be oppressive towards the less powerful.[53]

Collective solidarity is dismembered, too, through precarious, non-unionized labor put to neoliberalism's use. One of the biggest meat operations in New Zealand suppresses union activity by laying off union members; it is also the most notorious company for injury in the country.[54] Commonly in the industry, on the international scale, conditions in the workplace are far from ideal, undermining any sense of species decency. Oxfam America's poultry worker justice campaign highlights the "dangerous and undignified working conditions in many poultry processing plants in the United States" and the "extremely high rates of injury and illness."[55] Migrants may be less willing to speak up to their employers if they feel their workplace is unsafe, due to lack of familiarity with national health and safety regulations and fear of losing their job and thereby their income.[56]

In the human and non-human animal worlds, neoliberalism finds the highest productivity value in young bodies. Farmed animals are worked to exhaustion from very young ages such that they cannot live beyond a few years. The meat processing industry also employs a significant portion of young human workers. In the Australian state of Victoria, almost one in ten of the state's meat workers are teenagers.[57] Young human workers are less likely to demand improved working conditions or to stand up to management due to their inexperience. Youth and inexperience are often linked to injury and even fatalities in meat work.[58] In addition, meat work is often located in regional areas and is an important source of employment in these areas,[59] which are affected detrimentally by neoliberal globalization and the radical restructuring of regional economies. Young people who finish their education and have few other employment options in regional areas may be forced into meat work. At the same time, neoliberal drivers see the retraction of disability services in regional and rural areas,[60] where farmed animals and meat works are located.

The correlation of acquired impairment due to injury and illness with increasing rates of production points to an industry that regards the bodies of non-white, poor, young, rural people and their communities to be as disposable as the animal bodies it processes into meat products. Richter compares Nibert's analysis of the wage exploitation and racism in slaughterhouses with Gleeson's description of underpaid and ill-treated care workers in disability services: "This lack of economic benefit is compensated for through the discursive construction of the difference between staff at slaughterhouses and care institutions and the bodies they manage."[61] Recognizing the violence of meat work requires an acknowledgement of the bodily integrity of non-human animals. On a deep psychological level, the work of killing animals results in additional, unique stresses and strains for the worker, compared to other types of dirty, low-prestige work, because of the "empathetic suffering among slaughterhouse workers," who "likely experience both identification with and forced psychological separation from the animals around them" in order to kill them.[62] An environment that induces desensitization to suffering and death encourages a person to degrade and devalue animal life, with the distancing and deadening of emotion that occurs with the objectification of animals also stunting a person's capability to have meaningful interaction with animals.[63] These psychological effects on the worker have wider ramifications in that person's community, due to their profound integration into the worker's embodied self. Negative social changes associated with slaughterhouses include increases in alcohol consumption, rates of domestic violence, child welfare incident reports, arrest rates, and sex offenses.[64] The monetary value generated by interspecies slaughter, captured as a labor market transaction, in fact severs forms of interspecies solidarity with deep effects on the subjective well-being of the worker. In the shared interspecies space of the slaughterhouse, the slaughterer may wonder if, or when, they too will be dismembered.

Human disability is reformulated in terms of productivity

The classification and productive stratification of non-human animals are framed around similar ideas and materialities that measure and value the human body-and-mind. Who is able? How is this defined? What processes and social practices stratify bodies into systems of exchange and monetary value? Who has access to work and the social hierarchies that this brings?

Disability may affect a person's ability to work, and impairment may necessitate a change in the types of work a person can do. Some states have in place income assistance and other supports to assist people who have reduced or different levels of work capability within the market or have additional participation needs due to having a disability. In Australia, as under other neoliberal

Western governments, disability is perceived at the policy level as a cost burden. Immigration rules restrict the entry of people with disabilities, whose potential health-care needs are calculated as too great a cost to Australian society,[65] while social security budgets are ransacked with the intensification of neoliberal austerity. Increasingly, the categorization of "disability" is being erased and in its place is put a measure of capacity to work, a measure of productivity. Disability is not defined through medical systems nor classification regimes of what a person can or cannot do. With the latest round of disability measurement instruments, "capacity to work assessments" as they are known, the Australian government has changed its classification of disability according to how many hours a person is able to perform so-called productive work within a week. Interestingly, this calculation of potential hours of productive work is assessed based on one's ability to engage in the labor of self-care, a necessity for personal survival. If they are assessed as able to perform the necessary labor for the self, they are moved off the disability support pension onto an unemployment benefit, which is a significantly lower payment and entails a massive loss of additional redistributive benefits and cash transfers (such as pharmaceutical subsidies and mobility allowance to subsidize accessible travel). Disability becomes an inability to turn the labor of self-care into productive work within the neoliberal labor market.[66] Thus, the laboring self is harnessed as the barometer of the productive worker, despite their differentiated purpose, intent, and temporalities. With this change in terminology and policy, thousands of people previously classed as disabled within the social security system are now deemed as simply unemployed.[67] In fact, rather than growth in disability pension rates due to such things as industrial accidents and an aging workforce, the number of people with disabilities in countries such as Australia has, in fact, decreased statistically.[68] The person's capacity to work, measured by their capacity to undertake the necessary labor of self-care, becomes their defining identity marker.

Completing capacity to work assessments can be painful in itself and demands a certain level of labor to fulfil the requirements, including the necessary but unacknowledged labor required to arrive at the assessment *on time* and the body work required to get ready for the assessment.[69] The obligation to complete the assessment creates further pain in the processes of self-invalidation that one must undertake to ensure that the performance of the disabled self is fully manifest. The disabled self in its totality must be displayed so that one can receive the full entitlements they may no longer be entitled to with shifting regimes of measurement, stratification, and ability. In "reforming" welfare systems, governments have created communities that are disgusted, resentful, and suspicious of people with disabilities and so exert additional pressure on people with disabilities to do *any* work.[70]

The rhetoric of "shirkers," or of people taking advantage of the system by falsely claiming disability (the "welfare fraudster"), persists. To push through their neoliberal agendas and justify the clawing back of disability social security, governments have popularized the idea of the "deserving" disabled person as opposed to the “undeserving,” the “truly disabled” as opposed to those who “are not really disabled.”[71] The temporarily able-bodied have become suspicious and hardened to the presence of disabled bodies, viewing them as potential fraudsters in our shared environments and public spaces, effectively *creating* disability as a new, revolting, stigmatized, and temporary identity attached to those who are unable or unwilling to overcome it.[72] Ongoing periodic reassessments violate the body-and-mind with the continual repetition of having to validate one’s disability and legitimize its permanency. It is the disability movement that has exposed the “neoliberal practices that disenfranchise people from access to shared public space.”[73] The reality of workplaces that cannot adapt to or welcome disabled workers is reframed as people who are not pushing themselves hard enough to find work.

Employers erroneously believe that employing a person with a disability is costly, with a range of financial burdens: “Employers panic because they don’t know how to deal with people with disabilities.”[74] These uncorrected assumptions make for an unreceptive labor market for job seekers with disabilities.[75] But the cost of adaptations in the workplace is often quite low.[76] An Australian study by the government department responsible for workplace safety found that the majority of people with disabilities require flexibility in terms of their working hours more so than they do physical adaptations to the workplace environment.[77] This does not sit well within neoliberalism, however, which favors the employer’s demand for flexibility from their employees over the employee’s need for flexibility from their employer. The neoliberal workplace demands massive efficiency of the human body yet simultaneously pulls apart the temporal protective mechanisms of decent work and social security with dignity. The exchange between workers and employers is thus further differentiated; workers must be absolute in their availability, their loyalty, and their productivity—a new form of conscripted labor—while employers offer precarity as their part of the exchange. This exchange is particularly gendered as well, as women are more often expected to have more care-giving obligations than men, making the more mobile, male laborer the subject of neoliberal work.

To reimagine productivity or to resist? Acts of interspecies resistance

> Who are the inhabitants of “nonproductive bodies?” . . . Nonproductive bodies are those inhabitants of the planet who, largely by virtue of biological (in)capacity, aesthetic nonconformity, and/or nonnormative labor patterns, have gone invisible due to the inflexibility of traditional classifications of labor (both economic and political). They represent the nonlaboring populations—not merely excluded from, but also resistant to, standardized labor demands of productivity particular to neoliberalism.[78]

As this quote from Mitchell and Snyder intimates, work performed by people with disabilities has historically been regarded as not having worth, with little or no market-exchange value. In institutions, including sheltered workshops and asylums, disabled people's work was deemed non-productive—although it was work that was necessary to maintain the institution itself, not dissimilar to gendered labor regimes that separated, naturalized, and devalued the household labor and care work of women within the private sphere. Work and labor performed by people with disabilities in institutions has yet to be fully appreciated for its critical significance to the emergence of capitalist industrialization, and its later transformations, even in its more respectable forms under Keynesian welfare. If we think of the farm also as an institution, the bodies of its animal inhabitants "farmed" for "goods" of market-exchange value, the farm depends on the self-sustaining body work of its residents/captives. This unseen and unremunerated work of farmed animals maintains the institution of the farm. Like the cow placed in the paddock for *visible* grazing and rest, while her body produces huge quantities of milk, the disabled body-and-mind was put aside in the *visible* institution, though the forms of capitalist exploitation that went on inside went unseen.

The *invisible visible*, seen but unseen, is a shared position, combining bodies-and-minds, human and non-human, in the naturalization of capitalist exploitation.[79] As Soper identifies, the nature of natural beings is transformed into a second nature that can be harnessed for the productive ends of accumulative regimes governed by human hands.[80] Our task is to see through the "natural" and view the creation of impairment via neoliberal work intensification as an issue of justice. The "artificiality of late capitalism's 'naturalness' must be exposed in order to build a political alternative for disability countercultural formations."[81]

Our four examples hinge on impairment creation and neoliberal processes of dissembling bodies-and-minds. The embodiment of impairment and the labor of self-care to survive the brutality of neoliberalism goes unacknowledged. Embodiment is usurped into productivity. The injured or downed non-human animal is seen as unproductive and is killed. Their capacity for health is viewed as too time-consuming, too costly, to foster. The engineered bodily modification of intensively farmed animals—whether acquired genetically or environmentally, through farm practices of tail docking, debeaking, or conditions of confinement, for example—goes unseen, is naturalized, in this case because human-created impairments make the animals more productive. Among human meat workers, the push for hyperproductivity creates impairment through injury and illness acquired on the dissembly line. This risk of impairment is absorbed into production costs; the human body that acquires the impairment (and the other animal bodies on the line) viewed as expendable, the impairment created as no (unavoidable) harm, as these bodies are fully replaceable by other expendable bodies-and-minds. And in the policy erasure of disability as a redistributive category, the prior recognition of the embodiment of impairment and the labor of self-care is dismantled, a process that is validated by neoliberal logics of productivity and expendability. In the name of productivity, impairment created in and viewed through the neoliberal labor market is seen as *no harm*.

These examples, drawn from human and non-human "work" realms, expose the harms of viewing each other's worth in terms of productivity for market exchange and the appropriation of profits through the dissembling of bodies-and-minds, human and non-human. Productivity becomes a normative part of the life course, a life course that becomes visible only through capitalist evaluations of productivity. A focus on productivity creates new forms of impairment, while simultaneously making structural processes of disability, disablism, and disablement invisible.

Neoliberalism continually transforms itself to swallow the progressive politics of disability, through coopting disabled people's demands for decent, non-exploitative work, critical to the realization of equality, rights, and justice. The disability movement's historical claims for justice within a capitalist political economy have distilled the relationship between work, social inclusion, and political participation; the emergence of capitalism has generated not only structural barriers to waged labor which are in themselves disabling but broader social processes of stigmatization and marginalization. Neoliberal mutations of the capitalist order have intensified this battleground of disability claims for justice and the struggle for recognition. The hollowing out of labor-market protections and the intensification of production hollows out the individual, assigning productivity as their only value. In critiquing this process as it manifests across species, we call for a politics of impairment that recognizes the creation of impairment as it emerges from neoliberalism's driving intent to dismember bodies-and-minds, human and non-human, for "productivity." This reformulates the making of impairment (for productive ends), alongside the unseeing of impairment, as an issue of justice.

Crip politics resists the idea that we need to be recognized as productive beings to be of worth. Applying this to farmed animals opens us to the possibility that their lives are valuable outside and beyond any formulation of productivity or their "work on the farm." Mobilizing for an interspecies right to be non-productive, to be lazy, may be an act of resistance to neoliberal intensification and its dispossessive structures, as Taylor, Grover, and Piggott, and Mitchell and Snyder have argued. This, says Taylor, will be of benefit to us all in allowing us to imagine a place for ourselves outside the workplace and to value ourselves beyond work or its absence.[82]

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bodies are invisible, the "absent referent" to the dangerous and disabling work performed by exploited humans.

46 AMIEU, "Safe Food from Safe Workplaces"; IUF, "Caged Chickens, Caged Workers," *Meat Workers News*, July 26, 2013, www.iuf.org/w/?q=node/2640. An extensive body of academic literature is dedicated to the particular repetitive injuries that meat workers in specific positions are at risk of, e.g. Pedro Ferreira Reis et al., "Influence of Anthropometry on Meat-Packing Plant Workers: An Approach to the Shoulder Joint," *Work* 41 (2012), https://doi.org/10.3233/wor-2012-0077-4612 (poultry workers); Adriana Seára Tirloni, Diogo Cunha dos Reis, Eliane Ramos, and Antônio Renato Pereira Moro, "Thermographic Evaluation of the Hands of Pig Slaughterhouse Workers Exposed to Cold Temperatures," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 14 (2017): 838, https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph14080838; and Marc Linder, "I Gave My Employer a Chicken That Had No Bone: Joint Firm-State Responsibility for Line-Speed-Related Occupational Injuries," *Case Western Reserve Law Review* 46, no. 1 (1995): 33–143. See also Lymbery and Oakeshott, *Farmageddon*, 192–94.

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Chapter 3

Zoos, circuses, and freak shows

A cross-movement analysis

Sammy Jo Johnson

Introduction

Critical animal studies scholarship on the zoo and circus, on the one hand, and critical disability studies scholarship on the freak show, on the other, in most cases, treat these institutions as distinct phenomena. In these discussions, scholars focus on different victims, analyze different systems of oppression, and emphasize distinct models of agency. Yet, when engaging with these conversations together, the exploitative institutions in question—the zoo, circus, and freak show—emerge as interconnected.

When addressing the circus, zoo, and freak show together, one discovers shared narratives of non-agency. These narratives position exhibited animals and humans as if they are without voice, resistance, or influence. When we analyze critical accounts of agency that strongly reject such dominant representations of exhibited animals in critical animal studies and exhibited humans in critical disability studies, it becomes possible to recognize the shared efforts of scholars in both fields to tell counter-narratives. The conversations occurring in critical animal studies and critical disability studies assert agency for displayed animals and humans respectively.

Jason Hribal defines agency as "the minorities' ability to influence their own lives—i.e. the ability of the cow to influence and guide her own life."[1] Critical animal studies scholars, like Jason Hribal and Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel, and critical disability studies scholars, like Robert Bogdan, Nadja Durbach, Eli Clare, and Sunaura Taylor, examine various ways agency is expressed inside and against exploitative institutions of display. These authors tell stories in which the minorities—animals in critical animal studies and disabled humans in critical disability studies—hold influence over their own lives.

If we read across critical animal studies conversations on the zoo and circus and critical disability studies conversations on the freak show, we discover three similarities in the efforts of scholars to assert agency for those exhibited in these institutions: (1) scholars recognize and challenge narratives that describe exhibited humans and animals as victims; (2) they recognize a system of oppression that enables the display of animals or humans (i.e. critical animal studies calls out speciesism and critical disability studies critiques ableism); and (3) they utilize a model of agency to present some exhibited animals and humans as more-than-victim.

In this chapter I will use an interdisciplinary approach to put critical animal studies discourse on the zoo and circus into dialogue with critical disability studies discourse on the freak show. In so doing, I aim to elucidate these aforementioned similarities. I focus most on the distinct model of agency presented in each discussion: in critical animal studies, the model of agency presented is associated with physical resistance; in critical disability studies, the model of agency presented is associated with rational decision-making.

In the second half of this chapter I take up Alison Kafer's practice of a "cross-movement" approach.[2] As Kafer suggests, this kind of work involves "reading disability into" movements not typically considered to be about disability, as well as questioning the gaps within disability studies where we fail to reimagine or critically engage with representations of disability.[3] Reading for disability in this way can help us to interrogate how disability is understood and to imagine it "differently."[4] In this chapter, a cross-movement approach enables us to imagine differently both disability and agency.

Throughout this chapter I grapple with debates in critical animal studies and critical disability studies simultaneously to demonstrate how a cross-movement approach can expand these critical arguments in three important ways. In the first section of the cross-movement analysis, I explore how reading disability into the zoo, circus, and freak show can work to blur the conversations and distinctions in critical animal studies and critical disability studies scholarship concerning agency. The notion of the *freak animal*, found in freaked animals and animalized freaks, powerfully demonstrates much of the crossover between the institutions of the zoo and the freak show. In the second section, I show how this approach can make visible those excluded from these conversations. My cross-movement analysis reveals, on the one hand, the exclusion of disabled animals in critical animal studies discourse when agency is defined as physical resistance and, on the other, the exclusion of intellectually disabled performers and performers from colonized lands in critical disability studies discourse when agency is associated with rational decision-making. Finally, in the third section, I consider the potential for this method to encourage us as scholars to continue searching for more nuanced models of agency. I conclude that a cross-movement method can expand animal and crip claims to agency, recognizing the limitations of models of agency dependent upon physical dominance or rational decision-making. When we imagine more ways one might express agency, we can see how other animals and humans—those excluded from critical claims to agency—live beyond the role of victim.

Accounts of agency on the part of zoo and circus animals

Hribal argues that histories, including those in the field of animal studies, present animals as passive and voiceless. According to Hribal, this discourse results in a "perspective from above," in which animal agency is not considered.[5] In these accounts, he writes, "[t]he animals are not seen as agents. They are not active, as laborers, prisoners, as resistors."[6] Instead, the focus is on animal suffering.

Representations of suffering are essential to welfare protections given to animals. Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel associates the lack of legal protections given to fish to the "lack of agreement that fish are capable of suffering, or at least that this suffering matters."[7] While the focus on suffering, as Wadiwel notes, can have tremendous impact on animal welfare and protections, the preoccupation with the capacity to suffer represents animals as only "voiceless beings who suffer."[8] Critical animal studies scholar Lauren Corman also notes this tendency to separate non-human animals from capacities such as voice and the dangers associated with this practice.[9] This separation has vital impacts as the notions of voice and "speech also become metaphors for agency and resistance."[10] Such representations of voicelessness can have devastating impacts on non-human animals, including those displayed in zoos and circuses, as well as those imprisoned on factory farms and research facilities. Corman argues that such beliefs function to support and justify the continued domination of animal bodies and lives.[11]

Critiquing this focus within animal rights discourse, Corman suggests that research that explores animals beyond their suffering has potential to more effectively convince others of the need to consider animal ethics.[12] Similarly, cognitive ethologist Marc Berkoff argues that with the recognition of the diverse range of animal emotions must come an improved commitment to animal lives.[13] This is again emphasized by Wadiwel, who argues that considering the capacity for non-human animals to do more than suffer, in this case considering the potential for fish to resist, may more effectively improve animal welfare.[14] To question how animals experience a host of other emotions and relationships necessarily makes us consider not only how we imagine other capacities—including pleasure, desire, and culture—but also the extent of damage inflicted on animals; this thinking "deepens the sense of what is lost when other animals are harmed."[15] Corman suggests that exploring who animals are beyond their suffering can work to resist "the current cultural hegemony that rationalizes nonhuman animal exploitation."[16]

Bringing disability studies to bear on animal studies, Sunaura Taylor argues that these narratives of voicelessness and suffering extend from ableist thinking.[17] A cross-movement analysis challenges and questions how "ableism permeates animal rights communities."[18] According to Taylor, it is ableist notions of what constitutes a "voice" and "speaking out" that positions animals as silent.[19] To assume animals do not speak is to have a specific and narrow conceptualization of what speaking and speaking out can look like. Using cognitive ethology, Berkoff argues that animals speak to us in a variety of ways: "[t]ails . . . postures, gaits, facial expressions, sounds and odors" tell us about animal emotions and expressions.[20] Continuing to rely on narratives of voicelessness and suffering "gives power to those who want to view animals as 'mindless objects.'"[21]

In an essential counter-narrative, *Fear of an Animal Planet: The Hidden History of Animal Resistance*, Hribal challenges narratives of suffering, presenting animals as expressive and active agents.[22] He provides numerous examples of the voices of zoo and circus animals, rejecting any idea that "only humans can be endowed with emotions, culture, intellect and the ability to resist."[23] This notion of agency, deeply speciesist, masks animal agency with words like "'accident,' 'wild,' and 'instinct.'"[24] Hribal's work presents a strong challenge to the speciesism inherent in narratives of voicelessness and pushes the conversation in critical animal studies to seriously consider the lives of displayed animals as more-than-victim. Contrary to the narratives, Hribal's work argues that exhibited animals have been and "are rebelling with knowledge and purpose."[25]

The model of agency presented in Hribal's account focuses largely on the physical resistance of animals to their captive and isolating environments. Wadiwel defines the accounts of agency discussed by Hribal as "intentional acts of insubordination against human domination."[26] For instance, Hribal describes the actions of Tatiana, a Siberian tiger who escaped her confines in the San Francisco Zoo in 2007 shortly after being taunted by several teenagers.[27] This conversation presents Tatiana's escape as an act orchestrated with intent. According to this perspective, Tatiana exerted agency—she escaped from her confines determined to harm those who had harassed her.[28]

Similarly, Hribal claims agency for Mary, a circus elephant exhibited in the early twentieth century who killed her trainer. Hribal's discussion of Mary reveals that she threw and crushed her handler after he attempted to deny her the opportunity to enjoy some watermelon.[29] In this conversation it becomes clear that, like many animals who resist their captors, Mary was murdered for her effort to influence her life.

Hribal also describes the escape efforts of several primates—many of which involved intellectually and physically complex plans. Hribal discusses the resistance of zoo orangutans to confinement, including those who learned "the basic principles of electricity, and thus have used a piece of wood or a rubber tire to ground wires. Others came to learn the engineering of locking mechanisms."[30] There are also stories of great escapes, including climbing formidable heights, conquering fears of water, and eluding capture for weeks and even months. It is in these acts of physical resistance that the agency of captive animals is most readily recognized.

Accounts of agency on the part of freak show performers

Reading across movements, the stereotypes of non-agency associated with animals displayed in the zoo and circus begin to sound familiar. These narratives travel across the human-animal binary, infused with power and control, to mask the agency of freak show performers.

The freak show became most popular in America and Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Often brought together by a manager, performers lived, worked, and traveled together to exhibit intricately crafted freakishness to paying crowds. According to Nadja Durbach, the Victorian freak show has come to be viewed as an "unsavoury part of Britain's history."[31] Current views position freak show performers as victims to the profit-driven demands of managers, without the capability to influence their lives.[32] This perspective has its roots in a medicalized model of disability that emerged as the popularity of the freak show waned; it became more appropriate to stare at disabled bodies in medical institutions, or through a lens of pity, rather than on a stage dramatically designed to showcase abnormality.[33] Durbach argues that these dominant narratives of victimization actually "misrepresent the nature of the Victorian freak show."[34] Scholars such as Robert Bogdan, Durbach, and Eli Clare resist dominant assumptions of non-agency that cloud accounts of the freak show today, and they argue that many performers lived as more-than-victims.

The conversation within critical disability studies grapples with agency while examining the various interconnected systems of oppression that legitimated and enabled the display of human freaks. Eli Clare exposes the reliance of the freak show on these systems of oppression: "ableism and racism . . . made the transition from disabled person to freak, nondisabled person of color to freak, even possible."[35] Furthermore, the freak show is called out as functioning to support the logics that enabled its existence.[36] The freak show provided evidence and "living proof" of the inferiority of people of color, Indigenous peoples, disabled peoples, and animals.[37] Proof was summarized in handbills available for purchase and the words of showmen, which often quoted scientists and leading medical professionals.

But even as disability studies scholars such as Clare, Bogdan, and Durbach recognize the overlapping systems of oppression on which the freak show relied, these scholars claim agency for some freak show performers. This conversation explores how, "[w]ithin this context of ableism and racism, the people who worked the freak show did not live only as victims."[38] Agency in the freak show, as we will see below, centers on choice and decision-making. The active agent emerges as making financially motivated decisions and using rational cognitive capacities. For instance, Clare reveals how performers worked alongside their managers to trick audiences and draw profits.[39] This model of agency allows Clare to recognize that, for some disabled performers, the freak show offered an opportunity to control certain aspects of their lives and even to reap large benefits.[40] While these conversations do not deny the exploitative reality of the freak show, they do allow some freak performers to emerge as more-than-victims.

Bogdan's discussion clearly asserts agency for William Henry Johnson. Johnson was exhibited under the titles "Zip" and "What is it?"—constructed displays that drew upon beliefs of the degeneracy of animals, intellectual disability, and people of color. Despite the oppressive logics enabling Johnson's exhibition, Bogdan's discussion presents Johnson as an active agent, as someone who exercised a considerable degree of control over his performance.

Bogdan emphasizes Johnson's financial success gained through his long career in the freak show. Johnson accumulated significant earnings and owned property in two different states.[41] This success, according to Bogdan, meant that Johnson could have lived independently from the freak show if he desired.[42] Bogdan tells us that Johnson did decide to retire several years before his final retirement in 1926, "but missing the excitement of that way of life, he returned to the circus, dime museums, and midway."[43] This analysis renders Johnson as financially autonomous and active in major career decisions.

Dubach similarly presents a counter-narrative of disability in the freak show, "interrogat[ing] the assumption that the freak show is already exploitative."[44] In *Spectacle of Deformity: Freak Shows and Modern British Culture*, Durbach examines the life of Joseph Merrick. Merrick, a popular performer in England during the late nineteenth century, was exhibited as "The Elephant Man." Durbach's description of Merrick relies heavily upon the written work of one of Merrick's showmen, Tom Norman. Durbach argues that Norman's account "challenges the assumption that the freak show is necessarily abusive and immoral and instead suggests that for the working class in particular it may have been a, if not the only, means to autonomy."[45]

Durbach argues that through his employment as a freak performer, Merrick became an "active economic agent."[46] According to her historical analysis, Merrick himself decided to become a performer and take the necessary steps toward obtaining employment in the business.[47] Before his employment in the freak show, Merrick worked in an English workhouse.[48] Durbach contrasts this oppressive workplace with his autonomous and active role as a freak performer.[49] She highlights decisions Merrick made about his performance, including his refusal to be examined by medical professionals.[50] Merrick, according to Durbach, was the operator of his own exhibition; he "had sole control over who saw and touched his body.[51]" Under this model of agency, performers who "controlled their own acts and displays, working alongside their managers to shape profitable shows" are depicted as active agents.[52]

Cross-movement analysis—the overlap

Placing conversations about agency in the zoo and circus alongside conversations about agency in the freak show highlights the overlap between discussions. This process can help us to read disability into critical animal studies. As I engage with Hribal's work—as well as the claims to agency made by Clare, Bogdan, and Durbach—it will become evident that the institutions of display, systems of oppression, and even those identified as victim (and more-than-victim) in each field of study are ultimately inseparable.

The overlap between these conversations is evident in what I call the *freak animal*. The freak animal is present in both freaked animals and animalized freaks and plays a central role within all three institutions—the circus, zoo, and freak show. In this way, the freak animal summarizes the crossover between these critical conversations on agency and the need for cross-movement analysis.

Below I present one obvious example of what I call the freak animal, but arguably the notion of the freak animal can be found in the lives of numerous other exhibits included in this chapter as many animal exhibits are freaked and many freak show performers are animalized. Elizabeth Hanson provides an obvious example of the freak animal. Hanson reveals that "[t]he National Zoo . . . received dozens of letters from people who tried to persuade the zoo directors to take—preferably to buy—albino, hybrid, sexually ambiguous, or deformed animals."[53] One example draws heavily on the lingo of showmen, crafting freakishness with his description:

> "I have the greatest living curiosity of the age," wrote G.W. Armistead to Frank Bajer, the director of the National Zoo, in 1897: "It is a calf 1 1/2 years old, small for the age. To raise its tail and examine thoroughly one would vow it to be male, but when you examine for the penis one would vow it to be a female. . . . I expect to make big money from this animal"[54]

This description sounds like it could be found on a handbill sold outside of a freak show entrance, perhaps alongside an ad proclaiming a curiosity such as a "bearded lady." In this example the freak show and zoo are blurred in more ways than one. The freak and the animal are deeply intertwined; recognizing this, we can see three important areas of overlap in the above conversations in both critical animal studies and critical disability studies.

First, it becomes evident that there are no clear boundaries that would neatly separate these institutions of display. Animality is on display in the freak show just as animals in the zoo and circus are gawked at as freaks. Taylor calls freak shows "virtual zoos, where people paid to wander from one exotic beast to the next."[55] Even those in the nineteenth-century audience couldn't keep them apart, expecting to "find the same curiosities" in the zoo as other exotic displays such as the freak show.[56] The blurriness between institutions is in part due to the second overlap identified by the freak animal, namely that the animal is central to the freak show just as the freak is central to the zoo and circus. From their start, freak shows existed "side by side exotic animal displays."[57] In the late nineteenth century zoos too exhibited non-Western people alongside exotic animals.[58] And finally, the freak animal demonstrates how the practice of constructing freakishness is a shared one, vital to all three institutions.

A critical disability analysis of the freak show emphasizes the constructed nature of freaks. Bogdan and Clare reveal the reliance on costuming and performance that utilized racist, ableist, and speciesist notions of gender, humanness, race, and ability.[59] Clare argues that such processes of construction "turned people from four groups into freaks": including disabled people, people brought to the freak show though processes of colonization, people of color, and lastly, folks whose abnormalities comprised of something other than a disability.[60] As disability studies scholar Rosemarie Garland-Thomson argues, this analysis reveals "what we assume to be a freak of nature was instead a freak of culture."[61]

When we consider the construction of human freaks, it becomes easy to recognize how zoo and circus animals are also crafted as freaks. Think of circus advertisements touting the "largest elephants" or "extra rare and exotic" displays. The very sounds, smells, and sights of the exhibits themselves are elaborately constructed. The display of animals in zoos for example is no closer to nature than the crafted human freak performer. Examining madness in non-human animals, Laurel Braitman exposes "the carefully calibrated experience" provided in zoos, in part to hide the disabling impacts of confinement, "in which everything from the sound track of hissing insects playing from hidden speakers to the hand-painted backdrops inside the exhibits has been designed to promote the zoo's vision of nonhuman nature and family fun."[62]

The freak animal is also present in the freak show, contributing to the freakishness of humans, where animals were often used as background scenery for the display of exotic performers or wild men exhibits. Freak show exhibits sometimes even included animals themselves. Mlle. Fanny—an ape exhibited as a human-animal hybrid—is one example of a freak animal.[63]

Furthermore, the animalization of many freak performers was an integral part of the elaborate construction process, transforming one from human to freak. Joseph Merrick was presented as a human-animal hybrid as "The Elephant Man"; the logics of his performance relied upon the supposed naturalness and certainty of the human-animal binary and Merrick's constructed position as somewhere in-between. In this way "animality was used to spark the imagination by transgressing common categories and distinctions, with theatrics and spectacle, while also legitimizing scientific racism, imperial expansion, colonization, and fear of disability."[64] Scientific and medical theories of evolution and evolutionary-throwbacks supported the display of some freak show performers as more animal than human.[65] The model of disability dominant at the time of the freak show's popularity supported this construction process. As Clare explains, during this time "disabled people were, in the minds of nondisabled people, extraordinary creatures, not entirely human, about whom everyone . . . was curious."[66]

The trope of the freak animal clearly demonstrates that there is overlap between these conversations; the institutions themselves are often indistinguishable, animal and human bodies transverse (blurred) lines between institutions, and the practice of crafting freakishness is essential to all three institutions. I argue that when we see this overlap, we can start to ask what happens to those bodies located at the edges of each discussion. When the conversation within each field of study focuses narrowly on one institution, or, more dangerously, on one side of the human/animal binary, many other beings are left behind, excluded from critical claims to agency.

Cross-movement analysis—the gaps

A cross-movement method can bring to light how we understand disability and, in this case, how disability is presented under different models of agency. This approach can also make visible where we fail to imagine disability differently; that is, this approach exposes the gaps left when applying narrow models of agency. Bringing a critical disability lens to the discussion of agency in zoo and circus animals in critical animal studies, I ask how disability is depicted, specifically how it is disassociated from agency. However, a cross-movement method also asks how we imagine or fail to imagine disability within disability studies,[67] thus exposing gaps within critical disability studies' discussions of agency in the freak show. This approach raises questions about the automatic and broad exclusion of some performers, specifically intellectually disabled performers and those brought to the freak show through processes of colonization.

Hribal's discussion repeatedly references the disabling conditions of confinement in the zoo and circus—for example, painful eye conditions developed by sea lions as a result of the water in their captive environment, elephants who experience joint disabilities from standing on concrete, and other instances of physical abuse common in such institutions. Disability is inseparable from harmful environments, evident in the massive amounts of institutionalized animals who "show signs of mental illness, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and madness, such as repetitive hair plucking, self-mutilation, biting the bars of their cages, pacing, regurgitation and reingestion (repeatedly vomiting and eating it), and repetitive head bobbing."[68] Disability is necessary for various animal industries, including the zoo and circus but also animal farms, to exist and generate profits.[69] Braitman also examines countless examples of madness in animals. In her many accounts of madness, disability is deeply associated with abusive and isolating environments.[70]

Recognizing these harmful environments is crucially important, but, by using a critical disability lens, we must also ask how and where disability appears (or doesn't) in arguments about animal agency. Acts of resistance in Hribal's accounts are associated with the intelligent, physically strong animal body—those capable of learning how electricity works, climbing impossibly high walls, and attacking abusive humans. Under this model of agency disability is too often presented as the conclusion to a life spent resisting. A critical disability analysis questions the disassociation from disability in several descriptions of animal agency.

Hribal's account of Mary's execution describes her physical defiance and highlights her agency. Before her death Mary resisted her captivity; she struggled fiercely against the execution device, and as a result she fell from considerable height and was severely injured.[71] Hribal writes that, after the fall, "Mary was in no condition to retaliate. The fall shattered her hip. Collapsed there in a heap, immobilized and in agonizing pain, Mary must have been a pitiful sight. But her handlers were unmoved. Instead, they refashioned the noose and slid it on once again."[72] With disability, it would seem, comes the end of agency and voice.

Thinking about agency in the animal body and the disabled body I stumble over another gap in Hribal's conversation, wondering how madness intersects with this model of agency. In Hribal's discussion of Tilikum, one of the most famous exhibited orcas, animal agency is presented as incompatible with disability. According to Hribal, Tilikum was diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as his non-compliant behavior was pathologized.[73] Hribal argues that this diagnosis inaccurately explains (denies) resistant behavior and that "captive animals have used their intelligence, ingenuity, and tenacity to overcome situations and obstacles put before them. Their actions have intent and purpose. If anything, these animals are psychologically strong, not weak. They are choosing to fight back."[74]

This diagnosis is given to Tilikum to mask resistance and actions as unintentional, as if all these were reducible to disability. In order to demonstrate agency, Hribal distances Tilikum, and other captive animals, from disability and madness. Reading across conversations, it becomes possible to recognize that this act of distancing supports dominant narratives of disability and madness that position the disabled body as incompatible with conceptions of agency.

Other animals, including captive elephants, experience a similar effect whereby agency is masked under diagnoses of madness. As Braitman details in her book, elephants express agency in many ways and live socially complex lives with other elephants and often humans. But elephants, those held in captivity, are also "known to suddenly explode into violence, going after their handlers, grooms, or trainers."[75] According to Braitman such actions were, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, commonly characterized as madness or insanity. Hribal argues that such actions in elephants have been diagnosed as PTSD to explain the behavior as a biological instability rather than resistance to captivity.[76] In fact, many more captive animals are pathologized as mentally ill and prescribed the same antipsychotics as humans. For example, Braitman examines the increasing prescriptions given to animals, ranging from pets to research subjects to those in zoos subjected to endless human gawking. Braitman reveals that such drugs are "often used to make captive animals more 'manageable.'"[77] As Braitman shows, antipsychotics are prescribed to control the symptoms or actions of self-harming behaviors, such as hair plucking, and aggression toward other captive animals (often of the same species).

Pathologizing these behaviors has the effect of masking both the damaging effects of this display (working to legitimize and support the ongoing exploitation of animal bodies) as well as the agency or expressions within such actions. Labeling animal behavior as "disability" or "madness" effectively removes any possibility to consider agency, insofar as the animal body is already considered voiceless, and disability itself is seen as a biological flaw, rather than as a response or reaction to harmful and devastating treatment. Could such behavior—behavior that is pathologized and in turn often treated with various antipsychotic drugs—be in direct response to captivity? Do sea animals who "throw up and reingest what they've spit up repeatedly,"[78] to the disappointment of animal trainers, know that this is the kind of behavior that those in the animal display industry do not want displayed for audiences? Even if we don't agree that animals given diagnoses of madness and disability know that this behavior is disruptive, it often still is.

Rather than narrowly arguing that animals have agency and this agency is separate from any disability or diagnosis, I contend that we need to crip critical animal studies and narratives of voicelessness in order to claim agency for captive animals who are labeled as "disabled." Failing to do so means that animals who are categorized as disabled are excluded from critical discussions about agency.

In juxtaposing these two models of agency I have not only been confronted with the gaps in critical animal studies but also been obligated to question exclusions made within critical disability studies. By questioning how agency is defined, as well as questioning how disability is imagined according to these definitions, it became impossible for me to overlook gaps left in the discourse surrounding agency in the freak show. Both Bogdan and Durbach clearly distinguish between the performers for whom they claim agency and those for whom they do not. As Durbach states: "freak performers—*at least those who were adults, mentally competent, and came from developed Western societies*—were clearly free agents who could ask for either a flat salary or a share of the profits."[79] Similarly, Bogdan writes that "[w]ith some exceptions, *namely certain Non-Westerners and people we would now call mentally retarded*, exhibits were showmen."[80] While Bogdan portrays William Henry Johnson, whom he describes as someone who "would be diagnosed as mentally retarded" today,[81] as an active decision-maker, Bogdan describes Johnson as "more intellectually competent" than some of the other performers he analyzes.[82]

I wonder about choice and rational decision-making and those, both animal and human, excluded from the realm of rationality. In the chapter titled "The Exhibition of People We Now Call Retarded," Bogdan portrays William Henry Johnson as active in his own freak career, but by explicitly excluding other intellectually disabled performers from such claims to autonomy or decision-making, he confines other performers within stories of passivity and victimization.[83] In this chapter Bogdan also discusses freak performers Hiram and Barney Davis, exhibited as "The Wild Men of Borneo,"[84] and Maximo and Bartola, exhibited as "The Last of the Ancient Aztecs of Mexico."[85] Unlike Bogdan's discussion of Johnson, these four performers are not presented as having control over their exhibition. Bogdan makes no arguments that any of these freak performers made decisions about or took on active roles in their exhibition. Instead, Bogdan focuses on the racialized and animalized advertisement techniques used by the managers of these performers. I wonder in what other ways these performers may have expressed desires and voice; how might they have shaped their daily lives?

Grappling with agency in these instances means thinking about such expressions occurring within and against systems of racism, ableism, and speciesism. Clare reminds us that the relationship between agency and exploitation in the freak show is complex. While the freak show presents an intriguing past for Clare, he refuses to reclaim the word "freak" as an identity of pride, as some disability activists have done, due to the many undeniable cruelties and oppressions the freak show brought about. Taylor too grapples with this conflicting history of the freak show, at times "romanticizing" the sideshow culture, especially in contrast with current medicalized perspectives of disability, but refusing to overlook the institution's reliance on the exploitation of bodies deemed exotic and abnormal.[86]

There are undeniable differences that impact how someone in the freak show could have influenced their daily life. Differences include: (1) how one joined the freak show (e.g. an American or English-born white individual seeking out employment as a sideshow attraction would differ from someone abducted from faraway lands, transported thousands of miles only to be forced into a character on display earning little, if any, money); (2) the cognitive capacities of various performers to make decisions in what were often abusive environments, and to have these decisions recognized by those around them; (3) being black or white, poor or wealthy, intellectually or physically disabled. Yet to exclude intellectually disabled performers and racialized performers from colonized countries provides too simple an answer to questions of agency, and it furthermore suggests, unfairly, that these folks did not live as anything other than victims. This is not to say that all performers equally resisted or expressed agency to the same degree. It is to demonstrate, rather, that we should be thinking about agency in more nuanced ways or we risk excluding whole groups of people from scholarly analyses purporting to focus on critically reclaiming agency.

Clare suggests that we *witness* this period of exhibition; rather than relating to the freak show with pride, Clare sees witnessing as an opportunity to "honor and mourn" those who did not or could not act as showmen.[87] While Clare asks if we can both take pride in and witness something, I wonder if we can both search for agency in these performers' lives and also witness their forced involvement in a horribly exploitative institution. Focusing on agency should not minimize these differences but push us to consider how even those deeply exploited by the freak show, intellectually disabled performers, and those forced into exhibition through processes of colonization, lived and did more than suffer. As Corman writes about the act of witnessing animal oppression, "suffering should not be dismissed or neglected in efforts to end exploitation. Rather, we must discuss suffering, but we should do so in conjunction with other, richer versions of other animals' experiences beyond suffering."[88] I am not arguing that Maximo, Bartola, Hiram, or Barney did or could have made decisions about their exhibition akin to a manager. Instead I want to ask: what else happened in the more than fifty years these performers were involved in the freak show? What moments, whispers, glances, and desires made these performers more than just victims?

Cross-movement analysis—the possibilities

The cross-movement approach utilized in this chapter asks us to examine how we imagine disability, specifically in relation to agency, in both critical animal studies and critical disability studies. This analysis shows us that agency can take many forms; in particular, we see two models of agency, one defined as physical resistance and one defined as rational decision-making. In this section I ask how a cross-movement approach can also work to generate different and potentially more inclusive understandings of disability and agency. This method also shows us how important it is to think about agency in different ways, urging us as critical animal studies scholars and critical disability studies scholars to continue reimagining what agency can and does look like. Most importantly, this approach encourages us to continue searching for agency in other, diverse contexts. Doing so will further disrupt narratives of non-agency that cloud the freak show, zoo, and circus and enable us to see the animals and humans exhibited within these institutions as more-than-victims.

In an argument for improved animal ethics, instead of focusing on the suffering fish experience though human interaction largely focused on fish-based protein, Joseph Wadiwel turns to the question of resistance. The focus on fish resistance offers another avenue to demonstrate the "large-scale systems of violence" inflicted on sea animals.[89] Wadiwel suggests fish resistance can be demonstrated by the presence of technologies and devices created to capture and destroy fish. In so doing, Wadiwel presents a nuanced model of agency, locating fish resistance in the presence of complex and varied tools designed to cause fish destruction. As Wadiwel argues, such tools "function to manage resistance" directly responding to the agency of sea animals to more efficiently maintain human domination.[90] Under the model of agency presented by Wadiwel, the resistant lives of all sea animals for whom weapons of destruction have been crafted is recognized.

Wadiwel claims agency even for those who do not escape their confines or ingeniously defeat the human machines used to contain them. While Wadiwel's model of agency may apply more readily to those animals for whom tools have been crafted specifically to defeat resistance—compared to animals harmed by the destruction of environments for example—this model recognizes fish resistance as already occurring. The focus on devices and tools of destruction can enable us to see fish, commonly considered to lack the ability to suffer let alone fight against their capture, as expressing agency in more ways than a model of agency associated with physical resistance identified in moments of escape and violent behavior against trainers.

Thinking about agency as Wadiwel does can remedy some of the exclusions left when using a model of agency associated with physical dominance. A similar possibility occurs when performing a cross-movement analysis. A cross-movement approach exposes the disassociation between disability and agency in critical animal studies as well as gaps left within critical disability studies' conversations on the freak show. Recognizing the different understandings of disability and agency presented in these disciplines—critical animal studies and critical disability studies—can we continue to expand what we understand the relationship between disability and agency to be? A cross-movement approach can help us to examine who is excluded from critical claims to agency and encourage more nuanced understandings of both disability and agency.

What a cross-movement analysis makes evident is the need to continue redefining disability and agency or risk excluding broad groups of humans and animals from critical discussions on agency. As I consider how agency is found and claimed in both critical animal studies and critical disability studies, I question why other acts or behaviors are not considered intentional, expressive, or resistant.

Thinking across movements means thinking across different bodies and victims and asking how those excluded may have lived as more-than-victim. I find myself asking about other ways Tatiana, Mary, Tilikum, Hiram, Barney, Maximo, and Bartola might have resisted. I wonder about Mary's physical protest, her fight against death, and Hribal's description of her as pitiful and helpless after her injurious fall. How can we see Mary outside of stereotypes of non-agency as she is gravely harmed? Can we remember Mary and her feisty passion for watermelon as she lay disabled on the ground?

Can we perform the act of witnessing, as outlined by Clare, without automatically removing those whose exploitation is distinct and tremendous from claims to agency? What does it mean to witness the many oppressions on which these institutions of display rely while also engaging with the performers as active participants in their own lives? Looking to the lives of animals, Taylor writes: "[e]ven the most beaten down and terrorized animals often resist their domination or at the very least express a preference for not being harmed."[91] What other ways can we define agency—perhaps focusing on the feelings, relationships, or, as Wadiwel does, devices used to capture and display circus, zoo, and freak show performers—that may tell us how exploited and exhibited humans and animals sought to maintain influence over their own lives?

Clare points out that not everyone in the freak show desired to be exhibited; not all became "showmen and -women [and -animals] in their own right."[92] Agency is messy. Systems of oppression and exploitation can make expressions of agency hard to recognize. These systems of power and control work to limit the expressions of those labeled animal and freak. Is there a difference between becoming a showman and influencing one's life? Are there more ways we can look for agency than the adoption of a showman label?

I look to a small part of Bogdan's discussion of Barney Davis to question his exclusion from Bogdan's claims to agency. In a sentence exploring Barney Davis' life after the death of his brother Hiram, Bogdan reveals how Barney lived as more than an exhibited freak. Bogdan's discussion reveals that when Hanford A. Warner, who had been the Davis' manager for over thirty years, went blind, Barney took on the role of "companion" for his now disabled manager.[93] The word "companion" invokes ideas of friendship and support. We thus see Barney as a caregiver and someone who was involved in an important yet complex relationship during his freak career. A cross-movement approach demonstrates the need to continue to search for more nuanced models of agency and demands that we ask how more animal and human performers may have lived outside the role of victim.

Conclusion

Narratives of non-agency, often described as voicelessness, are harmful to those exhibited in the zoo, circus, and freak show. The dominant assumption that animals lack agency can have similar devastating effects as when we assume animals can't suffer—their lives have no meaning and neither does the abuse or confinement inflicted upon them. The notion that freak show performers expressed little to no agency is inseparable from dominant perspectives of disability as a medicalized problem found in the body (a conception according to which this problem is properly responded to with treatment and pity). Discourse within critical animal studies and critical disability studies that claims agency for these performers powerfully challenges such narratives. A cross-movement analysis can help us to see the similarities between discourses, evident in the freak animal, which demonstrates the importance of both the freak and the animal to all three institutions of display. This analysis can also help us to question those excluded by specific models of agency. In this chapter I have shown how a cross-movement approach can expose the gaps left in critical animal studies when agency in the zoo and circus is tied to the physical resistance of animals. Likewise, my analysis has exposed the gaps left in critical disability studies when agency in the freak show is tied to rational decision-making. Thinking through and with other models of agency shows us that we need to continue to reimagine and redefine agency, to encourage our conversations to expand and ask how those excluded may have lived as more-than-victims.

Notes

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62 Laurel Braitman, *Animal Madness: Inside Their Minds* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2014), 99.
63 Bogdan, *Freak Show,* 31.
64 Taylor, *Beasts of Burden*, 104.
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66 Clare, *Exile,* 97.
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70 Braitman, *Animal Madness*.
71 Hribal, *Fear of the Animal Planet*, 44.
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79 Durbach, *Spectacle of Deformity*, 11, emphasis added.
80 Bogdan, *Freak Show*, 267, emphasis added.
81 Bogdan, *Freak Show*, 134.
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83 Bogdan, *Freak Show*, 119.
84 Bogdan, *Freak Show*, 122.
85 Bogdan, *Freak Show*, 127.
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87 Clare, *Exile*, 112.
88 Corman, “Ideological Monkey Wrenching,” 252.
89 Wadiwel, “Do Fish Resist?” 221.
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Chapter 4

Disability and the ahuman

A story about a dog, a duck, and the woman who cared for them

Agnes Trzak

I first met Nica, a rescue dog, when I moved into the house she lived in. When the humans who shared their house with her pointed Nica out to me, my gaze met a feeble-looking dog with a matted coat in the most beautiful brown, red, and gray colors. Nica was reaching halfway up my shins, spinning wide circles, struggling to balance. One of the humans lovingly said: “This is Nica, our little nursing case.” “Nursing case,” or “Pflegefall”—using the German language, as my housemates did—in hindsight struck me as a denigrating description, when I became aware of its bureaucratic origin and dehumanizing implications. They continued by saying: “After she had a stroke, the doctors only gave her a few days but she’s been with us for almost a year now. She might die any minute.”

This same amazing (and vegan) houseshare was also home to a dozen ducks. They had their own fenced-off area in the yard that they could leave, a pond and a shed to sleep in, as well as two lakes a stone’s throw away from the house. Despite that, the ducks stayed in the yard, where they enjoyed regular, guaranteed meal times and relative safety. After an attack by predators, however, one duck was badly injured, suffering from an open wound under the wings and immobility.

This isn’t their story because neither one of them is here to tell it, nor is a human audience one that would know what was being communicated by these animals. Thus it is my story—a story about a dog and a duck with whom I spent time, and a story about myself, the woman who cared for them. That is the only story I can tell, and it is one of speculation, assumptions, patronizing encounters, and especially one of love and care.

Foremost, it is not a narrative about animals but more so about humans. When relating to Nica and the duck, I learned that every encounter was always already about me, the human. All thoughts, all decisions, and all emotions that I can write about with certainty were mine, and I was only ever able to project them upon the ways I related to these animals, as this is all we, as humans, can ever do: speculate and assume. This is so because, in these relationships, I held all of the power over them. Although I do not deny the existence of the animals’ own decisions and emotions, I was in the position to ignore their agency. Even as I made space for their individual expressions to be noticed, I could only ever *interpret* the meanings they produced. Attributing meaning through interpreting symbols is the essence of any communicative practice—within our own species and beyond. It is thus our responsibility to act gently and with kindness.

In this chapter, I draw upon my relationships with Nica and the duck, as well as how my connections to them were interpreted as symptoms of my own madness, to argue that we need to explore new ways of communicating with and, specifically, of *relating to* domesticated, non-human animals. I integrate scholarship from critical animal studies and critical disability studies to analyze my experience of disability and dependency in these interspecies encounters. Additionally, I utilize Schüssler Fiorenza's concept of *kyriarchy* and Luce Irigaray's analysis of *specularization* to demonstrate how disability and the limits of the human are constructed through a process of objectification. Objectification creates an infrastructure that simply denies the fact that Othered individuals create and express meaning. This is a social architecture that is inaccessible, disempowering, and impairing to mad and disabled people as well as animals, both discursively and materially. Disability must not be understood as a mere metaphor for the ways kyriarchy disallows women and animals to express their untarnished personal truths and in doing so disables them. Neither, as Sunaura Taylor reminds us, is disability to be perceived as a medical issue concerning individuals on a very personal and intimate level, often constructed as a private tragedy. Rather, we must acknowledge that disability is social and political.

Kyriarchy, dependency, and objectification

Let us explore what it means to be recognized as fully human, or to have the power to decide the ways we relate to and communicate with one another. Power relationships come into existence in what Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza terms "kyriarchy."[1] Kyriarchy identifies the social system that institutionalizes privilege and oppression and the power dynamics that come with it. As the etymology indicates, kyriarchy implies the rule (*archō*) of a superior and sovereign master (*kyrios*). For the purpose of this work then, my discussion of kyriarchy includes conversations about disability, race, gender, class, and species, which are all identity markers that are exposed to systematic objectification. In this chapter, I focus on the ways kyriarchy requires speciesism and ableism to function. Ableism, as Taylor summarizes it, "is the historical and cultural perpetuation of discrimination and marginalization of certain bodies labeled impaired, incapable, or abnormal, and the simultaneous privileging of bodies labeled able-bodied."[2]

Within kyriarchy, moral personhood is equated with independence and self-sufficiency.[3] Each and every animal is placed into an anthropocentric context where the height of the neoliberal totalitarianism of privatization has led to the concept of dependency being constructed as not only (economically and socially) burdensome but more so as a justification for the horrors we inflict upon animals and fellow humans who are dependent. This happens (and is reinforced) when the power holder polices and takes control of their bodies, their homes, and their futures. Further, dependency is feared as a threat to personal dignity, socioeconomic stability, and freedom, and the need for personal, economic, social, and medical assistance. These are arguments deployed to justify the social exclusion and political inequalities suffered by disabled people.[4]

In a world in which being dependent signifies weakness, vulnerability, and passivity, the animal can only ever be perceived as an object whose agency is disabled in relation to the human. The objectified Other is positioned in relation to the dominating subject, which in an anthropocentric world always belongs to the human species. However, humans do not only dominate all those categorized as animals but also those who are not deemed human-enough among their own species. Through Eurocentric hegemony—that is, the production of meaning based on principles of dichotomous taxonomies that create hierarchies among every entity occupying space and time—the power holder can establish himself as human-enough. Sunaura Taylor reminds us that, in fact, dependency is intrinsic to our existence and that care should be an act of solidarity rather than charity: "The truth is, all of us are dependent. . . . Yet dependence often becomes an excuse for exploitation and has extremely negative connotations—no one wants to be dependent."[5]

Kyriarchal epistemologies are based on the Eurocentric presumption that science can accurately determine the state and value of any given circumstances through principles of reason, which in turn makes possible the allocation of meaning. In a society that privileges knowledge extraction by masculinist white subjects, our lived experience as Others, including women, animals, the mad, and the disabled, is shaped by exactly the process of *extraction*. By that I mean that knowledge is created through a forceful uprooting and removal of a reality that belongs to us, an isolation of that which is intrinsic to our individuality, and its placement under the (metaphorical or literal) microscope. Coercively ripped out of our bodies, our essence lies on a microscope slide, decontextualized and isolated. Magnified through a lens, this image/imitation of reality hits the rational, objective, scientific, and masculinist eye. Disability studies scholars document the devaluing of non-normative bodies and minds through this process of objectification in medicine, literature, and culture.[6] Noting the connection between ableism and speciesism, Taylor observes this very process of objectification—not only as a discursive tool of knowledge extraction but also as a very material occurrence with real-life implications for both disabled people and animals: "The medical profession's gaze on disability is calculated, measuring, labeling, and dissecting. The disabled person becomes a body to be cropped, numbered, and labeled—not unlike a butcher's diagram."[7]

In this section, I use Luce Irigaray's concept of "specularization"[8] to uncover this disabling violence of Western knowledge production. In "Love's Labours Lost?," Bill Hughes, Linda McKie, Debra Hopkins, and Nick Watson argue that Irigaray's analysis of the devaluation of feminine care work and embodiment is helpful for thinking about disability and the ethics of care.[9] Similarly, Minae Inahara uses Irigaray's work on difference and embodied subjectivity to critique able-bodied norms.[10] Irigaray critiques phallogocentrism, that is, the centering of that which combines the hegemony of the masculine with the privileging of the systematic and logical. Phallogocentrism is thus what Judith Butler calls a "masculinist signifying economy."[11] As Irigaray and other feminists have demonstrated, it is with phallogocentrism that we create an order of signification that is based on a dichotomous symbolic and material opposition of one thing to every other thing. This is why anybody who does not comply with the dominant classification within supposedly clear-cut binary categories, such as those of gender, race, or ability, is othered and excluded from knowledge production. In this process, the subject—or knower—uses a method of specularization to discover, occupy, and define the Other by means of his own knowledge about himself, as that is the only body he can truly know. The concept of specularization is thus a method of penetration, an opening-up of a hidden crevice and of illuminating this newly discovered space so as to observe its nature and extract possible parts for further examination. The findings of such an inspection can never be anything more than speculative assumptions.

Within kyriarchy then, the power-holder (the master, *kyrios*) is found in the figure of the knower. In various European social and historical contexts, the knower comes in different forms, such as the scientist, the teacher, the father, the brother, the husband, the priest, or god. Thus, the knower, who is the dominant subject of kyriarchy, is the white, able-bodied, masculinist human due to the long-lasting custom of exclusion, denial, and destruction of knowledges, affects, and realities created by individuals who are not white, masculine, able-bodied humans. To expose the process of objectification, it is important to expose the subject responsible for it. Thus I find it useful to conceptualize the *(hu)man*, as the dominant power holder in contemporary kyriarchy: the figure of the knower, embodying imperialist masculinity and the power to decide who is human-enough and who is "only" ever animal.

Distinguishing between the human, as a signifier of species belonging, and the (hu)man is helpful in that the latter always belongs to *homo sapiens* but also additionally perpetuates kyriarchy by making use of his white, able masculinism to secure his power over Others. Thus, the category of the human and the taxonomies it creates are put into question here, and the focus lies in exposing and defining the power holder. Revealing the (hu)man as the divine figure of the master, as well as linking his identity directly to that of the white able masculinist human, is essential in disrupting the process of objectification that the (hu)man perpetuates. The (hu)man in kyriarchy uses phallogocentric knowledge production to throw the Other into a perpetual cycle of objectification, so as to enable the exchange and consumption of the object within the (hu)man economy.

Martha Nussbaum tells us that "the seeing and/or treating of someone as an object"[12] can happen by various means, such as denying someone their autonomy and integrity or treating them as interchangeable and only useful in relation to the subject. Objectification then turns an Other into a *thing*. In the *Sexual Politics of Meat*, Carol Adams famously explains the process by applying the concept of the absent referent to the historical circumstances of people of color, women, and animals under imperial patriarchy.[13] Referents, or individuals and their personalities, are destroyed and made absent both linguistically and materially. Taxonomies that create classes between those who are (hu)man and the Other rely on the Other as an absent referent. As we learn from Adams, by inventing terms of *massification*, such as "animals," "women," and "the disabled," we extract the individuality of all the different personalities making up these groups, we make their various desires imperceptible, and we contribute to the homogenization of each group as an opposite to those who are (hu)man.

Additionally, specularization also works through the embodied process of objectification, which is inextricably linked to fragmentation and consumption. We can witness this material process especially when observing carnist practices but also in many cases of violence toward marginalized human bodies. Thus, conceptually as in actuality, objectification works through "fragmentation, or brutal dismemberment, and finally consumption."[14] Through consumption, the Other, as absent referent—that is, as an extracted and reappropriated piece of a former self-contained individual—is transformed into an object of exchange, even a currency that allows the (hu)man to increase his own significance and status by withdrawing value from the objectified Others and at the same time disabling them.

Language as disabling

In order to turn an individual into a consumable commodity, the (hu)man uses speculative methods to determine the value of his objects. The knower, being the most powerful, the most-human, will find ways of defining Others through dehumanizing categorization. From Mel Y. Chen we learn that objectification is an intricate process of assigning grades of animacy—that is, of humanness, aliveness, and ability: linguistically "an adult male who is 'free' (as opposed to enslaved), able-bodied, and with intact linguistic capacities, one who is also familiar, individual, and positioned nearby, stands at the top of the hierarchy as the most 'animate' or active agent within [the] grammars of ordering" of many language families.[15] Individuals who deviate from this kyriarchal figure are categorized based on their speculative grade of animacy. Chen further describes the way that agents in the linguistic hierarchy are deprived of their ability to act and be alive (in other words, the ways they are disabled) by means of feminization and animalization.

Linguistic objectification denounces the Other as not-human-enough, an inanimate thing without desires, an *it*. This robs the marginalized individual of the ability to self-identify as well as of the capability to (not) consent. Further, many languages include metaphors that are appropriated from the experience of marginalized groups: "a state of paralysis," "crippling fear," or being "blind" to an obvious occurrence are examples of, as Taylor writes, "disability metaphors . . . [which] are based on misrepresentations and lack of knowledge of what actual disabled people experience. Similarly, animals are metaphorized, and are reduced to placeholders for 'our bad behaviors and traits, as representation of what we don't want to be."[16] This means that any relation between the (hu)man and the objectified will be influenced by a (hu)man perception of the circumstances in which both bodies find themselves, which leads to the distorted construction of their desires and capabilities.

It is important to address concerns about the animalization of disabled people and comparisons between animals and disabled individuals.[17] Disability studies has come a long way in repairing the damage caused by the medical industry as well as in the fields of sociology and philosophy when it comes to comparisons and classifications of life. To this day Eurocentric thought must undo the consequences of hierarchical taxonomies forced upon everything: we are taught to categorize all life on a sliding scale that begins with the "healthy" and "unimpaired" human (both being subjective, ever-changing, and more cultural than medical concepts) and ends with a sick, impaired, and thus useless animal. This scale is justified by (and at the same time justifies) concepts such as the status of one's sanity, strength, intellect, communicative capability, and physical capacities and appearance—the meaning of all these being subject to cultural and historical context.

As we learn from Taylor, in Eurocentric, capitalist patriarchy, we come to identify and categorize one another based on *lack* instead of *difference*, which makes room for the idle argument that (intellectual) disability and animality are comparable, as we measure ability and value based on "specific human and neurotypical 'morally relevant abilities' [which] harms both [human and animal] populations."[18] Thus Taylor urges us to cease this pattern of thought that can be used to argue for and against the ethical consideration of disabled and/or animal individuals. In other words, determining value through (lack of) capacities is an irrelevant and harmful practice, even when it aids the argument that animals should be granted moral consideration based on their presumed similarity to neurodiverse humans. Instead, as Taylor argues, "we must argue against the very notion that beings with neurotypical human capacities are inherently more valuable than those without.'[19]

The dehumanized individual can thus never be represented as themselves, with their intrinsic values, independent of their relation to the (hu)man, as they only exist discursively through the speculative assumptions and definitions attributed to extracted pieces of them. Assuming another's identity and desires by inferring our own ideas onto them can be unlearned if we let our actions be informed by ahuman philosophy. As Patricia MacCormack suggests, it is within an ahuman philosophy that we discover ways of relating to what in current discourse signifies the animal, or more generally the animalized Other, without objectifying whatever the animal is.[20] Linguistically the Other can only ever exist in a (hu)man world, as a representation of something discovered, defined, and extracted by (hu)man knowledge. In the instance of perceiving an animal as *animal* or a disabled person as *disabled*, (hu)man systems of signification are at work, construing meaning that is removed from the reality of the Other.

As MacCormack puts it, the problem lies within human speech, which only allows us to speak *for* and *about* animalized Others, as "all speech is human and all phrases are between humans."[21] To create empowering relations between the (hu) man and the not-(hu)man-enough, it is thus essential to dismantle the (hu)man. It is within an ahuman understanding of relational politics that we can rupture (hu)man ways of relating to animals, so as to refrain from constructing animals and all dehumanized Others as our own products to be utilized and consumed. MacCormack imagines the ahuman as "nonparasitic recognition."[22] In practical terms, the ahuman has to be seen as a state for which to strive, a continuous project, and an ethics that informs our daily encounters. We don't occupy just one identity at a time: it is by no means unlikely that we embody both (hu)man power and objectified marginalization ourselves. The ahuman is thus not demanding an abrupt halt of identity politics (which is not only impossible but would also harm all of us who are fighting to become perceptible). A complete rejection and abandonment of *identity* would mean a denial of the suffering caused by kyriarchy and experienced by those with not-(hu)man-enough identities. I experienced the dilemma between acting with an ahuman approach whilst still embodying so many (hu)man traits, when caring for Nica, the dog, and the injured duck.

The disabled animals and the mad woman

It was the end of summer when I was introduced to Nica, who had suffered a stroke during her journey from Romania to Germany, having been crammed into a trailer among many other, much bigger dogs who had nowhere but the trailer to relieve themselves. Ever since that experience, she was struggling to walk in a straight line or stand still; she could reach her water and food bowl only with great difficulty. During the first few days living with this dog who, due to a veterinarian's estimate, we were expecting to die any minute, my emotions alternated between admiration for these kind-hearted humans who took this old, disabled dog into their care and strong doubt regarding the quality of life she had. I soon became aware of the ableism that produces both of these feelings. Unlearning this is an ongoing process. Similarly, finding out how to relate to Nica was hard at the beginning for two reasons. Firstly, I had never cared for a dog with whom I could not communicate by decoding stereotypical behaviors, such as tail wagging, their tone of voice, and their ear movement. I knew getting to know her would take more time than it would take with other dogs. Secondly, the social contract between me and my new housemates, whom I was also getting to know, made it hard for me to voice any suggestions regarding Nica's care when I first moved in.

Although we shared common anti-speciesist and anti-capitalist values, my feeling of living in *their* house and relating to Nica as *their* dog initially prevented me from acting fully in accordance with my own moral compass and capabilities when caring for Nica. Soon, however, we developed a bond, and I became so friendly with Nica that the human part of our household came to consider Nica as "my dog" and me as her human. It was not long until my housemates entrusted me and my partner with the care of Nica, and the more time I spent with her, the more I picked up on her ways of communicating with me, which she would do through subtle gestures of lifting her front paw when wanting to get out of bed or smacking her lips when wanting to drink. Whereas we were used to other dogs making themselves perceptible to us very overtly, we had to make ourselves perceptible to Nica and pay the greatest attention to her gentle communication.

This is why Nica was medically and discursively categorized as a dying dog, even a dog not worth keeping alive. She could not care for herself and she could only barely ask for help from humans. As a dog, Nica was firmly integrated into the production of meaning as a signifier for "man's best friend," a companion who exists as emotional support for the human and to make the human, as a social animal, feel needed. At times, a domesticated companion animal is referred to as a family member; at other times, the human is that animal's owner. Either way, in kyriarchal relationships companion animals are infantilized or turned into property, which ensures the human's power over them.

Nica ruptured this clear-cut purpose of "having a dog." She could not fulfill the role of a happy-go-lucky dog, frolicking in the yard, interacting with other dogs and humans. Instead she was utterly dependent on us humans. This made it very easy for outsiders to comment on our "keeping her alive for *no purpose*," tying the purpose of Nica's existence completely to the entertainment of humans that they could no longer see her providing. This logic assumes that the purpose of a dog's existence lies only in their relation to humans. Nica's role as a valuable part of the community in our household and her intrinsic value were lost on anybody who could not perceive her without animalizing and objectifying her existence.

When Nica's hind legs weakened, she used a wheelchair, which gave her the stability she needed to walk straight. Prior to this, Nica had been constructed as a "poor" dog, suffering under my inability to let go of her. In her wheelchair, however, her presence in public had a very different effect on people: she was fetishized as cute, strong, and a "little fighter," whereas people met me with admiration and compliments for being "kind" and "empathetic." Lauren O'Laughlin writes about a "transspecies intimacy" that is evoked in humans when technologies such as wheelchairs or prosthetic limbs are used to aid an animal's mobility. O'Laughlin states that this connection is a product of human recognition of "the shared precarity of animals, both human and non-human."[23] The (often-times internalized) doubt and even abuse I was met with when Nica was seen struggling to walk straight without the wheelchair must have thus been the result of her not being able to fulfill her designated function as a pet animal. Similar to farmed animals whose desirability, as O'Laughlin writes, is tied to the amount of goods "they can produce when alive (milk, eggs, etc.)," Nica's value was tied to her functioning as an entertaining companion or toy. When "edible" animals can no longer be utilized, "their productivity is converted to meat."[24] However Nica, as a dog, was not constructed as edible in this instance. A termination of her life was nonetheless suggested by outsiders, under the guise of relieving her from her suffering, which people assumed she must have been experiencing merely as a result of her dependency upon humans.

It was my mother who, when she first met Nica, reminded me that any ableism people were expressing toward her was a product of the continuous separation of disabled bodies from able ones. Making disability imperceptible, normalizing and naturalizing the able body leads to people meeting disabled Others through specularization: the disabled body in kyriarchy often evokes pity, anger, or disgust in the able-bodied, more-(hu)man individual, as an interaction between both is based on the speculative assumptions of the abled about the disabled. Disabled people are often infantilized, treated condescendingly, or otherwise patronized because their mental or physical abilities diverge so far from the social norm that ableist individuals interpret them as inconvenient or simply wrong. In a kyriarchal setting we don't ask neurodiverse people about ways to construct the world that would accommodate them because we already assume their mental capacities to be so compromised that only an expert figure with the necessary knowledge could decide what is best for them.

To do the opposite of using speculative methods when communicating with othered individuals is to be less-(hu)man and more ahuman. In most social justice movements we achieve this by not making use of our own privilege and at the same time by giving a platform to those we oppress. How could I do either of these things when relating to Nica? I would have to meet her without exerting power over her, when through capitalism I have learned that having someone utterly depend on you gives you power and leaves them, in turn, vulnerable and perhaps to some extent lesser than. It was clear to me I would have to give her a platform to express herself, her emotions and desires, but how could I ever understand her expressions when I entangled her whole person into a world of (hu)man meanings?

I faced a similar conundrum when caring for the duck who had been attacked by predators. Her wounds were deep and her legs seemed broken as she slid across the ground. The responsibilities we, as humans, had toward this duck were not as obvious to us as they were with our canine companion Nica. In our (hu)man system of signs and meanings, ducks represent wild animals who, in general, are far less exposed to humans than domesticated animals. We don't give them names, we don't coddle them, nor do they depend on us for food and walks. This particular duck, however, did share a home with us and she did depend on us for sustenance. I suspect that it is this rupture of the clear line between wild and domesticated, between clearly not-(hu)man and somewhat-(hu)man animals that made my housemates and I debate our ethical responsibilities after the attack that left the duck injured and disabled. Shocked and under pressure to relieve the duck from her pain, we discussed all the options we could think of: we could simply not intervene, which would let the duck either recuperate or die a dignified death without additional stress caused by our intervention. Another option briefly addressed was to help the duck pass on straight away, even using her body as food for the dogs who lived with us. For most of our lives, ducks were constructed as edible and, further, their status was not as (hu)man as Nica's, which allowed us to be more emotionally detached from the fate of the duck's dead body. Imagining Nica's dead body being eaten by other animals caused me great pain, whereas it almost felt to me as if it made sense that we serve a dead duck to the dogs.

Both of these emotions are completely anthropocentric and a product of the way we construct animals' identities in Eurocentric patriarchy. Perhaps most striking, however, was the fact that killing the duck was made an option so early on in our conversation. Perhaps this was because death is understood as relief from suffering or perhaps it was because caring for someone, under kyriarchy, is seen as a burden. At this stage we had no idea whether we were dealing with a temporary injury or expecting to care for a long-term disabled animal.

The result of our discussion was similarly (hu)man: we decided to intervene, remove the duck from the others, and bring her inside. Providing human ways of care to her, keeping her wound clean, her body warm, and her environment quiet and dark, we were hoping she would survive and not die from the additional strain we were putting on her through intervening. Friends and family whom we had told about the incident univocally supported and even applauded us for caring for this animal. Whereas with Nica many people judged our actions as ridiculous or even cruel, not a single doubt from outsiders was voiced with regard to what we were doing with and to the duck.

Capitalist health care is concerned with the prevention of injury as well as the curing of disability, which leads to a neglect of finding solutions for permanently disabled individuals.[25] Our aims and expectations when caring for the duck were to foster healing so as to release her as soon as possible from our imposed quarantine, whereas with Nica's care, we were providing available options that would make it easier for her to navigate the world in the long run. Although my relationship with both animals evoked different reactions from outsiders, personally I asked myself very similar questions whilst caring for both of them: How should I, as a human, best respond to the needs of these animals? How could I know what they desire? Was I fetishizing life over death and was I fetishizing the animals as they made me feel needed, giving my being a purpose only in relation to their disability?

These questions bear significance not only in relation to disabled animals but with regard to any human-animal relationship that, under kyriarchy, always already presupposes the human in a role of power over, and responsibility toward, the animal. In a speciesist and ableist world, human conceptions of disability are converted and enforced upon animals. As Taylor writes, we could never have the possibility of understanding "how other animals comprehend physical or cognitive difference within their species."[26] Thus we use specularization and impose our own, constructed and learned, modes of expression upon animals. This became obvious to me when I reflected upon the ways I was relating to the duck.

Not only had I assigned a gender to the duck, based on the restricted (hu)man, Eurocentric, and scientific ways of gendering the world, but I had also soon given her a name, Frida. After a couple of weeks she seemed much less scared of humans entering the bathroom; she began to use the pool we had arranged for her and moved around the room more confidently than before. The relationship between us, which I had forced by removing her from her family and isolating her in an alien place, seemingly began to transform into a slightly more consensual one—or so I imagined, as Frida was less reluctant to interact. After many weeks in quarantine, in much better condition, still limping, we released her, after we had seen her reaction to the ducks' voices outside. It seemed to us that she was responding to their voices, as loudly as she could, hectically moving about in the bathroom. Not having any veterinarian or animal behavior knowledge, we had no way of knowing whether her health would deteriorate or whether she would still be accepted by the others once we placed her outside again. Regardless, we could no longer justify isolating this non-consenting animal—and indeed it is debatable to what extent the human concept of consent is even applicable to animals. All we could do was to pay attention to Frida and interpret the signs she was communicating to us. This is when we successfully reintroduced her to her family.

Contrary to Nica, Frida did not demand constant attention, which is at least part of the reason why I did not experience any backlash from outsiders. My care for Nica evoked judgment and a questioning of my sanity, despite the fact that removing the duck from her familiar home and isolating her in a human bathroom must be understood as ethically far more questionable than caring for a disabled domesticated dog. Nonetheless, Nica's quality of life and my dedication to her were questioned far more than in Frida's case. I suspect that this was the result of an interplay between sexist and capitalist expectations. To provide Nica with the care she deserved demanded twenty-four-hour attention, which I shared with my housemates. From the time my partner and I took full responsibility for Nica until the moment we helped her pass on, we both worked from home. Neither of us had an income, as the academic work we were both involved in at the time was unwaged.

As we learn from Emily Gaarder, the majority of the movement for the rights and liberation of animals is constituted by women. Women, regardless of their age or political and educational background, are more likely to be outspoken and active against the oppression of animals. Gaarder articulates a sentiment experienced by women, including myself, when she writes, "A movement dominated by women struggles for legitimacy. The image of animal rights still suffers from stereotypical portrayals of overly emotional and irrational [read mad] activists."[27] Indeed, concern for animals is often regarded as psychologically abnormal: just as vegetarian diets can be pathologized as symptoms of a mental disability,[28] my choice to prioritize the well-being of a dog who could not fulfill the conventional criteria of the ideal pet was seen as mad in kyriarchal society. Specifically, in capitalist society it seems unreasonable to use the time that should be spent working (or looking for work, preparing for it, or resting after it) with the care of an animal who supposedly serves no purpose to society. From a (hu)man perspective this decision seems guided by emotions that are of no use to a system based on the exploitation of all for the sake of profit margins. Further, as Taylor notes, "disabled individuals are often represented as a drain on . . . resources" as a result of a narrow understanding of independence, productivity, and value.[29] Thus, the emotional and physical labor I participated in while caring for Nica did not only prevent the reproduction of expected labor relations under capitalism, it also actively ruptured them. Being unwaged and childfree, unmarried and a dedicated social justice activist, I am not able to meet the expectations kyriarchy has of me: a woman in her late twenties, without a stable income or (upcoming) offspring, cannot be categorized as either wife and mother or employer/employee and so spills out of the proper categories designated to adult women.

When relating to Nica and making decisions *with* her, and ultimately *for* her, it was inevitable that I subjected myself to the opinions of others, including friends, family, veterinarians, and other animal care professionals. I was aware that much of the advice I was given was informed by ableism and the assumption that Nica was suffering because of her impaired mobility. Being a woman made me aware of the sexist undertones much of the advice came with. I had to practice communication with Nica that would disregard the (internalized) sexism and ableism I had learned and find ways of communicating with her that were not based on anthropocentric specularization.

Julia Kristeva's concept of the *abject* was helpful in exploring this relationship.[30] She defines the abject as that which transgresses the boundaries between inside and outside, and self and other. The abject is that which slips away and thus cannot be examined and categorized so as to serve a function in kyriarchy. During what psychoanalysts refer to as ego-formation, which could be understood as becoming-(hu)man, we learn to control, dismiss, and suppress the corporeal process of abjection so as to become proper-functioning, well-respected, and profitable members of kyriarchal society. Reproducing proper femininity means continuously striving to become but never actually becoming (hu)man by denying the abject and meeting standards of control, restraint, and evenness. In other words, the abject, or all that is feminized and animalized, is expected to be repressed and made imperceptible.[31] This means that madness and disability are also made to disappear—metaphorically and literally. Kim Socha and Laura Wright both evoke this idea of annihilating oneself, "disappearing and making oneself the absent referent,"[32] in order to meet patriarchal expectations. Controlling one's own being means deciding when, what, and in what amounts substances enter or leave the body (such as food, drugs, other bodies) or become noticeable by taking up too much or the wrong space on the body (such as hair, crutches, prostheses). When we make these decisions while disregarding or not fulfilling kyriarchal expectations, we are not only animalized but also made imperceptible and impaired.

Conclusions: transforming a (hu)man present into an ahuman future

Those who are othered and even disabled through objectification by the speculum of the (hu)man are removed from the (hu)man world, and their modes of expression are ignored and erased from past and future discourse. The violence of objectifying and making imperceptible those who are queer; those who are Black, poor, mad, and disabled; or those who are animals also manifests in actions that are not as easily identifiable: silencing, minimizing, and hiding those bodies does not always necessitate material conditions but already takes place structurally on a societal level as well as internally on a personal level.

Every time we express ourselves through white, Eurocentric, able masculinism, we are granted benefits in kyriarchy, which at the same time means we are using this privilege to oppress those who are not given that privilege automatically. This is so because not only is the violence against the Other made imperceptible through specularization but the (hu)man subject and the power exerted by him is also rendered imperceptible. Thus, as we learn from many liberation movements, it is critical to locate and make perceptible privilege and power and the subject who controls them instead of solely focusing on making injustice and violence perceptible. Once we use specularization against the (hu)man, to discover, open up, and dissect every part of this powerful subject—in society and ourselves—we can begin to abolish it. The process of eradicating the (hu)man is then the process of becoming ahuman. If the goal of a liberation movement is to bring an end to the exploitation, fetishization, utilization, and consumption of a group, such as that of disabled people, women, or animals, then the ahuman proposes an undoing of the kyriarchal subject that oppresses them as the solution.

In addition to dismantling the (hu)man, MacCormack suggests that only through turning away and leaving the Other be can we escape the continuous reproduction of oppression and constant disabling of the Other. For an anti-speciesist politics, this implies ending all human-animal relations under kyriarchy, simply because the animal will always be an object to the human in an anthropocentric world. Bringing all speculative relations to animals to a halt then results in empowering, emancipating, and enabling animals; as MacCormack writes: "*I am able to so you are able to*. This ensures obligation remains with the 'I.' 'You' is diminished as a comprehensible addressee to a life with will and appetite unknown but to which we are obliged without demanding obligation or reciprocity."[33] Using this principle as a guiding philosophy, the ahuman does not encourage us to instantly cease all interaction between humans and animals, and it does by no means demand an abandonment of those dependent on us, animal or human. Rather, an ahuman future bears possibilities to refrain from using Others for our own benefit by dismantling the power relationships into which we continuously force those whom we animalize. It is the derogative meaning we ascribe to dependency, as Taylor reminds us, that "allows and even excuses" the exploitation of animals by humans.[34] The ahuman project thus advocates the gradual dissolution and eventual abolition of these relations, but not through an abandonment of those trapped in them without alternative prospects. Instead, the ahuman encourages us to expose the power dynamics between humans and animals and to undo them in favor of the objectified Other.

When we care for animals, the ahuman encourages us to relinquish our control over them and instead allow them to direct us as much as possible. When caring for Nica, I experienced this through acknowledging that I could never understand the intricacies of her expression. I wanted to meet her demands and unlearn all the (hu)man expectations I had of her as a dog. This principle, of giving up assumptions, expectations, and the power that comes with them, must be extended not only to disabled animals and humans but to everyone. In fact, becoming ahuman can be practiced every time a (hu)man subject interacts with an othered individual. All encounters with formerly objectified Others, in ahuman practice, will be encounters without assumptions, expectations, and demands. It remains an open question, however, to what extent we as kyriarchal subjects can remake the world in such a way while coexisting with animals, when our mere presence disables what we call "the animal."

My friend Lilith Cooper pointed out in a conversation with me that through kyriarchal power relations, we are "entrapped in a not just human, but neurotypical world of signifiers where the verbal drowns out so much." It should be our aim then, as Lili suggested, to turn communication into an embodied irrational practice. To achieve this, the ahuman does not call for a negation, invalidation, or extinction of animals and those animalized, disabled, racialized, and feminized but rather demands the undoing and elimination of our (hu)man traits and our continuous imitation of white, masculinist, imperialist behaviors.

Thus, an ahuman practice entails an abandonment of (hu)man communication and the ways we create meaning. As Taylor writes, "disabled people and domesticated animals are burdened with many people's stereotypes about what it is to be unnatural and abnormal, as well as assumptions about the indignity of dependency."[35] Striving to become ahuman, however, will make it possible to leave these assumptions behind and dislodge our care for one another from oppressive power dynamics. Caring for someone who does not communicate using signifiers familiar to ours involves that we must "pay attention to [these] individuals—learn from them so that we can recognize their agency and preferences,"[36] as Taylor writes. Becoming ahuman then simply means abolishing the process of relating, that is, the hermeneutic moment in which we infer, assume, and ascribe meaning. Ahuman practice thus removes the moment in communication that prescribes and enforces disability upon the Other. Instead, the ahuman grants space to those formerly animalized, disabled, and objectified and reduces the presence of all that is (hu)man.

Notes

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3 Eva Feder Kittay, "The Ethics of Care, Dependence, and Disability," *Ratio Juris* 24, no. 1 (2011): 49–58.

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5 Sunaura Taylor, "Interdependent Animals: A Feminist Disability Ethic-of-Care," in *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals & the Earth*, eds. Carol J. Adams and Lori Gruen (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 112.

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15 Mel Y. Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 27.
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18 Sunaura Taylor, *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation* (New York: The New Press, 2017), 69.
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20 Patricia MacCormack, *Posthuman Ethics: Embodiment and Cultural Theory* (Fernham: Ashgate, 2012).
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27 Emily Gaarder, *Women and the Animal Rights Movement* (Piscataway: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 11.
28 Sunaura Taylor, "Vegans, Freaks, and Animals: Toward a New Table Fellowship," *American Quarterly* 65, no. 3(2013): 757–64; Bradley Lewis, "A Mad Fight: Psychiatry and Disability Activism," in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013); Chloë Taylor, "Abnormal Appetites: Foucault, Atwood, and the Normalization of a Meat-Based Diet," *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* 10, no. 4 (December 2012).
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30 Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).
31 See Sunaura Taylor, *Defiant Daughters: 21 Women on Art, Activism, Animals, and the Sexual Politics of Meat* (Brooklyn: Lantern Books, 2013).
32 Laura Wright, "Disordered Pronouns, Disordered Eating," in *Defiant Daughters: 21 Women on Art, Activism, Animals, and the Sexual Politics of Meat*, eds. Kara Davis and Wendy Lee (Brooklyn: Lantern Books, 2013), 183.

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34 Taylor, "Beasts of Burden," 200.
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Part II

Thinking animality and disability together in political and moral theory

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Chapter 5

Against performance criteria

Stephanie Jenkins

In a *New York Times* article entitled "Unspeakable Conversations," Harriet McBryde Johnson describes her introduction to Peter Singer:

> Singer extends his hand. I hesitate. I shouldn't shake hands with the Evil One. . . . Hereabouts, the rule is that if you're not prepared to shoot on sight, you have to be prepared to shake hands. I give Singer the three fingers of my hand that still work. "Good afternoon, Mr. Singer. I'm here for Not Dead Yet."[1]

Johnson's initial feelings toward Singer, just barely avoiding the criteria for shooting on sight, respond to his utilitarian beliefs that she would have been "better off" if her parents had been given the choice to kill her as a baby, because she was born with a muscle wasting disease. A philosopher of animal rights, Singer only affords moral consideration to persons, which he defines in Lockean terms as "[a] thinking intelligent being that has reason and reflection and can consider itself as itself, in the same thinking thing, in different times and places."[2] Some *homo sapiens*, Singer believes, do not pass the threshold for moral standing, while some nonhumans do. In 2001, Johnson, a disability lawyer, activist, and advocate, traveled to Princeton University and publicly contested Singer's belief that disability strips individuals of their quality of life and moral considerability.

Although it is not articulated in this form, the debate between Singer and Johnson concerns two different understandings of moral considerability. Singer represents what I term the *Capacities Criterion Approach*, while Johnson implicitly advocates what I call the *Species Affinity Approach*. Their interaction shows how ways of paying attention can involve inattentions in our moral solicitudes and how these patterns can also become frames that delimit whom we are responsible to by circumscribing the moral community. In fact, such presuppositions shape "who counts as a who," or who is perceived as a moral other deserving of one's attention. My aim is to move beyond the juxtaposition of these two positions found in the Singer-Johnson debate toward an inclusive, embodied ethics.

A moral anthropology, whether implicit or explicit, undergirds all ethical theories; any attempt to articulate normative principles necessitates an understanding of the sorts of beings to which moral action applies. Consequently, critical disability studies and critical animal studies scholars share a common goal of dismantling the disembodied, universal subject of ethics. Nearly all the arguments used to justify the domination of non-human animals and disabled humans rely on the hierarchical comparison of capacities deemed essential to a meaningful life, such as rationality, language use, future thinking, and independence. This "animacy hierarchy" or "scale of relative sentience that places [normate] humans at the very top"[3] is produced through the speciesist and ableist "performance criteria"[4] that define notions of moral status and circumscribe the moral community. Beings who lack—or are perceived to lack—these essential capacities exist outside the protections of moral responsibility.

In this chapter, I argue against the use of performance tests for defining the boundaries of the moral community. Contrary to Margaret Somerville, I do not believe that human life is "sacred in some unique and special sense."[5] To the contrary, I contend that attempts to posit such uniqueness ultimately rely upon ableist and speciesist performance criteria. I first proceed by reviewing ethical literature on moral status. Drawing on conceptual tools from critical disability studies and critical animal studies, I identify two common approaches for defining moral considerability: the Capacities Criterion and Species Affinity Approaches. I argue against these moralities of competition in order to advance an inclusive, embodied ethics that calls for a Precautionary Principle of Moral Status. This chapter is a project in search of "novel coalitionary possibilities"[6] between advocates of non-human animals and disabled humans.

In this chapter I focus on disabled humans and non-human animals in order to highlight weak points in performance-driven morality; because many contemporary ethicists use non-human animals and people with disabilities as case studies of indeterminate moral status, animality and disability are clear examples of how normative performance criteria undergird moral thought. My aim is not to compare disabled humans to non-human animals. I do, however, agree with Sunaura Taylor that objections to such comparisons are grounded in speciesism.[7] Additionally, I am not proposing that ableism and speciesism are equivalent. Both of these conceptual moves artificially homogenize differences among embodiments of diverse origins, etiologies, and experiences, as well as differences among countless species of non-human animals. Moreover, such comparisons ignore the ways that ableism and speciesism are mutually constitutive of one another and the context-specific differential effects of ableism and speciesism.

Delimiting the moral community: who matters morally?

In contemporary moral theory, debates about the boundaries of moral consideration typically focus on "moral patienthood" and strive to articulate a "moral taxonomy."[8] A moral patient is "an individual who has interests, [and] is diametrically opposed to being considered a resource."[9] Bernstein continues, "We normally care, as we should, how our actions affect the moral patient itself; its well-being is a concern to us."[10] Animals and people with disabilities (especially cognitive) are discussed as moral patients.

Moral and political theories presuppose or assert what Sandal terms a "philosophical anthropology,"[11] or a conception of the person taken to be the subjects of their principles. While many moral theories take the subject of ethics for granted,[12] scholars examining moral status consider these questions: To whom are we responsible? What constitutes a who? Such questions get to the heart of philosophical debates over what sorts of beings should be morally considerable. G. J. Warnock formulates the problem:

> Let us consider the question to whom principles of morality apply from, so to speak, the other end—from the standpoint not of the agent, but of the "patient." What, we may ask here, is the condition of moral relevance? What is the condition of having a claim be considered by rational agents to whom the principles apply?[13]

From this perspective, we consider not the moral agent who is bound to certain moral principles but the other to whom those principles must be applied. Moral patients populate the moral community and are distinguished from amoral patients, to whom we do not hold obligations to protect from harm. In fact, some may argue that amoral patients by definition do not have interests and, thus, cannot be harmed. What is at stake is the moral standing of different kinds of beings found in the world. I prefer the term "moral other" to "moral patient" because it recognizes that moral agents can also be the object of moral perception, judgment, and action. All moral patients are moral others, but not all moral others are patients. Moreover, this terminology signals that social, cultural, and historical discourses of otherization are at play in the division between moral and amoral others.

According to Mary Ann Warren, moral status is defined as follows:

> To have moral status is to be morally considerable, or to have moral standing. It is to be an entity towards which moral agents have, or can have, moral obligations. If an entity has moral status, then we may not treat it in just any way we please; we are morally obligated to give weight in our deliberations to its needs, interests, or well-being. Furthermore, we are morally obligated to do this not merely because protecting it may benefit ourselves or other persons, but because its needs have moral importance in their own right.[14]

Simply stated, to have moral status means to "matter morally"[15] or to have interests that "matter intrinsically."[16]

While such definitions may appear to offer clear criteria for differentiating between others, the limits of the moral community are "imagined," contingent, contested, and indeterminate. As Vetlesen states,

> At heart the fostering of attentiveness and creation of moral space is a social, indeed a political, issue. And politics means power: the power relations at work between people, and often invisible to them, and the forces of repression at work within the individual.[17]

For example, as Vetlesen shows, Nazi ideology encouraged a constriction of the moral community. A derealization of the other impeded the affective moral responses of German citizens. I will consider who counts in moral perception, judgment, and action and will examine how animals and disabled humans have been denied moral consideration because they fall below the threshold of the "normal human adult." As Bernstein argues, "normal adult human beings . . . have unjustly disenfranchised some individuals from our moral domain."[18]

Two main approaches attempt to resolve the ambiguity within the concept of moral status. The first, which predominates the field of animal ethics, I will call the Capacities Criterion Approach. The second, which is more common in disability studies, I refer to as the Species Affinity Approach. While there obviously are nuances between different thinkers' uses of these strategies, the moral anthropology underlying both approaches is a normate theory of the human. Demonstrating this common denominator in moral theory will reveal the hegemony of an ableist, speciesist understanding of the moral other in both technical and lay moral thinking.

The Capacities Criterion Approach responds to the shifting nature of the boundaries of the moral community by establishing morally relevant criteria for moral standing. This argument is clearest in the work of DiSilvestro, who argues that if someone is human, then they have serious moral status. While this initially may appear to be a Species Affinity Approach, DiSilvestro's argument is a capacities criterion because the justification for moral standing is "the possession of certain capacities."[19] According to this view, personhood as a set of abilities is the hallmark of moral consideration. Most typically, the ability to reason is taken as the "mark" of personhood and the ground of moral status.[20] Other capacities may include language use, consciousness, future-oriented thinking, and death awareness.

The Capacities Criterion Approach has two significant difficulties. First, the use of "performance criteria"[21] to demarcate the boundaries of the moral community creates "outliers."[22] Ethicists often identify non-human animals and people with "severe disabilities" in a group identified as having contested status[23] and exist in a "moral twilight zone."[24] According to the Capacities Criterion Approach, some human animals will meet the standard for moral consideration, while some humans—particularly those with cognitive disabilities—may not. This conclusion is the starting point for the Argument from Marginal Cases. Proponents such as

Peter Singer and Jeff McMahan contend that we have increased moral obligations to non-human animals and diminished obligations to disabled humans.[25] Some scholars, unwilling to accept this conclusion, reject the use of performance criteria, a move I will make later in this chapter for different reasons.

The second difficulty is that if we accept the Capacities Criterion Approach, then we are forced to agree with the statement that killing a person is worse than killing a non-person.[26] A consequence of this principle would be that it would be worse to kill an adult pig than to kill a human infant. This violates widely held moral presuppositions. In order to avoid such a conclusion, many advocates of the Capacities Criterion Approach posit a modification that it is the *potential* for human capacities, rather than their possession, that is relevant for inclusion in the moral community.

The Potential Capacities Approach attempts to include humans who fall below the performance criteria in question, by arguing that it is the potential, not the actual possession, of capacities that is the basis for moral standing. This is most obvious in the case of human infants. While infants are not persons according to the Potential Capacities Approach, adherents of this theory argue that they possess inherent dignity because we must respect that they will meet such criteria in the future. This, as the contributors to the collection *Cognitive Disability and Its Challenge to Moral Philosophy* demonstrate, does not afford moral status to human individuals who will never develop the capacity to reason, for example, due to mental disability.[27] Some thinkers respond to this problem by changing the criterion for moral considerability. For example, Jaworska argues that it is the emotional ability to care that forms the basis for moral standing.[28] However, she notes that even with this more open criterion, some human individuals will still not meet the threshold inclusion in the moral community.[29] Unable or unwilling to settle on a moral "yardstick,"[30] some thinkers adopt or presume a Species Affinity Approach. Jaworska, for example, appeals to species-typical capacities in order to include all human beings in the moral community.[31]

This leads us to the second strategy for fixing the ambiguous borders of moral consideration: the Species Affinity Approach. In order to avoid excluding human "outliers" who fall below the threshold of capacities criteria (or to avoid extending moral rights to non-human animals), adherents to the Species Affinity Approach argue that all biological humans are members of the moral community. For instance, Kittay holds that moral standing is a result of species membership, rather than any particular property.[32]

The simplicity of this strategy is deceptive, as it raises more questions than it answers because it "presupposes that we have first settled the question of who does and does not count as a human."[33] As Tom Koch explains, "Membership in the category of protected living humans remains problematic, as does the values defining that membership."[34] The Species Affinity Approach is the Capacities Criterion Approach in disguise; it simply shifts the performance criterion from the level of the individual capacities to species-typical capacities. This is because, in order to restrict moral consideration to *homo sapiens*, defenders of the Species

Affinity Approach must appeal to the capacities of "normal," adult humans in order to justify human moral superiority. The Species Affinity Approach is not viable on its own terms; while the argument attempts to displace a performance-based morality, it masks and reifies the capacities-based standard that it explicitly rejects. The Species Affinity Approach conflates moral status with humanity, and in turn, it cannot provide an account of what it means to be human without appealing to performance criteria (whether rational or emotional capacities). Therefore, this strategy cannot resolve questions about the moral status of beings who challenge the definition of the human—such as human-animal chimeras, alien life, or artificial intelligence—or provide clear and consistent criteria for including moral "outliers" in the moral community.

It should be noted that some theorists rely on a combination of these two approaches, arguing for a "multi-criterial approach" to delimiting the moral community.[35] This approach does not escape the difficulties detailed above, because it simply creates more complex gatekeeping mechanisms. A normative humanism provides the foundation for all three attempts to circumscribe the moral community insofar as they either explicitly or implicitly presume the Capacities Criterion Approach. While the selected criteria are intended to be "purely descriptive" of the human species,[36] they entrench assumptions about what it means to be human and what kinds of lives are worth living. Non-human animals and disabled humans suffer the consequences of this exclusion. In the end, the boundaries of human life "remain shifting and uncertain."[37] The aforementioned approaches have limited the ability of moral theorists to fully contemplate the meaning of the indeterminacy inherent within the concept of moral standing, because they assume the very criteria for humanness that are under evaluation. No concept of personhood can resolve the "constitutive ambiguities" in moral criteria.[38]

DiSilvestro's work exemplifies the normative, performance-driven humanism within moral thought. He contends that moral status is a "placeholder" for the features of "normal adult persons."[39] He discusses people with disabilities as "damaged and disabled human organisms,"[40] whose moral standing is based not on their inherent worth but on their belonging to a species that "typically" exhibits high reasoning capacities. From this perspective, their inclusion in the moral community must be addressed in retrospect as a marginal case. He does argue that people with mental disabilities have moral standing because they possess the "potential" for higher-order cognitive capacity. This is an over-extension of the meaning of potential, as DiSilvestro admits that his position assumes technological advances that do not exist. Moreover, there is no reason that his argument could not apply, at the very least, to non-human primates or human-animal chimeras with human neurons.

Beyond performance criteria

The morality as performance criteria mission that is found in both the Capacities Criterion Approach and the Species Affinity Approach must be abandoned. On its own terms, the argument is unable to provide guidance on outlier cases. More importantly, dignity and respect are not moral attributes that must be earned. Performance morality should be accountable for its criteria rather than placing the evidentiary responsibility on marginalized others to prove their conformity with a homogenized notion of the moral other. This approach guarantees an "ethics of exclusion"[41] that is powerless to question its complicity with discourses of normalcy.

Performance-based standards for moral consideration engender a morality of competition because the moral community is defined through exclusionary mechanisms. When moral considerability is understood as a zero-sum game, marginalized others compete for space on a moral elevator to raise their group's status on a hierarchy of moral others. Not only does this competition reinforce the evaluation of moral others' status via standards of normality but it also discourages reflection about the deployment of otherizing discourses as a political strategy, as seen in the Singer-Johnson debates.

Many animal advocates, for example, utilize ableist norms in their attempts to "graduate" animals to persons by demoting people with disabilities. Jeff McMahan argues in *The Ethics of Killing*:

> I believe that reaching the optimal point of convergence with respect to killing and letting die requires that traditional beliefs about animals be more extensively revised than traditional beliefs about the severely retarded [*sic*]. Killing animals, and allowing them to die, are morally far more serious matters than we have supposed. But allowing severely retarded humans beings to die, and perhaps even killing them, are correspondingly somewhat less serious matters than we have believed.[42]

Additionally, some animal activists may utilize the shaming of deviance from human norms, using fear to reduce the human exploitation of animals. For example, PETA campaigns have deployed techniques such as fat shaming and manipulation of public fears of disability in their advertisements; their "Got Autism?" campaign, which suggests a link between dairy consumption and autism, and "Save the Whales" advertisement, which instructs the public to "lose the blubber" by going vegetarian, are instructive examples of these tactics.[43]

Additionally, in vying for membership in the exclusive moral community, disability advocates may participate in ableist discourses.[44] Because humans with disabilities are frequently denied moral and political consideration through dehumanization, they must verify their human capacity as unique from and opposed to those of non-human animals. For example, an ENABLE campaign seeks to rehumanize people with disabilities by highlighting the UK's prioritization of animal over disability charities.[45] Such strategies demonstrate how speciesism and ableism coordinate a morality of competition, which places non-human animals and human others in opposition.

Because the "human" is defined in opposition to the "animal," and normal human abilities are taken as the mark of moral solicitude, moralities of exclusion by their very nature create a kind of moral warfare between animal and disabled others. Moral attention is diverted to debating performance criteria, masking the constitutive role of normalizing institutions. The human, as Judith Butler argues, is not a biologically necessary kind but a "differential value" comprised of a value and morphology.[46] Through the competitive exclusion of non-human animals and disabled persons in the constitution of the human person, species-typical functioning frames the perception of moral others. As Taylor explains, "At their roots, all arguments used to justify human domination over animals rely on comparing human and animal abilities and traits. We humans are the species with rationality, with complex emotions, with two legs and opposable thumbs."[47] Correspondingly, the determinations of normal human capacity deployed to justify human supremacy devalue the lives of disabled individuals who deviate from performance-based norms.

The project that Peter Singer identifies as clarifying the "basis" of moral status will always result in an exclusive morality defined through performance criteria and, thus, will frame moral consideration as speciesist and ableist. As Warren argues, there can be no sole criterion for moral standing.[48] My analysis departs from Warren's, however, because I also reject her multi-criterial approach. Best has argued that "the discourse of the 'human' has been constituted in dualistic, speciesist, racist, patriarchal, and imperialist terms."[49] By combining research in disability studies and critical animal studies, I have demonstrated the importance of including ableism in intersectional analysis. Because normal human capacity is conflated with moral status, the interplay of speciesism and ableism is of unique importance to understanding the delimitation of the moral community. Unless the mutual constitution of speciesism and ableism in the construction of the moral other is addressed, the fantasized ideal of the human as entailing unique capacities will remain intact. The burden of proof then falls on marginalized others to "prove" that they possess the capacities that are prerequisites for moral solicitude. This exclusive view of morality positions animal and disabled human others in competition for the extension of existing moral boundaries to their situations. An effect of this marginalization is that moral reformists may find the deployment of performance criteria effective or necessary for advocating their inclusion within a morality based on the exclusion of abnormal bodies.

If speciesism and ableism are mutually reinforcing oppressions, how can we dismantle this moral double-bind? An imaginative, affective, and strategic coalition between advocates of non-human animals and disabled humans is crucial to this task. Advocates for both groups will likely be hesitant to entertain this suggestion. People with disabilities may fear that too close an affinity with non-human animals will result in their dehumanization. As Carlson notes, people with disabilities—especially of the intellectual variety—have often served as philosophical labor for animals, without receiving any benefit in return.[50] However, it is the very mechanism of dehumanization that must be rethought, destabilized, and liquidated. Disability and animal activists, ethicists, and advocates are uniquely positioned to launch such an attack, because of how these groups' outlier status has been used to demarcate the moral community and concretize the norm of the species-typical human. Therefore, I concur with Taylor and Salomon's conclusion that we must "challenge the fields of disability studies and animal rights to take each other seriously."[51] Together we can imagine and create new ways of valuing moral others that are not limited by normalizing performance criteria. Johnson's work in environmental justice points toward this kind of coalition, arguing that "merging feminist disability studies and environmental justice forces us to confront power dynamics that reinforce a narrow view of 'normal'—one that privileges a particular sense of the human body that is constrictive, not expansive."[52]

An anti-essentialist, inclusive, embodied ethics that opposes the use of performance criteria for moral consideration is needed. Rather than using the model of exclusion for moral considerability, this approach seeks to be inclusive; it begins with the assumption that animate life, whether human or non-human, abled or disabled, is deserving of moral concern. Derrida explains the transformative power of Jeremy Bentham's displacement of moral prerequisites by asking the question "Can they suffer?" in place of the usual debates about animals' capacities for speech and reason. Rather than the capacity for being-able, suffering is defined by a distinctive passivity or not-being-able.[53] Vetlesen adopts a similar perspective, although his analysis remains focused on (able-bodied) humans.[54] The question highlights our interdependence with all animate beings. In order to disrupt the question and production of who does and who does not count as human, an inclusive ethics seeks to re-imagine the concept of the right to life.[55]

In order for an ethics to take into account the production of the human in determining the boundaries for moral consideration, it must be able to provide an account of embodied difference as, in Derrida's terms, something other than a privation. Bodily difference must be revalued, because, as Scully notes, there is an imaginative gap between the worlds of the abled and disabled (and we may add the human and animal) that results in the normalization of ability in ethics. This is because individuals value bodies like their own and only understand physical difference as the lack of an essential component of their own experience. For example, some hearing individuals claim to be unable to imagine a world without music. When thought together, animality and disability, as marginal forms of embodied difference, hold enormous potential for challenging essentialist conceptions of the human and for articulating difference as productive variation, rather than as ontological deprivation.[56] An inclusive ethics, based on "bodily imperatives"[57] rather than categorical imperatives calls for the vulnerability of the other and dissolves speciesist and ableist performance criteria that have historically defined the moral community.

Knowing always has a location and therefore individuals—human or non-human, disabled or abled—know the world through embodied perspectives. Such diversity is the spice of life. This suggests the possibility of greeting and responding to moral others without privileging essentialist beliefs about the primacy of reason, language, vision, etc. For example, Derrida asks us to consider how the world would appear and what ethics would look like through the senses of smell or touch. In a different context, Mairian Corker also sought to disrupt the primacy of the epistemology of vision in her article "Sensing Disability," because she believed it resulted in a hierarchy between visible and hidden disabilities within disability theory.[58]

One might object to this embodied, animate, and inclusive ethics by arguing that it will inevitably be reterritorialized with new performance criteria. This objection remains within the frames of a competition-based morality. The significance of an inclusive, embodied ethics is not found in replacement criteria but in two ethico-epistemological shifts. The path of the least violence demands "epistemic modesty,"[59] insofar as we must recognize the fragmentary, incoherent, and normalizing function of standards for moral status. To the extent that suffering remains a "criterion," it is soft, open, and constantly under question. More significantly, this approach signals a reversal of evidentiary standards. The burden of proof, from this perspective, falls on anyone who would exclude a being from the moral community, rather than on marginalized others.

Suffering as a standard of incapacity remains under "heightened scrutiny."[60] Bodily imperatives engender a prima facie duty against killing animate, sentient life. In short, taking a cue from climate ethics, we need what I term a Precautionary Principle of Moral Status. Bradshaw has argued for the use of the Precautionary Principle in the assessment of the moral considerability of non-human animals.[61] My usage differs because Bradshaw analyzes what I consider to be performance criteria. The argument is thus: if there is strong evidence to indicate that a being experiences suffering, then the burden of proof falls on those who seek to deny it moral status, even if we lack consensus that doing so would constitute a moral harm. A Precautionary Principle of Moral Status does not require the inclusion of all biological life in the moral community, as Albert Schweitzer and Goodpastor each argue when they present "life" itself as a criterion for inclusion.[62]

Instead, I have argued that we must give up the goal of an objective, "fundamental account"[63] of moral considerability as an ableist, speciesist fantasy. The dominance of the performance-driven understanding of the moral other must be challenged in order to weaken the grasp of ableism and speciesism on our moral imaginations. The Precautionary Principle of Moral Status offers a tentative understanding of moral status, while recognizing its "viscous porosity."[64] Such a standard will never offer conclusive, universal determinants of moral status, but that does not preclude epistemologically modest and responsible "best guesses" that take into account evidentiary caution, uncertainty, and moral prejudice. I urge disability and animal advocates and theorists to coordinate a sustained, creative, and targeted attack on the use of human species-typical functioning as the mark of moral worth.

Conclusion

Theoretical accounts of moral status, at their core, are ethico-political narratives about belonging; they outline who or what matters. From the perspective of normate moral theory, as Sunaura Taylor has quipped, "all humans are equal, but some are more equal than others." Despite value theorists' attempts to circumscribe the limits of the human, as I have argued, this threshold remains heavily contested, as contemporary debates concerning abortion, premature neonates, euthanasia, and animal rights illustrate. In particular, I have examined how speciesism and ableism function as interpretative frames through which liminal others are excluded from the moral community. Because species-typical performance capacities (such as the ability to reason or speak) serve as prerequisites for moral consideration, the limits of moral response are maintained through the mechanisms of ableism and speciesism. As an alternative, the Precautionary Principle of Moral Status opposes the moral hubris of certainty and purity that Derrida identifies as a target of deconstruction and that Donna Haraway associates with ethical veganism.[65]

The attention to those who exist at the boundaries of moral considerability within critical disability studies and critical animal studies exposes the failures of theories of moral status. Rather than basing moral consideration on group membership or capacity possession, I envisage a moral relationship that responds to the unknown and unexpected others who transform our understandings of otherness, responsiveness, and moral community. As long as morality is an anthropology in disguise, or, in Cary Wolfe's terms, as long as the institution of speciesism—and, as I have argued, ableism—remain intact, they will "always be available for use by some humans against other humans"[66] and disguise the moral harms done to unrecognized moral beings.

Notes

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17 Vetlesen, *Perception, Empathy, and Judgment*, 9.

18 Bernstein, *On Moral Considerability*, 3.

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20 Anna Stubblefield, "The Entanglement of Race and Cognitive Disability," in *Cognitive Disability and Its Challenge to Moral Philosophy*, eds. Eva Feder Kittay and Licia Carlson (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 307; Tom Koch, *The Limits of Principle: Deciding Who Lives and What Dies* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), 32.

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22 Anita Silvers and Leslie Pickering Francis, "Justice Through Trust: Disability and the 'Outlier Problem' in Social Contract Theory," *Ethics* 116, no. 1 (October 2005): 40–76.

23 Cf. Jeff McMahan, *The Ethics of Killing: Problems at the Margins of Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

24 Warren, *Moral Status*, 14.

25 Cf. McMahan, *Ethics of Killing*; Singer, *Rethinking Life & Death*.

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34 Koch, *Limits of Principle*, 25.

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36 DiSilvestro, *Human Capacities*, 27.

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39 DiSilvestro, *Human Capacities*, 12.

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41 Adrienne Asch, qtd. in Kittay and Carlson, "Introduction," in *Cognitive Disability and Its Challenge to Moral Philosophy*, eds. Eva Feder Kittay and Licia Carlson (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 19.

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Chapter 6

Service dogs

Between animal studies and disability studies

Kelly Oliver

For at least the last thirty years, there has been an ongoing debate between animal studies and disability studies on the comparative status of highly intelligent animal species versus severely cognitively disabled human beings when it comes to membership in the moral community, which was spearheaded by Peter Singer's claims that some animals should have more rights than some humans based on their intelligence and functionality.[1] Eva Kittay and other disability scholars, especially feminists, have responded with outrage, along with compelling arguments. In this chapter, I consider beings whose intelligence and functionality put them at the intersection of animal studies and disability studies and embody some of the contradictions within both discourses, namely, service dogs. Obliquely engaging the Singer-Kittay debates, I suggest that both sides make questionable assumptions about humans and animals, which come to the fore when considering service dogs and their human companions.

Specifically, I focus on the notion of functionality in relation to issues of dependence and independence in order to rethink the human-animal divide in terms of what Cynthia Willett calls "interspecies ethics."[2] While endorsing Kittay's claim that we have an ethical responsibility to that which sustains us, I challenge her feminist ethics of dependence insofar as it is limited to interdependence between humans and discounts or disavows our dependence on non-human animals. The feminist insistence on acknowledging the fact that women perform most of the labor of dependence (child-care, sick-care, care for the elderly, care for the disabled) that enables independence—what Kittay calls the "labor of love"—should not be based on the disavowal of the ways in which our dependence on non-human animals enables our independence.[3]

Furthermore, in both animal studies and disability studies, too often both animals and humans are discussed explicitly or implicitly in terms of their abilities or functionality wherein the goal is to become highly functional, wherein functionality is defined in terms of production, or in the case of humans, their status as productive members of society. Focusing on service dogs makes clear some of the problems with reducing human or non-human animals to their functionality. Although it has been politically important in terms of advancing disability rights, the goal of integration is problematic insofar as it reduces people to their functionality. Following Julia Kristeva's criticisms of the notion of integration when it comes to people with disabilities, I suggest an ethics of proximity based on interspecies companionship. Rather than a utilitarian ethics based on intelligence as the criteria for membership in the moral community, or a feminist ethics of care that acknowledges only dependency relations between human beings, or even a feminist ethics based on embodied vulnerability rather than autonomy, I propose an ethics based on interspecies interdependence, particularly emotional interdependence and companionship.

The ambiguous status of service dogs

Technically, only specifically trained dogs (and some miniature horses) that serve as physical or psychiatric—but not psychological—therapy, or emotional, support, are legally considered *service animals*.[4] Rather than pets, companions, or even helpers, the law describes service animals as akin to *tools* that enable disabled people to navigate the world.[5] Government reports describing the difference between pets and service dogs compare service animals to *equipment* like "assistive aids such as wheelchairs."[6] Recently, Martha M. Lafferty, legal director of the Tennessee Disability Law and Advocacy Center, told reporters: "Look at the dog like it's a wheelchair. Would you ask someone a bunch of questions about a wheelchair?"[7] Furthermore, the Justice Department requires all service dogs to be specifically trained to perform certain "tasks." They must *do* something. They must perform a service such as guiding, picking up dropped keys, counterbalancing dizziness, or turning on lights. The calming or therapeutic effect of their company is not enough. The laws are clear that these animals are "tools" used for very specific tasks.[8]

But, laws can't prevent people from becoming emotionally attached to their service animals. And laws don't prevent these animals from providing companionship. As anyone who shares their life with one will tell you, service animals do much more for their human partners than turn on lights or pick up keys. Yet, in spite of growing evidence of mental and physical health benefits from having animals at home, our psychological and emotional relationships to animals continue to be circumscribed by laws that reduce them to forms of property.[9] This ambivalent attitude toward service animals is manifest in the military, where dogs have served alongside U.S. service men and women for decades.[10] New programs offer dogs as service animals or as pets to military personnel suffering from post-traumatic stress or emotional problems resulting from war and active military duty.

Following federal policy, however, the military is clear that emotional support animals are not service animals and that service animals are still the only animals legally protected under the ADA. Following federal policy, the military continues to draw sharp distinctions between companion animals and service animals. Legally, the former are considered pets, while the later are "viewed as equipment." While they can no longer be discarded as used equipment and left in warzones, military service dogs are still defined as equipment:

> As the Canine Members of the Armed Forces Act became attached to the larger National Defense Authorization Act for 2013, a key part of the legislation was noticeably omitted before the President signed on the dotted line . . . It was decided by the Senate that to get the bill passed they had to take out a portion of it. That portion was the reclassification of the Military Working Dogs from Equipment to Canine Members of the Armed Forces.[11]

While the emotional connection between humans and companion animals (in this case dogs) is being studied and proving significant to the scientific community, and while "pet owners" testify to the importance of their companion animals to their everyday well-being, the status of these animals is ambiguous in terms of public policy. Their importance as tools or equipment is acknowledged, while the importance of their emotional support is either suspect or must be quantified in terms of functionality.[12] In other words, these animals are valued in terms of what tasks they perform and how those jobs enhance the performance of human beings. Furthermore, all of these studies and discussions about them revolve around the benefits for humans rather than whether or not there are benefits for the animals themselves.

Focusing on the status of service dogs puts us at the intersection of disability studies and animal studies. In this chapter, I argue that examining the ways in which we view service dogs not only reveals problematic assumptions in both discourses but can show us a way forward that may be more promising for considering interspecies interdependence. At the heart of this chapter, I examine the ways in which service dogs are legally defined as equipment rather than companions and how that enables our disavowal of dependence on them. The fact that service dogs are seen to provide more independence for the people they serve indicates that we discount our dependence on non-human animals. Furthermore, it is telling that service dogs are defined in terms of their function. They are trained to perform certain functions and tasks. I argue that the functionality valued in these animals is akin to the functionality valued in mainstream ideas of integration of persons with disabilities. I conclude with a notion of interspecies interdependence to suggest a path forward, one that includes non-human animals, on the one hand, but doesn't define their value, or the value of their human counterparts, in terms of functionality, on the other.

Are we all disabled?

Focusing on the status of service animals highlights a tension within disability studies. First, some disability theorists suggest that disability is something all human beings share rather than something that separates one group off from the mainstream. For example, Eva Kittay points out that every human being starts her life completely dependent upon care-givers, unable to care for herself; most people's lives end with complete dependence or disability; and at some times, we are all rendered temporarily disabled by injuries and illness (1999). Dependence and independence, then, are always interconnected and matters of degree rather than of kind. As Rosemarie Garland-Thomson claims:

> Disability, like gender and race, is everywhere, once we know how to look for it. Integrating disability analyses will enrich and deepen all our teaching and scholarship . . . for the benefit of everyone. As with gender, race, sexuality, and class: to understand how disability operates is to understand what it is to be fully human.[13]

Of course, it is crucial to note that just because race and gender are everywhere does not mean that we are all one gender or race. Garland-Thomson develops the notion of *misfit* to describe differential levels of disability defined in relation to the ease of fitting into the built environment. Still, she concludes, "what we call disability is perhaps the essential characteristic of being human."[14]

If dependence and disability are part of the human condition, and perhaps the condition of life itself, and if companion animals can help people cope with their limitations, we might ask, Do we all need service animals? Now, every year, thousands "sign up" for emotional support animals, put "official" vests on their dogs, and thereby publicly announce that they are disabled.[15] For example, one website selling vest for dogs says, "SDA recognizes that every person in America may have some form of disability. . . . Service Dogs America can assist you in your desire to have your animal identified as a service dog." Has what used to be "a standard prop of indigents and poster children," as Garland-Thomson says, become the new normal?[16] Or, does the proliferation of pets passing as service animals give service dogs a bad name, as when a reporter for *The New Yorker*, armed with a letter from an online doctor, went undercover with a turtle, a lama, and then a turkey to see how far she could go in Manhattan before someone stopped her. No one did. Or, recently when a US Airways flight was forced to make an emergency landing when an emotional support dog had several diarrhea attacks that triggered vomiting among passengers? Perhaps, our emotional support animals need emotional support critters of their own. Certainly, all human animals, and perhaps most animals, need companion animals (human or otherwise) for emotional and physical support. As some disability scholars remind us, we are all dependent or interdependent beings. Yet, this does not mean, as some suggest, that we are all disabled. And, while we all need emotional support animals, human or otherwise, it is important to retain distinctions between these and service dogs who aid people with disabilities.

Dependence on animals doesn't count

Ironically, within dominant discourse around service animals, dependence on service dogs doesn't count. In fact, the rallying cry for service dogs is that they make people more *independent*. The largest nonprofit provider of service dogs in the United States is called Canine Companions for Independence. Their website is full of testimonies from recipients and their families describing the independence the dogs brought to the lives of those they serve. Numerous accounts describe how a person with disability went from dependent to independent thanks to their service dog. Obviously, this means "more independent from other human beings," since using service animals entails dependence on them. Many of these stories also include an emotional dimension that goes beyond the physical services provided or tasks performed by service dogs. People describe how their lives are enriched by the companionship the dogs provide. Indeed, Canine Companions for Independence claims that their dogs result in "a life full of increased independence and loving companionship."

Because service animals are seen as more akin to devices such as wheelchairs than they are to companions or other people, our dependence on them is not considered to compromise independence. If service dogs are considered equipment, then dependence on them doesn't compromise independence any more than our dependence on trains, airplanes, or eyeglasses does. Seen as tools, equipment, or prostheses, service animals cannot be the type of beings upon whom our dependence reflects the human (or animal) condition of dependence itself. Whereas disability may make visible, so to speak, the ways in which we are all "misfits" and vulnerable to disability, our dependence on non-human animals continues to show us only that they can be, and should be, properly trained to serve us.

If we believe that service animals can make us more independent, then what does that say about how we view both the status of their service and the status of their being? Obviously, defining service animals as equipment reduces them to disposable commodities that exist for our benefit. This is why until only very recently, like any other used or broken equipment, the U.S. military could simply leave military dogs behind in war zones. But, in addition to the problematic designation of *equipment* is the notion that service dogs must perform a function, a task, that they must *do* something.

The notion of functionality has been a thorny issue for disability studies. Dominant discourses around disability often include a notion of integration that involve making disabled persons productive members of society. Think of billboards advertising *The Goodwill*; by donating, you help give people with disabilities jobs. And it is good for people with disabilities to have jobs. It is good for them to *do* something productive, to learn to perform specific tasks. Various educational and social institutions, such as Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, US Department of Health and Human Services, and US Department of Labor's "Add us in" programs, aim to integrate disabled people into society by making them productive members who perform some function.

Even Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, who argues that disability not only is essential to the human condition but also can be generative of resourcefulness and adaptability, gives as examples people who develop alternative ways *to do things* through what she calls a "productive fusion" between fits and misfits with one's environment.[17] Furthermore, her examples of misfits often focus on access to the workplace, such as this: "A wheelchair user, for instance, might be socially accepted in a workplace, but if the only way to get to the office is via stairs, a wheelchair user will not have access to the economic benefits a stair climber has."[18] The wheelchair user is barred access to workspaces where she could earn a living and be a productive member of society. Garland-Thomson argues that the environment should be renovated to fit the wheelchair user and not the other way around. Disabled people should be integrated into the "democratic order" by building environments that fit and thereby allow them access to public spaces and private workspaces. We might ask, Is it possible to make the liberal democratic model of citizenship fit the misfit? Or, in another lingo, we might ask, are misfits in an important sense the constitutive outside of such a model?

Integration, functionality, and drawing lines in the sand

Rather than integrating disabled people into the "democratic order," Julia Kristeva argues that we need to rethink the pillars of democratic citizenship, particularly insofar as they may be at odds with the goals of such integration. Situated in France, Kristeva challenges the liberty, equality, and fraternity upon which the French republic was founded to embrace vulnerability as the fourth pillar of democratic citizenship. Responding to the 2003 documentary film *People Say I am Crazy*, about John Cadigan's struggles with schizophrenia (which launched his career as an artist), Kristeva says,

> Thanks to the film, the work of the disabled artist is swiftly made public; he has the right to an exhibition; the funding pours in. The madman henceforth becomes a disabled artist.[19]

Her sarcasm aside, Kristeva is critical of the film because rather than an interpretation of his artwork or his experience, it was presented as a spectacle to be consumed: "What more could be wanted in the benign society of the spectacle other than good disabled people? It suffices that the patient has only to become a producer and/or an object of the 'show.'"[20] This leads her to argue against integration and for what she calls interaction. In the case of John Cadigan, "the disabled person was indeed supported, but this was done in order to facilitate the insertion of his produced objects into the circuit of consumption."[21] The risk, Kristeva suggests, is that people with disabilities will be reduced to either "invalids or workers."[22]

Concerned with functional spaces, or spaces in which all people can function, Aimi Hamraie identifies a similar problem when questions of design are reduced to issues of consumption and marketability such that accommodating disabled bodies literally becomes planning one-size-fits-all access to markets and marketplaces. Hamraie discusses design as "a material-discursive phenomenon that produces both physical environments and symbolic meaning" that should be based on "a politics of interdependence and collective access."[23] This means not only rethinking what it means to function and what counts as performing a task but also rethinking interdependence and access outside of, or beyond, mere instrumental political economy that reduces everything to usable equipment or productive labor.

Access to the moral community

Questions of access take us back to the issue of service animals: who should have them, and where should they be allowed to go? Additionally, the notion of universal access raises the question of animal access and animal exclusion. Where are animals allowed, and in what ways is our built environment designed to keep them in or out? We build walls and fences, corrals and cages, not only to regulate their physical proximity but also, and moreover, to keep them out of our moral community. Our ambivalence toward animals, particularly those upon whom we are most dependent, comes into focus when we consider service animals.

That the U.S. military and federal ADA regulations describe animals as more like things than like persons follows the long history of regarding animals as property. Although some animal welfare and animal rights advocates argue that (at least some) animals should have the legal and moral status of persons, we might ask, why must animals be either things or persons? Is there no way to extend our moral community without making animals persons? In other words, can they enter the moral community as animals? The question of membership into the moral community is at stake for both animal studies and disability studies. Indeed, and more to the point, the connection between the status of animals and the status of disabled people, especially the severely mentally impaired, has been a sore spot in the literature for decades. Moreover, in terms of both people and animals, questions of moral worth have been linked to abilities, specifically the ability to contribute to society by performing tasks or serving various functions.

Some of the limits of this approach have been articulated by Eva Kittay and Licia Carlson in their responses to the comparison between non-human animals and disabled human beings, including challenging the reprehensible view that disabled human beings are non-persons or subpar, views that justify discriminating against them, or possibly even letting them die or not letting them live.[24] In other words, treating them "like animals." Kittay in particular expresses her outrage using words like "revulsion," "hideous," and "horrific" to describe the comparison between disabled people and non-human animals. While I am sympathetic to Kittay's emotional response at hearing her mentally disabled daughter Sesha compared to an animal, it seems to me that the comparison is only problematic, in large part, because of our current views of animals.[25] If we respected animals, even revered them, and treated them well, would Kittay find the comparison so insulting? The fact that Kittay herself suggests a hierarchy between animals wherein it is less insulting to compare her daughter to a chimp than a dog or a rat is evidence not just of our negative attitudes toward animals but also of our differential negative attitudes toward some animals. In other words, not all animals are alike. This is obvious in terms of their appearance, biology, habitat, behavior, etc. But it is also apparent in our attitudes toward them. We prefer chimps to rats, and dogs to ants. Human beings love some animals as pets, exterminate some as vermin, and eat others.

Obviously humans and animals are different in important ways that cannot and should not be discounted. Comparing animals to humans or vice versa, however, is not the point of this chapter. Rather, this debate highlights the kinds of criteria used to allow membership in the moral community. Furthermore, it reminds us of distinctions such as that between moral patients and moral agents, and the standards of normalcy based on able-bodied and fully rational adult humans in the prime of their lives. In other words, traditionally, these criteria are based on a subset of human beings, all of whom do not meet those very criteria at some points in their own lives. These types of criteria lead to "line drawing" in order to determine where to cut off lower levels of intelligence or pain and suffering and thereby membership in the moral community, the kind of line drawing so familiar in both animal studies and disability studies. Obviously, this difficult, if not impossible, exercise has dangerous political consequences for those who do not make the cut.

Many proponents of rights for disabled persons and for their inclusion in the moral community insist on their inherent dignity or worth as human beings, apart from any specific abilities. Yet, too often, these arguments are based on redrawing a human-animal divide, which places all animals on one side and all humans on the other. There are many problems with this approach. Here, I focus on the problem of dependence and the ways in which disability theorists like Kittay valorize inter-human dependence and devalue—or even disavow—interspecies dependence or interdependence, particularly our dependence or interdependence on nonhuman animals.

Throughout her work, Kittay has proposed an ethics based on our dependence on one another rather than independence. She argues that autonomy comes through interdependence. In her earlier work, Kittay maintains that a subject who "refuses to support this bond [of dependency] absolves itself from its most fundamental obligation—its obligation to its founding possibility."[26] More recently, Kittay argues,

> According to the most important theories of justice, personal dignity is closely related to independence, and the care that people with disabilities receive is seen as a way for them to achieve the greatest possible autonomy. However, human beings are naturally subject to periods of dependency, and people without disabilities are only "temporarily abled." Instead of seeing assistance as a limitation, we consider it to be a resource at the basis of a vision of society that is able to account for inevitable dependency relationships between "unequals" ensuring a fulfilling life both for the carer and the cared for.[27]

Yet, for all intents and purposes, we are indirectly and directly as dependent upon animals as we are on other human beings. We depend on animals as sources of food, clothing, other goods and services, entertainment, experimentation, and, most importantly, companionship and emotional support; or in the case of service dogs, services through which human autonomy is the result of their participation. We are utterly dependent on animals in virtually every facet of life. Indeed, it is hard to imagine that we could or would exist without them. Without other animals, we would be a very lonely species. If, as Kittay argues, our dependence on other humans for our very being obligates us to them, then it also follows that our dependence on non-human animals morally obligates us to them.

The limits of feminist discourses of vulnerability

Recently, several feminist theorists, including Judith Butler, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, and Julia Kristeva, have embraced the notion that it is our vulnerability and not our autonomy that defines us as human, and therefore vulnerability should be the basis of any ethical theory. Butler argues that our ability to be wounded by others makes us vulnerable to each other. Garland-Thomson argues that it is not just our vulnerability to pain that makes us interdependent but also our need for sustenance and care. She goes further when she says that "the relational and contingent quality of misfitting and fitting, then, places vulnerability in the fit, not in the body . . . a misfit occurs when world fails flesh in the environment one encounters," which means that vulnerability is a relationship that takes place between bodies and the world.[28]

None of these theorists, however, acknowledge that we share vulnerability with other animals.[29] Non-human animals are also vulnerable in the ways set out by Butler and Garland-Thomson. They suffer, can be wounded, need sustenance and care, and are subject to misfitting their environments when the world is hostile to their flesh. Indeed, in too many cases, thanks to pollution, climate change, and deforestation, the world is becoming more hostile to their flesh, to the point that in many cases, they face extinction. Elsewhere, I both challenge the concept of vulnerability as exclusive to, or constitutive of, humanity, on the one hand, and criticize the concept for leveling differences in levels of vulnerability, on the other.[30] I argue that rather than constitute uniquely human subjectivity or humanity as some suggest, vulnerability is shared with non-human animals. Furthermore, vulnerability is distributed according to political and social power. Some are more vulnerable than others. Making vulnerability, or recognition of vulnerability, constitutive of human subjectivity risks leveling differential vulnerability that is the result of political or social oppression.[31] In this regard, vulnerability could be seen as the flip side of political recognition. Some people or animals are given political recognition, while others are made vulnerable. And while starting with the vulnerable may be better than starting with the beneficiaries of political power, it too has its risks.

For better and worse, Kristeva's notion of vulnerability is specifically human. Indeed, she proposes it as part of a new humanism based on the vulnerabilities of the speaking being. Our vulnerability comes from the fact that we are beings who mean. It is this split between *zoë* and *bios* that makes us both vulnerable and human. We are all vulnerable, but what makes each of us vulnerable is not the same. Our specific vulnerabilities also make us singular. In particular, Kristeva claims that considering disability transforms our notion of the human, of democracy, and calls forth this new humanism.[32] Specifically, she argues that disabled people are vulnerable in a way that is different from the vulnerabilities of other groups. Their physical vulnerability is not something that can be repaired or overcome only through politics or by applying traditional notions of "human rights." It is not something that can be shared. She calls it the "irreparable."[33] And yet, she insists that there is something irreparable in each of us, which is not to say that we are all disabled. Rather, the new humanism must recognize the singularity of the irreparability of each person.

Resonant with Kittay and Carlson, Kristeva argues that each disabled person is disabled in his or her own way, and each disability is singular, as is their exclusion. But, rather than calling for *integration* of disabled persons into the public sphere, Kristeva argues for *interaction* based on sharing and caring.[34] As we've seen, she worries that integration means assimilation into the liberal political economy that values bodies only insofar as they are productive. She argues against trying to turn every body into a productive worker through integration programs that define the value of humanity in terms of the ability to work or tasks performed.[35] In this regard, it is noteworthy that current public policy values service animals only in terms of the tasks they perform and not in terms of the emotional support they provide. Indeed, Kristeva claims that our culture's "maniacal surge of productivity" is an attempt to deny our fundamental vulnerability, a disavowal manifest in traditional philosophies based on rational autonomy of the will.[36]

While socially and politically important as a project, there is a contradiction in trying to integrate disabled persons into a political economy that values independence over dependence to the point of disavowing dependence and interdependence as fundamental to the human condition. Dependence and independence are two sides of the same liberal ideal of autonomy; they are intimately connected.[37] And, it is their inseparability, namely our *interdependence*, that makes politics necessary. Considering disabled people when thinking about political rights and moral responsibilities challenges traditional notions of rights and equality based in rational autonomy and physical independence. Kristeva suggests that it forces us to rethink democracy not in terms of contracts but rather in terms of proximity. Basing democracy on proximity rather than on contracts, however, would also require us to rethink our relationship to animals, especially to companion animals. And this might be its promise—that is, it takes us beyond humanism and opens onto a democracy of proximity with all animals upon whom we are dependent, especially for care and emotional support.

Given Kristeva's analysis of the singular exclusion of disabled persons and the need for a new approach that takes us beyond traditional humanism with its emphasis on human rights and autonomy, and given her insistence on recognizing the unique vulnerability of each through caring and sharing as the starting points of such a venture, her analysis could be useful in describing how a concern for animals might affect notions of humanism and democracy. For her part, however, Kristeva is clear that in spite of its limitations, she embraces humanism; and furthermore that the vulnerability she diagnoses is uniquely human insofar as it is the wound or fracture that results from what she calls our "untenable" position between zoë and bios, biology and signification. Risking a problematic comparison between animals and disabled persons—yet not wanting to endorse it in the ways drawn by either Kantians or Utilitarians—for feminist care ethics or feminist vulnerability ethics, animals, while *not like* disabled persons, also are singularly excluded from traditional notions of humanism. They too challenge our notions of the human and of democracy in their vulnerability, particularly in their vulnerability to us, given our destruction of their habitats, and our control over every aspect of the lives of those we breed to eat, for pets, for service animals, etc. Indeed, might an equally radical challenge to liberal notions of humanism and democracy come from animal studies, or animal studies in solidarity with disability studies?

Ethics of interspecies interdependence

At the intersection of animal studies and disability studies, we learn that ethical compassion is rooted in a fundamental obligation to acknowledge our dependency on other animal bodies that support our own. With both compassion toward others and obligations to those who sustain us, we have an ethical obligation to share the planet even with those with whom we do not share a world. Not because we share common abilities or can perform tasks but rather because of what we cannot share, namely, the singularity of the irreparable ways in which we are all misfits sharing the same planet.

Beginning to articulate what this sharing of the unshareable might look like, Cary Wolfe proposes a new way of seeing, what Kristeva might call "emerging subjectivities," as "shared trans-species being-in-the world."[38] Wolfe's prime example is a magazine cover representing a blind woman accompanied by a German Shepherd service dog. Wolfe argues that the service dog is not just a prop or tool (or piece of equipment) that allows the disabled person to be mainstreamed or integrated into liberal society. Rather, he suggests, the interaction between the woman and the dog becomes "an irreducibly different and unique form of subjectivity—neither *Homo sapiens* nor *Canis familiaris*, neither 'disabled' nor 'normal', but something else altogether . . . constituted by complex relations of trust, respect, dependence and communication."[39] While Wolfe's suggestion is provocative, it is important to consider the dog as a living being with its own needs and desires apart from its servicing interactions. The service dog too is an interdependent being in need of emotional support and companionship. In the words of Jimmy Boehm, leader of the Tennessee chapter of the National Federation of the Blind, "I view it like we're explorers. That way, it doesn't get frustrating or anything. We just travel a little bit different."[40] We might call these emerging subjectivities, interspecies interdependence, or interspecies-intersubjectivities, which point to what Cynthia Willett calls interspecies ethics.

In her most recent book, *Interspecies Ethics*, feminist philosopher Cynthia Willett develops an alternative account of ethics as what she calls "interspecies communitarianism." Focusing on relationships and attachments between humans and non-human animals, and animal relationships with other non-human animals, Willett argues for "new ethical ideals for a trans-species living." Acknowledging the importance of other animal ethicists' concerns with what we share with other animals, Willett shifts the focus away from intellectual abilities and language-use and toward community and community-building practices such as play and laughter. She gives priority to Eros over Logos. Tracing an evolution of play and laughter, she argues that humans have more in common with animals such as wolves and elephants—and they have more in common with us—than many accounts acknowledge. Willett's *Interspecies Ethics* is a testament to the need for interspecies ethics by considering our shared "communitarian cohabitation," or proximity. More recently, in response to critics, Willett explicitly mentions proximity when she concludes,

> Ethics as contact calls attention to the poetry of proximity, to erotic waves that transmit through the sound or feel of the other's breath, the heat of the body, and the smell of the skin. This intense proximity serves as a compelling source for ethical sociality."[41]

Interspecies ethics, then, is not based on intellect, reason, abilities, or functions; it is not based on care relations between human beings, or even on shared vulnerability. Rather, it is based on shared bonds and interdependence that are bodily, to be sure, but which take us beyond physical dependence or interdependence and toward love and companionship.

In sum, in the name of feminism, we should not discount or disavow our interdependence on non-human animals. If Kittay's ethics of care based on shared dependence obligates us to that which sustains us, then it obligates us to non-human animals. If Kristeva's politics of vulnerability as the fourth pillar of democracy obligates us to other embodied creatures in our midst, then it obligates us to non-human animals as well as humans. If, as she argues, democracy is based on proximity and not the productive integration of citizen workers, then democracy must be expanded to include non-human animals. Furthermore, as attention to service dogs has shown, neither animals nor people should be reduced to their functionality. Doing so throws us back into the nonproductive type of line drawing that have fueled the problematic debates over who has more right to be included as members of the moral community, intelligent animals or severely cognitively disabled humans. As we've seen, this type of hierarchical thinking, whoever is on top, is counterproductive at best and damaging to both animals and people, at worst.

Finally, standardized notions functionality and integration disregard alternative "functions" such as love and companionship that are equally, if not more, important to the well-being and thriving of various animal species, including our own. As the ambiguous status of emotional support animals shows, we disregard the love, or what Willett might identify as the erotic, dimension of our relationship with non-human animals. This is also a danger of popular discourses of integration of people with disabilities when they revolve around integration into the workforce and making them productive members of society. As we've seen, even the dichotomies ability-disability, dependence-independence, and vulnerable-empowered so forcefully deployed by feminist theorists to challenge the primacy of liberal notions of autonomy too easily fall back into line-drawing, on the one hand, and cooptation by capitalist notions of productive citizenry, on the other.

What if rather than, or in addition to, picking up keys or barking to warn of seizures, the function of lips and mouths were for kissing? In *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, discussing "cyborg" hybridity between humans and technology, Alison Kafer gives the provocative example of the slogan "trached dykes French kiss without coming up for air" to indicate that what counts as an ability or a disability cannot be reduced to standard norms circulating with dominant culture.[42] Kafer argues that in addition to showing how technology doesn't just replace a disability with an ability, the disabled body itself can enhance experience, in this case erotic experience. Rather than trying to fit in or integrate, Kafer's trached dykes French kissing are aiming for love and pleasure. The function of mouths may be for kissing rather than for breathing or picking up keys. This goes to show that there are many functions of a mouth—kissing, breathing, eating, talking, picking up keys, barking alerts—depending on the type of mouth and the relationship in which it is engaged. At the intersection of animal studies and disability studies, interspecies interdependence complicates any standardized notions of mouths or their functions.

The seeing-eye dog shows us that there are many ways of seeing; and all of them implicate each of us in a network of relationships and perspectives. Rather than see service animals as mere equipment to be used, and rather than see disabled people as deficient or defective when measured against an ideal norm, both have a positive valuation, singularly manifest in their relationships to each other. Indeed, it is only if we "see" vision as the proper, and perhaps only, function of the eye, that we see blindness as a defect. What if, instead, we take the function of the eye to be crying, crying for those in need or in pain, crying for joy in companionship?[43] These would be tears of compassion for other living beings, tears that acknowledge our ethical obligations to them, based not on dependence or independence but rather on interdependence, especially emotionally interdependence, whatever species they may be.

Notes

1 See Peter Singer, "Reflections," in *The Lives of Animals*, ed. Amy Gutman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Peter Singer, "Speciesism and Moral Status," *Metaphilosophy* 40, no. 304 (2009): 567–81. See also Jeff McMahan, "Cognitive Disability and Cognitive Enhancement," *Metaphilosophy* 3–4 (2009): 582–605.

2 Cynthia Willett, *Interspecies Ethics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

3 Eva Kittay, *Love's Labor: Women, Equality and Dependency* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

4 Federal law allows business owners to ask only two questions of people using service animals; otherwise they risk charges of discrimination or harassment: (1) Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) What work or task has the dog been trained to do? Some people are taking advantage of the fact that the law does not require that a disabled person provide documentation, and growing awareness and concern for the needs of people with disabilities, passing off what the law considers pets as service animals. See Andy Hobbs, "Fake Service Dogs: Pet Owners Exploit ADA Loopholes," *Federal Way Mirror*, April 12, http://federalwaymirror.com/news/147080865.htmld.

5 See for example, accessed July 15, 2012, www.bazelon.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=mHq8GV0FI4c%3D&tabid=245. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, Fair Housing Information Sheet #6. See also the military's statement on emotional support versus service dogs at www.military.com/entertainment/pet-corner/what-is-service-animal-and-do-i-really-need-one. The Americans with Disabilities Act defines service animals as: "Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA." United States Department of Justice, 2010 revised definition at www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm.

6 See, accessed July 15, 2012, www.bazelon.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=mHq8GV0FI4c%3D&tabid=245. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, Fair Housing Information Sheet #6.

7 Tony Gonzalez, "Service Dogs Still Hounded Despite Change in Tennessee Law," *The Tennessean*, March 6, 2014.

8 See "Proposed Rules, pages 34465–34508," in *The Federal Register Online via GPO Access* 73, no. 117 (June 17, 2008), wais.access.gpo.gov. The department is proposing new regulatory text in Sec. 35.104 to formalize its position on emotional support or comfort animals, which is that "[a]nimals whose sole function is to provide emotional support, comfort, therapy, companionship, therapeutic benefits, or promote emotional well-being are not service animals."

9 Gary Francione, *Animals, Property, and the Law* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995); Margaret Jaspers, *Pet Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

10 War dogs have been used for centuries, since at least the time of the Roman Empire in which armored dogs with spiked collars were used in combat (see English 2003).

11 Dogtime Staff, "Military Working Dogs Still Considered Equipment," May 24, 2013.

12 Some media and public suspicion of emotional support dogs or therapy animals is evidenced by reactions to Ashley Judd's announcement that she has therapy dogs.

Compare this to some reactions to Jill Abramson's (the first woman editor in the history of *The New York Times*) *The Puppy Diaries*, which elicited an article in the online magazine *The Gawker* entitled "Your Fascination with Your Dog Is an Embarrassment (To You)." The author suggested that it was silly and undignified for the editor of an important newspaper to write about her attachment to her puppy. Although these are just two examples, they are representative of at least one strand of popular opinions about companion animals that does not take them seriously as human companions or family members.

13 Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "Integrating Disability: Transforming Feminist Theory," *NWSA Journal* 14, no. 3 (2002): 28.

14 Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "The Case for Conserving Disability," *Bioethical Inquiry* 9, no. 3 (2012): 28.

15 These quotations are from the SDA Website Selling Service Dog Kits.

16 Garland-Thomson, "Integrating Disability," 24.

17 Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "Misfits: A Feminist-Materialist Disability Concept," *Hypatia* 26, no. 3 (2011): 604.

18 Garland-Thomson, "Misfits," 602.

19 Julia Kristeva, "At the Limits of Living," trans. Claire Potter, *Journal of Visual Culture* 5 (2006): 220.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Kristeva, "Limits," 221.

23 Aimi Hamraie, "Designing Collective Access: A Feminist Disability Theory of Universal Design," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 33 (2013).

24 Eva Kittay, "The Personal Is Philosophical Is Political," *Metaphilosophy* 3–4 (2009): 606–27.

25 Kittay, "Personal," 610.

26 Eva Kittay, "Welfare, Dependency, and a Public Ethic of Care," *Social Justice* 25:1, no. 71 (Spring 1998a): 131. See also Kittay, *Love's Labor*.

27 Eva Kittay, "The Ethics Care, Dependency and Disability," *Ratio Juris* 24, no. 1 (2011): 49.

28 Garland-Thomson, "Misfits," 600.

29 See Kelly Oliver, *Women as Weapons of War: Iraq, Sex and the Media* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Kelly Oliver, *Animal Lessons: How They Teach Us to Be Human* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Cf. Cary Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 140. Chloë Taylor extends Butler's notion of vulnerability to non-human animals. See "The Precarious Lives of Animals," *Philosophy Today* 51, no. 1(2008): 60–72. Taylor argues that although, as she articulates it, Butler's Levinasian ethics necessitates the exclusion of non-human animals, it can be extended and adapted to include animals. James Stanescu argues that fragments of concern for non-human animals already exist within Butler's writing. Gathering these bits together, Stanescu argues that Butler's ethics not only includes non-human animals but also does so necessarily. See "Species Trouble: Judith Butler, Mourning and the Precarious Lives of Animals," *Hypatia* 27, no. 3 (2012): 565–82. As intriguing and helpful as Stanescu's reconstitution is, non-human animals have not been a priority for Butler.

30 Kelly Oliver, "Recognition, Witnessing, and Response Ethics," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 48, no. 4 (2015): 473–93 and Oliver, *Women as Weapons of War*.

31 Felugni Sheth, *Toward a Political Philosophy of Race* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009).

32 Kristeva, "Limits," and Kristeva, *Hatred and Forgiveness*, trans. Janine Herman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

33 Kristeva, "Limits," 224.

34 Kristeva, “Limits,” 223 and *Hatred*.
35 Kristeva, “Limits,” 221–22.
36 Kristeva, “Limits,” 222.
37 I am indebted to Sean Meighoo, who asked me to clarify the relationship between dependence and independence in his comments on my talk on Service Dogs at the *philoSOPHIA* conference in Atlanta, May 2015. Thanks also to Linda Fischer for helpful comments on the talk version at the Central European University in Budapest Hungary.
38 Kristeva, “Limits,” 141 and *Hatred*.
39 Ibid.
40 Gonzalez, “Service.”
41 Cynthia Willett, “Ethics for a Layered Self: Laughter, Reciprocity, Generosity, Home,” *philoSOPHIA* 5, no. 1 (Winter 2015): 71.
42 Alison Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 112. Kafer is critically engaging feminist theorist Donna Haraway’s notion of the cyborg as a hybrid being in “A Cyborg Manifesto.” See Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge Press, 1991). Following other disability theorists, Kafer challenges Haraway’s assumption that crip bodies are cyborgs without engaging in discussion of the lives of real disabled persons. Yet, unlike other theorists, Kafer finds the notion of the feminist cyborg useful for disability studies.
43 Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 126–27.

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Chapter 7

Veganism as universal design

Accommodation and inclusion in law and social justice praxis

Chloë Taylor and Kelly Struthers Montford

In "Vegans, Freaks, and Animals: Toward a New Table Fellowship," Sunaura Taylor describes participating in an evening of activities called The Feral Share, which involved an art fund-raising event, an organic meal, and a philosophical debate.[1] Taylor was invited to debate the ethics of eating meat with Nicolette Niman, an environmental lawyer, cattle-rancher, and author of a book titled *Righteous Porkchop*. Although she is an artist herself, Taylor was excluded from part of the evening—the art fund-raising event—because it was located on an inaccessible floor of the building. She and her partner David thus spent the first forty minutes of the evening sitting alone downstairs, because the organizers had not opted for an accessible building, and architects did not have bodies like Taylor's in mind when they designed the building. Although the event featured a debate on veganism, the dinner was not readily accessible to vegans either but rather entailed a choice of grass-fed beef or cheese ravioli. Taylor and her partner were prepared a separate, lackluster plate of roasted vegetables. As she writes,

> As I was about to expound to a room full of omnivores on the reasons for choosing veganism, I felt keenly aware of how this food would be read—as isolating and different, as creating more work for the chefs, and as unfulfilling in comparison with the other dishes. I entered into the debate with a keen sense of being alone in that room, not only because I was the only visibly disabled individual, but because, besides David, I knew I was the only one with no animal products on my plate.[2]

Taylor summarizes the evening by writing, "animal oppression and disability oppression are made invisible by being rendered as simply natural: steers are served for dinner and disabled people wait downstairs."[3]

Veganism and disability are linked in contemporary Western societies because they both mark abnormalities, and—like most non-normate subject positions in a normalizing society—they have been medicalized and stigmatized. Moreover, veganism and disability have both been responded to through practices of marginalization, exclusion, and, at best, accommodation. In a society that assumes normative bodies, minds, and eating practices, being either disabled or vegan means that one must continually ask to be specially accommodated, which is read as a perpetual inconvenience to others. As Taylor observes, "On his attempt at being a vegetarian, . . . [popular food writer Michael] Pollan writes: 'Other people now have to accommodate me, and I find this uncomfortable: My new dietary restrictions throw a big wrench into the basic host-guest relationship'."[4] In response to Pollan's aversion to needing accommodation, Taylor suggests that disability theory can be useful for resisting carnism, because it is a body of work that has already theorized how to exist as abnormal in a normalizing world and how to resist normalization. For instance, of Pollan, Taylor argues,

> It is a telling privilege that this is a new experience for him. Disrupting social comfort and requesting accommodation are things disabled people confront all the time. Do we go to the restaurant our friends want to visit even though it has steps and we will have to be carried? Do we eat with a fork in our hands, versus the fork in our mouth, or no fork at all, to make ourselves more acceptable at the table—to avoid eating "like an animal"? Do we draw attention to the fact that the space we have been invited to . . . is one of unacknowledged privilege and ableism? For many disabled individuals, the importance of upholding a certain politeness at the dinner table is far overshadowed by something else—upholding our right to *be* at the dinner table, even if we make others uncomfortable.[5]

If we were to agree with Pollan's argument that it is an unacceptable violation of the host-guest relation to need accommodation at the dinner table, we would reject not only vegetarianism and veganism but also disability politics. Pollan suggests that it is unacceptable not only to be vegetarian or vegan—his "food rules" explicitly tell us to "eat like an omnivore"[6]—but to be disabled as well. *Contra* Pollan, veganism and disability politics unite in insisting on our right to inconvenience our host and, we will argue, in advocating for default practices of inclusion.

Building on Sunaura Taylor's work, this chapter examines the intersections and alliances between disability and animal activism with a focus on food politics and veganism. In Section I we explore some of the links between veganism and disability in order to argue for veganism as a potential crip identity. In Section II, we take up the critical disability studies literature on universal design to argue for veganism as a default practice of inclusion demanded by social justice. Importantly, we do not primarily make this argument anthropocentrically; although we argue that providing exclusively vegan food *is* the surest way to accommodate the most humans, more importantly we argue that it is also the surest way to keep the planet accessible for billions of non-human species. In Sections III and IV we consider the implications of this argument for two areas of practice: Section III explores accommodation legislation, focusing on the Canadian province of Ontario's Human Rights Commission, and Section IV discusses campus catering. Finally, in Section V we consider the politics of food within the disability community.

Cripping veganism

In *Disability Politics and Theory*, critical disability studies scholar and activist A. J. Withers discusses the ways in which oppressed or marginalized people often distance themselves from other oppressed or marginalized people, especially those who are even more oppressed and marginalized than they are.[7] In particular, Withers observes the tendency of various groups that *could* identify as disabled—such as neurodiverse people, fat people, deaf people, and trans people—to reject this label in order to avoid the stigma of disability. As Rosemarie Garland-Thomson writes,

> People with disabilities routinely announce that they do not consider themselves as disabled. Although they are often repudiating the literal meaning of the word disabled, their words nevertheless serve to disassociate them from the identity group of the disabled. Our culture offers profound disincentives and few rewards to identifying as disabled. The trouble with such statements is that they leave intact, without challenge, the oppressive stereotypes that permit, among other things, the unexamined use of disability terms such as *crippled, lame, dumb, idiot, moron* as verbal gestures of derision. The refusal to claim disability identity is in part due to a lack of ways to understand or talk about disability that are not oppressive.[8]

Critical animal studies scholars have similarly considered the ways that oppressed people reject being compared to non-human animals, since animalization is profoundly stigmatizing in a speciesist society and is regularly used to justify their subordination.[9] People of color,[10] women,[11] prisoners,[12] and disabled people and their advocates[13] have all objected to comparisons to animals. Although resistance to dehumanizing comparisons is understandable and perhaps, in some cases, necessary, critical animal studies scholars have shown that it functions to reinforce the oppression of non-human animals and human others and the logic wherein animality spells inferiority and justifies oppression. Thus, when one group insists that they are humans and not animals, they—or some privileged subcategory of them—may manage to leverage themselves into a less oppressed position; however, they have done nothing to critique the fundamental logic that says that to be an animal is to be inferior and justifiably dominated. In critiquing animalization we do nothing to help other humans who continue to be seen as closer to animals, as well as animals themselves, and we in fact reinforce animal and human oppression. The logic of speciesism frequently underpins intrahuman oppressions, and so long as we perpetuate a language of humanism, we do not fundamentally challenge the ways that humans oppress one another as well as other animals.

Like critical animal studies scholars who worry about the human disavowal of animality, Withers is critical of distancing moves in which various medicalized groups disavow the label of disability or their association with one another, each group striving to affiliate themselves with normates instead. Withers views disability not as an indication that there is anything wrong with a person but rather as a marker that one is considered abnormal and is therefore oppressed within a normalizing society. Withers argues that disavowing disability denies shared histories of medical violence as well as shared political investments in resisting a normalizing society. This disavowal furthermore refuses potentially liberatory political alliances and re-entrenches the stigma of disability. Withers describes their own "radical" model of disability as going beyond the social model, in part because of its strong intersectionality and the alliances it forges with other social justice movements, including critical trans, anti-sizeism, and anti-poverty movements. As Withers insists, disability is not separate from other forms of oppression but is interlocking. In *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation*, Sunaura Taylor takes a similar position, demonstrating the interlocking of disability and other oppressions; Taylor's analysis, however, extends beyond the human. Indeed, Taylor does not deny but embraces her affinities with more-than-human animals and suggests that just as animal and disability oppressions intersect, so do the paths to animal and disability liberation.

In this section we take up Withers' and Taylor's arguments in order to consider the links and alliances between veganism and disability. As was discussed above, veganism and disability are commonly associated in that they require "accommodation" in a carnist, ableist culture. Veganism becomes translated as a "dietary restriction"—a category that also includes religious prohibitions on certain foods, food allergies, and gluten intolerance. As academics we are familiar with conference registration forms that ask participants to note dietary restrictions along with any disabilities or other accommodation needs. One declares one's veganism, therefore, on the same form where one states one's need for wheelchair-accessible washrooms or ASL interpretation. Even more significantly, however, veganism is linked to disability because it has historically been pathologized as a mental illness. Several critical animal studies scholars have discussed the nineteenth-century diagnoses "zoophilpsychosis" and "anti-vivisection disorder," which were used to pathologize people who cared for animals and resisted animal-based diets and animal experimentation.[14] In *Psychiatric Power*, Foucault describes the nineteenth-century case of a man institutionalized for "melancholia" as a result of his vegetarianism.[15] In another nineteenth-century psychiatric case study discussed by Foucault, holding a funeral for a pet bird was retrospectively interpreted as a clear indication that an individual was a monomaniac who would later slaughter his family and should have been locked up before he could commit these crimes.[16]

The pathologization of veganism continued into the twentieth century: in 1962, Leonard Roy Frank was institutionalized in a psychiatric hospital when his parents became concerned that he had been influenced by the teachings of Gandhi, one manifestation of which was his vegetarianism. Frank had become attuned to social injustice, had grown a beard, and had given up meat as well as his job selling real estate to dedicate himself to spiritual studies. Frank, who later co-founded the Network Against Psychiatric Assault, was involuntarily committed by his parents and diagnosed as paranoid schizophrenic. He was subjected to fifty insulin-comas and thirty-five electroshocks, his beard was shaved off while he was unconscious from treatment, and he was obliged to eat animal products to be released from hospital. A decade later, in a 1975 article published in the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, titled "On Vegetarianism," psychoanalyst Stanley Friedman described vegetarians as suffering from "intense ego-alien oral cannibalistic impulses."[17]

Even more recently, twenty-first-century psychiatrists have proposed a new eating disorder diagnosis, "orthorexia nervosa," which pathologizes people who eliminate entire food groups and are "righteous" about what they eat, explicitly naming vegetarians and vegans as suffering from this condition.[18] Although orthorexia nervosa has not yet been introduced into the *DSM*, it is consistently treated as a legitimate eating disorder by psy professionals; for instance, in June 2019, a webinar was hosted for psychotherapists at a Santa Barbara eating disorder clinic, titled "Veganism & Eating Disorders: History, Holes, and Hope for Recovery," by Tammy Beasley.[19] Despite orthorexia not being in the *DSM*, the very first question on the very first PowerPoint slide for this webinar asks: "Is veganism a form of disordered eating, a reflection of orthorexia, or an eating choice that can be sustained without disordered eating behaviors?"

Another eating disorder that is also indicative of the ongoing medicalization of veganism was added to the *DSM*-5 in 2013: Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID). ARFID is defined thusly,

> Persistent avoidance or restriction of food intake, without the weight and body image concerns paramount in anorexia nervosa (AN) and bulimia nervosa (BN), resulting in at least one of the following: substantial weight loss (or, in children, failure to gain as expected or faltering growth), significant nutritional deficiency, dependence on oral nutritional supplementation or enteral feeding, or *marked interference with psychosocial functioning*.[20]

Characteristics of ARFID include a "narrow range of accepted foods" or "selective food refusal."[21] Diet is medicalized and normalized at early ages when children and adolescents are still largely dependent on their family or parents for food. Indeed, the limited research on ARFID has focused on children and adolescents, and it is likely that pediatricians and primary physicians will be vigilant for children following non-normative diets, regardless of the child's health. As Mammel and Orstein write in their article aimed to provide guidance to health professionals in their diagnosis of ARFID, "a low threshold of suspicion is crucial to early diagnosis of ARFID . . . concerns about eating behaviours at any age, with or without weight loss, should be taken seriously with close monitoring even in subthreshold presentations to optimize early intervention."[22] Recommended treatment modalities for ARFID include in-patient care, outpatient day programs, cognitive behavioral therapies, and parental coaching for parents who can normalize their child's eating. The cases of orthorexia nervosa and selective eating disorder make clear that animal activists and vegans have been and may continue to be pathologized, and the identity categories of veganism and disability thus intersect.

Following Withers, we understand disability to mean that one is stigmatized and medicalized due to some kind of physical, cognitive, or behavioral abnormality; this stigmatization, however, does not mean that there is anything “wrong” with the person. Although, for reasons that are discussed in Chapter 13, we follow disability studies scholars such as Elizabeth Crow, Susan Wendell, Tom Shakespeare, and Rosemarie Garland-Thomson in acknowledging that not all impairment-related suffering would dematerialize with disability liberation, even in cases where suffering would remain, there are considerable social factors at play. In other words, disability is not primarily an individual problem or condition but a social position of marginalization and hence a political issue. According to Withers’ understanding of disability, therefore, veganism plausibly *is* a disability in a carnist society since it has been consistently pathologized as a medical problem. Veganism, at least in many contemporary social contexts, may then be seen as a crip identity, and it is one that we proudly embrace.

Like Deaf people, trans people, neurodiverse people, and fat people wanting to resist the label of disability, we recognize that some vegan readers will also feel wary of the comparison between veganism and disability. Such readers might argue that veganism is different from gluten-free diets and food allergies, let alone illness and disability, in that it is fully voluntary but also in that it is an ethical and political stance rather than a medical condition. From this perspective, ethical vegans might also resist being interpellated as “restricted” (as in the phrase “dietary restrictions”) and, by association, “disabled” by veganism, since these terms put veganism in a negative light, and politicized vegans often promote veganism as a positive, happy, healthy lifestyle. Following Withers, however, we are wary of the impulse to distance ourselves from disability, as well as negative constructs of disability, such as those that automatically oppose it to notions of a positive, happy, and healthy life; we are also wary of categorically negative understandings of illness. Such impulses and constructs are almost inevitably indicative of ableism and of the compulsory healthism, able-bodiedness, and able-mindedness that characterize contemporary society. Because disabilities are stigmatized and punished, we are socialized and indeed compelled to perform health, able-bodiedness, and able-mindedness, like normative gender roles and heterosexuality, to the degree that we can.[23] Unfortunately this desire to perform health, able-bodiedness, and able-mindedness reinforces the stigma—and hence the oppression—of disability.

Moreover, critical disability studies makes us question the assumption that while veganism is voluntary, disability never is. This distinction relies on the assumption that disability is always experienced negatively and is never something a person would choose. Widespread resistance to “cure” on the part of disabled people,[24] diverse accounts of “desiring disability,”[25] as well as the more marginal phenomenon of transability,[26] all challenge this assumption.

Finally, as has already been seen with the example of Withers, many critical disability scholars and activists resist the medicalization of disability much like vegans have resisted the medicalization of their eating habits. For these authors and activists, disability is neither a medical problem nor a problem of individual bodies but a social and political problem. As Marsha Saxton writes, "oppression is what's most disabling about disability."[27] Disabled people do not need to be fixed, rehabilitated, cured, or normalized.[28] Rather, society has to change in order to accommodate and include a diverse range of bodies and minds. Given this understanding of disability, we would not want to distance veganism from disability by claiming that veganism is a social, ethical, and political movement, while disability is an individual and medical issue, a health problem or impairment. On the contrary, both disability and veganism are social, political, and ethical issues.

Universal design

Critical disability studies has taught us that it should not be the responsibility of individual disabled people to make sure that they are accommodated everywhere they go. Currently the way that disability accommodation works at most universities, to take but one example, is that to receive accommodation, a student is required: to go to a medical clinic to request a doctor's note proving her diagnosis; to then take this doctor's note to the Office for Disability Services on campus in order to obtain another note attesting that she is eligible for accommodation; and, to then bring this note to her instructors to sign *prior* to her being accommodated in her classes. Critical disability studies scholars have argued that putting individuals through these extensive medical and bureaucratic processes is *itself* disabling. When this situation is multiplied in most situations in a person's life, her life is thoroughly medicalized, she is continually relying on doctors to write her notes in order to have access to everything that matters to her, and she is continually subjected to hurdles and bureaucratic tasks that other people are not. Some disabled people may also not want to out themselves as disabled to their instructors, as such accommodation practices require. Many disabled people may opt to not take a class or participate in an activity because they are unwilling to, do not have the energy to, or are unable to get the medical certification required; alternately, they may take the class or participate in an activity without receiving the accommodations they need. Practices of individual accommodation therefore continue to exclude and disable many people. This type of "accommodation" is therefore not so much a solution as it is part of the problem.

Rather than obliging individual people to prove their disabilities and to apply for individual accommodations through time-consuming medical and bureaucratic procedures, disability studies teaches us that we need to make accommodating spaces and practices our default. We should therefore design our classes to be as inclusive as possible and alert students to the fact that we welcome them to tell us how we can accommodate them, whether or not they have medical documentation. According to the principles of universal design, we should similarly design buildings and public spaces to be as accessible to as many kinds of people as possible.[29] Thus, rather than retrofitting buildings that assume normate users in order to accommodate particular individuals, buildings should be designed from the outset with diverse bodies in mind. To take the most common examples, sidewalks with curb cuts and buildings with ramps are accessible not only to people in wheelchairs but also to people pushing baby carriages, pulling shopping carts, or on bicycles and rollerblades, and they are no less inconvenient than stairs and regular curbs for people who bipedally perambulate. Aimi Hamraie cautions, however, that ramps and curb cuts designed for strollers and bicycles may be too steep for wheelchairs, so universal design needs to be grounded in a disability politics from the outset.[30] Taking up universal design principles in designing our classes, we should assign take-home exams instead of exams scheduled in particular locations and time slots. Take-home exams easily accommodate students with a variety of learning disorders and anxiety issues, without these students having to apply for extra time or to take the exam in a more private location and without inconveniencing normate students.

Although food accommodations are currently less bureaucratized and medicalized than disability accommodations, to some extent vegans experience similar hurdles to disabled people in ensuring that they will be accommodated and sometimes opt to not participate in events as a result. Flying transcontinentally, vegans and people with other food restrictions (Kosher, Halal, lactose intolerance, and gluten and nut allergies) must order a special meal seventy-two hours ahead or pack their own meals or else go hungry on long flights and in transit through airports that lack vegan options. In contrast, most carnists need not think ahead and always find food they can eat in airports and on airplanes. As vegans, we often have to phone a restaurant where a gathering we are invited to is taking place, making sure that, despite a carnist menu, the cook will prepare us a meal that we can eat. At restaurants or at our hosts' houses, we must face social discomfort by drawing attention to the speciesism of the space, asking questions about ingredients, aware that other guests look on with disapprobation. Often we simply forego a gathering rather than go to this trouble in order to sit at a table where animals are being eaten. Like disabled people seeking default practices of inclusion, ethical vegans do not simply want to be individually accommodated so that they can eat plant-based foods, while everyone around them continues to eat animals and their excretions. On the contrary, ethical vegans think everyone (or at least most people) should be eating plant-based foods. Thus, unlike the person with gluten intolerance or a nut allergy, ethical vegans will not be satisfied with a special meal made for them. Ethical vegans want veganism to be the universal design. We can make this argument both anthropocentrically and non-anthropocentrically.

To first make the case anthropocentrically: vegan foods are the most accessible option for most humans. Many humans besides vegans have ethical, religious, and health restrictions on the non-human animal products they can eat, whereas similar restrictions on plant foods are uncommon. For instance, people who only eat organic, so-called "happy," free-range, or grass-fed animals, people who follow

Halal and Kosher rules, and people who are lactose intolerant are all better accommodated by vegan food than by regular animal-based foods. Serving vegan food as a default, especially with nut-free and gluten-free options, maximizes the number of people who can eat, while the more animal products one serves, the more likely one is to exclude certain human eaters. Thus, if airlines only served vegan foods, not only the vegan traveler but also travelers who only eat free-range animals, travelers who follow Kosher or Halal rules, and travelers who are lactose intolerant would still be able to eat, even if they forgot to call the airline days in advance. Serving vegan food exclusively avoids problems of cross-contamination and also avoids excluding vegans who politically abstain from events where dead animals are on the table.

More importantly, however, we can make the case for veganism as universal design non-anthropocentrically, considering all species of life on earth. Indeed, too often complaints about the lack of vegan foods are taken as a mere failure to accommodate certain human beings, and the solution is to add a vegan option onto an animal-based menu or to order exactly enough special vegan meals to accommodate the vegans, while everyone else continues to eat animals. For instance, at a recent book launch that one of the authors attended—for a book that was ironically about global warming in which animal agriculture is a leading driver—there was precisely one plastic-wrapped, specially labeled vegan cookie available, to which the author was alerted. Human vegans are thereby accommodated, but no thought is given to the oppression of animals, whose bodies continue to be the primary fare consumed in these spaces, or to the environmental impact of these consumption patterns. For vegan scholars and activists, however, non-human animals should be considered as part of our communities, and their interests and the fate of the environment ought to be taken into account.[31] The near total unavailability of plant-based foods in most spaces should therefore not merely be an occasion for us to contemplate the difficulties of being vegan but should more importantly draw attention to the overwhelming scale of animal oppression and the catastrophic damage that our consumption habits are wreaking on the environment. Put otherwise: given the environmental cost of animal agriculture, veganism makes the planet more accessible for life on earth. As one life form among many, all humans would benefit from making the planet accessible through veganism; more importantly, however, billions of other species would also benefit from widespread human veganism.

Legislation

The accommodation of *individual* vegetarians and vegans has been the subject of human rights law. A constrained, individualized, and politically evacuated approach to accommodation has structured other legal cases about discrimination against vegans, as well as informed recent revisions to the Ontario Human Rights Commission about creed. Individuals in a handful of legal cases have argued that their veganism is a philosophical belief system and/or religion that ought to be accommodated by employers and state institutions, such as hospitals, universities, and prisons. Importantly, animals are not considered as subjects in these legal mechanisms but are considered as those about which individual humans may or may not have a legally protected belief system. Accommodation in these regards is only for the individual who holds *personal* beliefs about the purpose of animals.

In *Anderson v. Orange County Transit Authority* (1996), bus driver Bruce Anderson told his employer, the Orange County Transit Authority, that he would refuse to directly hand out coupons for an animal-based fast-food restaurant as it violated his belief that animals ought not to be killed or consumed. He instead offered to place the promotional materials in a basket by the bus entrance—a suggestion his employers rejected. Anderson was fired for insubordination. Anderson argued that his ethical vegetarianism occupied a place in his life akin to religion, and as a consequence he had suffered employment-based discrimination on religious grounds. As such, Anderson argued that his employer had a duty to accommodate. The case was settled prior to trial.[32]

The only test of Section 2 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*[33] protection of freedom of *conscience* (rather than conscience and religion) was the 2002 case brought by Jack Maurice, a federally incarcerated vegetarian man whom the Correctional Service of Canada refused to accommodate. The court ruled that Maurice was entitled to conscientious accommodation, meaning that the prison service had to provide him vegetarian meals.[34] While this is the best outcome the applicant could have hoped for, the structure of legal argumentation meant that the court considered this individual human's right to accommodation based on his ethical stance towards animals, yet animals themselves remained abstracted objects.

Other cases brought by ethical vegans have succeeded and failed based on whether legal arguments about one's resistance to animal subjugation are based in formally recognized religions. For example, in 2002, Jordan Friedman brought a wrongful termination suit against Southern California Permanente Medical Group, as he, a vegan employee had not been hired as a permanent employee because of his refusal to accept a Mumps vaccine made from chicken embryos. He was unsuccessful as his veganism failed to meet the legal test for religious creed. Put otherwise, the court found that his veganism was a personal and secular belief outside of legal protection.[35]

In *Chenzira v. Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center* (2012), Chenzira, a Christian and a vegan, was fired by the hospital for refusing a mandatory vaccine containing animal products.[36] The hospital claimed that Chenzira's refusal was related to her veganism, which they framed as a personal choice. By framing her ethics as a personal choice, they argued that these were not legally protected, and as such, they were not obligated to provide accommodation. Chenzira, however, argued that her ethical veganism was related to her Christianity, and she presented various passages from the Bible to argue this point. Her wrongful dismissal claim was upheld by the court.

More recently, in 2015 the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) revised their discrimination policy to include secular and ethical belief systems as protected under Human Rights Laws. Such inclusions specify that creed now encompasses "non-religious belief systems that like religion, substantially influence a person's identity, worldview, and way of life."[37] The OHRC explains that such a revision allows for Indigenous spiritualties, specific dress requirements, and dietary restrictions, for example, to fall under the purview of a creed. This non-religious framing therefore legally protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of creed in the five areas covered by Ontario's policy: housing, services, employment, contracts, and union and professional associations (OHRC). According to the OHRC, a belief system is a protected creed if it meets the following five criteria:

- Is sincerely, freely, and deeply held;
- Is integrally linked to a person's identity, self-definition, and fulfilment;
- Is a particular and comprehensive, overarching system of belief that governs one's conduct and practices;
- Addresses ultimate questions of human existence, including ideas about life, purpose, death, and the existence or non-existence of a Creator and/or a higher or different order of existence; and
- Has some "nexus" or connection to an organization or community that professes a shared system of belief.[38]

As these criteria demonstrate, social, ethical, and political practices are depoliticized and instead become individual issues that ought to be accommodated. For example, educational institutions would have to provide alternatives to vivisection, employers would have to provide uniforms free of animals, and hospitals and prisons would have to provide vegan meals to those claiming ethical veganism rather than fundamentally altering their methods of instruction or the food institutions provide that would be cogent with non-anthropogenic accommodation.

In a UK case, *Hashman v. Milton Park*, a landscaper, vegan, and anti-hunting advocate charged that his contract was terminated because of his beliefs. In order to assess the role of his beliefs in his life, the defense analyzed his veganism by arguing that because he wore clothing made with animal-derived dyes, had lapsed in his vegan diet at times by detailing which animal products he had consumed, he was not a true vegan and, because of this, did not have grounds to make a claim of discrimination.[39] Ultimately, the defense attempted to reduce matters of employment equity to whether the plaintiff was a consistent vegan. This is similar to the accusations faced by those seeking disability benefits from the state and insurance providers, namely that they are faking their disabilities for financial gain. Alison Covey suggests that similar legal arguments could be made in cases brought before the Ontario Human Rights Commission, wherein the individual is scrutinized for their consumer choices in a non-vegan world.[40] As such, for a belief system to be a protected creed, the individual will be required to prove not only that their veganism meets these criteria but that they have suffered discrimination in the five protected areas *due to* their creed. Accommodation then functions, according to anti-discrimination policy, as a mechanism for individuals who have strongly held beliefs about animals in relation to how they conceptualize humanity.

Camille Labchuk, lawyer and executive director of legal animal advocacy group, Animal Justice, has suggested that this definition of creed has positioned veganism as "one step closer to becoming a human right in Ontario."[41] Other advocates and groups were similarly optimistic about the expanded definition of creed, with the result that the OHRC issued a formal statement titled "In response to claims that ethical veganism is now a creed," whereby they reiterated the preamble of the Ontario Human Rights Code, which is premised on the "inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family."[42] As such, community as well as the legal protections that flow from such a definition remain exclusively human and do not allow for the consideration of other animals, with whom we share our world. Individuals who abstain from the consumption and use of animal products must currently ask for special accommodation. Protection of creed then applies should an individual prove they faced discrimination in one of the five protected areas *due to* their creed. Creed, which is defined as that which attached to broader belief systems about human existence—and in the case of ethical vegans, animal and ecological existence—could be evaluated based on the individual and how consistently their practice follows their belief system.

Under such provisions, animals are only made legally intelligible via the individual claimant's practices and beliefs. Such matters will only be upheld should the individual successfully prove that *their* beliefs about human existence vis-à-vis animal existence constitute a creed, and their practices were always consistent with their creed (a near impossibility in a systematically speciesist world). Veganism is thereby transformed from being about animals to being about an individual's personal and political attachments and beliefs. The onus is placed on the claimant to prove that animal life matters to the individual, that this mattering is evinced consistently in the individual's practice, and that such a position was the basis upon which they were discriminated. Animals remain legal non-subjects who are absent even in cases in which the duty to accommodate ethical vegans is in question—practices premised on the recognition of animals as subjects. Given that ethical veganism as a protected creed will be decided on a case-by-case basis and in a reactive manner, such provisions will not lead to ethical vegans—let alone more-than-human animals—being a protected class. By default practices and institutions will remain speciesist and have a duty to accommodate creed only to the extent that not doing so would result in discriminatory treatment in the social areas protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

While it is unsurprising that human rights provisions are beneficial to humans only, such a statement requires a caveat. Inasmuch as the subjugation of the more-than-human is causing unprecedented climate catastrophe, it is more accurate that human rights provisions that individualize ethical veganism *might* prevent discrimination against individuals while contributing to the ongoing ecological destruction of the planet, which will have devastating implications for human survival. Human rights, therefore, ought not be constrained or positioned as in conflict with the interests of animals or nature. Human rights could then benefit from a more capacious and relational understanding of "the human" as not merely those within their jurisdictions or that such provisions only relate to and affect the human family. In the case of ethical veganism, it might be the case that the rights of those in the global south and of future generations to survival would be better realized not through the duty to accommodate individual vegans but through providing plant-based food by default and adjudicating accommodation issues from this baseline. This would be a measure that would help us to meet our ethical obligations to human and non-human others and to the earth. We thus follow Stephanie Jenkins and Richard Twine in arguing that we should view animal-eating as akin to smoking, an act that puts others at risk through secondary smoke inhalation or so-called "passive smoking," and which thus merits legislative restraints.[43] Indeed, animal-eating should be an even clearer candidate for such legislative restraints than smoking, since, unlike smoking, animal eating has detrimental primary impacts on others (the slaughtering of more-than-human animals), its detrimental secondary impacts (pollution of a shared environment) are not potential but assured, and its sum detrimental impacts are far greater in scale than the harms of smoking.

Campus catering and social justice praxis

In this section we focus on the social justice politics of campus catering.[44] While similar debates have occurred around catering for governmental meetings and at public events generally,[45] we focus on campus catering because it is a realm of social justice praxis in which we—and many of our readers—are directly involved on a regular basis. While campus catering may appear to be a marginal issue occurring in a space of social, cultural, and economic privilege, we believe that it provides a good case study of universal design. Attitudes that trivialize the significance of food (and of bodily needs generally) in spaces devoted to the life of the mind ignore the background labor that makes the "examined life" possible, as well as the way that certain choices around food work to exclude certain people from this life.[46] In other work, we moreover address issues of food access in other disciplinary institutional settings, particularly prisons,[47] while food access in institutions for disabled people and for disabled people who require assistance with food preparation will be discussed in the following section.

Our experience of choosing vegan catering for campus events has been overwhelmingly positive but also contentious. Vegans and vegetarians who normally are unable to eat at campus events have expressed gratitude for the unusual experience of being fully included and considered in meals and receptions taking place at our campus events. Omnivores who are tired of the bland and unhealthy fare that is routinely available at campus catered events, and who are aware of the ways that this fare excludes their vegan and vegetarian students and colleagues, harms animals, and harms the earth, have also consistently complimented the catering at the events we have organized. Omnivore and vegetarian colleagues alike have asked to be referred to the caterers we hired in order to organize their own events. Non-vegetarians who follow religious dietary restrictions such as Kosher or Halal, omnivores who are nonetheless selective about the origins of the animals they eat, and people with lactose intolerance have also found more to eat at our vegan-catered events than at the usual campus-catered receptions. By ordering vegan catering, we have also had one more reason to avoid politically problematic campus caterers, such as Aramark, and have instead been able to support small, local vegan businesses and provide delicious arrays of dips and fresh salads and warm meals as well as desserts such as cupcakes, fruit crisps and chocolate-dipped strawberries and bananas. Although the majority of people who attend the events we organize on campus are omnivores, overall they have appreciated the food we have provided. Some omnivores have not even noticed that the foods they regularly enjoy such as hummus, bruschetta, grilled asparagus, vegetable samosas, and spring rolls were served to the exclusion of animal-based foods that they would normally also eat or were unaware that the scones they enjoyed at our conference breakfasts were made with flax eggs and coconut oil instead of chicken eggs and cow butter. Although we thus want to stress that the majority of people have been delighted with the catering we have provided at campus events, we have unfortunately also encountered a vocal minority who has objected to this catering. They have done so not on the grounds of quality or taste but because they thought dead animals and their excretions should *in principle* be served at campus events. Indeed, objections to our vegan catering practices have been raised on purportedly *social justice grounds*.

The complaints about our vegan catering have taken several forms. Some of them—such as one colleague who asked us: "how can you worry about this issue when there are homeless people outside my hotel?"—take the familiar and blatantly speciesist form of a "people first" argument. Such arguments are routinely made even when the people insisting that we must worry about certain people first are themselves not doing anything for the people they reference. Another obviously morally bankrupt argument that we heard repeatedly is that although veganism is "ethically" the best option, "optics" is more important than ethics when it came to decisions about departmental catering—and, the worry was, the "optics" of veganism is that of an elite, white diet. Yet another argument has been that we need to respect people's freedom to choose to eat what they want. One feminist philosopher espousing such lofty liberal ideals of freedom, choice, and respect also cast the argument as feminist; she recounted that she had once been vegetarian but got tired of doing all the ethical and political labor and depriving herself of pleasures, while the men she knew were relaxing over a beer and eating steaks. This feminist philosopher, an ethicist, thus went back to eating steaks in order to assert women's (but not animals') equal right to enjoy life and defended serving meat at feminist conferences on these same grounds. While the anthropocentrism of mainstream gender studies may account for the inability of many feminist scholars to register animal oppression as such, this does not justify the failure of feminist faculty to recognize animal-eating as oppressive, since we know that there are countless ways in which animal agriculture oppresses humans, and decades of feminist scholarship has demonstrated that animal and human oppressions are interlocking. Moreover, regardless of one's ability to recognize animals as oppressed, resisting animal agriculture should be widely understood today as a matter of environmental justice and a necessary response to climate change, with which all social justice scholars and activists should be on board.

In responding to this last type of argument, we would again turn to Jenkins and Twine's 2014 chapter. Against the widely held view that what we eat is a personal practice or private choice, Jenkins and Twine contend that meat, dairy, and egg consumption ought to be understood as relationships we have *with* particular animals, as well as acts that directly and perniciously impact the shared environment and hence other humans as well as other animals beyond those who are directly consumed.[48] Eating, associated as it is with the domestic sphere, is considered private and is hence defended as a realm of freedom from interference; however, Jenkins and Twine draw on feminist theory to challenge the public/private distinction, arguing that "Privacy can be oppressive as much as it may be freedom enhancing."[49] In this case, insisting on food as a "private" matter "calls into question the ability of contemporary, nominally democratic, societies to respond to the challenge of climate change."[50] Moreover, Jenkins and Twine note that what is ignored in framings of meat-eating as a matter of privacy and choice that ought to be respected is that "for most consumers of animal products no choice as such has been made. Consuming animals is a dominant cultural practice, and so it is part of the set of normalized values and ontological distinctions of the culture we are born into."[51] As Jenkins and Twine write, "The taste and desire for animal flesh nourishes our bodies before we realise that our favourite foods require the death of another animated being."[52] What passes as "freedom" in the case of animal-eating is thus merely the reification of dominant and unchosen social norms. Indeed, Jenkins and Twine write, "Just as it makes little sense to say that one 'chooses' to be heterosexual in a heteronormative world, the continuance of speciesist dietary norms cannot be considered to be autonomous."[53] Moreover, we are *not* in fact free in our society to eat what we want, and those who defend eating chickens, pigs, eggs, and dairy in the name of "freedom" would not defend eating companion animals, such as cats and dogs, let alone other human beings. What animal-eaters insist they should be free to eat is already circumscribed by social norms, such as taboos involving companion animals and cannibalism.[54] Perhaps most importantly, however, the demand that people's food choices be respected in the name of freedom is perverse given the systematic and extreme violations of freedom that dominant food choices require. As Jenkins and Twine write, "we believe that a 'freedom' that requires the suffering and slaughtering of an animate creature cannot be considered a freedom in any sense, because it inherently conflicts with a moral other's rights to life, bodily integrity and autonomy."[55] If we were to recognize the impact that our food choices have on others, we would not be so inclined to defend alimentary autonomy.

Most often of all, however, the argument with which we have been confronted in critiques of our vegan catering has been the argument that veganism is a white, Western, elitist diet, and that by providing exclusively vegan food we may be alienating people of color and particularly people from non-Western countries from our events. One trenchant argument we have heard is that the vegan catering that we provide, and our choice to host meals at vegan restaurants, perpetuates the whiteness of the Women's and Gender Studies department where we have both taught. According to this view, people from non-Western countries would feel excluded from our events because what we were offering to eat is "not food" and "not welcoming" in their cultures, so long as it does not entail animal cadavers and animal excretions. These extremely general claims purportedly about all people of color were taken up uncritically by many. One colleague, for example, added the point that not offering meat "such as local game" would be disrespectful to Indigenous colleagues and students. Needless to say, the Aramark fare that is more commonly provided at campus events includes meat, eggs, and dairy from industrial animal agriculture, not locally hunted game animals, and has never been subjected to similar critiques. In the Women's and Gender Studies department where we have both worked, the critique of vegan catering as white has thus frequently taken the form of an argument for "diversity and inclusion," which, it is assumed, would mean providing "diverse" options that would cater to both meat- and plant-eaters. Thus, although it is initially surprising that anti-oppression scholars would defend the manifold oppressions and climate injustices inevitably entailed by standard carnist catering, in fact, this has continually been done on social justice grounds, such as calls for respecting cultures, diversity, and inclusion.

The first thing that should be said about the frequently heard argument that veganism is white, Western, and elitist is that it is homogenizing of people of color, and demonstrates an inverted understanding of how food imperialism has worked,[56] an egregious ignorance of the colonial functions of animal agriculture,[57] as well as ignorance of the literature on veganism by people of color.[58] In the Women's and Gender Studies department where we have heard these arguments, we were told that it was particularly crucial that we provide meat at receptions for two women of color who were invited to campus in consecutive years to give the department's annual public lecture. As it turned out, one of these women, who is from South Asia, had been raised vegetarian and herself opts for South Asian vegan catering for the campus events she organizes. The second, an Indigenous woman of Algonquin, Métis, Huron, and Scottish heritage, informed us that she had been vegan ever since she watched *Earthlings*. Over a vegan meal during her visit to campus, she laughed about white people who told her that because she is Indigenous she cannot be vegan, unaware that a similar assumption had been made about her prior to her visit to our campus. Although neither speaker is a critical animal studies, food studies, or environmental studies scholar, each disrupted the stereotypes of “people of color” that were being expounded in the department at the time. Indigenous people and non-Western people, like anyone else, can be horrified by contemporary realities of meat, egg, and dairy production and can make ethical decisions accordingly, and this is a point that has been made repeatedly by Indigenous, postcolonial, and critical race vegan scholars.[59]

Because we have made this argument at length elsewhere,[60] in concluding this section we simply hope to bring disability back into these conversations of social justice catering, from which it has been conspicuously absent. As we hope to have shown, not only are there no social justice grounds for opposing veganism or resisting vegan catering (put otherwise, the arguments based on race, ethnicity, class, diversity and inclusion, “respect” for “freedom,” etc., are all severely flawed), but there *are* strong grounds for advocating vegan catering on disability grounds—as well as on anti-speciesist and environmental grounds. As we have argued, veganism is a disability issue and shares many commonalities with disability; veganism is itself imperative in promoting diversity and inclusion, and the difficulties that vegans currently face often parallel those experienced by disabled scholars seeking accommodation and inclusion in the workplace.

Veganism and disability communities

In “Toward a Queer Crip Feminist Politics of Food,” feminist philosopher of disability Kim Q. Hall notes that if every culture has a cuisine, the cuisine of disability culture is fast food.[61] When a majority of restaurants are both physically and economically inaccessible to most disabled people, and when many disabled people live in poor neighborhoods that are “food deserts,” drive-through fast-food restaurants are appealing or may be one of few options for disabled people. For this reason, alternative food movement writers such as Pollan who reject the ontological status of fast food *as* food are accused by Hall of “alimentary ableism.”[62] As Hall writes, “the alternative food movement tends to present disability and the end of the heteronormative family meal as signs of the harm of the industrial food system and, thus, perpetuates ableist, heteronormative, and gendered assumptions about good lives and good food.”[63]

In *Beasts of Burden*, Taylor also raises the issue of what kinds of foods are available to many disabled people. As Taylor notes, some disabled people live in institutions where they cannot prepare their own foods or choose what they eat.[64] Even disabled people living independently may require that food be prepared for them by personal assistants, and they may have more or less control over what that food entails. As Taylor notes, some disabled people are just trying to get enough to eat while navigating numerous social barriers, and it would be unreasonably stringent to expect them to eat exclusively plant-based diets.[65] In still other cases, disabled people may be (correctly or incorrectly) advised by doctors that their health needs are best met by an animal-based diet. These discussions raise several issues at the intersections of food politics and disability politics that we have not yet addressed in this chapter, and that might trouble the connections we have been building between vegan and disability politics. Namely, following Hall's argument, we may ask: Must we embrace the carnist fast food industry in order to avoid alimentary ableism? Is vegan politics ableist, in so far as it often fails to consider material constraints on many disabled people's lives? Although veganism is usually promoted as a healthier diet than eating animal-based foods, are these arguments healthist, and what do we say about specific cases where people are medically advised or even medically required to eat meat, eggs, and dairy?

First, we are skeptical of the politics of nutritional science, which has often been grounded more in carnist food norms than empirical research and has frequently been funded by animal agriculture and has reflected the economic interests of that industry.[66] We also note that if there were nutritional science discoveries that suggested health benefits to eating baby humans or even puppy- or kitten-meat, Western medical doctors still would not be recommending these foods to their patients, and there would be public outcry if they did. Medical advisements to eat beef, pork, chicken, and fish meat are premised on speciesism, since even the most minor and hypothetical health advantages for humans are believed to outweigh the life and death interests of cows, pigs, chickens, fish, and other animals who have their own reasons for existing. We are thus wary of the ease with which health considerations are raised as a justification for eating certain animals and with the usually unquestioning acceptance of arguments made from "health." Nonetheless, we recognize that there are genuine cases in which people must make difficult decisions between maintaining a plant-based diet and their health or even survival.[67] Like a majority of ethical vegans, we are sympathetic to the difficult choices that individuals make in these cases and recognize that none of us are "purely" vegan in a structurally carnist society. Veganism remains aspirational for all of us and is most productively advocated for at structural and institutional levels rather than at the level of interrogating individual choices or demonizing those (which is all of us) who fall short in some ways. Moreover, we recognize that food choices are made in more or less constrained circumstances, and just as nutritional advice is routinely premised on speciesism, so is vegan politics routinely premised on healthism, ableism, and a negative ontology of disability.

In particular, animal and vegan activists regularly critique animal agriculture and animal-based diets because of the ways that they disable animals, workers, and eaters, and often this is done without considering how these discourses reflect and reproduce a negative view of disability and thus impact the lives of disabled people. Animal ethicists critique domestication for making animals dependent on others for lifelong care, while vegans critique the animal agriculture industry for "crippling" the bodies of animals in the industry in various ways. Sunaura Taylor observes some of these connections when she writes:

> Of the tens of billions of animals killed every year for human use, many are literally manufactured to be disabled. Industrialized farm animals not only live in such cramped, filthy, and unnatural conditions that disabilities become

> common but also are literally bred and violently altered to physically damaging extremes, where udders produce too much milk for a cow's body to hold, where turkeys cannot bear the weight of their own giant breasts, and where chickens are left with amputated beaks that make it difficult for them to eat. Even my own disability, arthrogryposis, is found often enough on factory farms to have been the subject of *Beef Magazine's* December 2008 issue.[68]

All of this disabling of animals takes place in an industry that pollutes the environment, which can produce further disability, in order to produce foods that cause health problems for consumers, and hence even more disability.[69] The high rates of repetitive strain injuries and disabling workplace accidents in slaughterhouses, as well as the psychological harms caused by industrial slaughter of animals, are also noted in the vegan and animal activist literature.[70] As Taylor discusses, these are impacts of animal agriculture that must concern us, and yet the way that these critiques of animal agriculture function often devalue the "dependent" lives and "crippled" bodies of people and animals with disabilities, and this should also concern us. Like Taylor, we thus want to critique the ways that animal ethics and arguments for veganism are saturated with negative views of disabled lives as regrettable or tragic, even while remaining critical of the many ways that animal agriculture materially harms the mind-bodies of animals, including human animals.

While the insights of critical disability studies certainly caution us against denigrating or devaluing the lives of the more-than-human animals and human workers and eaters who have been disabled by animal agriculture, ultimately we do not think that a disability politics requires that we accept or take a neutral stance on capitalist industries that sacrifice the well-being of animals and worker and consumer safety in the interests of profit. There are many stories of animals disabled during their early lives on factory farms who have gone on to live long and happy lives on animal sanctuaries, and human workers and eaters disabled by the animal agriculture industry may also go on to lead rich and meaningful lives. These facts do not exculpate animal agriculture for the physical harm and psychological suffering that they inflict each year on billions of animals—the vast majority of who do not make it to animal sanctuaries—or the damage that they do to human workers, consumers, and the environment. Returning to Sunaura Taylor's examples of cows who have been bred to have too much milk for their udders to hold, turkeys who have been bred to have giant breasts that their bodies cannot support, and chickens who cannot eat because of their painfully amputated beaks, we would not want to say that these animals simply need to adjust to a new, but ontologically neutral, way of being in the world, and we think that we need to have a disability studies that can account for that. Animals in industrial agriculture are not only physically harmed but are systematically placed in situations that produce mental illness in humans as well as animals, such as solitary confinement and—the other extreme—intensive crowding. They are depressed, anxious, afraid, bored to the point of madness, and they grieve their offspring desperately, just as humans do in comparable conditions. We do not believe that to be allies of mad people we need to deem such conditions morally acceptable.

In a similar way, we reject Hall's argument that disability politics requires us to accept fast food as the cuisine of the disability community. Just as critical race scholars such as A. Breeze Harper have rejected carnist versions of "soul food," so we argue for a disability politics that would critique rather than celebrate the carnist fast-food industry. For Harper, it is perverse to celebrate animal-based "soul food," when this is a cuisine that developed in the context of slavery, where Black people had to make do with the scraps of animal foods that white people considered inedible—particularly since the perpetuation of inequities in the quality of food available to Black people in a racist society continues to result in disproportionate rates of infertility and premature deaths due to high rates of diabetes in the Black community. While we may admire the creators of soul food in so far as this cuisine demonstrates the resilience and creativity of enslaved people who managed to provide for their families and even create a rich culture under conditions of extreme oppression and deprivation, it makes no sense to continue to eat soul food in its carnist incarnations[71] when this diet perpetuates the legacy of slavery by resulting in premature death. Similarly, we do not think that a disability politics requires embracing fast food, which also contributes to the premature deaths of both humans and more-than-human animals, in addition to exploiting workers and destroying the planet. To do so would be to celebrate a situation wherein poor quality fast food is all that many disabled people can afford and access.

Our response to the situation Hall describes is thus to strive for a world in which more healthy, plant-based, ethical eating options are available to disabled people, poor people, and people who are currently living in food deserts. As vegan critical race scholars have argued, we need to proliferate economically and physically accessible restaurants and healthy, plant-based, and affordable foods as part of our anti-oppression struggles. Veganism is thus a more appropriate cuisine than fast food for the disability liberation movement, just as it is for anti-Black racism struggles and decolonial movements, not least because of the ways that speciesism intersects with racism, colonialism, and ableism. Rather than celebrating the fast-food industry as the cuisine of the disability movement, therefore, we strive for a decolonial, anti-racist, anti-poverty, and multispecies disability politics working in coalition with the humans and more-than-human animals disabled by this very industry.

To conclude this section, we would like to describe a project that unites disability and food politics in a way that we find to be a true alternative to the food ontology advanced by Hall: Alexis Hillyard's Edmonton-based Stump Kitchen. Hillyard explains on her website that she was born without a left hand and thus has "a stump," a "unique feature" that she "loves" about herself.[72] Having been vegetarian most of her life, Hillyard became gluten-intolerant and vegan as an adult, which made learning to cook a necessity. As Hillyard explains, experimenting with "stump techniques" in the kitchen provided an opportunity for her to fall even more in love with her body than she had been before and to remember how glad she is to have a stump.[73] Today, in addition to teaching cooking classes for children and adults, she creates playful YouTube videos in which she prepares gluten-free, vegan foods, often with friends and children—some of whom also have stumps. These cooking videos highlight some of the many advantages of having a limb difference in the kitchen. For example, Hillyard gleefully demonstrates to viewers that stumps make great spatulas, potato mashers, and vegan butter spreaders and are also perfect instruments for juicing lemons and oranges. As Hillyard observes, in this way she provides fun and joyful examples of life with a stump for viewers, including children who are growing up with limb differences and see few such models in the media.

Conclusions

By thinking about accommodation politics from critical disability and critical animal studies perspectives together, we hope to forge solidarities between these disciplines and to catalyze veganism as universal design in institutional settings, including the academy. Whereas disability is often positioned by the mainstream as in need of a cure, and veganism is positioned by some of its proponents as a means of achieving health, and by those in the health professions as itself a health problem, we strive instead for abnormal politics and abnormal social settings. A crip politics is not premised on improving the individual's body but rather seeks to enable inclusive spaces so that a plurality of crip identities may flourish. *Contra* humanist liberal notions of individual freedom and privacy, we argue that our eating habits, and the social spaces in which these occur, must be re-oriented based on default practices of inclusion. Accommodation through human rights law and current campus policies that require individuals to prove themselves having suffered discrimination remain insufficient. Rather than only focusing on human vegans as those who should be accommodated, we have argued that we should refigure accommodation to include all animals and the more-than-human world. Although the systematic unavailability of plant-based foods certainly means that vegans are regularly discriminated against in terms of what they can eat, and even go hungry or are effectively excluded from certain events, this fact pales beside the animal oppression and environmental devastation of which this situation should continually remind us, or the ways that animal agricultural is systematically making our shared planet inaccessible to life. Thinking about accommodation from this perspective necessitates that our relationships with animals and the environment be transformed. We suggest that vegan activism should shift away from speaking of a "universal moral imperative" to be vegan[74] and should aspire instead to veganism as universal design. While talk of veganism as a "universal moral imperative" is problematic in that it focuses on individuals and ignores issues of privilege and access,[75] veganism as universal design shifts attention from what individuals consume to what structures and institutions make available, addresses issues of access, and makes veganism accessible for all.

Notes

1 We would like to thank our co-editor Stephanie Jenkins for her very helpful and encouraging feedback on this chapter, including the idea of framing our argument in terms of universal design.

2 Sunaura Taylor, "Vegan, Freaks, and Animals: Toward a New Table Fellowship," *American Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (September 2013): 757–58.

3 Taylor, "Vegans, Freaks, and Animals," 763.

4 Taylor, "Vegans, Freaks, and Animals," 760.

5 Ibid.

6 Michael Pollan, *Food Rules: An Eater's Manual* (New York: Penguin, 2009), 65.

7 A. J. Withers, *Disability Politics and Theory* (Blackpoint, Nova Scotia, Winnipeg and Manitoba: Fernwood Publishing, 2012).

8 Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory," *National Women's Studies Association Journal* 14, no. 3 (Autumn 2002): 22.

9 See Rebecca Tuvel, "Exposing the Breast: The Animal and the Abject in American Attitudes Towards Breastfeeding," in *Coming to Life: Philosophies of Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Mothering*, eds. Sarah LaChance Adams and Caroline Lundquist (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 263–79; Rebecca Tuvel, "'Veil of Shame': Derrida, Sarah Bartmann and Animality," *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* IX, no. 1–2 (2011): 209–29.

10 See Marjorie Spiegel, *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery* (London: Mirror Books, 1997).

11 See Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage, 2011 [1949]).

12 See Lisa Guenther, *Solitary Confinement: Social Death and Its Afterlives* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Kelly Struthers Montford, "Dehumanized Denizens, Displayed Animals: Prison Tourism and the Discourse of the Zoo," *philoSOPHIA* 6, no. 1 (Winter 2016): 73–91.

13 See disability rights lawyer and Not Dead Yet member Harriet McBryde Johnson, "Unspeakable Conversations," *New York Times Magazine*, February 16, 2003, in which she describes a debate between herself and Peter Singer about disability and animal ethics; see also Eva Feder Kittay, "The Personal Is Philosophical Is Political: A Philosopher and Mother of a Cognitively Disabled Person Sends Notes from the Battlefield," *Metaphilosophy* 40, no. 3–4 (2009): 606–27, and "At the Margins of Moral Personhood," *Bioethical Inquiry* 5 (2008): 137–56.

14 Chloë Taylor, "Abnormal Appetites: Foucault, Atwood, and the Normalization of an Animal-Based Diet," *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* 10, no. 4 (2012): 130–48; Vasile Stănescu and James Stănescu, "The Personal Is Political: Orthorexia Nervosa, the Pathogenization of Veganism, and Grief as a Political Act," in *Animaladies: Gender, Animals, and Madness* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), 137–54.

15 Michel Foucault, *Psychiatric Power*: *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1973–4* (New York: Picador, 2006), 34–35.

16 Michel Foucault, *I, Pierre Rivière, Having Slaughtered My Mother, My Sister, and My Brother: A Case of Parricide in the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982).

17 Stanley Friedman, "On Vegetarianism," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* (1975): 396–406.

18 Taylor, "Abnormal Appetites"; Stănescu and Stănescu, "The Personal Is Political."

19 The June 2019 webinar was hosted by the Alsana eating disorder clinic: www.alsana.com/. Information on the webinar, including PowerPoint slides, was shared by an acquaintance of one of the authors, a clinical social worker who took the webinar as part of the ongoing continuing education required to maintain her LCSW license. The

purpose of the webinar was to trouble the distinction between veganism and eating disorders (suggesting that many vegans are in fact disordered eaters) and to respond to the question of whether treating disordered eating requires making clients give up their veganism. Questions covered by the webinar included whether clients can be treated who insisted on remaining vegan and whether clients can overcome eating disorders and become healthy if they do not eat animal products. Problematic nutritional information (which consistently suggested that vegan diets were nutritionally "lacking" by comparing their nutritional content to that of animal-based diets rather than to what is nutritionally optimal) was shared with webinar participants. The conclusion of the webinar was that treating recalcitrant vegan clients was difficult, though not impossible.

20 Kathleen Mammel and Rollyn Ornstein, "Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder: A New Eating Disorder Diagnosis in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 5." *Current Opinion in Pediatrics* 29, no. 4 (August 2017): 1. Italics added.

21 Mammel and Ornstein, "Avoidant," 409.

22 Mammel and Ornstein, "Avoidant," 411.

23 Robert McRuer, "Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence," in *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities*, eds. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, Brenda Jo Brueggemann, and Sharon L. Snyder (New York: MLA Publications, 2002), 88–99.

24 Eli Clare, *Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling with Cure* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017); Sunaura Taylor, "All Animals Are Equal (But Some Are More Equal Than Others)," in *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation* (New York: The New Press, 2017), 123–48.

25 Robert McRuer, "Desiring Disability: Queer Theory Meets Disability Studies," *A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 9, no. 1–2 (2003); see also Alison Kafer, "Desire and Disgust: My Ambivalent Adventures in Devoteeism," in *Sex and Disability*, eds. Robert McRuer and Anna Mollow (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 331–53.

26 Alexandre Baril, "'How Dare You Pretend to Be Disabled?' The Discounting of Transabled People and Their Claims in Disability Movements and Studies," *Disability and Society* 30, no. 5 (2015)"; Alexandre Baril, "Needing to Acquire A Physical Impairment/Disability: (Re)Thinking the Connections Between Trans and Disability Studies Through Transability," *Hypatia* 30, no. 1 (Winter 2015).

27 Marsha Saxton, "Disability Rights and Selective Abortion," in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 89.

28 Clare, *Brilliant Imperfection*.

29 Aimi Hamraie, *Building Access*: *Universal Design and the Politics of Disability* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017).

30 Aimi Hamraie, "Designing Collective Access: A Feminist Disability Theory of Universal Design," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (2013): 13.

31 Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

32 U.S Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Determination Letter on Bruce Anderson v. Orange County Transit Authority, August 20, 1996; Alison Covey, "Ethical Veganism as a Protected Identity: Constructing a Creed Under Human Rights Law," in *Thinking Veganism in Literature and Culture*, eds. Emilia Quinn and Benjamin Westwood (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 225–47.

33 *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, 1982.

34 *Maurice v. Canada (Attorney General)*, 2002 FCT 69, accessed June 28, 2019, http://canlii.ca/t/lnk.

35 Covey, "Ethical Veganism."

36 U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio in Cincinnati, *Chenzira v. Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center*, Case No. 1:11-cv-00917; Covey, "Ethical Veganism."

37 Ontario Human Rights Commission, "Policy on Preventing Discrimination Based on Creed," September 17, 2015, www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-based-creed.

38 Ibid.

39 *Hashman v Milton Park* (Dorset) Ltd (t/a Orchard Park) ET/3105555/2009, January 31, 2011. See: https://uk.practicallaw.thomsonreuters.com/Link/Document/Blob/I42aa7bb90c5511e498db8b09b4f043e0.pdf?targetType=PLC-multimedia&originationContext=document&transitionType=DocumentImage&uniqueId=1516dc39-a7bb-44be-93d4-b9cc74bece91&contextData=%28sc.Default%29&comp=pluk; Covey, "Ethical Veganism."

40 Covey, "Ethical Veganism."

41 Camille Labchuk, "Veganism Is One Step Closer to Becoming a Human Right in Ontario," January 12, 2016, www.animaljustice.ca/blog/veganism-is-one-step-closer-to-becoming-a-human-right-in-ontario.

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44 For other discussions of this topic, see reference the Sydney campus catering project.

45 See the *PlantPowerCommunity* campaign, www.change.org/p/public-events-organizers-plantpoweredcommunity-plant-based-food-at-public-and-social-events?recruiter=864666387&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=facebook&utm_campaign=share_petition.nafta_share_post_interaction.control.

46 Thanks to Eloy LaBrada for this point.

47 Kelly Struthers Montford, "Abnormal Eaters, Incarcerated," presentation at Canadian Law and Society Association, June 3, 2019, Vancouver.

48 Jenkins and Twine, "Limits," 180.

49 Jenkins and Twine, "Limits," 183.

50 Ibid.

51 Jenkins and Twine, "Limits," 184.

52 Jenkins and Twine, "Limits," 187.

53 Ibid.

54 Jenkins and Twine, "Limits," 185.

55 Jenkins and Twine, "Limits," 184.

56 Maneesha Deckha, "Toward a Postcolonial, Posthumanist Feminist Theory: Centralizing Race and Culture in Feminist Work on Nonhuman Animals," *Hypatia* 27, no. 3 (2012): 527–45; Richard Twine, "Ecofeminism and Veganism: Revisiting the Question of Universalism," in *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth*, eds. Carol Adams and Lori Gruen (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 191–207.

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59 Margaret Robinson, "Animal Personhood in Mi'kmaq Perspective." *Societies* 4, no. 4 (December 3, 2014): 672–88; Rita Laws, "History of Vegetarianism—Native Americans and Vegetarianism." *Vegetarian Journal* (1994), https://ivu.org/history/native_americans.html; David M. Peña-Guzmán, "Anti-Colonial Food Politics: A Case Study in Action from Mexico—Faunalytics," *Faunalytics*, blog, October 24, 2018, https://faunalytics.org/anti-colonial-food-politics-a-case-study-in-action-from-mexico/; Linda Fisher, "Freeing Feathered Spirits," in *Sister Species: Women, Animals and Social Justice*, ed. Lisa Kemmerer (St. Paul, MN: Paradigm, 2011); Deckha, "Toward a Postcolonial, Posthumanist Feminist Theory"; Brueck, *Veganism in an Oppressive World*; Harper, *Sistah Vegan*; Ko and Ko, *Aphro-ism*.

60 "Editors' Introduction" to Kelly Struthers Montford and Chloë Taylor, *Decolonizing Critical Animal Studies*, forthcoming with Brill Press.

61 Kim Q. Hall, "Toward a Queer Crip Feminist Politics of Food," *philoSOPHIA: A Journal of Continental Feminism* 4, no. 2 (Winter 2014): 177.

62 Hall, "Toward," 178.

63 Hall, "Toward," 183.

64 Sunaura Taylor, *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation* (New York: The New Press, 2017), 205–18.

65 Ibid.

66 See James Hamblin's *Atlantic* article on the U.S. food guide, www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/10/ag-v-nutrition/409390/; see also Melanie Dupuis, *Nature's Perfect Food: How Milk Became America's Drink* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

67 See Taylor, *Beasts of Burden*, 193–204, where she discusses the case of a vegan animal activist who campaigns against animal experimentation but whose disability requires that she eat small amounts of animal protein (her body cannot absorb nutrients from plant foods). In *Veganism, Sex, and Politics: Tales of Danger and Pleasure* (London: Hammer On Press, 2019), C. Lou Hamilton similarly discusses the case of a pregnant vegan woman who undergoes chemotherapy—although chemotherapy isn't vegan—to try to survive.

68 Taylor, "Vegans, Freaks, and Animals," 761.

69 Taylor, *Beasts of Burden*, especially Chapter 14: "Romancing the Meat," 157–78.

70 Taylor, *Beasts of Burden*; Amy J. Fitzgerald, "Doing Time in a Slaughterhouse: A Critical Review of the Use of Animals and Inmates in Prison Labor Programmes," *The Journal for Critical Animal Studies* 10 (2011): 12–46; Amy J. Fitzgerald, L. Kalof, and T. Dietz, "Slaughterhouses and Increased Crime Rates: An Empirical Analysis of the Spillover from 'The Jungle' into the Surrounding Community," *Organization and Environment* 22, no. 2 (2009): 158–84.

71 There are many vegan soul food restaurants throughout the United States, such as Sweet Soul Food in New Orleans and Souley Vegan in Oakland. There are also numerous vegan cookbooks, including Bryant Terry, *Vegan Soul Kitchen: Fresh, Healthy, and Creative African-American Cuisine* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Lifelong Books, 2009); Jenné Clairborne, *Sweet Potato Soul: 100 Easy Vegan Recipes for the Southern Flavors of Smoke, Sugar, Spice and Soul* (New York: Harmony Books, 2018); and Afya Ibomu, *The Vegan Soulfood Guide to the Galaxy* (Atlanta: RGB Fit Club, 2008), among others. Also see the "Veggie Soul Food," blog, www.veggiesoulfood.com/ and Soulfood Vegan, https://soulfoodveganhtx.com/.

72 See: Stump Kitchen, www.stumpkitchen.com/.

73 See Hillyard's "Hi, I'm Stump Kitchen," video, www.youtube.com/watch?v=n__6bGVilE8.

74 This language has been most influentially used by Gary Francione. It is also advocated for by Gary Steiner in, among other works, *Animals and the Limits of Postmodernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

75 For a critique of the idea of a "universal vegan imperative," see Chloë Taylor, "'Postmodern' Critical Animal Theory: A Defense," a review of Gary Steiner's *Animals and the Limits of Postmodernism*, in *PhaenEx* 8, no. 2 (Fall–Winter 2013): 243–58.

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Part III

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Chapter 8

Lost in translation

Temple Grandin, humane meat, and the myth of consent

Vasile Stănescu and Debs Stănescu[1]

> Dr. Dolittle: [to the pig] Gub-Gub, will you please stop making that infernal noise! A few pork sausages and a bit of bacon. The way you're carrying on here, I would think we were cooking your entire family . . .
>
> Matthew: I don't know, but, you can hardly blame him for being a bit upset, Doctor. I mean, I'd be a bit upset me-self if you started frying Irishmen.
>
> —Dr. Dolittle, 1967

Temple Grandin is the most well-known and well-respected consultant to CAFOs (confined animal feeding operations, also referred to as "factory farms") about how they can produce meat more humanely. The reason for this remarkable success is based—in part—on her claim that as an autistic person she, in essence, "thinks" in the same way that animals think. It is, therefore, her claim that she, uniquely, is able to "translate" between other humans and animals. As Grandin describes her success:

> Animal behavior was the right field for me, because what I was missing in social understanding I could make up for in understanding animals. Today, I've published over three hundred scientific papers, my Web site gets five thousand visitors each month, and I give thirty-five lectures on animal management a year. . . . Half the cattle in the United States and Canada are handled in the humane slaughter systems I've designed. I owe a lot of this to the fact that my brain works differently.[2]

As a paid consultant for the CAFO industry, Grandin represents a very different vision of the possibility of "humane meat" as articulated by other well-known authors such as Michael Pollan[3] or Catherine Friend.[4] While Pollan focuses primarily on environmental reasons and Friend focuses primarily on issues of care for individual animals' suffering, both claim that the factory farm system is irredeemable and, instead, advocate for a separate and competing system of small-scale and local farms. While Vasile Stanescu has been quite critical of these other advocates for humane meat,[5] it is important to note the sharp distinction between their advocacy and that of Grandin; Grandin's focus is exclusively on the factory farm system. In fact, she has become the leading spokesperson for the factory farm system, including numerous awards, media appearances, and leading roles in multiple industry-funded promotional videos in which Grandin reassures consumers that factory farms have, because of her, been adequately reformed and can now be considered a humane source of meat production.[6] In other words, to engage with Grandin's work is to engage with the single most well-known and well-respected advocate for the entire factory farm system.

The following points would be the positive view that Grandin holds, and that many seem to believe: (1) As an autistic person, she uniquely thinks in the same way as non-human animals—as such, she can know what animals know and can, therefore, "translate" for others what animals think and want; (2) by enacting her suggested changes, factory farms can be, and indeed already have been, reformed in a manner that makes them humane to animals and an ethical choice for consumers; (3) her personal success helps to improve the understanding and acceptance of autistic people and, as such, she is seen by many to be implementing changes that are helpful to both animals and autistic people: A "win-win," she would have us believe, for both animals and for neurodiversity.

In contrast, we will argue that a careful reading of Grandin's texts reveals the opposite of all of these claims. In reality there is nothing about Grandin's autism that allows her to "think" like animals more than anyone else can. Instead, we believe all such claims are a highly dangerous exoticization both of animals and of people on the autism spectrum. Moreover, her own texts prove both that factory farms are not humane now and that they can never become humane in the future. Instead, what we must understand about Grandin is not that she can in fact "think like animals" but instead that, culturally, the producers and consumers of meat continue to want someone to reassure us that farmed animals consent to their treatment and death. As such, Grandin engages in a type of dual-violence speaking for people (animals and other autistic people) who do not, in fact, need her to "translate" for them at all.

A "way station" on the road from animals to human

Grandin's main claim of support for being able to speak for animals is based on her claim that autistic people think in the same way as animals. For example, in *Animals in Translation*, she assures her reader that "[a]utistic people can think the way animals think. . . . Autism is a kind of way station on the road from animals to humans, which puts autistic people like me in a perfect position to translate 'animal talk' into English."[7] This sentiment permeates her entire text: Grandin explains to the reader that not only are autistic people like animals, but also that "I'd go so far as to say that animals might actually *be* autistic savants"[8] and both animals and autistic people are different, in her words, from "normal people."[9]

The reason Grandin believes that this supposed similarity exists between animals and autistic people is because of her belief that both groups lack functional frontal lobes. As she phrases it:

> Animals and autistic people see detail either because their frontal lobes are smaller and less developed (in the case of animals), or because they're not working as well as they could be (in the case of autistic people).[10]

This belief leads to her theory that humans possess in her terminology an "animal brain" that is separate from their "human brain." In other words, according to Grandin humans possess two "brains": a human brain, personified by the frontal lobes, and an "animal brain," which evolution has kept within humans but that in non-autistic people is suppressed by the use of their frontal lobes. However, in the case of autistic people, because of her belief that they lack functional frontal lobes, Grandin claims that all autistic people think only with their "animal brain." Again, as she phrases it, in one of the most revealing passages of the entire text:

> I think that's [i.e. the absence of functional frontal lobes] also the reason for the special connection autistic people like me have to animals. Autistic people's frontal lobes almost never work as well as normal people's do, so our brain function ends up being somewhere in between human and animal. We use our animal brains more than normal people do, because we have to. We don't have any choice. *Autistic people are closer to animals than normal people are.*[11]

There is much to object to in these characterizations of both animals and humans with autism. On the most basic level, such claims are factually false. Plenty of different animal species have active frontal lobes; furthermore, humans' frontal lobes are, in the words of researchers publishing in *Scientific American*, "nothing special relative to the size of our other brain structures."[12] Moreover, while there is research on autistic people and possible changes in their frontal lobes, such research is far from settled.[13] In either case, we can find no research—other than Grandin's own—to support the claim that because of possible changes in their frontal lobes autistic people "think like animals" or have to think with their "animal brain."[14] Moreover, even if there were some connection between animals and autistic people, the framing of all such comparisons posit evolution as both progressive and linear when, in reality, it is neither. Current animal species have evolved and changed as have human species, and the human species is no more a "higher" type of evolution than, say, elephants or whales (or any others). Likewise, autistic people are not some type of halfway point, or "way station," between, on one end of evolution, animals and, on the other end, "normal people." Such a view cannot but render both animals and autistic people as less than neurotypical humans who, in such a view, come to represent the pinnacle of evolution. As Sunaura Taylor has previously argued on the dangers of uncritical linkages between disability and animal comparisons (while still arguing for intersectional linkages):

> When I ask members of the disabled community whether they have ever been compared to animals because of their disabilities, I receive a torrent of replies. I am transported to a veritable bestiary: frog legs, penguin waddles, seal limbs, and monkey arms. It is clear, however, from the wincing and negative interjections that these comparisons are not pleasant to remember.[15]

"How to make a pig fall in love"

While Grandin is incorrect in her characterization of both animals and autistic humans, this is not to say that reading her work does not possess great value. Specifically, she has access to the reality of factory farms that, because of the so-called "ag-gag" laws, claims of "biosecurity," and inflated fears of acts of animal rights' "terrorism," few others will ever enjoy.[16] Ironically, though, her industry-specific insight, published in her own memoirs, reveals that factory farms are not currently humane, can never become humane in the future, and should never be supported by anyone concerned with animals, disability, feminism, queer rights, or any other social justice issue.

For example, in a chapter entitled "How to Make a Pig Fall in Love," Grandin writes:

> I talked to a man who had one of the most successful records for breeding sows out there, and he told me things no one's ever written in a book as far as I know. Each boar had his own little perversion the man had to do to get the boar turned on so he could collect the semen. . . . He might have to hold the boar's penis in exactly the right way the boar liked, and he had to masturbate some of them in exactly the right way. There was one boar, he told me, who wanted to have his butt hole played with. "I have to stick my finger in his butt, he just really loves that," he told me. Then he got all red in the face.[17]

Nor are these acts of sexual aggression limited only to male pigs or semen extraction. As Grandin immediately clarifies:

> This same man also told me he had to deal with the female pigs the same way . . . [you] have to get the sow turned on when you breed her so the uterus will pull the semen in. If she isn't fully aroused, she'll have a smaller litter because fewer eggs will get fertilized.[18]

To be clear, all of these examples are not areas of concern or areas for reform for Grandin; she is simply providing what she sees as interesting information for her reader about what is essential for the industry of animal husbandry to be able to run. As she phrases the necessity for the mass sexual violence of all farmed animals: “[r]emember, this *is* a business we’re talking about. The number of sows bred by the boars translated directly into the profits a company can make.”[19]

Likewise, in a subsection entitled “Rapist Roosters,” Grandin makes it clear that not only do animal farms cause sexual violence against animals directly, they also foster it indirectly via selective breeding. Specifically, she gives the example of a farm where, due to selective breeding, the roosters had lost the genetic ability to engage in their normal courtship and mating rituals. As a result, the roosters were—in Grandin words— “raping and murdering” the hens. Again, as she phrases it:

> We’ve done some strange things to animals’ emotion makeup in our breeding program. When I was just starting my work with chickens a few years ago, I visited a chicken farm. Inside the barn where all the chickens lived, I found a dead hen lying there on the floor. She was all cut up, and her body was fresh. I was horrified. . . . [H]alf of the roosters had stopped doing the [mating ritual] dance, which meant that the hens had stopped crouching down for them. So the roosters had become rapists. They jumped on the hens and tried to mate them by force, and when the hen tried to get away, the roosters would attack her with his spurs or his toes and slash her to death.[20]

What is particularly troubling is that, even with her unique and privileged access, Grandin has no idea how widespread this effect is, if the practice is still occurring or, as she makes clear in her later text, *Animals Make us Human*, even the original cause, because “[i]ndustry breeding programs are trade secrets.”[21]

The myth of consent

Perhaps the most important aspect that reading Grandin’s work reveals is that even if, say, animals are given some additional room, provided occasional access to the outdoors, or fed more nutritionally satisfying meals, in a world in which the animals are increasingly bred to engage in or to receive sexual violence—to experience constant stress and anxiety or to be bred in such a way that their own bodies give them constant pain and suffering—we are not, in fact, moving toward a system where animals’ lives are more “humane,” no matter how much the industry may try to claim otherwise and no matter how much more reassuring the images of these animals lives may have become. Instead, what we are currently witnessing in all these cases is a move toward “humane meat,” both within and without of the factory farm complex, which is a move toward what Gilles Deleuze refers to as “societies of control.”[22] For Deleuze, societies of control ostensibly represent a movement from sites of enclosure to an apparent openness and freedom. However, in reality, they provide for even more effective, albeit invisible, control. One example that Deleuze provides is the movement from prisons, in which people are directly locked in a cell to, say, probation, ankle bracelets, and “home arrest.”

While the second may seem more "free," what the changes actually accomplish is both to ward off more extreme criticisms of the prison-industrial complex (e.g. prison abolition) and to bring ever more people into the prison industrial complex than could have existed under the pre-existing system of simple confinement. For example, in the United States there are now far more people under "probation" and "parole" than are directly locked up in the prison system itself, even as the prison system continues to increase in size and severity.[23]

Likewise, we argue that the industry's response to pressure by animal rights activists and scholars and concerned consumers is to announce with great fanfare ever new changes that remove some of the more obvious and visible forms of confinement and suffering. For example, producers of chickens have recently moved toward marketing a small percentage of their meat and eggs as "free range." However, the term itself has virtually no legal meaning, and by and large, the chickens themselves never actually see the outdoors.[24] Let us suppose, for a second, it were otherwise: even if every chicken or turkey raised for meat consumption were exclusively raised outdoors without any visual form of confinement, as Grandin's text makes clear, the invisible history of their genetic breeding would prevent any possibility of such farms as being considered either "humane" or "compassionate." In other words, from removing fences and chains to putting collars on dogs that shock them if they ever try to leave a yard; to removing visible fences for zoo animals (but adding in moats); to the creation of theme parks such as Disney's "Animal Kingdom," where animals seemingly roam free but are still found dead from exposure to antifreeze,[25] we must see the move toward claims of improved "animal welfare" within the factory farm complex as part of a larger move toward creations of anthropocentric domination based on "societies of control."[26] For example, thanks to Grandin, we can now see images of factory farm workers gently guiding cattle with trash bags filled with air and brightly colored plastic paddles (her suggestions for humane alternatives to cattle prods) or hear how happy pigs are now that they get to live indoors all day and "enjoy air conditioning" (an actual claim made by Smithfield farms in a documentary that features Grandin).[27] However, we must see all such efforts toward "rebranding" the industry as not premised on actually improving the lives of any animals but instead as simply shifting the optical function of power and control to create the appearance of care and the myth of animal consent. As even Grandin briefly concedes concerning chickens that have been bred to be continuously hungry in order for them to gain market weight as quickly as possible, so that even as they continuously eat, they still feel as though they are starving to death: "These birds have low welfare no matter what you do."[28] And these are only the few examples that, due to published industry insiders—such as Grandin—we even know about. Since, as they are considered industry-protected trade secrets, no one even knows what other traits the industry is intentionally or unintentionally breeding in animals.

Therefore, while the earlier discussed claims of autistic people lacking frontal lobes and having "animal brains" are scientifically false, they do provide perhaps the most important insight into the appeal of Grandin's work. Every representative of humane farming has engaged in some form of animal "translation," reassuring the reader and consumer that the animals are content with their current ownership and treatment and, ultimately, that they agree to being owned, killed, and eaten. Nicolette Niman,[29] Michael Pollan, Joel Salatin, Catherine Friend, Kathy Rudy, and Donna Haraway, all make this same argument; in fact it is arguably the single consistent aspect of this entire body of literature.[30] While it is often animal rights' scholars who have been accused of "anthropomorphism," it is in fact the opposite case—it is the advocates of consuming meat who anthropomorphize animals to a level that no critical animal scholar could ever imagine. For example, Nicolette Niman tells us—at length—about the nature of cow friendships;[31] Pollan informs us how grass looks and tastes to a cow;[32] Catherine Friend even writes a letter to her sheep on their way to slaughter.[33] However, while they all engage in these "animal-whisperer" types of activities, the problem is that there is no reason to believe that they have any more insight into the lives of animals than anyone else. In contrast, Grandin claims that she alone is able to translate the animal experience for her readers to assure them that, even if the objective evidence would suggest that animals do not enjoy being removed from their loved ones, sexual violence, cages, genetic breeding, or death, we—as supposed neurotypicals—have simply failed to truly understand the animal side of the equation. The effects of this type of animal "translation" can, in turn, be quite dangerous. For example, after watching a lengthy video about horse slaughter, where the horses have to be repeatedly shot in the head, and in which the workers themselves can be overhead as saying "Ahh, you're not dead yet," Grandin insists that the horses were not suffering; that is, she viewed such practices as humane.[34] However, Dr. Nicholas Dodman, an anesthesiologist and veterinary behaviorist at Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, after watching the same video, concluded: "My final conclusion, after reviewing 150-plus horse slaughters in this series of videos, is that the process was terrifying for most of the horses and, in many cases, horribly inhumane."[35] In other words, the fact that Grandin believes that she can uniquely know how animals feel not only fails to reveal new insight but also further conceals the reality of the very suffering that she is witnessing.

"Supercrip"

Specifically in terms of autism, Grandin reveals that one of the more counterintuitive ways in which exoticization of disability can operate to stereotype the disabled[36] is not as less able, but instead, as more able, as in essence, "magical" or "superhuman." The danger of this kind of stereotyping can be hard to see because it operates via a violence that does not claim that those who are disabled are not "good enough" but instead is based on the idea of disabled folks being exactly the opposite: as "magical" or "super powerful." Each type of discrimination and stereotype has its own unique history and genealogy; we do not mean to imply that exoticization around disability and exoticization around race are, in any sense, the "same." However, it is perhaps in terms of race that the danger of this exoticization based on possession of a "superhuman" ability is most clearly visible. For example, a peer-reviewed study conducted in 2014 found that white people held a number of "superhuman" beliefs about African-Americans, including that they possess superhuman strength and ability to ward off pain.[37] The study also found that white Americans were more likely to associate African-American with words such as "ghost," "paranormal," and "spirit."[38] The study goes on to note that this view of African-Americans as "superhuman" can, in fact, be as dangerous as the view of African-Americans as "subhuman."[39] For example, this belief may be part of the reason African-American juveniles are more likely to be tried as adults, why white juries are less likely to convict police officers who kill unarmed African-Americans, and why black Americans are less likely to receive adequate pain treatment.[40]

So, too, we would argue that there exists a similar tendency in the literature about disability, which suggests that disabled people may possess similar "superhuman" or "magical" abilities, a tendency Eli Clare has referred to as "supercrip."[41] Perhaps the most well-known cultural example is the belief that blind people's other senses may develop to superhuman levels. For example, *Scientific American*, a relatively well-respected publication, ran an article on the scientifically valid concept of neuroplasticity via the scientifically invalid title "Super Powers for the Blind and Deaf" that included an opening graphic of a literal superhero, complete with a cape and the ability to fly.[42] The publication went on to uncritically cite the superhero "Daredevil" as relevant to understanding disability: "It's an oft-repeated idea that blind people can compensate for their lack of sight with enhanced hearing or other abilities . . . [for example] the superhero Daredevil, who is blind but uses his heightened remaining senses to fight crime."[43]

Indeed, the superhero "Daredevil" exemplifies the cultural construct of the supercrip since, due to his blindness, he comes to see not only the "same" as someone who is not blind, but gains "superhuman" senses. As the novelist Katie Rose Guest Pryal has noted about this tendency to write all disabled characters as either "superhuman" or "magical":

> When writing about a magical disability, authors use the disability to boost the characters' strengths. Daredevil's strength is *amplified* because he is blind. Jessica Jones is *stronger* because she has to overcome PTSD. Professor X can bring Wolverine to his knees—*from a wheelchair*. The contrast of strength with disability makes the strength seem even larger and more magical.[44]

While this tendency to see disability as "superhuman" or "magical" can be found in terms of many disabilities, in the case of autism, it seems to take on a particularly commonly repeated trope. For example, many people's first (and, in some case, still only)[45] exposure to autism was watching the movie *Rain Man*. In the movie *Rain Man*, Raymond "Ray" Babbitt, played by Dustin Hoffman, is shown to possess a number of unique abilities, such as being able to tell how many matches have been dropped on the ground and perfect card counting. *Rain Main* was a massive success, winning four academy awards, including Best Actor for Dustin Hoffman and Best Picture; researcher Joseph Straus argues that it defined the emerging view of autism.[46] However, the character of *Rain Man* was not based on an autistic person—the original inspiration for the movie was Kim Peek, a man diagnosed with mental "retardation" and savantism, not autism (he probably had FG syndrome.).[47] Furthermore, the original script of the movie did not have an autistic character. As Dr. Darold Treffert, the originally medical consultant for the movie records:

> That October 1986 version of the script was very different from the finished product. First of all, that early version had Raymond Babbitt's mental handicap as mental deficiency rather than autism. A variety of persons, especially Dustin Hoffman, felt that the portrayal of an autistic person, with all the typical associated rituals, obsessiveness, resistance to change and relatively affectionless behaviors might make a more interesting character for Raymond Babbitt, one the public had never really been exposed to on screen. . . . However, it required a major rewrite of the script changing from the real-life savant model, Kim, whom Morrow had written about to a new, composite character. The savant skills remained, but the basic disability was an entirely different one, now autism, with all of its distinctive, difficult and demanding characteristics and features.[48]

In other words, for purely artistic reasons, a "composite character" was created by Dustin Hoffman; he "blended" his own view of autistic "rituals" with his impression of "savantism." Based on the original success of *Rain Man* and this new invented "composite character" (of autism and savantism), Hollywood produced a string of movies that focused on autistic characters who—exclusively—possess savant and other "superhuman" abilities. For example, the very next movie released with an autistic character, *Mercury Rising*, focused on a nine-year-old boy who was being targeted by government assassins because he was able to break an "unbreakable" government code.[49] Such tropes have now become the norm and, as Douwe Drassisma has documented, the primary way in which autistic people are displayed throughout the media.[50]

Therefore while 90 percent of autistic people display no savant-like abilities,[51] repeated media depictions have created an incorrect perception that all autistic people possess extreme savant traits. As Straus comments on this same tendency to "enfreak" both autistic people and savants:

> From any of these angles of perception, savants are thoroughly *enfreaked*, set apart from normal people by their seemingly bizarre, extreme, prodigious abilities (as well as their apparent cognitive deficiencies). . . . The enfreakment of savants has enshrined them as a species of *super-crip*, people whose

> unusual ability in one narrow area has enabled them to transcend their general disability.[52]

These incorrect movie portrayals have, in turn, produced a series of news shows and articles that "report" on autistic people's amazing, if not outright magical, abilities. For example, in 2005 *World News Tonight* ran a popular news show entitled "The Extraordinary Abilities of an Autistic Savant" with the opening words:

> Daniel Tammet of England can verbally reel off the number pi to 22,500 decimal places in just over five hours—though he admitted after a recent demonstration that it made him "very tired." Tammet, 26, is a phenomenon. He has done lots of amazing things—like learning Icelandic, one of the world's most difficult languages, in just seven days. That's because Tammet is an autistic savant.[53]

The news show concluded with the line: "Researchers from around the world are studying Tammet. Some believe his case may show that there's a savant in all of us, a little Rain Man, you might say, if only we could find a chemical or other way to unlock those abilities."[54] How a chemical could unlock a fictitious composite character produced purely for dramatic effect remains unclear; what is clear is that myths first suggested in by *Rain Man*, and in particular on the idea of savantism, continued to dominate the reporting that is done on autism.[55]

Building on this idea that autistic people have genius and/or savant-like abilities, other publications have escalated the degree of magical ability autistic people are supposed to possess, including the claim that autistic people may possess telepathic abilities. For example, based only on the claim of single mother about her five-year-old autistic son, *The Independent*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Mirror*, *New York Post*, and *The Huffington Post*, all ran articles on the possibility that autistic people possess telepathy.[56] What is remarkable in all of these articles is that the idea is treated as though it was a completely valid and possible argument requiring further scientific research to determine if, in fact, autistic children are "telepathic." However, the most extreme example we've come across of treating autistic people as magical beings is the repeated reporting on the topic by *Psychology Today*: in 2011 they ran a headline asking: "Are Autistic and Psychic People Similar?"[57] And again, in 2013, the magazine ran an article entitled "Autistic Kids Are Magnets for Ghosts," arguing, as the title would suggest, that autistic children have the ability to perceive "ghosts":

> Because they process information and see the world differently, autistic children are more likely to see strange things. They often witness activities way before anyone else in the home. They are more sensitive to nuances, and they cannot lie. So when they look at the ceiling and react as if someone is talking to them, then you know you are dealing with truth. They really are seeing and hearing something.[58]

As earlier discussed, while such claims may on the surface seem harmless, comical, or even positive—disabled people are not “subhuman”; they’ve become “superhuman”—much as with race and the similar view that African-Americans have magical powers or can perceive “spirits,” such views can mask real harm. In the first place, it renders autistic people who do not possess any “special” quality as somehow now “deficient” autistics, who lack the “magical” abilities the media suggests that all disabled and/or autistics must possess.”[59]

In the second place, it masks the social construction of disability and the need for reasonable accommodation. As Clare has previously argued about the danger of “supercrip” (i.e. people with disabilities seen as extra powerful or resourceful) and the elision of questions around access:

> Supercrip stories never focus on the conditions that make it so difficult for people with Down Syndrome to have romantic partners, for blind people to have adventures, for disabled kids to play sports. I don’t mean medical conditions. I mean material, social, legal conditions. I mean lack of access, lack of employment, lack of education, lack of personal attendant services. I mean stereotypes and attitudes. I mean oppression. The dominant story about disability should be about ableism, not the inspiration supercrip crap, the believe-it-or-not disability story.[60]

Perhaps most importantly, “supercrip” stories mask the normal and universal nature of disability. That is, these stories mask the fact that many have, and most people will experience, disability in their lifetime. Disability is not “magical” or even “special”; it is, instead, both common and, indeed, statistically “normal.” According to the U.S. Census about one in five Americans is currently classified as having a disability.[61]

However, this view of “disability as superpowers” seems to underlie much of the cultural acceptance of the claim that Grandin possesses almost magical powers, which allow her, uniquely, to translate between animals and humans. Secondary sources would seem to support this view, that Grandin possesses an almost magical power of animal understanding: The *Boston Globe* assures us that “[Grandin’s] unique perspective is like one of those fairy tales that reveal a magical kingdom lurking in the cranny of your kitchen.”[62] *O*, the *Oprah Magazine*, contends that Grandin’s focus in *Animals in Translation* is “not on all the normal things autistics and animals can’t do but on the unexpected, extraordinary, invaluable things they can do.”[63] After the word “inspiring”—itself a troubling idea—[64] the most common description of Grandin seems to be “extraordinary.”[65] Indeed, the aforementioned article from *Psychology Today*—which asked about the difference between psychics and autistic people—makes clear that the inspiration for the research was based on the author’s belief that Grandin possesses nearly “psychic” abilities that allow her to communicate with animals.[66]

Of course, Grandin is not, in any way, responsible for the ridiculous notions that others possess about autistic people. However, at the same time, it seems clear that part of the popular cultural acceptance that Grandin can “translate” between human and other animals seems less based on a belief that she is a careful watcher of animal details, or even that she thinks with her “animal brain,” and more based on historical and continuing beliefs that marginal groups—and in particular autistic people—possess “magical” or “psychic” powers allowing her to “talk” with non-human animals. For example, Grandin self-records how slaughterhouse workers first interacted with her in her own memoirs; as she recounts, they came to believe that she had a “magical connection” to animals.[67] Likewise, a review of *Animals in Translation* in the UK was titled “Was Dr. Doolittle Autistic?” After dismissing Grandin’s own view of how she was able to understand animals as “pseudoscience,” it still concludes with the belief that Grandin can “talk” to animals and returns back to the original reference to *Rain Man*:

> Nevertheless, we have much to learn from this real-life Dr. Doolittle. After reading Grandin’s book I could not help thinking that Rex Harrison should have played Doolittle in the 1967 Hollywood film as an autistic uncle. Or perhaps it would have been better to cast Dustin Hoffman in the role, in his “Rain Man” persona?[68]

Conclusion: autism speaks

Grandin has done a great deal to promote an awareness of the degree to which people on the autistic spectrum can be successful and impactful individuals. At the same time, we have attempted to highlight that such exposure has come at a cost: in the first place, this social success has been based on inaccurate and unscientific views that people on the autistic spectrum lack functional frontal lobes, think with an animal brain, and are less fully evolved than the neurotypicals whom Grandin refers to as “normal people.” In the second place, her claims have also served to obscure the massive and ongoing amount of violence that routinely occurs within animal agriculture (which Grandin herself admits is necessary for such farms to be able to run at all). Indeed, her own writing at times explicitly sanctions extremely graphic examples of repeated sexual violence against non-human animals as somehow now “humane.” Finally, we have argued that this cultural belief that Grandin can “talk” to animals is supported by two co-woven views of magical thinking within the wider culture. In the first place, it is premised on a perceived “need” for animals to consent to our treatment of them and for animals to consent to their own death and our consumption. Since in reality no such consent does, nor ever could, exist, the belief that Grandin possesses almost magical or psychic powers allows readers of her work to elide the broader questions of animal resistance, pain, and refusal. As the previously cited example of horse slaughter highlighted, even when clear examples of animal cruelty and the animals’ own expression of pain are captured on video, the belief that Grandin can “speak for” animals can—and does—obscure the animals’ own voices and desires. Finally, we have argued that underlying part of the cultural acceptance that Grandin can "translate" animals is a broader cultural belief that disabled people and autistic people in particular possess magical gifts and powers that allow for people to believe, without any clear scientific evidence to support this view, that Grandin can uniquely understand or perhaps even "talk" to animals. We see in all these cases a double-objectification and a double-silencing of both animals and other autistic people. What of all the autistic people who are vegan, who do not believe they think with an "animal mind," or who do not believe they possess any particular unique, special, or magical abilities? If, as Grandin claims, all autistic people think as she thinks, where do these people get to be heard or understood? In other words, we would argue the hyper-visibility of Grandin results in a great deal of invisibility of both other autistic people and all non-human animals.

Let us, therefore, end by pointing out a certain parallel that seems to operate in both animal welfare and, for lack of a better term, disability "welfare" organizations. Although Grandin is wrong about the absence of frontal lobes, there does seem to be one important and striking similarity between animals and those with autism. It is that within the host of humane farmers, compassionate carnivores, locavores, and Grandin on the animal side, and within organizations such as Autism Speaks (which is not, in fact, run by any individuals with autism)[69] on the disability side, there seems to be a shared view that neither autistic people nor animals are, in fact, able to speak for themselves. As John Elder Robison, the only person with autism to serve on the board of Autism Speaks, wrote in his resignation letter:

> Autism Speaks is the only major medical or mental health nonprofit whose legitimacy is constantly challenged by a large percentage of the people affected by the condition they target. The absence of people with autism in governing or oversight roles has crippled [*sic*] Autism Speaks in its efforts to connect with the community.[70]

And, therefore, all discussion about their needs, desires, and rights can only be determined via almost magical "translators." However, if critical theory has anything at all to teach us, it is that whenever anyone makes a claim based on sweeping generalizations and the ignorance of difference, it cannot but harm all those whom such a speaker chooses to speak "for." For the truth is that neither autistic people nor non-human animals need anyone to translate for them at all: we do not need Grandin to "translate" the experience of other autistic people to the neurotypical community; while her experience has been important and impactful for her, it is not the universal or "true" experience of anyone else with autism. As one of the most common mottos in the autistic community reads: "If you've met one person with autism, you've met one person with autism."[71]

Likewise, we do not need Grandin to "translate" non-human animals. We have argued that what seems to underlay such mistranslation is a dual process of exoticization and assimilation—simultaneously. Animals are rendered as so foreign and different that humans cannot possibly understand even their basic and universal expressions—for example their cries of pain—and yet, at the same time, animal worlds are viewed as so accessible and understandable that translators can describe to us the nature of their friendship, the way food tastes, and—most importantly—that they have "agreed" to humans' ownership and treatment. In other words, it is not the case that the animal is rendered as "voiceless": via supposed translators, she is always and already rendered as having said "yes" to human ownership, domination, and consumption; what is never allowed is a space for her to simply express "no." Specifically, in the case of Grandin's decision to speak for all non-human animals, the clear and basic cries of animal refusal, their desire to stay with loved ones, their grief when their children and parents are taken from them, the way that their selectively bred bodies make them hurt every second of every day, to the point of feeling as though they are starving even as they are constantly eating, as well as their basic desire not to be the victims of sexual violence by either humans or other farmed animals, all of these clear acts of refusal, all of it, simply become "lost in translation."

Notes

1 The idea for this chapter was originally conceived by Debs Stănescu and then co-written. We would like to thank Adam Rosenblatt for his help and insights. We are also grateful to Stephanie Jenkins for her extensive suggestions.

2 Temple Grandin and Catherine Johnson, *Animals in Translation: Using the Mysteries of Autism to Decode Animal Behavior*. Harvest Book (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2006), 7.

3 Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006).

4 Catherine Friend, *Hit by a Farm: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Barn* (New York: Marlowe & Co., 2006); Catherine Friend, *The Compassionate Carnivore: Or, How to Keep Animals Happy, Save Old MacDonald's Farm, Reduce Your Hoofprint, and Still Eat Meat* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Lifelong, 2008).

5 Vasile Stanescu, "Selling Eden: Environmentalism, Local Meat, and the Postcommodity Fetish," *American Behavioral Scientist* (2019), https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764219830462; Vasile Stanescu, "New Weapons: 'Humane Farming,' Biopolitics, and the Post-Commodity Fetish," in *Animal Oppression and Capitalism—Volume 2: The Oppressive and Destructive Role of Capitalism*, ed. David Nibert (Santa Barbara, CA and Denver, CO: Praeger Press, 2017), 209–28; Vasile Stanescu, "Crocodile Tears: Compassionate Carnivores and the Marketing of 'Happy Meat'," in *Critical Animal Studies* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 2014), 216–33; Vasile Stanescu, "Why 'Loving' Animals Is Not Enough: A Response to Kathy Rudy, Locavorism, and the Marketing of 'Humane' Meat," *The Journal of American Culture* 36 (2013): 100–10; Vasile Stanescu, "Green Eggs and Ham: Michael Pollan, Locavores, and the Myth of Environmentally Sustainable Meat," in *Critical Theory and Animal Liberation* (Lanham and Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 8–38. See also, Matthew Cole, "7 Getting (Green) Beef," in *Critical Animal and Media Studies: Communication for Nonhuman Animal Advocacy*, eds. Núria Almiron et al. (New York: Routledge, 2015); Emily Lind Johnston, "Agrarian Dreams and Neoliberal Futures in Life Writing of the Alternative Food Movement," *Food and Foodways* 24, no. 1–2 (2016): 9–29.

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video, 9:07, posted by Smithfield Foods, February 24, 2011, www.youtube.com/watch?v=oeXAqvj5nvg&list=PLlQ5WM5yTI9t3oHm9NtLstIC6frkCzS69.

7 Grandin and Johnson, *Animals in Translation*, 6.

8 Grandin and Johnson, *Animals in Translation*, 8.

9 Grandin and Johnson, *Animals in Translation*, 51.

10 Grandin and Johnson, *Animals in Translation*, 52.

11 Grandin and Johnson, *Animals in Translation*, 57. Italics in the original.

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18 Grandin and Johnson, *Animals in Translation*, 104.

19 Ibid.

20 Grandin and Johnson, *Animals in Translation*, 70.

21 As she phrases it: "When I wrote *Animals in Translation* it looked like the rapist roosters were a side effect of the industry's selective breeding program to create chickens with bigger breasts for more white meat. But now researchers aren't sure what caused it. . . . It's obvious that industry is selectively breeding for larger breast size because breast size is getting larger. But we don't know what *other* selective breeding programs the industry might be using." From Temple Grandin, *Animals Make Us Human* (New York: Mariner Books, 2010), 220.

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23 Stanescu, "New Weapons," 209–28.

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28 Grandin and Johnson, *Animals in Translation*, 219.

29 Jonathan Safran Foer, *Eating Animals* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2010), 207.

30 See Pollan, *Omnivore's Dilemma*; Salatin cited in Pollan, *Omnivore's Dilemma*; Friend, *Hit by a Farm*; Kathy Rudy, *Loving Animals: Toward a New Animal Advocacy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Donna Jeanne Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

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32 Pollan, *Omnivore's Dilemma*, 185–86.

33 Friend, *Compassionate Carnivore*, 160.

34 Vickery Eckhoff, "Horse Slaughterhouse Investigation Sounds Food Safety and Cruelty Alarms," *Forbes*, December 6, 2011, www.forbes.com/sites/vickeryeckhoff/2011/12/06/horse-slaughterhouse-investigation-sounds-food-safety-and-cruelty-alarms/#320da2056bff.

35 Ibid.

36 There is a debate within the disability community about "person first language." In other words, should one say "those with disabilities" or "people with autism" or, instead, should one say "the disabled" or "autistic people." Debs' personal preference is the latter. Of course, we respect the decision of others who may wish to choose other terms to self- identify.

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42 Mary Bates, "Super Powers for the Blind and Deaf," *Scientific America*, September 18, 2012, www.scientificamerican.com/article/superpowers-for-the-blind-and-deaf/.

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46 As Joseph Straus has documented about this connection between *Rain Man* and public views coupling autism with savantism: "Beginning especially with the film *Rain Man* (1988), the autistic savant is often portrayed as a kind of living computer, a human database, with a mysterious, incomprehensible, and seemingly superhuman gift of memory and calculation." Joseph Straus, "Idiots Savants, Retarded Savants, Talented Aments, Mono-Savants, Autistic Savants, Just Plain Savants, People with

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50 Douwe Draaisma, "Stereotypes of Autism," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 364, no. 1522 (2009): 1475–80. *PMC*.

51 Baker, "Recognizing Jake," 245.

52 Straus, "Idiots Savants."

53 Terry Moran and Lenny Bourin, "The Extraordinary Abilities of an Autistic Savant," *ABC News: World News Tonight*, June 5, 2005, transcript published, June 11, 2005, http://abcnews.go.com/WNT/Health/story?id=830166&page=1.

54 Ibid.

55 As Stuart Murry has argued in his book-length treatment of the topic: "With autism, it is especially the imagined place of savantism that appears to exercise public imagination. Time and again in this study we shall see the figure of the autistic savant presented as the normative mode of autistic subjectivity, with all the complex ideas of fascination this brings for consideration." Stuart Murry, *Representing Autism Culture, Narrative, Fascination* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 14.

56 Alexandra Sims, "Five-Year-Old Ramses Sanguino Examined by Doctors After Mother Claims He Is 'Telepathic'," *The Independent*, November 6, 2015, www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/five-year-old-ramses-sanguino-examined-by-doctors-after-mother-claims-he-is-telepathic-a6723946.html; Sophie Jane Evans, "Five-Year-Old Savant from LA Who Displays Signs of Being Telepathic—and Is Already Learning Seven Languages—Is Being Studied by Scientists After His Mother Filmed Him 'Reciting Numbers Written in Secret'," *Daily Mail*, November 5, 2015, www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3305206/Five-year-old-savant-LA-displays-signs-telepathic-learning-seven-languages-studied-scientists-mother-filmed-reciting-numbers-written-secret.html; John Balson, "'Telepathic' Five-Year-Old Studied by Scientists After He Stunned Mum with 'Mind-Reading Abilities'," *Mirror*, November 6, 2015, www.mirror.co.uk/news/weird-news/telepathic-five-year-old-studied-6781860; Lauren Tousignant, "My 5-Year-Old Son Is a Telepathic Genius," November 5, 2015, https://nypost.com/2015/11/05/my-5-year-old-son-is-a-telepathic-genius/; David Moye, "5-Year-Old Mental Giant Is Also Telepathic, Mom Claims," November 6, 2015, www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/ramses-sanguino-telepathic-genius_us_563cdf06e4b0307f2cad3373.

57 Anneli Rufus, "Are Autistic and Psychic People Similar?" *Psychology Today*, May 10, 2011, www.psychologytoday.com/blog/stuck/201105/are-autistic-and-psychic-people-similar.

58 Deborah Schurman-Kauflin, "Autistic Kids Are Magnets for Ghosts," *Psychology Today*, October 30, 2013, www.psychologytoday.com/blog/disturbed/201310/autistic-kids-are-magnets-ghosts.

59 As Andrew Baker documents: "[I]ndividuals with autism and no savant skills—that is, ninety percent of individuals with autism—are constructed as savant-deficient, as lacking the key, redeeming feature of cinematic autism." Baker, "Recognizing Jake," 245.

60 Clare, *Exile and Pride*, 22.

61 “Nearly 1 in 5 People Have a Disability in the U.S., Census Bureau Reports,” *Census Bureau*, July 25, 2012, www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/miscellaneous/cb12-134.html.

62 All of these quotations are included in Grandin’s *How Animals Make Us Human*.

63 Ibid.

64 “Congratulating a disabled person for being out in public or remembering their own name may make you feel real sensitive—but more often than not, it makes the disabled person feel worthless. It makes me wonder how low the standards are set for me, how often people expect me to fail. It reminds me that I’m not just another teenager amongst hundreds at an educational milestone, or just another shopper confused about cereal brands in a busy supermarket. No, I’m an “object of inspiration.” It tells me that no matter what I achieve or how well I perform, I’ll always be judged as a disabled marvel, not as a person. At the same time, being called “inspiring” feels a bit dismissive. It’s a handy adjective, used by mainstream media in any situation involving differently abled people, and pulling it out is an easy way for able-bodied people to feel as if they have acknowledged the disability. It’s simpler to just drop the I-word and move on than it is to engage with the disability and the ways in which it may influence another person’s real life.” From Venessa Parekh, “Please Stop Calling My Life with a Disability ‘Inspiring’,” *The Establishment*, April 8, 2016, https://theestablishment.co/please-stop-calling-my-life-with-a-disability-inspiring-d8f6a6a27b72.

65 For example, see one the first articles to bring Grandin to national prominence: Oliver Sacks, “An Anthropologist on Mars,” *The New Yorker*, December 27, 1993, www.newyorker.com/magazine/1993/12/27/anthropologist-mars. *The New Yorker* still even links to the article as “The Extraordinary Gifts of Temple Grandin.”

66 Rufus, “Are Autistic and Psychic People Similar?”

67 “That feedlot consultation [opening a door] was the kind of thing that started to give me a reputation for having practically a magical connection to animals.” In Grandin and Johnson, *Animals in Translation*, 24.

68 Graham Farmelo, “Was Dr. Dolittle Autistic?” *The Telegraph*, July 3, 2005, www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/3644624/Was-Dr-Dolittle-autistic.html.

69 Emily Willingham, “Why Autism Speaks Doesn’t Speak for Me,” *Forbes*, November 13, 2013, www.forbes.com/sites/emilywillingham/2013/11/13/why-autism-speaks-doesnt-speak-for-me/#28cf69e73152.

70 John Elder Robison, “I Resign My Roles at Autism Speaks,” *Look Me in the Eye*, November 13, 2013, http://jerobison.blogspot.com/2013/11/i-resign-my-roles-at-autism-speaks.html.

71 Stephen Shore, “Leading Perspectives on Disability: A Q&A with Dr. Stephen Shore,” *Lime Connect*, www.limeconnect.com/opportunities_news/detail/leading-perspectives-on-disability-a-qa-with-dr-stephen-shore. The quotation used “person first language”; however, as this seems the original text of the quotation, we have left it unchanged. In either case, we are supportive of either usage.

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Chapter 9

Disrupting Temple Grandin

Resisting a "humane" face for autistic and animal oppression

Vittoria Lion

The work of the autistic writer and slaughterhouse designer Temple Grandin has been received as radical and refreshing by prominent thinkers in the academic field of animal studies, including Donna Haraway and Cary Wolfe. Within the autistic community, Grandin is perceived as a forerunner of the neurodiversity movement for her vocal opposition to a cure for her disability.[1] Since medical professionals previously largely assumed that autistic people were incapable of describing their lived experiences, her publication of *Emergence: Labeled Autistic* in 1986 is regarded as a groundbreaking challenge to stereotypes and misinformation surrounding autism.[2] Most provocatively, in *Thinking in Pictures: And Other Reports from My Life with Autism*, *Animals in Translation: Using the Mysteries of Autism to Decode Animal Behavior*, and *Animals Make Us Human: Creating the Best Life for Animals*, Grandin claims that her disability has given her special insight into animal minds and communication.[3] Grandin is thus portrayed as a unique voice for both people labeled as "autistic" and non-human animals (whom I will henceforth refer to as "animals" for the sake of brevity) in popular culture. However, I contend that the irony of Grandin's success is that her writings do not challenge her readers to take actions that disrupt ableism or speciesism in any meaningful way. More disturbingly, I argue that her persona functions incredibly effectively as a "humane" façade for capitalist violence toward both autistic people and animals. The absence of criticism of the medical model of disability in Grandin's writings reassures able-bodied and able-minded people of its correctness. Similarly, her claim to have an intimate understanding and love of animals whilst defending their industrialized killing provides a powerful justification for the continued consumption of animal products. In these ways, Grandin's work upholds both what Barbara Noske has termed the "animal-industrial complex"[4] and the contribution of money and resources to the medical-industrial complex in the hope of finding new treatments, and potential cures, for autism.

The autistic activists Lydia X. Z. Brown and Jim Sinclair have openly expressed discontent with Grandin's status as a representative of autistic people, the former focusing on her ableism and the latter condemning her role in industrialized animal killing.[5] Among the very scarce critiques of Grandin within animal studies scholarship, Jessica L. W. Carey's work is a laudable attempt to understand how the work of a slaughterhouse engineer and defender of intensive farming operations could manage to gain widespread acclaim within the mainstream animal advocacy movement.[6] However, none of the aforementioned authors sufficiently discuss the entanglement of Grandin's ableism and speciesism. In her recent book, *Beasts of Burden*, Sunaura Taylor provides a cursory discussion of Grandin within the context of a broader critique of the ableist rhetoric of the "humane," "organic," and "free-range" animal product industries.[7] With this precedent in mind, I intend to provide a more expansive critique of Grandin, specifically, one that also centers her ableism against other autistic individuals. Thus, I call for theoretical and literal confrontations of Grandin in the autistic and animal advocacy communities that critically examine intersections between these two forms of oppression. In doing this, I draw upon my own experience of taking the stage with Grandin and loudly interfering with her public appearance at the University of Guelph, a Canadian educational institution with a reputation for training future farmers and animal experimenters, in the summer of 2015. I viewed this experience as a symbolic opportunity to resist both the exploitation of animals and the repression of my body and mind as a psychiatric survivor who has been assigned, among other diagnoses, the label of "autism." Following from my discussion of this event, I will engage with the gender and disability politics of what is loosely termed "direct action" and argue that similar demonstrations can be liberating experiences for individuals who find themselves forced to perform normalcy.

But the cows still die: the sanitization of Grandin's violence in my disabled childhood and animal studies scholarship

Carey writes that Grandin's books, alongside Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*, are the animal ethics texts most familiar to people outside academia and the animal rights movement.[8] With the possible exception of Raymond Babbitt, the eponymous fictional character in *Rain Man* (1988), portrayed by Dustin Hoffman, Grandin is the person assigned the label of "autism" most instantly recognizable to able-bodied and able-minded individuals who have never engaged with disability studies. Dia Neighbors, author of the *Native of Nowhere* blog, sarcastically refers to her as "the Grand Grandin Vizier of American autism," underscoring her role in codifying a very specific, Western-centric narrative about the phenomenon of "autism" that hinges upon behaviorism, biomedical "treatments" and "cures," and the power of the individual to "overcome" disability.[9]

Inevitably, my childhood and adolescence were overshadowed by Grandin's influence as a household name. At the age of four, I was assigned an "Autism Spectrum Disorder" label without my consent, and many of my earliest memories relate to profound fascinations that I developed with the lives of other animals.[10] My mother bought me a copy of *Animals in Translation* as a gift for my twelfth birthday, and an otherwise favorite teacher instructed me to watch *Temple*

Grandin (2010), the Emmy Award-winning HBO adaptation of Grandin's autobiography, after class. Although they were well intended, the underlying assumption behind these actions was that I would identify with Grandin by default (or that I should). During a period of intense depression in my early adulthood, a psychiatrist mentioned Grandin to me as a symbol of hope. When I quickly snapped back that "the cows still die," he told me that I had a tendency to view situations negatively, neglecting to acknowledge that having a pessimistic reaction to violence is rational and valid. Since Grandin faced similar limitations and grew up to be a supposedly well-adjusted and productive member of society, it was a cause for suspicion if I did not appreciate or identify with her.

However, instead of accepting the narrative of Grandin as a heroine promoted by large autism and animal advocacy charities, I became increasingly discontented with the discourses of disability and animality that she represents. I questioned the narrative that I needed to "overcome" my disability (including the debilitating psychological symptoms that I developed later as a consequence of years of medical abuse) through compliance with the repressive structures of biomedical psychiatry and late capitalism. My refusal to accept notions of human superiority emerged organically as a self-evident parallel. Specifically, I doubted the narrative that the purpose of the lives of billions of animals is to be denied the fulfillment of their natural desires and, ultimately, mechanically dismembered for the production of consumer goods. I was skeptical of claims that this extreme violence could be rendered morally palatable, having been subjected to forced confinement and ensuing physical and psychological abuse by individuals and institutions that, I was told, acted in accordance with my best interests. With her compliance with the expected trajectory of able-bodied and able-minded human development under capitalism—a fundamentally patriarchal trajectory that centers on the establishment of selfhood through repression of one's instincts and violence against non-human nature—Grandin was a "good" autistic subject.[11] Having been labeled as a mentally ill, disruptive, and "out-of-control" latter-day hysteric, I was not.

My search for alternative readings of Grandin that reflect my lived reality and that of countless factory-farmed animals is frequently unfruitful: within the academic field of animal studies, reception of Grandin's work has been largely apolitical. In *When Species Meet*, Donna Haraway superficially praises Grandin for "[h]er designs of less terrible industrial slaughter systems," as if the promise of a marginally "less terrible" death on an assembly line were a victory for animals suffering in industrial livestock operations.[12] Cary Wolfe argues that Grandin's view of the world as a chaotic collection of details presents a refreshing challenge to anthropocentric and hierarchical thinking.[13] Evoking medieval and Renaissance representations of the omniscient perspective of God, Wolfe writes that vision is consistently framed as a form of mastery in the Western philosophical canon. Referencing Jacques Derrida's *Memoirs of the Blind*, Wolfe claims that Grandin's supposed inability to generalize, like blindness, disrupts the illusion of a unified and orderly world that visual perspective provides.

Yet, Grandin's unique perception does not prevent her from lumping organisms into the categories of "human" and "animal" and maintaining that one group is superior to the other, a contradiction that calls into question her attribution of superhuman (or inhuman) insight to her disability.[14] Nor is it difficult for her to accept the reification of animals into commodities alongside inanimate objects, as she makes clear in an essay ironically titled, "Animals Are Not Things."[15] Likewise, the following disturbing passage from the afterword to *Animals Make Us Human*, titled, "Why Do I Still Work for the Industry?", contradicts many of Wolfe's claims:

> I vividly remember the day after I had installed the first center-track conveyor restrainer in a plant in Nebraska, when I stood on an overhead catwalk, overlooking the vast herds of cattle in the stockyard below me. All these animals were going to their death in a system that I had designed. I started to cry and then a flash of insight came into my mind. None of the cattle that were at this slaughter plant would have been born if people had not bred and raised them. They would never have lived at all.[16]

Here, Grandin blatantly demonstrates top-down, hierarchical thinking that privileges human beings over non-human nature.[17] Viewing the cows from above as the designer of systems that control and end their lives—their "stairway to heaven,"[18] in her words—Grandin performs a quintessential example of what Haraway refers to as a "god trick."[19] Wolfe's arguments to the contrary aside, Grandin exemplifies "the humanist *ability* to survey, organize, and master space."[20] A truly critical animal studies and a truly critical disability studies should reject all instances of this "logic of domination."[21] Wolfe correctly observes that "Grandin's assessment of her own case and its broader implications . . . is often problematic," but the alignment of his supposedly critical analysis with mainstream praise of Grandin's work is deeply unsatisfying.[22]

Kari Weil and Jessica L. W. Carey have produced writings on Grandin using the framework of animal studies that proceed from an openly critical position; however, in this respect, only the latter's work truly succeeds. Although Weil unsubtly nods toward the irony of Grandin's career and does not shy from the fact that it directly helps to facilitate the mass death of animals, her paper, "Killing Them Softly: Animal Death, Linguistic Disability, and the Struggle for Ethics," is overall a disappointment for readers who wish to engage seriously with the ethics of killing and consuming animals. Weil even states that her "point here is not to find fault with Grandin, who has had enormous, positive influence on the handling of cattle," making it clear that her approach to her subject does not differ significantly from the perception of the general public.[23] I question why explicitly "finding fault" with Grandin is a boundary that Weil, like Wolfe, regards as uncrossable; even a literary and sociological analysis, it seems, cannot challenge the authority of technoscience and bio-psychiatric hegemony represented by Grandin. Disturbingly, Weil (like Haraway) draws inspiration from J. M.

Coetzee's novel, *Disgrace*, to suggest that killing animals in large numbers with highly technologized (or medicalized) means has the potential to be a caring, and even "empathic," act.[24] She compares the experiences of Coetzee's protagonist, David Lurie, whose task is to euthanize "surplus" dogs at an animal shelter, to a passage in *Thinking in Pictures* in which Grandin describes the hydraulic restraint of a cow for ritual slaughter as a kind of mechanical caress. In neither of these scenarios is the killing necessary for subsistence purposes or motivated by a genuine desire to ease the suffering of actively dying animals; rather, their lives are being taken purely for the convenience of humans. If Weil does not actually endorse the conclusions that she arrives at, she gives the reader little reason to think so, only mildly pointing out that the interests of Lurie and Grandin are not shared by their animal subjects (or, more appropriately, victims).[25] More promisingly, Carey situates Grandin's work within the context of neoliberalism and scientific positivism, specifically focusing on her use of cognitive science and a version of social contract theory (in the form of an appeal to symbiotic relationships in nature) to make the mass production and disposal of animals demanded by capitalism appear natural and justifiable.[26] However, perhaps due to the constraints of her paper, Carey does not engage sufficiently with Grandin's portrayal of her disability or the similarities between her thoroughly neoliberal approaches to autism and animality.

Sunaura Taylor devotes the fourteenth chapter of *Beasts of Burden*, "Romancing the Meat," to problematizing the symbiosis argument used by "humane meat" advocates such as Grandin and Pollan. She also demonstrates that their views draw upon a broader cultural perception of dependency as a justification for violence based on species and ability.[27] At its conclusion, she briefly comments on the tensions and contradictions raised by Grandin's disabled identity, referencing the work of autistic animal rights activist Daniel Salomon. Although I sympathize with Salomon's concern that criticism of Grandin within the mainstream animal rights movement (on the rare occasion when it occurs) is often expressed through the invocation of ableist tropes, I simultaneously wonder if a fear of accusations of ableism has further deterred animal studies scholars from making much-needed legitimate critiques.[28] (To be clear, viewing a disabled person's unethical actions as inseparable from their impairment is in itself ableist.) Taylor's verdict, nonetheless, is unapologetically critical: "[Grandin's] conception of the ways in which autistic and animal minds are similarly misunderstood ultimately stops short of asking challenging questions about how disabled human beings and nonhuman animals are oppressed and exploited by neurotypical and ableist paradigms."[29] The latter is something that I intend to take up further in my analysis, especially with regard to holding Grandin responsible for her role in the perpetuation of these paradigms. And, most satisfyingly, Taylor holds no reservations about bluntly stating the importance of Grandin's work for capitalism's self-interest: "She also satisfies the public's desire to have a clean conscience while eating at McDonald's."[30]

Silenced by the "squeeze machine": ableism, speciesism, and Grandin's foundation of coercive compliance training

Grandin's descriptions of autistic people reveal an oppressive logic resembling her uncritical anthropocentrism, troubling her celebration by influential figures associated with the neurodiversity movement: among them, notably, Oliver Sacks and, more recently, Steve Silberman.[31] Grandin frequently uses functioning labels, which are nearly universally hated by disabled activists for their depersonifying implications, and sorts autistic people into a binary of "high-functioning" and "low-functioning."[32] When discussing "high-functioning" autistic people, whom she privileges, she sounds very similar to neurodiversity advocates, rejecting the idea of curing autistic people and praising their talents.[33] However, she compares the lives of non-speaking autistic people to those of prisoners and has favorably discussed the possible elimination of these individuals through a biomedical cure on numerous occasions.[34] Grandin correlates the value of different autistic ways of being with their assumed level of usefulness to the market and encourages the implementation of intensive behavioral therapies to increase the future productivity of autistic children.[35] In *Thinking in Pictures*, she states that half of all autistic children subjected to intensive behavioral therapies at a young age enter "normal first grade" and that "their ability to live a productive life will be improved" as a result.[36] She continues this unsettling trend in *Animals Make Us Human*, remarking that she would never have developed a successful career had she been allowed to engage freely in autistic self-stimulating (or "stimming") behaviors.[37] Grandin's consistent use of productivity according to capitalist standards as the measure of a worthwhile life reveals that her views of disability and animality are far from value-neutral. In *War on Autism*, one of the few critical texts published on cultural representations of autism, Anne McGuire writes that the language of investment in the futures of autistic children through early therapeutic interventions is inseparable from its neoliberal context. Forcing "delayed" bodies to develop faster, she explains, ensures that the pace of the market is not hindered by a burgeoning unproductive sector of the population.[38]

Autistic activists claim that therapies that teach autistic children to repress their natural body movements and ways of communicating are painful, traumatizing, and detrimental to their overall psychological health.[39] A growing number of autistic self-advocates, parents of autistic children, and former behavioral therapists suspect that post-traumatic stress disorder is alarmingly common among autistic children subjected to intensive behavioral therapy routines, which can consume up to forty hours of a child's week and are further enforced in the home by parents and other family members. This nearly inescapable regime of surveillance and discipline compromises the parent-child relationship and the child's sense of autonomy and security.[40] Pressure to pass as able-bodied and able-minded is a source of chronic anxiety, exhaustion, and depression for invisibly disabled people that contributes to low self-esteem and decreased quality of life: fatigue from performing normalcy frequently confines me to my bed, despite the absence of physical impairment. Furthermore, autistic activists express concern that therapies that emphasize compliance over bodily autonomy increase the vulnerability of autistic children to physical and sexual abuse.[41] Although she appears superficially to adopt the neurodiversity movement's approach to autism, Grandin's insistence that her supposedly enviable career can be enabled by intensive therapy can only make these potentially highly abusive interventions appear more attractive to able-bodied and able-minded parents of autistic children.

Grandin's endorsement of the use of psychopharmaceuticals to normalize the minds of young autistic people is equally disturbing, especially within the context of the domination of "mental health" discourse by a neoliberal psychiatric establishment eager to frame psychological distress as the consequence of faulty genetics and expand markets for the consumption of antidepressant and antipsychotic drugs.[42] People labeled as autistic are disproportionately affected by depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation, but Grandin never once mentions social factors that contribute to this problem, including ignored or unfulfilled access needs, residual trauma from pathologization and compliance-based upbringing, extreme prejudice, pressure to work under capitalism, harassment, and abuse.[43] Instead, Grandin narrates her own experience of psychological distress solely through the lens of the medical model, locating its cause in her biology and praising pharmaceuticals as the solution.[44] Although Grandin appears to greatly value alleviating pain and suffering, completely absent from her work is the suspicion that industrial society's institutions, by their very design, may be condemning humans and animals alike to lives of misery.

The aforementioned behaviorist ideas, which originate in B. F. Skinner's experiments on animals, form the basis of Grandin's work with farmed animals.[45] Grandin's support for teaching compliance to autistic humans is perhaps unsurprising when read in light of her career within stockyards and slaughterhouses, which centers on increasing the subservience of exploited animals. She repeatedly states that the corporations that she works for see increased profits when they install her handling systems: "With animals there's no ambiguity: stress is horrible for growth, period, which means stress is horrible for profits. So even a feedlot owner who doesn't care about an animal's feelings doesn't like using prods, because a stressed animal means financial loss."[46] In *Thinking in Pictures*, Grandin flatly remarks that she has "designed one of the world's most efficient killing machines."[47] When animals die passively on the assembly line, "like clockwork," to use Erika Ritter's description of Grandin's operations, it is easier to conceive of them as parts of a machine.[48] Ironically, the ability to further instrumentalize animals and control their movements that Grandin's methods and devices provide is masqueraded as kindness toward animals and respect for their autonomy. Drawing upon numerous incidents in which animals confined in laboratories, farms, zoos, and circuses have escaped or attacked their oppressors, Jason Hribal questions portrayals of animals as non-communicative and devoid of agency.[49] Thus, Grandin's career is necessary precisely because animals do not want to be confined and will refuse to cooperate with their exploiters, injure their attackers, and attempt to escape captivity at great costs to themselves. Electric prods are used to deter farmed animals from resisting, and Grandin's devices serve the same purpose, albeit in a less physically painful way. "Animals express themselves all the time, and many of us know it. If we didn't, factory farms and slaughterhouses would not be designed to constrain any choices an animal might have," Taylor emphasizes.[50] By disguising the danger that awaits animals on the kill floor and manipulating them into moving smoothly through slaughterhouses, Grandin's handling systems dramatically decrease opportunities for animals to resist. As the title of *Animals in Translation* implies, we are enthralled by the idea of hearing animals talk, but we do not want to acknowledge their refusal.[51]

Revealingly, Grandin nonchalantly discusses frequently dealing with instances of farmed animals escaping their confinement in the aforementioned book, including cases of pigs running through electric fences despite their awareness of the impending pain, inadvertently evidencing Hribal's argument that animals are capable of actively resisting oppressive structures. "In farming and ranching you see lots of situations where animals will learn something useful by accident, such as how to break through a fence or open a gate," she admits.[52] However, in the next sentence, she minimizes their agency (perhaps in order to assuage her own cognitive dissonance) by stating that "[t]his is probably not true cognition."[53] She shows slightly greater sympathy in the following anecdote but represses any speculation about the mixture of boredom, lack of freedom, and physical abuse that could have motivated an animal to be so desperate to escape their current circumstances, let alone in a very dangerous and potentially painful manner:

> There was one bull from the Arizona high country who was the champion fence buster . . . he took out fences faster than the U.S. Forest Service could build them. He knew how to knock over a high-quality four-strand barbed wire fence built to government standards. In one afternoon he walked through four brand-new fences. I saw him after he had been locked in a stall corral that was too strong for him to break out of. All of us were amazed that the bull could tear out so many barbed wire fences without getting cut. His tan-and-white hide did not have a single scratch. This is where cognition is at work. He had figured out how to knock over a barbed wire fence without getting cut.[54]

Perhaps, if Grandin meaningfully empathized with her animal subjects, she would use her knowledge of their capacities for emotion and self-determination to advocate for their liberation from capitalism rather than to further intensify their subjugation within industries that rely upon their exploitation. As I have shown, Grandin's work may recognize the sentience of animals and their ability to communicate, but it is ultimately based upon depriving them of agency and, most importantly, silencing their protests. Chelsea Dub, an autistic animal rights activist, compares portrayals of animals as voiceless to charity initiatives that claim to speak on the behalf of supposedly non-communicative disabled humans.[55] Grandin, who is regarded as a voice for both animals and autistic humans, a "translator" of non-normative minds, ironically ignores and dismisses the voices of animals and autistic humans who challenge their oppression under capitalism, such as the "champion fence buster" bull. As Carey eloquently explains and the preceding story demonstrates, Grandin assumes that it is impossible for farmed animals to feel discontented with their confinement and the manipulation of their lives by humans. In Grandin's view, the inescapable physical and psychological violence of the factory farm is part of a symbiotic pact with humans that domesticated animals consented to, and they should be grateful to be artificially safe from natural predators.[56] She entirely disregards forms of distress that cannot be remedied through quick technological fixes—such as, for example, the grief experienced by "dairy" cows watching members of their herd being taken away to die:

> Because the cattle are assumed to lack a normal human's conception of death (and most other concepts), animal welfare becomes measurable in atomized moments of calm behavior; larger questions about the ethics of engineering and controlling vast populations of living beings are simply rendered irrelevant—conveniently enough for the economic apparatus, and for those of us who do not wish to interrogate the operation of "Burgerland."[57]

Furthermore, in *Animals in Translation* Grandin denies that either animals or autistic people have the ability to repress unconscious impulses at all, erasing their suffering from unfulfilled needs and desires that can very rarely, if ever, be expressed within industrial civilization. Paradoxically for a person frequently perceived as a window into the interior lives of autistic people, Grandin baselessly claims that the autistic subject lacks an unconscious; if this is true, such an individual cannot be imagined to have a complex mental world.[58] The implication of this is that autistic people, like animals, can be molded at the behaviorist's will with little consequence. In the words of Melanie Yergeau, "Autistics are *robots-en-organisme*, mindblindly spewing and spreading our shit because full communicability is beyond our reach."[59] The role of stereotypes of autistic people as closer to machines than the rest of humanity, incapable of suffering, introspection, or experiencing contradictory emotions, in normalizing and justifying the use of behaviorist approaches to supposedly "treat" and "cure" autism cannot be understated. Heavily indebted to Descartes' view of animals as automatons and extending it to include human beings, the behaviorist's gaze reduces a hidden psychic life and a painful body to a series of superficial, conditioned reflexes, the jerky movements of a machine.[60]

By reassuring her able-bodied and able-minded human readers that intrinsically ableist and speciesist institutions can be made "humane" with the most cosmetic of modifications, Grandin drowns out more uncomfortable voices that press for difficult systemic changes. Stating her views bluntly in a conversation with writer and animal rights advocate Erika Ritter, Grandin claims that the comparatively mild behavioral change of abstaining from animal products "doesn't work. For anybody."[61] Thus, she effectively tells her readers that they should not even alter their lifestyles to help animals: cynically, one might add that Grandin's constant reassurance that she works with the animal products industry implies that the best way to "help" animals is, precisely, to maintain the status quo. Carey alludes to this, attending to Grandin's apparent portrayal of the factory farm (equipped with handling systems that receive her approval) as the most advanced and non-violent form of symbiotic relationships found in nature.[62] Lydia X. Z. Brown writes: "[Grandin's] ideas have proliferated quite abundantly. Yet this is also due in part to the fact that her positions render her an acceptable autistic, a well-behaved autistic willing to conform to hegemonic normative standards and compliance as ethics."[63] Similarly, as Carey observes, Grandin's ideas about animals have proliferated precisely because she is an acceptable animal "advocate" within the context of capitalism and industrialized animal exploitation.

"Autism" meets "meat": Grandin and the capitalist empire

As I have suggested earlier, meaningful acknowledgment of institutional violence is tellingly absent from Grandin's corpus; it is almost entirely dismissed and rendered invisible, like psychological violence that extends beyond the inducement of superficial, immediate feelings of fear and pain. In her worldview, "violence" appears to be mainly constituted by a handful of relatively mentally isolated incidents of slaughterhouse employees physically assaulting animals and individual "processing" plants using what she deems to be "incorrect" methods of killing. On the contrary, the existence of massive corporations and other institutional bodies that exploit the labor and lives of humans and animals in order to benefit a wealthy minority, or the accumulated and barely imaginable misery experienced by an animal whose entire world is limited to the perimeter of a dim feedlot or warehouse, do not register as examples of "violence." After such expansive arenas of oppression are excluded from discussion, the reader of Grandin's work is left with the profoundly empty and one-dimensional vision of "social change" (if it even merits that label) that makes her extremely favorable to the neoliberal order.

Grandin's role within the animal-industrial complex is paralleled by her support of what McGuire calls the "autism industrial complex."[64] Referencing the work of Rebecca Mallett and Katherine Runswick-Cole, McGuire argues that autism is marketed as a commodity to be consumed. She describes a vast conglomerate of multinational charities, research institutes, medical equipment and pharmaceutical manufacturers, and even department stores that rely financially upon autism. The "autism industrial complex" sells a wide range of products, including therapies, drugs, toys and smartphone apps that supposedly improve the developmental outcomes of autistic children, and clothes and accessories decorated with puzzle piece logos. The ultimate example of capitalist appropriation of the phenomenon of "autism" is perhaps Autism Speaks, a charity empire founded by former NBC CEO and General Electric executive officer Bob Wright and his late wife, Suzanne Wright. The autism-branded objects sold by Autism Speaks and its corporate partners that McGuire lists include Starbucks coffee cups, pretzels, candles, and even frying pans.[65]

Although such merchandising appears crass and offensive at face value, more insidiously, the commodification of "autism" as an abstract entity silences actual people labeled or identifying as "autistic." McGuire reminds her readers that a spectral "autism" detached from the bodies of real people does not exist.[66] Similarly, Carol Adams describes how the abstract commodity of "meat" serves to distance consumers from the bodies of living animals. To extend Adams' analysis of the linguistic violence of the word "meat" to the sphere of disability oppression, "autism" can be said to function like a "mass term" when used to refer to a nebulous concept rather than someone's identity: the subjectivity of feminized animals and feminized "patients" is thereby erased, turning them into "absent referents" incapable of articulating their own suffering.[67] In clinical settings, I have frequently been angered by the flattening and reifying effect of having my personal history, character traits, and tastes ignored in favor of an emphasis on bio-psychiatric diagnostic criteria, much like a farmer's view of a cow is filtered through the cuts of "meat" shown on a butcher chart. In her narrative of the epistemic violence involved in receiving an "autism" diagnosis, Yergeau expresses this through the following haunting statement, which I find to be heavily applicable to the extreme objectification experienced by both animals and disabled women: "I was no longer my body's author."[68]

Naturally, Grandin functions as an incredibly effective salesperson for the twin commodities of "autism" and "meat," helpfully bypassing any troubling ethical concerns about the quasi-magical transformation of sentient beings into "hamburger" patties and walking checklists of symptoms. In *Animals Make Us Human*, she appeals to the existence of, in her words, "good, kind people who raised cattle" and the dangers faced by wild animals as arguments for why humans should continue to farm and slaughter domesticated animals.[69] Her words effectively twist the animal-industrial complex into a savior of animals. Although she rejects biomedical cures for a very limited number of autistic humans, she ultimately portrays the medical-industrial complex as saving her and other autistic humans from non-productive lives spent watching objects spin[70] or spiraling into madness. In accordance with these views, the Autism Research Institute exploits Grandin's praise of "[e]arly, intense intervention,"[71] and she is a regular feature at conferences hosted by Future Horizons, Inc., a publishing company that exclusively sells material on autism.[72] It is worth mentioning her partnership with Therafin Corporation, a medical equipment company that commercially manufactures her "squeeze machine," which she modeled on restraints for farmed animals.[73] Grandin is celebrated because she is the ideal neoliberal autistic subject, actively engaging in the manufacture and consumption of commodities designed to enhance her own productivity. Arguably, she fits among the paradoxically hyper-able, "excessively engineered" disabled bodies identified by David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder as a phenomenon unique to late capitalism, having effectively overcompensated for her impairments through the boons of technocracy and intensive medicalization.[74] Furthermore, I contend, the maintenance of such masculinized and hyper-productive bodies is inseparable from the unprecedented destruction of non-human nature: literal killing machines count among Grandin's array of possible prostheses.

Grandin's unquestioning embracement of the economic status quo is perhaps most egregiously visible in her choices of partners for her work with animals. Cargill, which *Forbes* has ranked as the largest American private corporation for nearly three consecutive decades, surpassing Koch Industries, was Grandin's first corporate partner, and she is featured heavily on the company's website and in its promotional materials.[75] In a video on Cargill's website titled, "Temple Grandin's Vision," a herd of tiny green cows wearing bells demonstrate how her plants work, walking to slaughter under "soothing lights." Over upbeat music, the narrator explains that Grandin's methods lead to "higher-quality products and increased incomes." The video portrays Cargill as a rescuer of animals, adopting Grandin's designs ahead of its competitors and exporting her equipment in order to "set a new ethical standard" in slaughterhouses "across the globe."[76] Yet, Grandin remains silent on Cargill's history of rainforest destruction in Southeast Asia and Brazil, violence against Indigenous peoples, and use of human slavery.[77] Notably, Vandana Shiva condemns Cargill for its major contributions to world hunger, citing its instigation of dramatically increased corn and soy production for fuel and farmed animal feed instead of human consumption.[78] Grandin has partnered with McDonald's, a company tarnished by a similar environmental and human rights record, since 1999.[79] She claims that designing systems for painlessly slaughtering human beings would be against her ethics, but she is effectively a bystander in the murder of vulnerable humans by partnering with these corporations.[80]

This evidence alone heavily problematizes common rationalizations invoked by animal rights activists for continuing to support Grandin's work despite her rejection of veganism. Her denial of the significant contributions of anthropogenic greenhouse gases made by animal agriculture[81] strongly suggests that she is not, as she would like her readers to think, a neutral observer who is simply interested in practical solutions.[82] When discussing incidents of employees assaulting animals on industrial farms, Grandin blames the "sadistic" personalities of individual workers for these abuses instead of viewing them as a systemic problem arising from inherently violent and degrading conditions.[83] She does not acknowledge that the majority of these workers are desperately poor, undocumented immigrants and members of disenfranchised communities of color who will be further punished if they are convicted of animal abuse. Grandin tries to make her work appear acceptable to animal rights activists by claiming that it is based on a realistic observation that animal agriculture will not end overnight: this was Ingrid Newkirk's reasoning behind her decision to give Grandin PETA's "Proggy" Award in 2004.[84] However, a critical examination of Grandin's work easily reveals her true interest in perpetuating the slaughter of animals (and ignoring the exploitation of marginalized humans in the industry) to satisfy the appetite of the market.

Grandin's lack of innocence becomes particularly apparent when situated within the context of the fierce program of neo-colonial expansion waged by both the animal-industrial complex—most glaringly, by agricultural giants such as Cargill—and biomedical psychiatry. Mallett and Runswick-Cole emphasize that Western charities aggressively market the medical model of autism in the Global South, attempting to eliminate alternative understandings of mental impairments and madness found in local cultural and religious traditions, regardless of whether they are beneficial or harmful to disabled people. In this respect, they suggest that *DSM* diagnoses effectively function as an imperialist, Eurocentric "universal language." For example, they point to the African Autism Awareness and Intervention Initiative, a project of the New York City-based Center for Autism Research and Education, Inc., and Autism Speaks' Autism Research and Training Initiative in India (ARTI).[85] As McGuire insightfully suggests, Western capitalist nations' paranoia surrounding the presence of "developmental delays" in children is inseparable from racist and colonial anxieties about the perceived "burden" of the "under-developed" Global South.[86] Complementing McGuire's argument that Autism Speaks and its partners frame themselves as a "combative" military-industrial apparatus, James R. Wilson, working for Cargill's UK branch at the time, compared the corporation's business practices to "military strategy" during a presentation at the Salzburg Seminar in 1994.[87] As Brewster Kneen observes, Cargill uses the sale of hybrid seed (mostly corn, which is disproportionately used in farmed animal feed) and construction of animal "processing" plants as "Trojan Horses" for trapping farmers in the Global South in cycles of economic dependency upon the company. With regard to selling hybrid seed, specifically, he lists "Argentina, India, Pakistan, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Malawi" among countries where Cargill has employed this destructive policy.[88] Through similar structures of oppression, the production and consumption of "autism" and "meat" is enforced on a global scale. Deceptively, both are framed as charitable initiatives: large American autism advocacy organizations relentlessly stress the "urgency" of "early intervention," and multinational agricultural corporations like Cargill tout increased animal production and consumption in the Global South as a solution to "world hunger," despite wealthy Westerners benefiting disproportionately from such encroachments.[89]

The figure of Temple Grandin can thus arguably be read as a careful media creation that misleads consumers and "manufactur[es] consent."[90] In her otherwise disappointing piece, "Displaying Autism," Katherine Lashley importantly states that Grandin is a quintessential example of a "supercrip," a disabled person who gains popular media attention for their "inspiring" achievements. This trope is deeply offensive for trivializing the lives of disabled people, especially when the accomplishments being celebrated are mundane activities, and implying that physical and social limitations can be "overcome" with individual willpower alone.[91] The lives of "supercrip" celebrities are usually unrecognizable to the vast majority of disabled people, who lack the relative protection from discrimination provided by wealth and fame.[92] Under capitalism, the "supercrip" is one of the very few valuable disabled subjectivities, perpetuating the status quo's self-serving myth that economic inequality, prejudice, and factors such as race and gender have no impact on the degree of limitation experienced by disabled individuals. Only the body (and/or brain) can ever be blamed for problems that arise because of disability. In the words of Mitchell and Snyder, this and similar forms of token representation have transitioned disability "from a scapegoated and incarcerated form of difference within liberal eugenics to a limited form of inclusionism within late liberal capitalism."[93] Unsurprisingly, invocation of "supercrips" is consistently relied upon by mainstream mental health charities to personify and dignify biomedical psychiatry, a discipline disproportionately marked by a history of producing profoundly undignified interventions and the vocal dissent of the individuals whom it claims to support. Grandin belongs to a handful of privileged, mostly white Western academics and celebrities who have been assigned *DSM* diagnoses and unwaveringly adhere to bio-psychiatric orthodoxy concerning the etiology of, and proper social responses to, neurodiversity and madness. It is therefore easy to understand her appeal to another industry with a desperate need to "manufacture" consent: like Cargill, McDonald's, and the prison-industrial complex, psychiatric facilities disregard the consent of their sequestered—or, more broadly in this case, coercively medicalized—victims and build public support through attempts to bypass instinctive revulsion with cruelty.

Through the persona of Grandin, the animal-industrial complex combines the "supercrip" trope with a fantasy version of animal agriculture. In the film *Temple Grandin*, she is portrayed as a spirited young woman having a quasi-ecstatic experience of communing with cows on her aunt's idyllic farm, as if restoring a lost connection with animals.[94] Arguably, the success of her work lies in an appeal to a repressed unconscious desire for immersion in nature: in *Animals in Translation*, she portrays herself and other autistic humans as a missing link on a continuum between able-minded humans and animals, evoking our species' evolution as animals in nature.[95] That such relationships have ever existed between animals exploited in agriculture and their captors, let alone can be restored within the context of industrial livestock operations, is a narrative fabricated by capitalism to market animal products to consumers who otherwise might boycott them. The implication is that Grandin *is* an animal[96] and can thus be trusted to speak on their behalf: although otherwise adhering to a rigid anthropocentric paradigm, Grandin is strangely comfortable with affirming the animality of herself and other autistic people.[97] In light of her incredibly permissive attitudes toward all but the most shocking and appalling forms of animal exploitation, I have always found it particularly unsettling to think about the conclusions that can potentially be drawn from these claims. However, Grandin's arguments are extremely useful for constructing her persona as a symbol of humaneness, care, and corporate responsibility that reassures animal product consumers. Yet, in reality, she assists some of the most destructive multinational corporations on Earth in making even greater profits.

Parallels between the mainstream disability and animal advocacy movements

In my effort to unpack the failure of large, publicly visible disability and animal advocacy groups to directly challenge Grandin, I wish to attend to Alison Kafer's deconstruction of social attitudes that regard disability as an "apolitical" issue. In *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, Kafer writes that disability is seen as something best handled by families, medical professionals, and charities and demonstrates how the power of these narratives effectively discourages and derails conversations about the necessity of institutional change. She argues that this perception legitimizes extreme and invasive interventions that include "growth attenuation" surgeries performed on profoundly physically disabled children and the elimination of disabled fetuses through genetic screening and eugenic abortions.[98] Reading her work with the politics of the mainstream animal advocacy movement in mind, I see a parallel in the latter's failure to adopt a firm anti-capitalist platform. In my view, one of the many consequences of this is that the biomedically informed intervention of building a neurologically "soothing" slaughterhouse has come to be viewed as preferable to calling for the complete dismantling of Cargill, McDonald's, Tyson, and their equivalents. Within Leftist circles, animal advocacy has traditionally been derided as a cause taken up by the white bourgeoisie in order to maintain a false compassionate image and derail attention from the struggles of working-class and racialized people.[99] After becoming disillusioned by repeatedly seeing this in practice, I have distanced myself from animal rights organizations that are not explicitly feminist, anti-racist, and engaged with other human rights causes. A similar dynamic exists within disability advocacy, manifest in cultural phenomena ranging from Jerry Lewis' infamous telethon to charities founded by corporate executives. However, I contend that fiercely politicizing ableism and speciesism provides a powerful opportunity to forge new alliances.

Working from damaging assumptions that disabled people and animals have no agency and are incapable of expressing themselves in any meaningful way, the mainstream disability and animal advocacy movements largely center the work of able-bodied and able-minded human allies: when actual disabled people and animals are featured in their promotional materials, they are all too frequently portrayed through undignified and infantilizing language and imagery. For example, PETA's website is notoriously plastered with images of highly privileged vegan celebrities who show negligible commitment to animal advocacy apart from changing their dietary habits. Furthermore, a cursory survey of promotional materials for loud and wealthy animal charities, such as PETA and Mercy for Animals, reveals an unwillingness to challenge systemic objectification of nonhumans. Lurid photographs, footage, and reports reduce factory farm victims to indistinguishable, bleeding bodies on slaughterhouse floors and frame survivors living on sanctuaries as passive victims requiring complete dependency upon humans, precluding the alternatives of respectfully grieving deceased animals and celebrating the remarkable resilience of individuals who have escaped nightmarish circumstances.[100] Arguably, this focus on shock value and eliciting pity mirrors the sensationalized, non-consensual disclosure of disabled people's medical histories and saccharine exploitation of "poster children" that are unquestioned staples of mainstream disability advocacy. Unsurprisingly, these organizations uphold numerous policies and decisions that are not in the best interests of the individuals whom they supposedly "speak" for. The focus is shifted to the supposed heroism of the advocates; little discretion is made about the celebration of parents like Alison Tepper Singer, who openly admitted to fantasizing about murdering her autistic daughter (within earshot of the young child in question, no less) in an Autism Speaks promotional video,[101] or slaughterhouse engineers like Temple Grandin. Even organizations like PETA, which supposedly work toward an "uncompromised" final goal of complete animal liberation, perpetuate views of animals informed by anthropocentrism and eugenics, endorsing the euthanasia of "surplus" animals and maintaining that domesticated animals must become extinct in a post-liberation world.[102]

Here, I am reminded of Taylor's comparison of the figures of the doctor and the farmer. Despite actively facilitating the exploitation of their subjects' bodies, both of these individuals are assumed to be intimately familiar with their subjects' best interests. For Taylor, the doctor and the farmer are joined by the anthropocentric, scientific gaze from which they operate, studying animal bodies to devise how they can be more efficiently turned into "meat" and studying disabled bodies to devise how they can be "enhanced" and "cured."[103] Armed with her (presumed) expertise in neurobiology and animal science, Grandin can be described as a combined "doctor-farmer" who educates medical professionals, slaughterhouse owners, and the general public about how both of these tasks are best accomplished. Mirroring psychiatry's long history of denying women's autonomy and silencing our rebellions by pathologizing our bodies and minds, Grandin medicalizes the animals she oppresses in order to further legitimize their subjugation and effectively preclude any political understanding of their situation.

Return of the repressed ruminants

In the face of widespread silence on the ethics of Grandin's work from the disability and animal advocacy communities, I have dreamed for many years of voicing my rejection of her complicity with capitalism, the medical-industrial complex, and mechanized animal killing in a visceral way. I fantasized about exploding her reductive discourse with narratives about "autism" and animality that have been repressed because what they reveal contradicts the interests of power: challenging Grandin meant disrupting the forced identification with her—and, by extension, the economic status quo—that I was raised with. My opportunity to actualize this came halfway through "An Evening with Temple Grandin" at the University of

Guelph, at a demonstration attended by a group of animal rights activists traveling from Toronto. Earlier, I had surreptitiously entered the lecture hall with help from Jenny McQueen, a longtime activist in the community. I joined Grandin onstage and yelled, “Don’t believe the happy lie! Animals do not want to die!”; “It’s not food, it’s violence!,” the slogan of Direct Action Everywhere, an organization that I supported at the time;[104] and “I’m autistic and I try to save animals from [Grandin] every day!” My prompt and rough removal by security guards hardly dimmed the overwhelming feeling of elation that this experience gave me.

The form of protest that I participated in is frequently derided by critics both within and outside the animal rights movement who view it as inappropriate and borderline violent. For instance, Marti Kheel argues that direct action tactics intersect with toxic masculinity in troubling ways, encouraging the glorification of aggressive male activist “heroes” at the expense of those who perform less visible work.[105] I also believe that it is of vital importance to attend to concerns that emphasizing direct action can exclude racialized and disabled people (developmentally disabled and mad people of color, especially), who are more vulnerable to becoming victims of police brutality.[106] For some individuals with physical impairments or mental conditions related to post-traumatic stress, engaging in direct action (or, at the very least, its most culturally visible and provocative forms) may be impossible. As someone who, like many disabled people, has faced violence within the context of institutions, I must negotiate constant anxiety about engaging in forms of protest that can potentially make me vulnerable to physical assault and confinement against my will.

This being said, however, I wish to discuss how spontaneous releases of emotion within the context of protest have been a source of joy and liberation for me as a psychiatric survivor and woman assigned the label of “autism.” Patriarchal social conditioning frames intense emotional experiences as excessively feminine, inappropriate, and “hysterical” and therefore demands repression of them. Burdened by the assumption that disabled people—especially, individuals labeled with developmental and psychiatric disabilities—are, by their very nature, out of control, disabled women are affected by a particularly virulent version of this form of misogyny. For me, living under capitalism and patriarchy requires hypervigilant monitoring of my tone of voice, my bodily movements, the intensity of my emotions, and the content of my speech. I live in constant fear of my disabilities becoming too visible, one of the worst consequences of which could be reincarceration. Instances of “wild” behavior that I have engaged in for causes that I care deeply about (prominently among them, justice for animals and the environment), such as confronting Grandin and riding *Charging Bull* while wearing an animal mask and a pink tutu, represent marvelous moments in which I am temporarily released from the constant pain of excessive self-censorship. Protest is one of the few contexts in which I do not feel as if I am waging war on my own body: behaviors commonly regarded as startling, outlandish, or “mad,” such as screaming in unison and banging on pots and pans, become socially acceptable during large, noisy demonstrations. Given the false over-representation of men in the animal rights community and social justice movements more broadly, one can infer that able-bodied and able-minded men who participate in direct action are valued more positively and given greater media attention than their women and gender non-conforming counterparts.[107]

Loudly disrupting institutions and spaces that depend upon animal exploitation makes me an unacceptable animal advocate who refuses to tolerate and cooperate with the food, fiber, medical research, and entertainment industries. Uncompromising demands for institutional change are frequently met with resistance within the animal rights movement, which has mostly settled for the safer tactic of advocating for changes in personal eating (and other consumption) habits. However, observations that the material conditions of farmed animals have changed negligibly over the past forty years suggest that an exclusive focus on behavioral change has failed.[108] My actions also designate me as an unacceptable disability advocate—especially, within the context of my "autism" diagnosis—for refusing to feign normalcy, purposely losing control, rejecting social niceties, and screaming in a public place. Reflecting on this, I am reminded of the "Loud Hands" project, an Autistic Self Advocacy Network campaign that subverted the phrase "quiet hands," frequently used by behavioral therapists to deter autistic children from flapping their hands (or otherwise moving them in a non-normative manner).[109] I like to think that I successfully reclaimed an experience that autistic and psychiatrized people are taught to view as humiliating and stigmatizing, and I hope to facilitate further discussion about how protest tactics and aesthetics might be positively transformed by openly celebrating and incorporating traits associated with disability and madness. I am reminded of the anarchist writer David Graeber's comparison of protesters to "freaks": "The circus metaphor seems to sit particularly well with anarchists, presumably because circuses are collections of extreme individuals (one can't get more individualistic than a collection of circus freaks) nonetheless engaged in a purely cooperative enterprise that also involves transgressing ordinary boundaries."[110] Although I am troubled by his lack of disability analysis in making this claim, I find value in Graeber's recognition that the protester and the disabled "freak" are joined by their perceived ridiculous appearance, disruptive behavior, and presumed lack of productivity within neoliberal regimes. I have often criticized the mainstream animal rights movement for its lack of creativity, constantly relying upon the tired and ineffective use of shock value and the commodification of women's bodies in its imagery and public performances.

Instead, I contend that only a passionate rejection of our repression will enable us to truly refuse the economic hegemony under which we live and see through its false promises of compliance training and "humane" slaughter. Like the non-human communities that we advocate for, I believe that animal and environmental justice activists must challenge the boundaries of patriarchy and civilization and bring back something of the "outside," to use Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's term.[111] In the words of pattrice jones, taking a page from Herbert Marcuse, the project of total liberation "will depend on our ability to put people in touch with their most heartfelt desires (which won't tend to be wedding dresses or artisanal cheese), and that in turn will require us to embrace our own animality, including its queer eros."[112] I would like to expand upon her statement by positing that an authentic love of our own animality would lead us to celebrate madness, "hysteria," modes of existing and communicating labeled as "autistic," and the movements of physically divergent bodies. In spite of Grandin's claims to genuinely "love" the animals whom she slaughters and accept the impairments that she simultaneously maligns, her work ultimately reproduces an ethos that hinges upon subduing, restraining, neutralizing, and treating as expendable human and inhuman ways of being that throw into doubt the myth of the unified, consistent, rational, and "productive" human self. By rejecting the possibility of human and non-human liberation and subordinating a passion for animals to the whims of Cargill and McDonald's instead, her work reinforces the capitalist doxa that no alternatives to the current system exist.[113] This lack of imagination—clearly produced by the tyranny of the market, not Grandin's disability—is, I believe, proving to be incompatible with hope for a viable future.

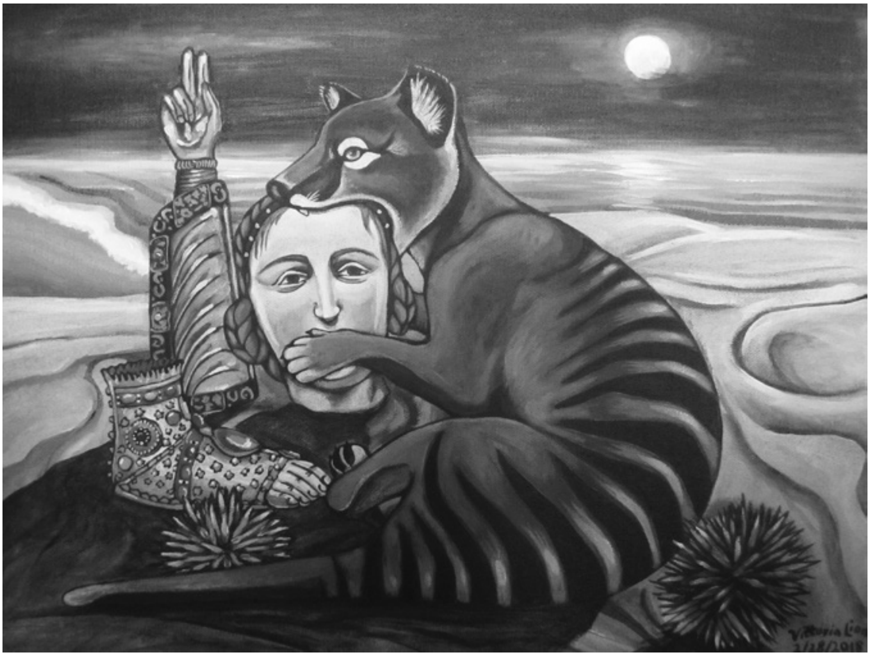

Figure 9.1 Vittoria Lion, "The Stuff of Heaven"

Vittoria Lion. *The Stuff of Heaven*. 2018. Acrylic on canvas, 12 x 16 in.

Postscript: The Stuff of Heaven—Artist's Statement

An unusual meal unfolds on a pink beach that transitions from smooth sand to a creased, undulating surface resembling an endless bedsheet in the foreground, suggesting a scene taking place on the edge of a dream. The full moon and a turquoise sea are visible in the background. A thylacine, a striped and vaguely wolf-like carnivorous marsupial driven to extinction by settler colonialism, rests on the sensual fabric in a curled position, beginning to devour a jealously guarded cache that they had perhaps hidden beneath its folds earlier. However, this cache is not the expected collection of old bones (that is to say, ordinary ones) but a treasure trove of three gilded and bejeweled High and Late Medieval body-part reliquaries. Their lustrous decoration glorified the fragmentation of the body, and the pieces of flesh and bone from saints and martyrs (purportedly, at least) contained within were believed to be imbued with the power to cure illness and disability. The reliquaries depicted here are an arm reliquary modeled on a thirteenth-century South Netherlandish object from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, with two fingers raised in the gesture of blessing; a head reliquary modeled on a sixteenth-century Belgian reliquary bust of a companion of St. Ursula, also from the Metropolitan Museum; and a foot reliquary modeled on a fifteenth-century reliquary of one of the Holy Innocents from the treasury of Basel Cathedral. The thylacine's gaze is alert, surveilling the landscape for other predators and scavengers, and their lack of a left hind foot hardly fazes them as they grip the head reliquary between their front paws and clamp down on the pale skin of the saint with their powerful bite. This juxtaposition simultaneously détourns ideologies that seek to erase disability, alongside the whiteness and human-ness of this particular representation, and implicitly suggests (in a de-theologized manner) that acceptance of bodily fragmentation and death and belief in the life-affirming significance of consuming a meal can ameliorate our alienated relationship to our own animality. Our fleshly remains are the "stuff of heaven," and the appetite is the window to the soul. A pair of large sea urchins, dark purple and red in color, lie next to the animal's hindquarters and tail, accentuating the sense of wonder evoked by this conglomeration of strange artifacts and beings. A rejection of Social Darwinist misrepresentations of animal life and the generation of new forms as exclusively hinged upon violent competition and "advanced" by the death of disabled organisms, this is an image of evolution as driven by the unconventional appetites of non-normative bodies.

Notes

1 Temple Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures: And Other Reports from My Life with Autism* (New York: Random House, 1995), 60–61.

2 Cary Wolfe, "Learning from Temple Grandin: Animal Studies, Disability Studies, and Who Comes After the Subject," in *What Is Posthumanism?* ed. Cary Wolfe (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 129.

3 See, for example, Temple Grandin and Catherine Johnson, *Animals in Translation: Using the Mysteries of Autism to Decode Animal Behavior* (New York: Scribner, 2005), 6–8.

4 Barbara Noske, “The Animal Industrial Complex,” in *Beyond Boundaries: Humans and Animals* (Montreal, Buffalo and London: Black Rose Books, 1997), 22–39.

5 Lydia X. Z. Brown, “Critiquing Temple Grandin,” *Autistic Hoya*, blog, August 10, 2013, www.autistichoya.com/2013/08/critiquing-temple-grandin.html; Jim Sinclair, “An Autistic Activist Responds to Temple Grandin,” *Our Compass*, blog, 1998, accessed January 30, 2014, https://our-compass.org/2014/01/30/an-autistic-activist-responds-to-temple-grandin/.

6 Jessica L. W. Carey, “ ‘The Paradox of My Work’: Making Sense of the Factory Farm with Temple Grandin,” *CR: The New Centennial Review* 11, no. 2 (2011): 169–92.

7 Sunaura Taylor, *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation* (New York: The New Press, 2017), 176–77.

8 Carey, “ ‘The Paradox of My Work’,” 169–70.

9 Dia Neighbors, “Why Temple Grandin Bums Me Out,” *Native of Nowhere*, blog, Wordpress, October 19, 2017, https://nativeofnowhere.blog/2017/10/19/why-temple-grandin-bums-me-out/.

10 I acknowledge that, for many mentally disabled people, an “Autism Spectrum Disorder” diagnosis is readily welcomed and viewed positively, providing an explanation and support for previously unaddressed impairments and a sense of community. However, since the label of “autism” was forced on me at an age when I could not consent and is heavily implicated in the recurring trauma that I have experienced within the psychiatric system, I no longer view the diagnosis as a part of my identity equivalent to, for instance, my gender, sexual orientation, or mental disability more broadly. Since the label is interwoven with a deeply entrenched history of pain for me, I have never felt fully comfortable with this. Instead, I currently prefer to describe myself as a psychiatric survivor and someone who has been “assigned the label of ‘autism.’” As a survivor and academic holding multiple perspectives on mental health that are excluded from mainstream psychiatry and psychology, I also question the validity and usefulness of the “Autism Spectrum Disorder” label as a scientific category. For further reading on the latter topic, see the essays collected in Katherine Runswick-Cole, Rebecca Mallett, and Sami Timimi, eds., *Re-Thinking Autism: Diagnosis, Identity and Equality* (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2016). However, for the sake of brevity, I will henceforth mostly use “identity-first” language (e.g. “autistic people” as opposed to “people with autism”), reflecting the preference of the majority of people who have been assigned and/or identify with the label of “autism.”

11 Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr and trans. Edmund Jephcott (1947; rpt. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 203–12.

12 Donna J. Haraway, Notes to *When Species Meet*, vol. 3 of Posthumanities, ed. Cary Wolfe (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 319.

13 Wolfe, “Learning from Temple Grandin,” 130–34.

14 Rudolfo Piskorski, “Temple Grandin’s Ableism,” *Posthumanities*, blog, Blogspot, February 7, 2010, http://posthumanities.blogspot.ca/2010/02/temple-gradins-ableism.html.

15 Temple Grandin, “Animals Are Not Things: A View on Animal Welfare Based on Neurological Complexity,” accessed 2002, www.grandin.com/welfare/animals.are.not.things.html.

16 Temple Grandin and Catherine Johnson, *Animals Make Us Human: Creating the Best Life for Animals* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009), 297.

17 Carol J. Adams, “ ‘A Very Rare and Difficult Thing’: Ecofeminism, Attention to Animal Suffering, and the Disappearance of the Subject,” in *A Communion of Subjects: Animals in Religion, Science, and Ethics*, eds. Paul Waldau and Kimberley Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 592.

18 Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures*, 189.
19 Quoted in Adams, "'A Very Rare and Difficult Thing'," 600.
20 Wolfe, "Learning from Temple Grandin," 130.
21 Adams, "'A Very Rare and Difficult Thing'," 593.
22 Wolfe, "Learning from Temple Grandin," 128.
23 Kari Weil, "Killing Them Softly: Animal Death, Linguistic Disability, and the Struggle for Ethics," *Configurations* 14, no. 1–2 (Winter–Spring 2006): 92.
24 Weil, "Killing Them Softly," 96; Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 80–81.
25 Weil, "Killing Them Softly," 91–96.
26 Carey, "'The Paradox of My Work'," 176.
27 Taylor, *Beasts of Burden*, 157–77.
28 Taylor, *Beasts of Burden*, 176–77.
29 Taylor, *Beasts of Burden*, 177.
30 Ibid.
31 Oliver Sacks, "An Anthropologist on Mars," in *An Anthropologist on Mars: Seven Paradoxical Tales* (1995; rpt. New York: Vintage, 1996), 244–96; Steve Silberman, "The Wizard of Clapham Common," in *NeuroTribes: The Legacy of Autism and the Future of Neurodiversity* (New York: Avery, 2015), 19–43. I would argue further that, due to its tendency to fall back on genetic determinist explanations for autism and other forms of mental disability (thus pre-emptively silencing potential conversations about the social construction and historical situation of such labels), the "neurodiversity" framework lends itself toward an apolitical approach to disability. Ultimately, I agree with Mallett and Runswick-Cole's assessment that "autism is so embedded in the cycle of commodification that even the movement which seeks to resist the 'autism-as-disorder' narrative, by re-using and re-inscribing the category with different meanings, cannot escape capitalist logic" (2016: 122–23).
32 Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures*, 52.
33 Temple Grandin, "The Ways of the World: Developing Autistic Talent," in *Thinking in Pictures: My Life with Autism, Expanded Edition* (1995; rpt. New York: Vintage, 2006), 122.
34 Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures*, 53; Grandin, "The Ways of the World," 122.
35 Brown, "Critiquing Temple Grandin."
36 Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures*, 59–60.
37 Grandin and Johnson, *Animals Make Us Human*, 23.
38 Anne McGuire, *War on Autism: On the Cultural Logic of Normative Violence* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 112–14.
39 See, for example, Maxfield Sparrow, "ABA," *Unstrange Mind*, blog, Wordpress, October 20, 2016, http://unstrangemind.com/aba/.
40 Sparrow, "ABA"; Socially Anxious Advocate, "Why I Left ABA," *Socially Anxious Advocate*, blog, Wordpress, May 22, 2015, https://sociallyanxiousadvocate.wordpress.com/2015/05/22/why-i-left-aba/; Julia F. Gruson-Wood, "Autism, Expert Discourses, and Subjectification: A Critical Examination of Applied Behavioural Therapies," *Studies in Social Justice* 10, no. 1 (2016): 42–53.
41 Sparrow, "ABA."
42 Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures*, 118–23.
43 Scott Michael Robertson, "Neurodiversity, Quality of Life, and Autistic Adults: Shifting Research and Professional Focuses onto Real-Life Challenges," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (2010): n.p, http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1069/1234.
44 Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures*, 116.
45 Grandin and Johnson, *Animals in Translation*, 10–16. In a stark departure from psychoanalytic theory, behaviorism rejects the investigation of unconscious activity and/or any mental states that cannot be observed via surface-level behavior or reported

thoughts, reducing human and animal psychology to a series of automatic reflexes and associations triggered by external stimuli. In her research on the emotional and social impacts of intensive behavioral interventions on autistic children, their families, and therapists, Julia F. Gruson-Wood encapsulates the behaviorist ethos thusly: "In behavioral analysis, there is no mind or psyche, only thoughts, behavior, and environment. Behavioral analysis brings the self to the surface . . . as an object that is exterior and visible, and therefore more available for acting upon" ("Autism," 43). Although she credits Skinner as a major influence during her education, Grandin argues that her work differs from his strict behaviorism by bringing into account animals' emotions and speculating (albeit dubiously) about their neurological functioning (Grandin and Johnson 2005: 9–12). However, her unfounded assumptions about the simplicity of autistic and animal emotions, dismissive statements regarding the unconscious, and emphasis on monitoring and modifying superficial behavioral reactions underscore her adherence to a behaviorist worldview (88–93). One must only read her disturbing words about Ole Ivar Lovaas, the founder of intensive behavioral therapy for autistic children, who also used this approach to "treat" assigned-male children exhibiting so-called "deviant sex-role behaviors" (George A. Rekers and O. Ivar Lovaas, "Behavioral Treatment of Deviant Sex-Role Behaviors in a Male Child," *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1974)): "There've been years of controversy over whether Dr. Lovaas did or didn't cure anybody, but to me, the fact that he brought those kids so far there could be an argument about it is what matters. Behaviorism gave parents and teachers a reason to think that autistic people were capable of a lot more than anybody thought, and that was a good thing" (Grandin and Johnson 2005: 14). Having abandoned psychoanalytic theories of repression, behaviorism is left without a language for expressing the depth of human (and, I argue, non-human) mental suffering—an omission that makes it a particularly powerful ideological complement to late capitalism.

46 Grandin and Johnson, *Animals in Translation*, 20–21.

47 Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures*, 201.

48 Erika Ritter, "Killed with Kindness: Humane Slaughter," in *The Dog by the Cradle, the Serpent Beneath: Some Paradoxes of Human-Animal Relationships* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2009), 20.

49 For further reference, see Jason Hribal, *Fear of the Animal Planet: The Hidden History of Animal Resistance* (Petrolia and Oakland: CounterPunch and AK Press, 2010).

50 Taylor, *Beasts of Burden*, 63.

51 This insight arose from a discussion following the presentation of an earlier version of this paper at the "Decolonizing Critical Animal Studies, Cripping Critical Animal Studies" conference at the University of Alberta in June 2016.

52 Grandin and Johnson, *Animals in Translation*, 247.

53 Ibid.

54 Grandin and Johnson, *Animals in Translation*, 248.

55 Chelsea Dub, "Guest Post by Chelsea Dub on World Vegan Day/Autistics Speaking Day," *Hana Low: Opening Cages for Collective Liberation*, blog, Wordpress, November 4, 2015, https://hanalow.wordpress.com/2015/11/04/guest-post-by-chelsea-dub-on-world-vegan-dayautistics-speaking-day/.

56 Carey, " 'The Paradox of My Work'," 174–80.

57 Carey, " 'The Paradox of My Work'," 186.

58 Grandin and Johnson, *Animals in Translation*, 91–92. To the contrary, Sigmund Freud recognized the existence of some degree of unconscious activity in the mental lives of animals, as evidenced by the following iconic quotation from *The Interpretation of Dreams*: "I do not myself know what animals dream of. But a proverb, to which my attention was drawn by one of my students, does claim to know. 'What', asks the proverb, 'do geese dream of?' And it replies: 'Of maize'" (1900: 131–32).

59 Melanie Yergeau, "Introduction: Involution," in *Authoring Autism: On Rhetoric and Neurological Queerness*, eds. Erin Manning and Brian Massumi (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2018), 15.
60 Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 204; Gruson-Wood, "Autism," 43–44.
61 Ritter, "Killed with Kindness," 52.
62 Carey, " 'The Paradox of My Work'," 180.
63 Brown, "Critiquing Temple Grandin."
64 McGuire, *War on Autism*, 126.
65 McGuire, *War on Autism*, 126–30.
66 McGuire, *War on Autism*, 151.
67 Carol J. Adams, "More than Meat," in *The Pornography of Meat* (New York and London: Continuum, 2003), 22–25; Adams, "The Rape of Animals, the Butchering of Women," in *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (1990; rpt. New York and London: Continuum, 2010), 66–67. Although it is intended to illustrate different forms of oppression, I feel that the following quotation from *The Pornography of Meat* also perfectly encapsulates the sense of violation and objectification felt by many women who have been psychiatric "patients": "With the absent referent, we do not have to ask of someone, 'What are you going through?' since there is no one there to ask" (2003: 23).
68 Yergeau, "Introduction," 1.
69 Grandin and Johnson, *Animals Make Us Human*, 296–97.
70 Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures*, 53.
71 Temple Grandin, "Temple Grandin: An Inside View of Autism," Autism Research Institute, accessed June 17, 2016, www.autism.com/advocacy_grandin.
72 Future Horizons, Inc., "Experience a Future Horizons Conference," accessed June 17, 2016, http://fhautism.com/autism-conference-experience-temple-grandin.html. I cannot help but note the implied emphasis on restoring the future productivity of autistic children in this company's name.
73 Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures*, 222.
74 David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, "From Liberal to Neoliberal Futures of Disability: Rights-Based Inclusionism, Ablenationalism, and the Able-Disabled," in *The Biopolitics of Disability: Neoliberalism, Ablenationalism, and Peripheral Embodiment, in Corporealities: Discourses of Disability*, eds. David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2015), 54–59.
75 Andrea Murphy, "America's Largest Private Companies 2017," *Forbes*, September 5, 2017, www.forbes.com/sites/andreamurphy/2017/08/09/americas-largest-private-companies-2/#7fe8e8dc247c.
76 Cargill, "Temple Grandin's Vision," video, 2:34, accessed June 18, 2016, www.cargill.com/150/en/TEMPLE-GRANDIN-VISION.jsp.
77 Rainforest Action Network, "Cargill Exposed: A Trail of Human Rights Abuses," August 31, 2011, www.ran.org/cargill_exposed_a_trail_of_human_rights_abuses.
78 "Vandana Shiva on Monsanto and Cargill," *YouTube*, video, 1:39, posted by Jordan Engel, March 1, 2013, www.youtube.com/watch?v=eMZw3TkmW-Q; for further reference, see Vandana Shiva, *Cargill: The Corporate Hijack of India's Food and Agriculture* (New Delhi: Navdanya, RFSTE, 2007).
79 Grandin and Johnson, *Animals in Translation*, 32.
80 Ritter, "Killed with Kindness," 29.
81 Quoted in James McWilliams, "Temple Grandin's Reason for Eating Animals? 'I Get Lightheaded . . . if I Go on a Vegan Diet'," *James McWilliams*, blog, May 8, 2012, http://james-mcwilliams.com/?p=1340.
82 Ritter, "Killed with Kindness," 29–30.

83 Temple Grandin, "Commentary: Behavior of Slaughter Plant and Auction Employees Toward the Animals," *Anthrozoos* 1, no. 4 (1988): 205–13, www.grandin.com/references/behavior.employees.html.

84 Ritter, "Killed with Kindness," 28.

85 Rebecca Mallett and Katherine Runswick-Cole, "The Commodification of Autism: What's at Stake?" in *Re-Thinking Autism: Diagnosis, Identity and Equality*, eds. Katherine Runswick-Cole, Rebecca Mallett, and Sami Timimi (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2016), 117–18; for further reading on the intersections between biomedical psychiatry and imperialism, see Ethan Watters, *Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche* (New York: Free Press, 2011).

86 McGuire, *War on Autism*, 109–13.

87 McGuire, *War on Autism*, 144–85; quoted in Brewster Kneen, "The Invisible Giant: Cargill and Its Transnational Strategies," in *The Environment in Anthropology: A Reader in Ecology, Culture, and Sustainable Living*, eds. Nora Haenn and Richard R. Wilk (New York and London: New York University Press, 2006), 446.

88 Kneen, "The Invisible Giant," 446.

89 Noske, "The Animal Industrial Complex," 29–32.

90 Quoted in Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, "Preface," in *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (1988; rpt., New York: Pantheon, 2002), lix.

91 Katherine Lashley, "Displaying Autism: The Thinking and Images of *Temple Grandin* (2010)," in *Cultures of Representation: Disability in World Cinema Contexts*, ed. Benjamin Fraser (London and New York: Wallflower Press, 2016), 127–32.

92 See Mitchell and Snyder, "From Liberal to Neoliberal Futures of Disability," 57.

93 Mitchell and Snyder, "From Liberal to Neoliberal Futures of Disability," 37.

94 *Temple Grandin*, DVD, directed by Mick Jackson (New York: HBO, 2010).

95 Zipporah Weisberg, "Animal Repression: Speciesism as Pathology," in *Critical Theory and Animal Liberation*, ed. John Sanbonmatsu (Lanham and Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 190; Grandin and Johnson, *Animals in Translation*, 6–7.

96 Sunaura Taylor brought this to my attention following the presentation of an earlier version of this paper at the Decolonizing Critical Animal Studies, Cripping Critical Animal Studies conference at the University of Alberta.

97 Carey, " 'The Paradox of My Work'," 185.

98 Alison Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 9, 47–68, 81–82, 161–68.

99 See, for example, Ryan Gunderson, "Marx's Comments on Animal Welfare," *Rethinking Marxism* 23, no. 4 (2011): 543–48.

100 Many examples of the kind of imagery that I describe here can be found at the online PETA Media Center (www.peta.org/media/, accessed February 21, 2018) and Mercy for Animals' Undercover Investigations webpage (www.mercyforanimals.org/investigations, accessed February 20, 2018).

101 Jami L. Anderson, "A Dash of Autism," in *The Philosophy of Autism*, eds. Jami L. Anderson and Simon Cushing (Lanham and Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 120.

102 People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, "Animal Rights Uncompromised: Euthanasia," accessed January 9, 2017, www.peta.org/about-peta/why-peta/euthanasia/; People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, "Doing What's Best for Our Companion Animals," accessed January 9, 2017, www.peta.org/issues/companion-animal-issues/companion-animals-factsheets/whats-best-companion-animals/.

103 Sunaura Taylor, "Beasts of Burden: Disability Studies and Animal Rights," *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences* 19, no. 2 (Spring–Summer 2011): 217.

104 Direct Action Everywhere is a Berkeley, California-based animal rights organization known for its noisy and confrontational tactics, which typically involve disrupting public events and spaces focused on the sale and consumption of animals. Although Direct Action Everywhere's seemingly uncompromising platform made a great impression on me during my formative years as an animal activist, I feel I can no longer support this organization with a clear conscience due to its partnership with PETA and lack of commitment to an intersectional analysis of animal oppression. PETA's repeated degradation and mockery of women, racialized people, and people with non-normative bodies requires no further commentary from me. Moreover, I am concerned to have since learned that multiple women activists have reported being sexually assaulted and harassed by prominent male Direction Action Everywhere members.

105 Marti Kheel, "Direct Action and the Heroic Ideal: An Ecofeminist Critique," in *Igniting a Revolution: Voices in Defense of the Earth*, eds. Anthony J. Nocella and Steven Best (Oakland: AK Press, 2006), 307.

106 See Raffi Ciavatta, "Direct Action Is for the Privileged," *Collectively Free: Awareness and Action*, January 20, 2016, www.collectivelyfree.org/direct-action-is-for-the-privileged/.

107 See Carol J. Adams, "After MacKinnon: Sexual Inequality in the Animal Movement," in *Critical Theory and Animal Liberation*, ed. John Sanbonmatsu (Lanham and Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 274–75.

108 See, for example, Laura K. Hahn, "I'm Too Sexy for Your Movement: An Analysis of the Failure of the Animal Rights Movement to Promote Vegetarianism," in *Arguments About Animal Ethics*, eds. Greg Goodale and Jason Edward Black (Lanham and Plymouth: Lexington, 2010), 79–95.

109 Julia Bascom, "The Loud Hands Project," *Just Stimming . . .*, blog, Wordpress, December 26, 2011, https://juststimming.wordpress.com/2011/12/26/the-loud-hands-project/.

110 David Graeber, "On the Phenomenology of Giant Puppets: Broken Windows, Imaginary Jars of Urine, and the Cosmological Role of the Police in American Culture," *Libcom.org*, April 5, 2007, 11–12, accessed March 15, 2009, https://libcom.org/files/puppets.pdf.

111 Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 11.

112 pattrice jones, "Eros and the Mechanisms of Eco-Defense," in *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals & the Earth*, eds. Carol J. Adams and Lori Gruen (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 105. With regard to the title of this section, I would like to acknowledge jones' powerful usage of Freud's phrase in her essay.

113 For further reading, see Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Alresford: Zero Books, 2009).

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Chapter 10

Cripping mad cow disease

Hallie Abelman

> Hey, diddle, diddle,
> The cat and the fiddle,
> **The cow jumped over the moon;**
> The little dog laughed
> To see such sport,
> **And the dish ran away with the spoon.**
> —Mother Goose

In the summer of 1999, my family took a vacation to London and Paris. As I was only seven years old, I have just three memories from this trip. The first is my brother and me duetting all the songs from the rock musical *Rent* while bored at tourist attractions. Another is lying in a dark hotel room watching The Spice Girls being interviewed on French TV. The third is our parents telling us that we absolutely could not eat any beef during the trip because of mad cow disease. Only in retrospect have I understood that our family Euro-trip coincided with the worst mad cow disease fiasco in history,[1] and as a child completely ignorant of this sort of thing, it led at the time to nightmarish imaginings of enraged, zombie-like cows ready to attack. This memory only resurfaced due to my recent introduction to mad and disability studies, which has in turn led to my investment in unpacking how my affective response to a temporary dietary restriction imposed by my parents during my youth can be read as an artifact of sanist violence. How did cattle become prey to the prejudices and violence of being deemed mad by human society? By approaching the historical event of mad cow disease in the UK (i.e. the burning of several million cattle) through a Queer Crip lens, I can highlight some mythologies driving the carnage and perhaps even open doors for fantasies of anti-carnist resistance.

The mad cow disease crisis fascinates me because it is sandwiched between human livelihoods to such a degree that cows are often absented from the story. On one side are the farmers who were blamed for the spread of the epidemic, which scientists claim was caused by feeding cattle infected slaughterhouse waste (i.e. ground-up cow carcasses).[2] These farmers dealt with this blame and the subsequent economic toll of plummeting beef prices and embargos on cattle-derived products.[3] On the other side are the humans who were at risk of infection via beef consumption. In the middle was the British government, whose response to the epidemic centered on human lives; in fact, they failed to enact any serious preventative measures until, ten years after its spread in cattle, scientists discovered that humans *too* could become infected with the disease.[4] Slaughter and destruction of all animals suspected to have what is officially called bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) was obligatory, with the government even bribing farmers to declare any potential cases with financial compensation.[5] In other words, the already imminent, premature deaths of all 4.4 million bovines[6] involved took a backseat to the anthropocentric havoc wrought by those with more (money) to lose.

The media frenzy surrounding this chaotic period in the UK is what actually generated the catchy moniker "mad cow disease,"[7] which references both bovine spongiform encephalopathy and its human strain, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD). Brain and nervous system damage characteristic of these diseases often causes erratic behavior and movements,[8] symptoms that subjected bovines diagnosed with BSE to labels and treatment mirroring those often imposed on psychiatrized and disabled humans. These bovines' proximity to disease-induced neurodivergence deemed them unfit for meat processing and therefore undeserving of life. In order to prevent the propagation of these diseased bodies, farmers were forced to engage in practices reminiscent of twentieth-century eugenics, such as federally funded compulsory sterilization of disabled folks, withholding medical care from already marginalized populations, and even mass incineration. This invites the questions: Why did these cows and bulls have to die? Why were they not treated for painful symptoms and then pardoned from slaughter to live out their remaining days in peace? Some historians might argue that the UK's ruminant crusade was the result of largely unfounded concerns about the ambiguity surrounding the disease. From what I have gathered, there seems to be a fundamental connection between the nickname given to BSE and CJD (mad cow disease) and the fact that these herds were swiftly eradicated.

Mad cow disease is just one example of how stigmas against humans deemed mad by society make their way to animal bodies as justification for cruelty and violence. The potential for farmers to unintentionally disable their cattle (via bad feed) and for those cattle to then disable the humans consuming their flesh entangles humans and animals in a shared affliction with complex political implications. Disabled humans' long history of being animalized as well as Eurocentric associations of Black and Indigenous bodies with animals contribute to this complexity.[9] These dehumanizing traditions, commonly seen in stigmas against disabled and racialized humans that utilize animal metaphors and associations, are proof that the human-animal binary is a critical tool for ableism and systemic racism. Derogatory sayings linking animals to any smidgen of psychiatric deviance in humans are common in the English language. These include tropes such as the "crazy cat lady," warnings against interacting with feral or stray dogs for fear of contracting rabies; phrases such as "crazy as a loon"; and a stream of further moral judgments that link human and animal sanity.[10] These stigmas traverse animal bodies to oppress humans and are employed as efficiently in reverse.[11]

Though I have qualms about providing sanist linguistic examples in this text, the cruel and dehumanizing depictions of "Mad" humans mentioned above have proven helpful for unpacking my aforementioned fear of diseased zombie cows that resulted from our trip to London and Paris in 1999. I presume this fear is rooted in long-held assumptions that Mad humans are dangerous, irrational, and unpredictable. Therefore, the cows marked by popular media as "mad" for their erratic behavior and movements fell prey to these same stereotypes. The mythological infusion of fear and danger into narratives of madness has been explored by disability scholars and activists such as Shayda Kafai and Margaret Price.[12] Price, for example, critiques mainstream discourses about school shooter phenomena that instrumentalize these shooters to flag mental illness as a predictor of violent behavior.[13] This speaks to the ways in which those deemed mad are criminalized and often contained or incarcerated under the guise of the protection of public safety.[14] The containment of cows in herds where BSE was present, and the slaughter of those herds, occurred to protect . . . future barbecue attendees.[15]

I should clarify that I have not shared my childhood fear of cows diagnosed with BSE to elicit retroactive sympathy. On the contrary, I think that this affective memory is a good marker of my privilege. Though I was genuinely afraid of these imagined zombie cows, having to forgo cheeseburgers for two weeks is *hardly* a sacrifice. I gesture toward my usual privilege to choose *what* and *when* I ate to elucidate a theme running throughout this narrative for all parties involved. Cows, natural herbivores, were forced not only to become carnivorous but also to consume their own flesh and bone. The story of mad cow is a story of unjust feeding. It urges us to acknowledge that the right to choose what we eat and when is a freedom reserved for those unaffected by forced containment. Perhaps this is a generative lens for approaching the multispecies issue of incarceration. Facilities that prevent bodies from exiting, such as farms, prisons, nursing homes, hospitals, elementary schools, and psychiatric institutions, are all architectures infamous for fueling those within with poor quality food, further contributing to the maintenance of already de-legitimized bodies.[16]

The cattle feed that was responsible for spreading BSE in the UK has been described as "recycled," an attempt to put a positive spin on a sketchy, albeit common, practice in late-twentieth-century animal agriculture.[17] Or, in the words of novelist Ruth Ozeki, "feed the animals shit and it gets rid of waste at the same time."[18] This lack of care given to the bovines' diets is driven by capitalist opportunism. Increased hastiness required of farmers to process cattle in order to make money is even cited as the main reason the disease did not appear *until* the 1980s.[19] The nature of the UK's disease eradication program prioritized the protection of farmers' economic livelihoods over bovine welfare. This meant that entire herds with just one or two BSE-diagnosed cow/bull were burned to prevent the loss of future profits.

Unable to perform their fundamental, productive duty, the cows and bulls disabled by BSE were rendered valueless in a capitalist society. Therefore, "mad" is not the *only* "criminal offense" marking the animals in question. They are also charged with tampering with animal agriculture enterprises in a record-breaking sabotage of profitable business-as-usual. Were they human offenders, their offense would deem them eco-terrorists! Perhaps unsurprisingly, these two forms of criminalization, mad and anti-profit, go "hoof in hoof."

Speaking of hooves, one of the most common locomotive symptoms of BSE is failure of the hind legs, causing frequent falling.[20] This symptom affects diseased humans and animals and occurs more regularly as brain mass is eaten away by the infectious protein or prion, which can take many years.[21] Falling invites further consideration of queer failure as it pertains to mad cow disease symptoms and refusal. Accounts and observations of BSE in cattle have noted especially fascinating behavior changes such as kicking, aggressiveness toward farmers, refusal to enter the milking barn, choosing solitude, and problems with locomotion.[22] These symptoms blur boundaries between psychological and physical effects of BSE, which reinforces how physical and neurotypical ableism worked in tandem to constrain the pathologized bodies. These symptoms could also be seen as evidence of Mad reclamation, small daily acts of resistance championed by activist-scholars Shayda Kafai and Lindsay Eales.[23] As someone committed to imagining more compassionate futures for farmed animals, I must validate the fantasy of "cow refusal." In the brief period between their slow acquisition of BSE symptoms and being burnt to ashes, these cows and bulls performed a variety of choreographies that directly (even if unintentionally) resisted the robotized labor and cooperation expected of them.

Though I opt for a plant-based diet in opposition to animal agribusinesses that perpetuate multispecies abuse, I understand that the 4 million plus bovines being considered here were not raised and bred for anything other than beef production. In this way, it *is* a shame that meals for several million people went into the incinerator. And it was *hard* to kill that many cows and bulls, which took a toll on English countryside pride. French biologist Maxime Schwartz noted that it triggered a *particular* panic in "the traditionally staid British."[24] After all, the famous Tower of London is guarded by the esteemed and internationally recognized Beefeaters. *Animal Capital* author Dr. Nicole Shukin describes how various politicians even engaged in bizarre public relations stunts in order to boost public morale around the issue, one going so far as to feed his toddler a safe hamburger on national television.[25] In other words, not only were these cows rejecting the carnism on their *respective* farms but they were also denying their country the financial and spiritual profits gained from a national identity that overtly celebrates carnism. Does all of this make the diseased cows bad patriots? Crip theorist Robert McRuer discusses various forms of political and cultural resistance on behalf of Crip communities interested in finding modes of resisting global capitalism and neoliberalism.[26] These forms are all grounded in a "resistance to becoming normate" evident in the performances of these anti-assimilationist cattle. Shukin also suggests imaginative considerations of animal protest in mad cow disease, though by way of the "vengeful prion,"[27] or infectious protein, that prevents "carnal currency as capital."

Attention to this resistance on behalf of the diseased cattle has invoked some semi-realistic fantasies. Thinking back to my affective response to mad cow disease as a child, I can see how ignorance, fear, and confusion inspired horror-film aesthetics in my young brain. I am reminded of *Black Water*, an eco-horror film about tourists killed by crocodiles who have been bred for tourism and then sold to the handbag market.[28] While I abhor how horror films often demonize characters by bestowing them with traits akin to neurodivergence, I could envision the eco-horror film genre framing cows' "refusal to cow" as revenge against humans for centuries of abuse and objectification. Australian eco-horror film scholar Catharine Simpson defines eco-horror as films where humans become prey to animals and asserts that this genre of films can create "eco-post-colonial terrain"[29] through animals displaying "more plural forms of being"[30] that often go against "nationalist discourses."[31] Two decades after the epidemic, this "revenge of the Mad cows" paradigm still seems to have potential.

But what does this *fleshly refusal* have to do with madness? Well, broadly speaking, cows engaging in the oft-taboo-ized performance of cannibalism overlaps with Mad reclamation in the sense that these bodies are resisting societal stigmas against their misunderstood ways of moving and being. Or maybe this performativity could be considered "neuroqueering," a concept coined by Nick Walker and Athena Lynn Michaels-Dillon, which they describe as "[e]ngaging in practices intended to undo one's cultural conditioning toward conformity and compliance with dominant norms, with the aim of reclaiming one's capacity to give more full expression to one's neurodivergence and/or one's uniquely weird personal potentials and inclinations." I adore Walker's concept of neuroqueering, particularly because it playfully welcomes abundant difference through queer solidarity.

Fleshly refusal might also relate to madness through conversations of cloning and eugenic mastery. Thanks to the Brazilian environmental technology scholar Tiago Saraivo's writing on the Brazilian naval orange, I now understand how neo-standardization of plants, farmed animals and humans requires an overarching commitment to normalcy necessary for sustained profits. This speaks to the ideology behind killing not only the bovines infected with BSE but also all cows/bulls/steeds/heifers/calves in herds where BSE was detected. It speaks to abortive practices following non-normative risk detection in human babies, and I am reminded of the sculpture series *Bulls Without Horns* by the contemporary Eastern European artist Aleksandra Dominovic. For the project Dominovic conducted research at UC Davis with the scientists responsible for bioengineering the first two bulls to be born without horns using a genome editing tool. Dominovic's sculptures capture the violence of maintaining human supremacy over bovines—whereas cattle ranchers typically cut or burn off bull horns to prevent future accidents when handling the bulls, this new technology eliminates the issue completely.

It is also important to explore BSE-infected cows' inability to gain weight as further evidence of their unintentional and arguably nonconsensual "refusal to cow." Given that farmers want their cattle to be very fat to produce maximum quantities of meat, the weight loss caused by BSE short circuits disabling overfeeding practices. I am especially curious how we might reconcile the weight that is *compulsory* for farmed animals to gain prior to slaughter with the weight that systemic fat phobia *demands* humans to shed. The association of fatness with animals who are deemed edible leads me to wonder about the dehumanization of fat human bodies and how this pertains to race. In Sabrina Strings' new book *Fearing the Black Body: The Racial Origins of Fat Phobia*, she discusses the "ascetic aesthetic born of eighteenth-century Britain"[32] that propagated slenderness as a sign of religious propriety and self-control for elite WASP women and intelligence and rationality in men.[33] Not only did the ideal of thinness place these people at the top of the social hierarchy[34] but it also insinuated a "mastery over animal nature within,"[35] simultaneously denoting non-slender Black bodies as prone to gluttony and excess.[36] Therefore, to truly Crip mad cow disease requires an interrogation not only of bovine abuse but also of the cultural eating and biopolitical feeding apparatuses that have entwined marginalized humans with farmed animals throughout their existence.

Scientists still do not know how long CJD incubates in humans. Some even argue that the disease can remain dormant for up to sixty years before presenting symptoms,[37] meaning that there could be heaps of British folks with still-dormant CJD or diseases misdiagnosed as something else. Through their inherent resistance to immediate biomedical eradication, CJD and BSE narratives contribute to the greater project of queering illness. This text was largely inspired by the steadfastness of pathologized cows, whose movements and attitudes reflect a momentary subversion of the mean monster of agribusiness and the risk zoonotic transmission poses to human commitments to normalcy. It is grounded in the work of mad and disability studies scholars who have extended fruitful prompts and imperatives for alternative pathways for those implicated by capitalist devaluation and abuse. What did it mean or what could it mean for cattle to "stay mad" à la Lindsay Eales? Surely climate chaos, environmental changes, and capitalist corruption will only increase the potential for continued transference of diseases from animals to humans and vice versa, necessitating more eco-inspired approaches to disability, not howling/crying/laughing at but with and for the moon.

Notes

1 Maxime Schwartz, *How the Cows Turned Mad: Unlocking the Mysteries of Mad Cow Disease* (University of California Press, 2004), 152.
2 Schwartz, *How the Cows Turned Mad*, 146.
3 Schwartz, *How the Cows Turned Mad*, 158.
4 Kevin Keane, " 'All Protection Steps Taken' After BSE Diagnosis," *BBC*, October 23, 2018. BSE in humans is often referred to as Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease by medical professionals (Schwartz, *How the Cows Turned Mad*, 157).

5 Schwartz, *How the Cows Turned Mad*, 145.

6 The colloquial use of "cow" has been avoided in this text to prevent confusion. A "cow," by definition, is a female that has given birth, as opposed to a bull, heifer, steer, or calf.

7 Schwartz, *How the Cows Turned Mad*, 146.

8 Schwartz, *How the Cows Turned Mad*, 158.

9 Grace Rogers, "Dreaming (Dis)ability: Toward and Interspecies Ethics of Care in Wanuri Kahiu's *Pumzi*," *Confluence*, April 17, 2019, https://confluence.gallatin.nyu.edu/featured/dreaming-disability.

10 A loon is a bird that cries out at night, when most birds are silent, suggesting a howling at the moon. Loon is also shortened form of "lunatic," an Old English term deriving from the Old French *lunatique*, from late Latin *lunaticus*, and from Latin *luna* "moon," which refers to a belief that phases of the moon caused intermittent insanity. See M. A. Riva, L. Tremolizzo, M. Spicci, C. Ferrarese, G. De Vito, G. C. Cesana, and V. A. Sironi, "The Disease of the Moon: The Linguistic and Pathological Evolution of the English Term 'Lunatic'," *Journal of the History of Neurosciences* 20 (2011): 65–73.

11 Identities commonly associated with humans, such as Mad or Black, often get projected onto animals. For more on this, see Claire Jean Kim's writing about the racialization of animals in "Murder and Mattering in Harambe's House" (2017) and Sunaura Taylor's writing about animals disabled by humans in her chapter "Animal Crips," in *Beasts of Burden* (The New Press, 2017), 32.

12 Shayda Kafai, "The Mad Border Body: A Political In-Betweenness," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (2013), doi:10.18061/dsq.v33i1.3438; Margaret Price, "Assaults on the Ivory Tower Representations of Madness in the Discourse of U.S. School Shootings," in *Mad at School: Rhetorics of Mental Disability and Academic Life* (University of Michigan Press, 2011).

13 Price, "Assaults on the Ivory Tower," 156.

14 Price, "Assaults on the Ivory Tower," 163.

15 It is worth noting that these cows' prison-like confinement preceded their respective herd's diagnoses. For work that explores the controversial and often problematic collusion of prisons with factory farms, see Kelly Struthers Montford, "Land, Agriculture, and the Carceral: The Territorializing Function of Penitentiary Farms," *Radical Philosophy Review* 22, no. 1 (2019): 113–41; Kathryn Gillespie, "Placing Angola: Racialization, Anthropocentrism, and Settler Colonialism at the Louisiana State Penitentiary's Angola Rodeo," *Antipode: A Journal of Radical Geography* 50, no. 5 (November 2018): 1267–89; and Karen Morin, *Carceral Space, Prisoners and Animals* (New York and London: Routledge, 2018).

16 Regarding food in residential homes for the disabled, Sunaura Taylor confirms that inmates in such institutions may not have much autonomy over what they eat (*Beasts of Burden*, 10). For more on this, see Catrin Smith, "Punishment and Pleasure: Women, Food and the Imprisoned Body," *The Sociological Review* 50, no. 2 (2002): 197–214; Amy Smoyer, "Making Fatty Girl Cakes: Food and Resistance in a Women's Prison," *The Prison Journal* 96, no. 2 (2015): 191–209; Rebecca Godderis, "Food for Thought: An Analysis of Power and Identity in Prison Food Narratives," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 50 (2006): 61–75; Kaitlyn de Graaf and Jennifer M. Kilty, "You Are What You Eat: Exploring the Relationship Between Women, Food and Incarceration," *Punishment & Society* 18, no. 1 (2016): 27–46; and Thomas Ugelvik, "The Hidden Food: Mealtime Resistance and Identity Work in a Norwegian Prison," *Punishment & Society* 13, 1 (2011): 47–63.

17 Howard Lyman and Glen Merzer, *Mad Cowboy: Plain Truth from the Cattle Rancher Who Won't Eat Meat* (Touchstone, 2001), 12.

18 Ruth L. Ozeki, *My Year of Meats* (Canongate, 2013), 258.

19 Schwartz, *How the Cows Turned Mad*, 148.
20 Schwartz, *How the Cows Turned Mad*, 145.
21 Nicole Shukin, *Animal Capital Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times* (University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 228.
22 Schwartz, *How the Cows Turned Mad,* 145.
23 Kafai, "The Mad Border Body"; Lindsay Eales et al., "Stay Mad Mural," *Mad Home*, May 2019, madhomeproject.weebly.com/.
24 Schwartz, *How the Cows Turned Mad*, 156.
25 Shukin, *Animal*, 282.
26 Robert McRuer, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York University Press, 2006), 44.
27 Shukin, *Animal*, 229.
28 Catherine Simpson, "Australian Eco-Horror and Gaia's Revenge: Animals, Eco-Nationalism and the 'New Nature'," *Studies in Australasian Cinema* 4, no. 1 (2010): 48.
29 Ibid.
30 Simpson, "Australian Eco-Horror and Gaia's Revenge," 43.
31 Simpson, "Australian Eco-Horror and Gaia's Revenge," 45.
32 Sabrina Strings, *Fearing the Black Body: The Racial Origins of Fat Phobia* (New York University Press, 2019), 121.
33 Strings, *Fearing the Black Body*, 671.
34 Strings, *Fearing the Black Body*, 210.
35 Ibid.
36 Strings, *Fearing the Black Body*, 212.
37 Swartz, *How the Cows Turned Mad*, 161–62.

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Part IV

Melancholy, madness, and misfits

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Chapter 11

Vegan madness

Han Kang's *The Vegetarian*

Chloë Taylor

In a previous article, "Abnormal Appetites: Foucault, Atwood, and the Normalization of an Animal-Based Diet," I analyzed the manner in which female ethical veganism is described as a slippery slope into anorexia, (hetero)sexual dysfunction, and insanity in a number of fictional works by Canadian author Margaret Atwood.[1] In that essay I related Atwood's pathologizing descriptions of female veganism to the history of psychiatrists medicalizing vegetarianism, veganism, and the love and defense of animals more generally.[2] I argued that Atwood's novels were a popular reflection and reinforcement of the history of psychiatry pathologizing people who violate carnist alimentary norms. In this chapter, I return to the topic of literary representations of female veganism as madness, this time focusing on Korean author Han Kang's novel, *The Vegetarian* (2007). Like the characters in Atwood's *The Edible Woman* (1969) and *Surfacing* (1972), the female protagonist in Han's novel suddenly begins to empathize with animals, after which she cannot eat them. This position results not only in social ostracization but also in a quick descent into eating disorder, sexual dysfunction, and madness. While in Atwood's novels the female protagonists recover their sanity and normative heterosexual relations by eating meat, in Han's far darker novel, the protagonist persists in her veganism, ultimately dividing her family, destroying two marriages, and dying of self-starvation in a psychiatric hospital. As in Atwood's fiction, in Han's novel we see illustrated Foucault's argument that abnormalcy and mental illness are equated in contemporary societies; indeed, this conflation is so deeply entrenched that we have generally forgotten that it is a recent understanding of mental illness, while illness is itself a contingent and novel paradigm for understanding madness.[3]

While Atwood clearly advocates for sanity-as-social-conformity—writing happy ending after happy ending in which women return to carnist and heterosexual normalcy—what is different and far queerer about Han's novel is that *The Vegetarian* offers no such closure. On the contrary, the novel leads us to question what is mad, how people become mad, and whether the mad do not have things right. Beyond this, as Porochista Khakpour has observed, *The Vegetarian* is “magnificently death-affirming” and raises—but does not answer—the maddest question of all—why should we continue to live? As Khakpour writes:

> As Yeong-hye fades further and further from the living, our author, like a true god, lets us struggle with the question of whether we should root for our hero to survive or to die. With that question comes another, the ultimate question we never quite want to contemplate. “Why, is it such a bad thing to die?” Yeong-hye asks at the end of one section. The next section simply echoes back: “Why, is it such a bad thing to die?”[4]

“Zigzagging,” in Khakpour’s words, “between domestic thriller, transformation parable and arborphiliac meditation,” *The Vegetarian* was the first of Han’s novels to be translated into English and was awarded the prestigious Man Booker Prize in 2016.[5] The celebration of this work arguably indicates not only its undeniable beauty but also an enthusiasm for orientalist readings of the novel’s plot. In particular, the book has widely been received by Western audiences as a condemnation of Korean patriarchy and East Asian social conformity—an interpretation that Han has herself rejected, insisting that her book speaks to universal themes such as the impossibility of innocence in a relentlessly violent world.[6] As I shall discuss in this chapter, *The Vegetarian* can moreover be seen to reinforce pre-existing and persistent associations between veganism, femininity, sexual dysfunction, and insanity in the social imaginary—messages that are gratifying to many readers in a carnist world. Rather than combatting these cultural associations through an insistence on the normalcy and rationality of veganism, however, in this chapter I read Han’s novel through mad studies to advocate for a mad-vegan-queer-crip feminist refusal of animal-based diets.

The Vegetarian

The protagonist of *The Vegetarian*, Kim Yeong-hye, is described as having been an exceedingly normal woman. Indeed, it is precisely because of her normality that her husband has married her. Yeong-hye’s matter-of-factness about killing animals is noted as the primary example of her normalcy, and she is described cooking a wide array of meat dishes for her husband. As he describes,

> Tongs in one hand and a large pair of scissors in the other, she’d flipped rib meat in a sizzling pan whilst snipping it into bite-sized pieces, her movements deft and practised. Her fragrant, caramelised deep-fried belly pork was achieved by marinating the meat in minced ginger and glutinous starch syrup. Her signature dish had been wafer-thin slices of beef seasoned with black pepper and sesame oil.[7]

Yeong-hye’s husband observes that his wife’s entire family is adept at carnist cuisine. As he tells us:

> I couldn’t think of her family without also recalling the smell of sizzling meat. . . . All of them . . . enjoyed . . . beef tartar. I’d seen my mother-in-law

> gut a live fish, and my wife and her sister were both perfectly competent when it came to hacking a chicken into pieces with a butcher's cleaver. I'd always liked my wife's earthy vitality, the way she would catch cockroaches by smacking them with the palm of her hand. She really had been the most ordinary woman in the world.[8]

Indeed, the only predictor of what her husband will see as Yeong-hye's eventual insanity is a mild gender deviance, manifested in her refusal to wear a bra. Although her husband frequently exhorts her to put a bra on before leaving the house, Yeong-hye simply unfastens it once she is out the door, and her nipples are described showing through her thin blouses like "acorns."[9] Because she otherwise conforms to social expectations, however, it comes as a shock to Yeong-hye's husband and family when she becomes vegan overnight as a result of a nightmare of bloodshed. Yeong-hye awakens from this gruesome dream and goes into the kitchen to throw all the meat in the house into the garbage and thereafter will neither eat animal products nor prepare them for her husband.

Yeong-hye's sudden veganism is accompanied by numerous indicators of unwellness: she suffers from insomnia, and when she does sleep, she continues to have nightmares; she becomes anorexic and loses a dramatic amount of weight; she withdraws into silence and seems impervious to the social discomfort she causes; her aversion to wearing a bra intensifies; and she will no longer have sex with her husband because she finds he excretes the smell of meat from his pores. Yeong-hye's husband responds to this sexual refusal by raping her. The situation continues to escalate when Yeong-hye accompanies her husband to an important business dinner conspicuously bra-less and refuses to eat the meat-based meal or to speak more than a few words over the course of the evening. Shortly thereafter, at a meal with her family, Yeong-hye refuses to eat meat when both her mother and father command her to do so, and she slashes her wrist with a fruit knife after her father strikes her and attempts to force-feed her. This suicide attempt results in Yeong-hye's first confinement in a psychiatric hospital and in her husband divorcing her. Once released from hospital and single, Yeong-hye enters into an affair with her brother-in-law, but only because he ascertains that she wants to be a plant and paints her and his own bodies with flowers. This arboreal adultery ends Yeong-hye's sister's marriage.

Han's description of Yeong-hye's overnight conversion to veganism has been widely compared to Kafka's "Metamorphosis," in which the protagonist—another perfectly ordinary individual—wakes up one morning to discover that he is a giant insect. As Khakpour describes Han Kang's plot: "When Yeong-hye awoke one morning from troubled dreams, she found herself changed into a monstrous. . . . vegetarian. . . . Ultimately, though, how could we not go back to Kafka?" As Khakpour goes on to observe,

> More than "The Metamorphosis," Kafka's journals and "A Hunger Artist" haunt this text. And Kafka is perhaps the most famous vegetarian in literary

> history; he apparently once declared to a fish in an aquarium, "Now at last I can look at you in peace; I don't eat you anymore".[10]

The book's English publishers, Random House, also allude to Kafka in promoting the novel, describing *The Vegetarian* as "a darkly allegorical, Kafka-esque tale of power, obsession, and one woman's struggle to break free from the violence both without and within her."[11] According to Han herself, however, her literary inspiration for woman-become-plant was not a European author but Korean modernist poet Yi Sang. As Jiayang Fan writes in her review of *The Vegetarian*, "Yi described catatonic withdrawal as a symptom of oppression. 'I believe that humans should be plants,' he wrote."[12] While the metamorphosis in Kafka's tale is absurd and non-agential, Yeong-hye's conversion to veganism is indeed closer to Yi's advocating for catatonia; Yeong-hye demonstrates enormous tenacity in becoming-plant, and her botanophilia is clearly linked to a will to cease being implicated in violence.

Han's novel is narrated first by Yeong-hye's husband, and then by her brother-in-law, and finally by her sister. We thus never hear Yeong-hye's own perspective on her story, other than in a few italicized passages in which she describes surreal and bloody dreams. Described from the outside, however, Yeong-hye's veganism is consistently taken as a refusal of her humanity—and, ultimately, of her animality as well. Yeong-hye's brother-in-law thinks, "what she had renounced was the very life that her body represented."[13] Indeed, Yeong-hye's affair with her brother-in-law is apparently due to a shared arousal for animals becoming plants.

Yeong-hye's brother-in-law had never been attracted to his wife's sister until he became aware that she had a Mongolian mark on her buttock; as he describes it, "It called to mind something ancient, something pre-evolutionary, or else perhaps a mark of photosynthesis, and he realized to his surprise that there was nothing at all sexual about it; it was more vegetal than sexual."[14] The birthmark is repeatedly compared to a blue petal. Slightly later, he describes her as "some kind of mutant animal that had evolved to be able to photosynthesize."[15] As a result, Yeong-hye's brother-in-law becomes obsessed with a fantasy of covering her body and his own in painted flowers and of their plant-bodies intertwining like vines. Fortunately for him, while Yeong-hye is not attracted to men at this point in her life, she seems extremely aroused by the idea of plant sex—of a penis painted like a pistil penetrating the flowers that are blooming from her crotch.

Re-institutionalized when her sister discovers this floral affair, Yeong-hye's identification with plants only grows and explains her abnormal behaviors. Beyond refusing to wear a bra, Yeong-hye now has a habit of baring her breasts to the sun, oblivious to the attention this causes, believing that her body needs air and sunlight to photosynthesize. She reflects that she likes her breasts, since, unlike other parts of her body, they are gentle and innocent, incapable of harming anyone.[16] Yeong-hye takes to doing handstands in the hospital, claiming that trees also stand upside down, with their roots being arms that reach into the earth. Following an escape from the hospital in which she spent hours in the forest, Yeong-hye explains her refusal to eat by saying she has become a tree and that all she needs now is sun and water. Numerous and violent attempts are made to force-feed

Yeong-hye, but they fail due to her remarkable resistance, and, as the novel ends, she has dwindled to sixty-six pounds and we are led to believe that she will die.[17]

In the final pages of the book, Yeong-hye's sister, In-hye, realizes that the reason she had her sister institutionalized, and left her in the hospital at a point when doctors thought she could be released, was that she

> had been unable to forgive her for soaring over a boundary she herself could never bring herself to cross, unable to forgive that magnificent irresponsibility that had enabled Yeong-hye to shuck off social constraints and leave her behind, still a prisoner. And before Yeong-hye had broken those bars, she'd never even known they were there.[18]

After frequent visits to the psychiatric hospital to visit her sister, In-hye also begins to question what is "normal." As she observes, "after all these visits to the hospital, sometimes it's the tranquil streets filled with so-called 'normal' people that end up seeming strange."[19] Although initially In-hye does not question that her sister is ill or that hospitalization is the best thing for her, after witnessing her sister being force fed, and wandering the hospital halls observing other psychiatric inmates, she thinks, "They're trapped here" and realizes that her inability to embrace one of the patients "is bound up with the guilt she feels over having had Yeong-hye incarcerated here."[20]

As for Yeong-hye, although it is the phytomorphic affair that results in her final institutionalization, it is only in the period of this liaison—when she has been freed from her unhappy marriage and from spousal rape, when she had been rid of her physically abusive father and emotionally abusive mother, and when she was living alone and able to eat what she wanted—that Yeong-hye had seemed somewhat happy. Although she still had bad dreams, she was sleeping, eating plant-based foods, had put weight back on, was looking for work, and was talking, opening up to her brother-in-law, and enjoying an erotic life—even if an unconventional one. Although Han's narrative is not didactic in the way of Charlotte Perkin Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," the novel at least raises the question of whether it is familial oppression and psychiatrization that led to Yeong-hye's madness, degeneration, and death. What would Yeong-hye's life have been like had she not been disciplined and assaulted for her abnormalcy? How might her story have unfolded if she had been allowed to live as she wanted, flouting gender, sexual, and alimentary norms? Would Yeong-hye even have been mad in a less carnist and patriarchal society, and if she had been, could she not have led a free and beautifully mad life?

Mad readings

Han states of her character:

> Yeong-hye is such a determined person that she believes herself to no longer belong to the human race. She feels and wants to get literally uprooted from human beings. In this way she believes she is saving herself, but ironically

> she is actually approaching death. *Of course, in the real world she is mad*, but to her it is something thoroughly sane. She is trying to root herself into this extreme and bizarre sanity by uprooting herself from the surface of this world.[21]

"In the real world," humans are heterotrophs who are incapable of carbon fixation. They cannot live from light and water alone, and they survive only by consuming other complex organisms. Much as we might like to, we cannot be plants, and if we try to be plants, we die. Humans can, however, flourish on plant-based diets, and Yeong-hye was happily and healthily eating a plant-based diet in the second part of the novel. It appears to have been in response to the misery of her married life that Yeong-hye lost her appetite and began losing weight, while it was only in response to her incarceration in a psychiatric hospital that she refused food altogether, and not just animal foods. On one mad studies reading of the novel, therefore, we might argue that Yeong-hye's illness is iatrogenic[22]—it is the traumas of psychiatrization itself that pushed her beyond an enthusiasm for plant foods and plant sex, toward a more radical plant-identification. It is incarceration that makes Yeong-hye snap, after which she is not merely eccentric but mad and death-bound. By punishing Yeong-hye for her enactment of sexual fantasies involving flora, psychiatry pushes Yeong-hye to fully embrace phytomorphism, ushering in madness and death. Psychiatry, on this reading, is an agent of oppression and, through its oppressive tactics, produces the very illnesses that it purports to cure or contain.[23]

A second mad studies reading, however, would be to reject the view that Yeong-hye was *ever* mad. While living outside the hospital, we might say that she was simply and very reasonably refusing to eat animals, as do many ethically aware individuals, whereas inside the hospital, she chose to die rather than to submit to the violence of incarceration and forced feedings. Han's *The Vegetarian* has been analyzed by critics in relation to her earlier novels, most notably *Human Acts*, which describe the unfathomable horror of the imperialist violence humans wreak upon one another. *The Vegetarian* is different from Han's previous works in that it brings gender and species oppression into focus, and yet it remains of a piece with these works in its relentless focus on the brutality of existence, useless suffering, and the seemingly endless bloodshed our species causes. What is clear from all her writings is that Han is keenly cognizant of what we might deem the absurdity and evil of our species, which raises the question of why we should persist in living. Albert Camus has described the question of suicide as the most important and primordial of all philosophical questions.[24] Camus' sanity has not been questioned perhaps only because he answered the question in the negative, insisting that we must live to create meaning out of the absurdity of existence. Due to what critical suicidologist Ian Marsh has described as the compulsory ontology of pathology within the psychiatric model, however, anyone who answers the question of suicide affirmatively is certain to be deemed insane.[25] A mad studies approach challenges this compulsory ontology of suicide as illness. On such a reading, driven to justifiable despair by the violence of society and psychiatry, Yeong-hye was not so much mad as she was, reasonably, responding "no" to her own question, "is it such a bad thing to die?"

Exemplifying this second Mad Studies reading of Han's text, in her feminist and anti-speciesist essay on *The Vegetarian*, "Erupt the Silence," Hayley Singer urges that we not read Han's protagonist as mad, and simultaneously insists that it is a society that oppresses both women and animals that is "irrational," "hysterical," and "pathological."[26] Although Singer acknowledges that Yeong-hye's "anti-carnist narrative is *twisted* into a discourse of madness: schizophrenia, catatonia, hysteria," she insists on unwinding this reading and demonstrating that Yeong-hye's silence and refusal in *The Vegetarian* are in fact "an act of vegan disobedience [and] not a lapse into madness."[27] Here, like many mad studies scholars, Singer emphasizes the agency of psychiatrized subjects and their active resistance to psychiatry.[28] Indeed, according to Singer, Yeong-hye's "silence speaks the madness of not taking the lives and deaths of animals born into industrial agriculture seriously."[29] As such, for Singer, it is a carnist society that is mad and deems Yeong-hye mad precisely because she is sane. Unfortunately, while Singer attempts to de-medicalize Yeong-hye, she simultaneously deploys saneist and gendered labels to condemn meat-eating, describing "two of carnism's most significant pathological symptoms" as its own delusional conviction of "rationality" and its "hysterical focus on meat."[30] Clearly, for Singer, madness and illness remain stigmatized, and thus a vegan and feminist agenda entails demonstrating not only the sanity and wellness of figures such as Yeong-hye but the madness and sickness of meat-eating.

A third mad studies approach to the novel, and the one that I would like to pursue, would differ from Singer's not only by resisting this stigmatization of madness but also by questioning what madness is—or whether there is any objective way of knowing madness at all. Reflecting this social constructivist view of psychiatry that simultaneously does not disavow madness, in their introduction to *Mad Matters*, Robert Menzies, Brenda LeFrançois, and Geoffrey Reaume write that

> Mad Studies . . . incorporates all that is critical of psychiatry from a radical socially progressive foundation in which the medical model is dispensed with as biologically reductionist whilst alternative forms of helping people experiencing mental anguish are based on humanitarian, holistic perspectives where people are not reduced to symptoms but understood within the social and economic context of the society in which they live. As such, antipsychiatry is included within Mad Studies as contributing much to our understanding of the nature of psychiatric thought and practice by helping to reveal the inner workings of a profession that has dominated interpretations of madness but which, over the past 50 years, has had critics from within and without assail its presumptions, criticisms which continue today.[31]

As Menzies, LeFrançois, and Reaume make clear, psychiatric interpretations of madness may currently be dominant, but they are neither inevitable nor uncontested. This seems to be Han's own position, for not only does she interrogate the ontology of madness in her interview about the novel but she has her character In-hye do so as well. As Han notes, from Yeong-hye's own point of view, her radical refusal to do harm is "thoroughly" and "extremely" albeit "bizarrely" sane; and, as In-hye observes, after spending time in a psychiatric hospital, a shift in perspective takes place, and it is "normal" people who come to seem "strange."

Although there is no objective way of determining what madness is, madness, from a mad studies perspective, can be understood as a social construct, one that in today's world is primarily constituted through the discourses and practices of psychiatrists. Thus, one is mad because psychiatrists or a psychiatric society consistently say one is mad, and because one is consistently treated as mad. As Foucault's *History of Madness* reminds us, however, discourses of madness predate psychiatry by millennia, and so psychiatry's particular ways of constructing madness are but some among others, and arguably not even the most compelling. As Foucault demonstrates in *The History of Sexuality*, moreover, the labels of the psychiatric sciences can be reclaimed and redeployed through "reverse discourses"[32]; this is exactly what has been done by Mad people, queers, and crips with respect to the discourses and practices that pathologize them and what I would propose we do for Yeong-hye.

In this sense, Yeong-hye does indeed become mad at some point in the novel, but a mad studies approach insists that there is nothing essential or wrong about this way of being—and indeed, there are positive insights, wisdom, valued experiences, and political resistances that may derive from states of madness. In Yeong-hye's case, as in Friedrich Nietzsche's, it is in states of delirium that one is more attuned to interspecies injustice than in the sanity of the status quo, whether that be eating animals or beating exhausted horses. Much like Yeong-hye's madness is described as having a sudden onset, Nietzsche is said to have become unhinged when he witnessed a collapsed horse being beaten by a carriage driver. In response to this scene, Nietzsche began yelling at the driver, getting in the way of the whip by hugging the horse's neck, whispering to the horse, and weeping. He was arrested by the police and placed in a sanatorium for this disturbance of the peace—a peace that was never a peace for horses. From this moment onward, although he lived for another eleven years, Nietzsche stopped speaking.

If it is mad to refuse to eat meat, to intervene in the whipping of a horse, to scream and to weep over the violence that humans inflict on animals, to hug and to talk to animals but refuse to speak to humans, or to want to be a plant if violence is what being an animal means, then I am with the mad. Indeed, mad studies scholar Lindsay Eales urges us to "Stay Mad."[33] Certainly being and staying mad comes with high risks in a psychiatric society, and there are understandably situations in which psychiatrized subjects conform to social norms to escape the violence of psychiatrization. Nonetheless, as Menzies, LeFrançois, and Reaume write, from a mad studies perspective, we can envision "the radical reclaiming of psychic spaces of resistance against the psychiatric domination of Mad people."[34] The reclaiming of psychic spaces and the creation of alternate, accepting, and nourishing places for madness is work that Eales and her collaborators have accomplished in projects such as Madhome—not a "madhouse" in which the mentally ill are locked away from society, as happened to Yeong-hye, but a true home made for and by mad people.[35] Through the creation of spaces such as Madhome, mad studies "tap[s] into the desire for 'an alternative community'"[36] and "prizes the decades-long resistance" to those "who make a living labelling and medicating that which they cannot imagine or tolerate."[37]

In the previous chapter, Hallie Abelman argues that a "Mad and queer Crip lens . . . opens doors to fantasies of Mad, decolonial, and anti-carnist resistance." As Abelman suggests, mad studies enables us to dream of other worlds and to imagine multi-species rebellions. In particular, I find myself wanting to imagine an alternate ending to *The Vegetarian*, one in which, having discovered the bars that had kept both herself and her sister prisoners all their lives, In-hye liberates her sister from the madhouse where she has had her incarcerated and helps her to create a Madhome instead. What would this Madhome look like? I imagine walls painted with flora, a kitchen full of fruits and vegetables, a garden for doing handstands among trees, and a space where both sisters would be free from the saneist, ableist, naturist, and sexist norms that had previously confined them. Maybe in this Madhome Yeong-hye would still choose to starve herself, or perhaps she would leave the Madhome to die in the forest with her fellow trees. If so, her death would at least occur with respect for her autonomy and without attempts to force-feed her. More generally, however, I want to imagine what a mad animal politics would look like, particularly in these catastrophic times. As Kelly Struthers Montford puts it, "Maybe we need to be mad in a time of scientific rationalism that has gotten us to the impending 'chaos' of the Anthropocene premised on capitalist resource extraction of land and animals that pivots on rational man's entitlement to such."[38]

Conclusion

Although mad studies is diverse and takes diverse stances on the ontology of madness, in this chapter I have argued for a mad studies approach to the psychiatrization of veganism that does not so much insist on the sanity of veganism, or of characters such as Yeong-hye, as it accepts that in an alimentarily normalizing and speciesist society, being vegan and loving animals enough to not eat them may be a mad, queer, crip, or abnormal identity. This mad studies approach stresses that even if we grant that to be vegan is a bit mad, this is not a fundamental, ahistorical, or scientifically objective category but is through and through social, sociogenic, political, and contingent.

Whether we think that Yeong-hye was mad before she was hospitalized, that it was hospitalization that made her mad, that she was never mad, or that she was only mad according to a construct of the psychiatric sciences, from a mad studies perspective, we would always be critical of the ways that her autonomy was repeatedly violated on the basis of this diagnosis and of the pivotal role that these violations played in her death. This, even though the violence done to Yeong-hye would be described by medicinal practitioners as "treatment" and "care." While some mad individuals may want access to—and client control over—medical treatments, not all do. Many mad individuals wish to eschew any form of medical treatment or efforts at normalization. For mad studies scholars and mad activists, madness—like those other constructs, disability, and neurodiversity—simply refers to other, often more creative, more insightful, and more interesting way of existing in the world.

Notes

1 See Chloë Taylor, "Abnormal Appetites: Foucault, Atwood, and the Normalization of an Animal-Based Diet," *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* 10, no. 4 (2012): 130–48.
2 This is a topic that Kelly Struthers Montford and I also explore in Chapter 7 of this volume.
3 Michel Foucault, *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France 1974–1975* (New York: Picador, 2003).
4 Porochista Khakpour, "'The Vegetarian,' by Han Kang," *The New York Times*, February 2, 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/02/07/books/review/the-vegetarian-by-han-kang.html.
5 Khakpour, "'The Vegetarian'."
6 See Bethany Patrick's interview with Han Kang, "Han Kang on Violence, Beauty, and the Impossibility of Innocence," *Literary Hub*, February 12, 2016, https://lithub.com/han-kang-on-violence-beauty-and-the-impossibility-of-innocence/.
7 Han Kang, *The Vegetarian*, trans. Deborah Smith (London: Random House, 2007), 14.
8 Kang, *Vegetarian*, 18.
9 Kang, *Vegetarian*, 25.
10 Khakpour, "'The Vegetarian'."
11 Random House Website, www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/250333/the-vegetarian-by-han-kang/9781101906118/.
12 Jiayang Fan, "Buried Words: Han Kang and the Complexity of Translation," *The New Yorker*, January 15, 2018, www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/01/15/han-kang-and-the-complexity-of-translation.
13 Kang, *Vegetarian*, 85.
14 Kang, *Vegetarian*, 83.
15 Kang, *Vegetarian*, 91.
16 Kang, *Vegetarian*, 140.
17 In her interview with Bethany Patrick, "On Violence," Han Kang states that she "didn't want to describe the death of Yeong-hye"—but the suggestion is that she does die.
18 Kang, *Vegetarian*, 143.
19 Kang, *Vegetarian*, 142.
20 Kang, *Vegetarian*, 178.
21 Patrick, "On Violence," emphasis added.
22 See Ivan Illich, *Medical Nemesis: The Expropriation of Health* (New York: Pantheon, 1982 [1975]) where he refers to medicine as the "disabling professions."
23 Michel Foucault's *History of Madness* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006) and later works, such as *Psychiatric Power* (New York: Picador, 2006), and *Abnormal* chart some of the many oppressive and often physically violent tactics of psychiatry.

The *History of Madness* and volume 1 of Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage, 1978) moreover each argue that mental illnesses, including paraphilias, are social constructs produced through the discourses and practices of medicine, and of the psy sciences in particular. As Foucault observes, medicalization has a tendency of taking an abnormal practice and turning it into the very being or identity of medicalized subjects, as in his example of "The Perverse Implantation," in *The History of Sexuality*. Similar arguments have been made by advocates of what is called "labelling theory," wherein labeling itself produces the identities and behaviors so-labeled. A related argument is also made by David Rosenhan in "On Being Sane in Insane Places," which describes what is known as the Rosenhan Experiment. In this experiment, sane people were introduced into insane asylums and were diagnosed as biopolar or schizophrenic; psychiatric staff were not able to distinguish between genuine patients and pseudo-patients, even when told of the experiment. See David Rosenhan, "On Being Sane in Insane Places," *Science* 179 (1973): 250–58.

24 Albert Camus, *The myth of Sisyphus, and Other Essays* (London: H. Hamilton, 1965).

25 Ian Marsh, *Suicide: Foucault, History, and Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

26 Hayley Singer, "Erupt the Silence," 65.

27 Ibid.

28 Robert Menzies, Brenda A. LeFrançois, and Geoffrey Reaume write of "the oppression and agency of Mad subjects, and the battle against psychiatry and psychiatric discourse." See "Introducing Mad Studies," in *Mad Matters: A Critical Reader in Canadian Mad Studies*, eds. Brenda A. LeFrançois, Robert Menzies, and Geoffrey Reaume (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 2013), 1.

29 Singer, "Erupt," 65.

30 Ibid.

31 Menzies, et al., "Introducing Mad Studies," 2.

32 Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 101.

33 Lindsay Eales, et al. "Stay Mad Mural," *Mad Home*, May 2019, madhomeproject.weebly.com/.

34 Menzies, et al., "Introducing Mad Studies," 2.

35 Eales, et al., "Stay Mad Mural."

36 Menzies, et al., "Introducing Mad Studies," 2.

37 Ibid.

38 Personal correspondence.

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Chapter 12

"There, there"

Disability, animality, and the allegory of *Elizabeth Costello*

A. Marie Houser

Introduction

J. M. Coetzee's novel *Elizabeth Costello* (2003) begins with the suggestion of a bridge. The narrator announces, "There is first of all the problem of the opening, namely, how to get us from where we are, which is, as yet, nowhere, to the far bank."[1] This "bridging problem" refers to travel, specifically Elizabeth Costello's arrival from Australia to the United States, where the eponymous novelist will deliver a lecture at her son's college—the first in a succession of lectures Costello gives or attends.[2] It also refers to the "special problems" of a writer constructing a fictional narrative.[3] These include how to move the narrative along, beginning to end, and how to span the distance between the discursive and material worlds when, as Costello argues in this first lecture, "the word-mirror" of realism is "broken."[4] The bridge also suggests allegory, the reach from a literal meaning to one more recalcitrant. Further, the "us" of the opening sentence implies the reader, without whom these issues would not have saliency. The reader also constitutes "the far bank," to which the narrative extends.[5]

What the bridge appears to suggest least of all, at least in critical exegesis, is the horizontality of an exhausted body, of a body exhausted by age-born weariness, by disability, or by sex. Yet Costello arrives in the States appearing "frail," and from the hotel room of his philandering the next evening, John imagines his mother in bed, knees drawn up, back bared, a St. Sebastian brought down by knitting needles rather than arrows, and "impaled," not dead.[6] Throughout the novel, Costello is consistently "disoriented," "unwell," and "exhausted," finally fainting in a late chapter.[7] But if Costello's exhaustion fails to register for readers, *Slow Man* brings it starkly forward. Now a deuteragonist, Costello tells protagonist Paul Rayment that tiredness has become "like a dye that has begun to seep into everything I do, everything I say."[8]

This transuding exhaustion is the mark of the "exceptional body"—the disabled body—that, as Rosemarie Garland-Thomson notes, "seems to compel explanation, inspire representation, and incite regulation."[9] Following Garland-Thomson, Ato Quayson argues that, in fiction, "the disabled are represented as always having an ethical dimension that cannot be easily subsumed under the aesthetic structure."[10]

Yet scholarship largely assumes the ethically charged material of *Elizabeth Costello* to be limited to our epistemic and material relations with nonhuman animals. When it examines the imbrications and interrelations of animal oppression and oppression of human social others, its interest is racial or gender oppression, rarely including disability or gerontology perspectives.[11] But as Sunaura Taylor argues in her innovative *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation*, "we must begin to examine the systems that degrade and devalue both animals and disabled people—systems which are built upon, among other things, ableist paradigms."[12] In the literary milieu, we may sense these systems through the tensions they produce in or against texts, but without a disability perspective, we may fail to understand them.

A focus on Costello's ethical comportment toward non-human animals reflects the publication history of *Elizabeth Costello*, which began life as the novella *The Lives of Animals* (1999). The novella depicts Costello's delivery of two animal-themed lectures, "The Philosophers and the Animals" and "The Poets and the Animals," as well as their receptions afterward. Broadly, Costello argues that philosophy, theology, and science are threaded through with an anthropocentrism that denies non-human animal subjectivity, a conceptual violence that authorizes material violence against other animals. The language of poetry, Costello seems to argue, is corrective. Through its mysterious "ming[ling] [of] breath and sense," poetry may bring to life the "embodied soul" of the non-human animal.[13] Its conjuring may also be generative of "the sympathetic imagination," since a poem "ask[s] us to imagine our way into that way of moving, to inhabit that body."[14] In speaking for Sultan, the real-life chimpanzee, whom the psychologist Wolfgang Köhler captured for experiments, Costello herself may seem to inhabit Sultan, and through him, Kafka's Red Peter, the monologist of "A Report to an Academy." Costello believes Red Peter to have been inspired by Sultan. Our understanding of Costello deepens in *Elizabeth Costello*, which gathers the chapters from *The Lives of Animals* together with six new chapters.

Though key to the novel's ethos, Costello's didacticism has the effect of a signal-flare, drawing all focus to it. But the novel also pivots toward human otherness, thematizing the non-normativity of its central figure, her exceptional bodiliness. Elizabeth Costello, the novelist who argues that our representations conceptually obliterate the lives of non-human animals, falls outside her interlocutors' normative frameworks and so goes misunderstood, misrepresented, or entirely unheard.

Broadly, my argument is that *Elizabeth Costello* associates the appropriative explanations, representations, and regulations incited by the human exceptional body with those that surround non-human animals. In this way, the narrative of Elizabeth Costello allegorizes the social and conceptual processes that "downgrade" non-human animal life "from the somatic to the corporeal," or from life acknowledged to be full of being to life akin to inanimate materiality.[15]

Costello herself directs us to this association. Her epistemological and rhetorical comportment, as well as her specific rhetoric, draws her into proximity with the novel's animal figures, Red Peter and Sultan. In turn, her exhaustion, willed for the way it opens to non-habituated thought and perception, inflects her ways of knowing and speaking. The contours of Costello's social and rhetorical relation to these figures offer a relief map that, through exaggerations, identifications, chiasms, and contrasts, places us in the vicinity of other animals—in the vicinity, but not exactly there. As Philip Armstrong notes, "Humans can only represent animals' experience through the mediation of cultural encoding, which inevitably involves reshaping according to our own intentions, attitudes and preconceptions."[16]

Such reshaping attends critical reception of *Elizabeth Costello* when its namesake's exceptional bodiliness—as exhaustion, as sickness—goes largely unremarked. In "The Difficulty of Reality and the Difficulty of Philosophy," which opens the volume *Philosophy and Animal Life*, Cora Diamond writes:

> [I]f it is true that we generally remain unaware of the lives of other animals, it is also true that, as readers of this story, we may remain unaware, as her audience does, of the life of the speaking animal at its center.[17]

Yet, concerned with philosophy of mind and ordinary language, Diamond's otherwise brilliant essay does not consider Costello's singular bodily state, except to regard it as the receptor of the effects of mental events.

Costello's bodiliness appears in critical scholarship, when it appears, as that which *happens to* her. Disability's a dragooning in this frame, Costello's exhausted body "an obstinate force interfering with [her] projects" and that which threatens to "thwart [her] and turn into a cage . . . both stifling and open to attack."[18] More than a static repository of affects and states, "disability"—dynamic, shifting, resistant to categorization—shares the complexity of any mode of being. But the adaptivity that indexes the disabled body gives rise to plans and improvisations of doing-otherwise, making-and-solving, and other exigent forms of creativity. It also gives rise to moments of productive failing. As Jack Halberstam notes, "failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world."[19]

Johnson and McRuer place under the rubric of "cripistemology" a number of developments that counter the narrative of disability as invariably pitiable, fearful, and humiliating. These include Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's foundational argument that "a feminist disability theory presses us to ask what kind of knowledge might be produced through having a body marked by its own particularity."[20] Influenced by Halberstam's theorizations of failure, Johnson and McRuer argue:

> The decision to be capable—like the decision to be thin (girl, I could tell you stories)—is a winding road of self-deprivation. The decision to be unstable, incapable, unwilling, disabled (the sharpness of this "cannot") opens up a world of possibility.[13]

"Defective detective"

As demonstrated in his critical essay "Time, Tense, and Aspect in Kafka's 'The Burrow,'" Coetzee recognizes the epistemic possibilities for non-normative embodiment in fictional contexts. These possibilities become clear through Coetzee's comments on "The Burrow" and its confounding approach to narrative progression.

The story's monologist, an unnamed creature, impulsively engages in repetitive actions—burrow-building and burrow-patrolling—but reports those actions as one would a discrete, non-repeating event. As a result, the narrative "*now*" of the creature's speech comes to correspond with an "iterative, habitual present," creating a "bizarre" effect.[21] The creature attempts to work around the resulting discontinuity—and collapse of causality—by means of a "ruse," shifting from a linear relation of events to a "cyclic aspectual organization of time."[22] The failure of this ruse provokes a sense of "time . . . as continual crisis."[23] Coetzee remarks: "There is no way of getting from here to there."[24]

Coetzee's comment also refers to the anxiety provoked when, having ascended to the outside world, the creature realizes that crossing back through the moss-covered entrance may expose its existence to unknown enemies. Turning over a number of dread possibilities, the creature stalls. As the creature is the story's narrator as well as its protagonist, this inaction doubly pressurizes the creature, who must find a way both to move and to "keep the narrative moving."[25] But exhaustion ultimately provides a throughway: thinking sputters out, finally failing, and the worn-out creature shuffles home. Coetzee comments:

> Exhaustion and incapacity for thought are the sole means that overcome the arguments (or rationalizations) of the conscious mind . . . they also constitute the absurd "technical device" that solves the problem of getting stuck during the cycle.[26]

Hilary Thompson notes the association between the issue of "crossing to somewhere" in "The Burrow" and the construction of *Elizabeth Costello*, writing that the "bridging problem . . . is one Coetzee appears to have learned through his master's inverse, or his mentor Kafka's negative example."[27] Coetzee also seems to have ported into his novel an idea of exhaustion as catalyst for knowing beyond, and against, reason. Though he left behind the temporal confusion that strands the creature's narrative, Coetzee similarly appears to have carried over a sense of time and space as discontinuous. "We skip," the narrator says in the first chapter by way of marking gaps produced in the narrative by fast-forwards, and then we find Costello appearing somewhere else in each subsequent chapter: Pennsylvania, Christchurch to Cape Town, Massachusetts, Amsterdam, Zululand, an unmappable space "at the gate" characterized as Kafkian.[28]

Halfway through the novel, Costello appears in South Africa, where she will attend an address given by her sister, a nun, in acceptance of an honorary degree.

Patting around for the telephone in her hotel room, Costello finds she has become deeply disoriented by flight: "*Where am I?* she thinks. *Who am I?*"[29] Costello has lost the subjective orientation that spatial deixis—Coetzee's "here" and "there"—and personal deixis would mark out. This loss opens to the existential and social question of what it means to be "out of place," a question conditioned by the ill body's uneasiness with spaces and schedules meant for ableds. It also suggests the "double-sidedness" of allegory.[30]

Contextualizing Coetzee's work within a disability and gerontology frame, Alice Hall considers disability and aging in *Elizabeth Costello* to dial up a sense of Coetzee's texts as constructed. Hall writes, "the exposure of bodies in pain and the bare bones of the text itself constitute precisely [the] art of 'dis-illusion.'"[31] I would shift Hall's thesis by locating this art in the figure of Elizabeth Costello and, more specifically, by making the claim that Costello's way of being in the world is related to dis-illusion, something close to *ostranenie*.[32]

Generally translated as "defamiliarization," "alienation," or "estrangement," *ostranenie* is Russian Formalist Viktor Shklovsky's term to describe an approach to literature that "removes objects from the automatism of perception" so as to make the things of the world "unfamiliar."[33] Though Shklovsky's literary insurrection is in service of art itself, his exemplar of *ostranenie* is Tolstoy's "Kholstomer," a novella that "prick[s] . . . the conscience" by depicting the suffering and slaughter of a horse monologist, the novella's namesake.[34]

Costello the literary character ports into life, as a technique of living, something akin to the literary concept of estrangement: her way of being and doing is "making strange"—making the objects of our perception and thought strange to herself and to her audiences.[35] Though chronically exhausted, Costello chooses the jet-lag and disarray of a peripatetic existence. She is a novelist who nowhere writes fiction, a citizen whose travel induces a kind of statelessness, and a fatigued woman who rarely rests. The apparent disjunctures between who Costello is or has been, as conveyed through summary and exposition, and who she is or becomes through the novel's unfolding invites thought about the ways Costello's inhabitance of world, body, and being braid together.

The morning after her arrival in South Africa, Costello finds herself out of sorts just prior to a luncheon: nauseous, uninterested in food, wanting a lie-down. When she visits her sister's chapel, Costello finds a pile-up of crucifixes that a retired employee, Joseph, has been directed to carve—"too many . . . to sell."[36] Distressed at the importation of a gothic Christian sensibility into Africa, Costello asserts the moral value of beauty, as against this art, which inspires the thought, "*My God, I am going to die, I am going to be eaten by worms*."[37] The next day, Costello faints. Coming to on the floor of the chapel, she finds her "body is complaining" at her travels, which are "all too strange and too much."[38]

Later, in Amsterdam to present a paper on "the problem of evil," Costello will again oppose depictions of the brutalized body, denouncing Paul West's "terrible pages" on the murder of Hitler's would-be assassins.[39] The narrator describes Costello's arrival:

> From her hotel she wanders out along the canal, an old woman in a raincoat, still slightly light-headed, slightly wobbly on her feet, after the long flight from the Antipodes. Disoriented: is it simply because she has lost her bearings that she is thinking these black thoughts? If so, perhaps she ought to travel less. *Or more*.[40]

These thoughts owe to a certain clarity gained against torpid peace. To Costello, cruelty runs "under the skin of things," including the "rationally organized" streets of modern cities.[41] Yet by calling attention to everyday evil, Costello understands, she will only mark herself out as strange, especially if she "dare say" that the same evil manifests in "a sparrow knocked off a branch by a slingshot" as in "a city annihilated by air."[42]

The narrator conveys Costello's awareness of her difference: "How will Amsterdam react to . . . her present state?"[43] This state, marked previously in the narrative by spatial and existential disorientation, is estrangement. Conditioned by bodily vicissitude, estrangement forms for Costello an epistemological hinge, liberating perception from automatism and thought from its accommodations to the social order. Writing as a collective, dECOi Architects theorize how this is so: extremity stimulates "an intense 'sampling' of experience [as] the mind deploys its full cognitive capacity to account for the unfamiliar pattern."[44]

Altered perception makes Costello a "defective detective," able to sense a sulfurous evil that circulates through our cities and manifests not only in the execution of Hitler's would-be assassins but also in "what goes on in the slaughterhouses of the world."[45] Hoppenstand and Browne coined the term "defective detective" to describe "the defamed hero" of the pulp fiction genre, but speaking of its application to "disability rhetoric," Jay Dolmage writes, "the deliberate social abnormality, the strange habits, the sensory confusion, and even the extraordinary bodies of these detectives are what allow [defective detectives] to solve crimes."[46] Costello names as such the conceptual and material "crimes" we enact on the bodies and lives of other animals, asking after one of her animal-themed lectures, "What is so special about the form of consciousness we recognize that makes . . . killing an animal [go] unpunished?"[47]

By counting Costello as one of the genre's rum gumshoes, I do not mean to signal that her exceptionality makes her an always-capable "seer" of truth and, in so doing, place her in the pantheon of the "heroic[ally]" disabled.[48] Costello is a particular kind of knower: capable, capacious, yet at times productively "naïve." She is also occasionally confused, but more often—to those who expect "a certain spectrum of human thinking"—confusing (*EC*, 67).

Hinged open and hinged to

In "The Difficulty of Reality and the Difficulty of Philosophy," Diamond argues that knowing "what we do to animals," Costello suffers "woundedness or hauntedness, a terrible rawness of nerves."[49] Diamond's aim is not an exegesis of *Elizabeth Costello* but an adaptation of Stanley Cavell's concept of "deflection" to show how it reveals something about philosophy: that philosophy itself largely arises from deflection, the mind's bending away from suffering and toward philosophical argument, which would subdue through reasoning what would otherwise overwhelm.[50]

As a novelist who shirks reason for abandoning "what it is to be a living animal," Costello suffers, according to Diamond, the astonishing knowledge of how we treat other creatures.[51] Diamond evinces fellow-feeling with Costello, adjuring other philosophers to read literature "with a different sort of eye, attentive to different sorts of things, [which] may strike us as very strange."[52] In his responding essay, "Companionable Thinking," Stanley Cavell correctly reads Diamond as "respect[ing]" Costello, though he more specifically identifies Diamond as respecting Costello's "brush with *madness*" and, further, describes Costello as "crazed" by responses she receives to her statements.[53]

From there, the descriptors amplify, becoming "unhinged," "over the top," and "very nearly demented" in John McDowell's essay, which prompts a protest from Ian Hacking, who articulates "hopes" for a more "faithful" reading of Diamond's position.[54] Hacking's interpretation shows that Costello is not so much exposed *as* an "unhinged" person by her response to a merely "putative" reality.[55] Rather, she is exposed *to* a "reasonable" experience of reality *itself*.[56] She is *hinged open*.

Here and elsewhere in *Philosophy and Animal Life*, proximity to a feminized bodiliness seems to "induce a degree of gender/species anxiety."[57] But while Diamond avers that deflection "mak[es] our own bodies mere facts," she does not account for bodiliness and the ways bodiliness gives rise to, or shapes and entwines with, mental phenomena.[58] Instead, bodily phenomena are displaced onto a mental plane, and the body itself becomes a passive receptor to "the coming apart of thought and reality [which] belongs to flesh and blood."[59] In his introduction to *Philosophy and Animal Life*, Cary Wolfe argues that the essays' attention to Costello's presumed "rawness" serves to "not mak[e] it . . . just another example of some general principle."[60] But the essays do treat *the body* as a general principle, insofar as they suppose it to receive and absorb Costello's ostensible emotions. But the novel accents bodiliness, exceptional and singular, as that which gives rise to Costello's epistemic comportment and rhetorical approach.

Rhetorician George Kennedy argues that "we share [with other animals] a deep natural rhetoric," which he defines as "the mental or emotional energy that impels the speaker to expression," as well as "the energy level encoded in the message, and the energy received by the recipient who then uses mental energy in decoding and perhaps acting on the message."[61] As such, we can assume that rhetoric is relational, embodied, and affective. Its home is not disinterest. Indeed, Kennedy places the font of rhetoric in "an emotional reaction."[62] As "there are varying degrees of rhetoric in communications," we can infer that those communications we tend to think of as "rhetorical" are those with especial charge.[63] That charge may be mistaken for what Cavell calls "inordinan[ce]."[64]

Especially in this sense of amplitude and bodiliness, rhetoric appears to be, as Jay Dolmage argues, disabled at base. But as Dolmage further describes, exceptional bodies also make manifold the ways persuasion is aided by difference. Though Dolmage's examples derive from antiquity, Costello could be counted as one such body. Hers is a *disabled* rhetoric and a *disability* rhetoric, conditioned by exhaustion and manifesting a performative skewness that blurs the neat furrows of argument. It also demonstrates *mētis*.

Dolmage summarizes *mētis* as "cunning and adaptive intelligence" that may appear as "strange" and "unexpected."[65] Like Hephaestus's "sideways-facing feet," it may be "represented as backward and sideways movement."[66] Costello's arguments, particularly those in "The Philosopher and the Animals" lecture, likewise take her theme at angles: though the lecture has coherence, its passages hinged by figurative and rhetorical associations, its discursiveness may have the effect of "rambling," as Costello's daughter-in-law Norma complains it does.[67] The aesthetics of disability—sputtering, angling, or even "lop[ing]" toward a conclusion in a spillover of last energy—replenishes the exhausted genre of the lecture through the mutative and rhetorical power of the mistake, the incompletion, the failure.[68]

At the start of "The Philosophers and the Animals" lecture Costello foregrounds her age: "I say what I mean. I am an old woman. I do not have the time any longer to say things I do not mean."[69] Costello's "flatness of . . . delivery" lulls the audience, John thinks, which only leaves listeners unprepared for what's next: reference to animal death in "abattoirs, in trawlers, in laboratories, all over the world."[70] The vulnerability implied by Costello's enunciation of aging thus forms a rhetorical feint, a rope-a-dope in which dull speech suddenly shifts into nimble and impassioned argument. But the performative-agential dimension of Costello's rhetoric risks being missed; it risks dismissal as "madness," neediness, or muddlement. At the end of the lecture, Costello's daughter-in-law will whisper to John, "She just can't be allowed to get away with it! She's confused!."[71]

The lecture's main metaphors inspired the sense in *Philosophy and Animal Life* that Costello must surely be made raw, even demented, by our treatment of other animals. Costello declares that Red Peter is a "branded, marked, wounded animal presenting himself" and that she herself is "an animal exhibiting, yet not exhibiting, to a gathering of scholars, a wound."[72] Diamond takes this metaphor to reference anguish. In keeping with the scope of her essay, she does not consider it to mark out a chiastic relation between Costello and Red Peter, one in which Costello *follows* Red Peter. Yet Costello accents her statement as illocution; she issues the wound to herself by its utterance. As the wound surfaces in "every word" of her lecture, Costello in fact seems to issue to herself not the wound but its sufferance. Discussing Miguel Asturias's *Men of Maize*, Elaine Scarry describes this "technique of doubling—spatially separating the site of body damage and the locus of suffering"—as that which allows the "obscenity" of violence to be conveyed without occluding the one who endured it—in this case, the figure of Red Peter.[73]

Cavell does acknowledge that a portion of Costello's mien is performative, writing that she is "perhaps a little deliberately mad," an insight he does not follow through to its conclusion.[74] Instead, tracing Heideggerian thought back to the metaphor of the bridge and to the Holocaust analogy Costello employs, Cavell writes: "I rather imagine [Coetzee] . . . meant to be putting Heidegger's words to test in his novel, in effect to ask whether such a view is credible coming anywhere but from an old artist."[75] Contra Cavell, Roman Bartosch argues that the choice of Costello for a lecturer on non-human animal themes indeed constitutes "a subtle dig"—but one aimed at Deleuze and Guattari for their jab at "little house dogs and the people who love them . . . *especially* . . . *elderly women*."[76] (Of course, as we learn in the short story "The Old Woman and the Cats," Costello does not live in the company of dogs.)[77]

The irony and subtlety of this dig opens distance between audience and text. Costello's "impenetrable body," and the apparent contrast between her aging habitus and nimble *mētis*, heightens this sense of distance.[78] Laura Wright defines the "impenetrable body" as that which represents difference to the audience and thus "maintains a consciousness that may be mimicked or performed but never fully known."[79] Unable to access the consciousness of the body before it, the audience experiences "alienation" that inspires "acknowledge[ment] not only [of] difference, but also [of] ethical responsibility for that which is different."[80]

The rhetoric of Costello, and of the novel itself, is thus brought to exemplary moments of potential failure, moments when the novel's interlocutors and critics may misidentify Costello as inscrutable, or again addled, needy, or "mad." The challenge the novel presents is not just to take up responsibility through our own experience of alienation from the text but to recognize the alienation produced within, or anticipated by, the text when these misidentifications loom—and to ethically respond.

Costello implicitly presents this challenge when she discusses a passage from Wolfgang Kohler's *The Mentality of Apes*. The passage depicts captive chimpanzees bounding about "like a military band," draped in discarded cords and cloth.[81] In Costello's library copy of the book, a reader had written "Anthropocentrism!" in the margin.[82] Costello contrasts two modes of responding to the performance: that of "the indignant reader" who wrote the marginalia and that of a poet, who would "have made something of the moment."[83] Costello's dual audiences—the audience in the auditorium and the one constituted by readers in the real world—are meant to understand that their own responses should contrast with that of the nonplussed reader. *Elizabeth Costello* thus brings the inhabitants of the novel and the readers of the novel into a middle space to be indicted/invited together. The indictment, the invitation is, as Geoffrey Baker describes, for "transformative action that occurs on a seemingly non-political plane, at sites of interpersonal sympathy."[84]

During the Q&A that follows the lecture, Costello's sole questioner is a "tall, bearded man" who perhaps proxies for the bearded author himself, a cameo to concretize Coetzee's "reflexive self-consciousness" as a novelist.[85] Insofar as reflexivity implies observation from the outside, the questioner may also imply readers who, like him, want Costello to "just . . . say what she wants to say."[86] The questioner asks Costello to clarify what she is "actually targeting"; Costello's reply, that she prefers to think what "lies behind" ethical principles and prohibitions, leaves the dean flummoxed and the questioner to "expressive[ly] shrug."[87] Not unlike Sultan, who must solve tool-use puzzles or starve, Costello is pressed in these moments "from the purity of speculation . . . towards lower, practical, instrumental reason."[88] But it bears acknowledging that the consequences of Costello's failures or refusals are far less severe than starvation. Though her own experience of assault arises in memory, the harrowing effect of its remembrance dissipates, and Costello resumes her largely free and peripatetic existence.

Costello is thus not only *hinged open* to the realities of non-human animal suffering that Sultan and Red Peter represents, she is also *hinged to* Sultan and Red Peter. The correspondences between them are multiple, signaled by deictic cues that rhetorize displacements and estrangements. For instance, earlier in her lecture, Costello had articulated what she takes to be Sultan's understanding of his subjection as an experimental animal, enouncing, "The question that truly occupies him, as it occupies the rat and the cat and every other animal trapped in the hell of the laboratory or the zoo, is: *Where* is home, and how do I get *there*?"[89] Her own confusion in a hotel in Amsterdam, in which she asks, "*Where am I?* . . . *Who am I?*" will embody the echo of Sultan's profound dislocations.[90]

Stopped in her son's car after "The Philosophers and the Animals" lecture, Costello tearfully confesses that, knowing what we do to other animals—"a crime of stupefying proportions"—she feels she "must be mad."[91] As he begins to respond, John flashes to a clichéd olfactory image of aging—"cold cream . . . old flesh"—that parallels a previous vision of his mother as stereotypically reptilian.[92] His reply to Costello's tearful confession constitutes a deflection in the ordinary sense: " 'There, there,' he whispers in her ear. 'There, there. It will soon be over.' "[93] This lightly loving, lightly menacing reference to certain displacement implies allegory, its elsewhere-atmosphere.

Scenes of allegory

Similar to Costello's performative epistemology of exhaustion, allegory in *Elizabeth Costello* appears to function as a "technical device," one inspired by Coetzee's interpretive engagements with texts. These engagements center on the concept of the dilemma. In the essay "Into the Dark Chamber: The Novelist and South Africa," which articulates the aporia of representations of violence and argues against aestheticization of the violated body, Coetzee concludes with a discussion of Nadine Gordimer's *Burger's Daughter*. Coetzee writes of Rosa, who witnesses the brutal whipping of a donkey:

> What Rosa suffers and waits for is a time when humanity will be restored across the face of society, and therefore when all human acts, including the

> flogging of an animal, will be returned to the ambit of moral judgment. In such a society it will once again be meaningful for the gaze of the author, the gaze of authority and authoritative judgment, to be turned upon scenes of torture.[94]

As neither "liberation" nor "revolution will put an end . . . to cruelty and suffering," an inexorable dilemma forces a writer of conscience to make a choice: "either to ignore . . . obscenities or else . . . produce representations of them."[95] The allegorical approach appears to offer a middle option, one that gives cruelty little scope to keep camp.

Costello obliquely refers to one choice in the dilemma when, in response to her son, who has asked whether she expects poetry to solve the slaughterhouse, she offers, "I just don't want to sit silent."[96] Later, during her paper presentation for "the problem of evil" conference, she accents the other choice—"produce representations"—and its impossibility when she argues that depictions of violence are "obscene" and should not be read or written.[97] Though Costello's focus is Paul West's novel, the presentation deepens the problematics of representing non-human animals. If "The Poets and the Animals" lecture argues expansively that the sympathetic imagination *can* have no limit, then Costello's "problem of evil" presentation argues that it, or again how its exercise is translated into philosophy and literature, *should* have limits.

Thus, the narrative of *Elizabeth Costello* allegorizes the trials of misapprehension and misrepresentation that are Sultan's and Red Peter's, an allegorization that, I would argue, is maintained through the novel by reminders of non-human animal themes. Hence, "The Problem of Evil" chapter, which places a disoriented Costello in Amsterdam to present a paper, references "slaughterhouses of the world" and "sparrow[s] knocked off . . . branch[es] by a slingshot."[98]

Oscillating between discursivity and materiality—as Costello reminds us, Sultan actually existed, while Sultan could have inspired the character of Red Peter—the novel's animal figures link Costello to real "animal[s] trapped in the hell of the laboratory or the zoo," as well as those bred "for the purpose of [capturing and] killing them."[99] However, Sam Durrant would argue that the figurative Sultan is not meant to represent one who had existed. To Durrant, the figure of Sultan so clearly serves as "a naked projection of [Costello's] own concern for animal welfare" that the passage featuring him must be "ironic or tongue-in-cheek."[100] Ramon Bartosch instead argues, similar to my line of thinking, "the novel *does* show animals . . . by both emplotting the discourse on the lives of animals and staging the embodiment of a living animal."[101] However, this staging could not be effected without Costello's non-normativity. In a literal sense, Costello stands on stage for Sultan and for Red Peter, deploying her disabled/disability rhetoric. Offstage, Costello's own sufferance of estrangement and difference gestures toward what it might mean to be a non-human animal, one of our most othered others, without resorting to the obscenities of violence.

Of course, in a text that performs contradictions, and so forfends the kind of certainty that powers supremacism, John recalls that Costello would refuse meat by referencing “hacked flesh” and “juices of death wounds.”[102] In the final chapter “at the gate,” Costello recalls a ram in *Odysseus*, “dragged down by its master into [the] terrible place” of sacrifice, of murder.[103]

Indeed, taken together, the content of Costello’s lectures “The Philosophers and the Animals” and “The Poets and the Animals” implicitly suggests that, as a result of the subjection of non-human animals to domesticity, captivity, and slaughter, an aporia inheres in representations of non-human animals generally and not just in representations that depict marked violence. Though Costello appears to endorse poetry as a corrective to anthropocentric discourse, the Ted Hughes poem she uses as an exemplar is in fact exemplary of this aporia. “The Jaguar” trucks in “Platonic” abstractions—as Costello herself indicates.[104] That the poem does so poses a problem, since Costello has implied that the category of “animal” occludes individual “lives of animals” and authorizes our (mis)use of them—after all, what is one death if a replicate life may substitute? Yet, defined by confinement in a cage, the life of the individual jaguar cannot be easily represented. As Costello argues, “we see the most devastating effects” of the ways we constrain other animals “in zoos, in laboratories, institutions where the flow of joy that comes from living not *in* or *as* a body but simply from being an embodied being has no place.”[105] A fog of boredom, if not suffering, surrounds so-called “captive animals,” confounding or occluding apprehension of their “full being.”[106]

As Stephen Mulhall richly notes, following Costello, our concepts of others arise from our “embeddedness” in life with them. If we “alter those circumstances . . . our concept will not simply carry over.”[107] What Costello takes to be the poem’s idea of “jaguarness”—the jaguar’s “eyes drilling through the darkness of space” as though from “*elsewhere*”—is perhaps nothing more than the register of dis-embeddedness.[108] Costello’s remark that “the cage has no reality to him,” chillingly suggests the jaguar’s utter isolation.[109] The sympathetic imagination has no corrective power; it need only have the bodied, not the embedded, individual to project into; it cannot fix what has been stripped. Given that suffering arises from captivity, and given that suffering in its specificity marks the limit of what can, what *should*, be represented, a poet perhaps has little choice but to resort to the assuring structure of abstractive tropes.

Though these conclusions are not drawn out in Costello’s lectures, something of them becomes manifest in their unfolding, the paradox of representation of other animals evident in the unsatisfactory example of the Hughes poem. In her review of approaches literary criticism takes to “animal studies,” Susan McHugh notes that, for Marian Scholtmeijer, “representations fail . . . to ‘create the pure animal, the animal without reference to human constructions of the world.’”[110] Nonetheless, Scholtmeijer “sees the capacity for ‘animal victims’ to ‘impress their reality upon narrative, not by the stability but the instability of their presence.’”[111] To Costello, the ram of *Odysseus* “is not just an idea, the ram is alive though right now it is dying”—that is, the ram impresses a persistent aliveness upon the reader.[112] But we are returned to the aporia, the gap, when we realize this aliveness is born of a representation of grave violence. Thus, we may come into proximity of the ram, but that proximity also puts the ram at a distance.

Allegorical narratives are themselves dually constituted by a literal meaning and one more recalcitrant. Abstract and diverging from the time and place of the narrative, the allegorized meaning can be gestured toward but never quite grasped. In "The Structure of Allegorical Desire," Joel Fineman writes, "allegory will set out on an increasingly futile search for a signifier with which to recuperate the fracture of and at its source."[113] The aporia of representation of non-human animals, implicit in the contradictions within Elizabeth Costello's arguments, suggests that an intensified, more profound, instance of the fractured source is the absent referent of other animals.

Yet by its cultivation of distance, allegory in some way ensconces and protects beings-beyond-the-human, providing a billeted place of resistance. This place is one of opacity. In *The Poetics of Relation*, Édouard Glissant conceives of opacity as a resistance to colonizing modes of understanding.[114] Thus, "the right to opacity" that Glissant sets forth is, as Celia Britton summarizes, "a right *not to be understood*," particularly in a "hierarchical, objectifying way."[115] But as opacity gathers together "all the threatened and delicious things" in a radical relationality, Glissant adjures readers to "clamor for the right to opacity for everyone."[116] While respecting the decolonial aims of *The Poetics*—aims particular to human oppression—I wish to recognize Glissant as uniquely articulating a resistance to "the process of 'understanding' beings . . . in western society."[117] Costello endorses the resistance of other animals, and mourns the loss of that resistance, when she declaims: "Animals have only their silence left with which to confront us . . . [y]et . . . seem to us to be on the point of giving up their silence."[118]

In the narrative of *Elizabeth Costello*, allegory is an ethical force, and Elizabeth Costello is its allegorist. By her bodily decline, which propels the narrative, Costello powers the novel's entropic universe, tilting it toward "transitoriness, decline, dissipation, death"—the mood and atmosphere of allegory and the allegorist, under Walter Benjamin's theorization.[119] Costello herself is not melancholic; instead, she speaks of joy as the condition of (human and non-human) being. But neither does my understanding of allegory hew very closely to Benjamin's. What I note instead is the suffusion of disability through Benjamin's work, how crucial non-normativity is to the phenomenology of the allegorical dialectic.[120]

As an allegorist, Costello is a defective detective, picking out clues to the "death's head" of the anthropocentric scene.[121] During her first lecture, "What is Realism?," Costello asserts that the "word-mirror is broken."[122] Later, Costello implicitly contextualizes that argument, asserting for "The Philosophers and the Animals" that human subjectivity does not have privileged access to "the being of the universe."[123] Costello also argues that non-human animals are not alien others, the possessors of the most unknowable of minds; they are "embodied soul[s]" and "full of being."[124] Finally, through her encounters with the aesthetics of the violated body in the latter half of the book, Costello finds the ethical limits of representation and argues against that limit's trespass. Though focused on the human body, Costello's argument has clear bearing on the tendency in modern literature to aestheticize animal suffering.

In the essay "Franz Kafka," Walter Benjamin writes that Kafka's animal figures are "receptacles of the forgotten," adding that "[t]hey are not the goal, to be sure, but one cannot do without them."[125] In the universe of Elizabeth Costello, they are themselves the forgotten; they are also the goal. Thus, with the "gentle, lumbering monster" of her exhausted frame, Costello journeys through the novel, comprising scenes of allegory.[126]

Conclusion

Near the end of the final chapter of her narrative, Costello awaits word from the judges to whom she submitted a statement of belief, hoping to secure passage. In response to her questions, the guardian of the gate answers in no other way but to tell Costello, "We see people like you all the time."[127] Habitual action, in the form of the adverbial phrase "all the time," thus enters Elizabeth Costello's narrative, only to close it: irresolution on repeat, a refusal to risk reinscription of certainty and dominance.

Likewise, "representation of nonhuman animals [has] remain[ed] a 'Rubik cube' for Costello, as she calls understanding in general, yet to be solved—and perhaps is unsolvable."[128] Still, the very existence of the novel suggests that literature, for all its dilemmas and aporias, or perhaps because of them, may yet counter the prevailing tendencies of discourse to render other beings as either unknowable others or knowable others in a Foucaultian sense—"captive animals," "food animals," "zoo animals," and so forth.[129] In his essay on Franz Kafka, Walter Benjamin notes Kafka's "attentiveness" to other beings: "Even if Kafka did not pray—and this we do not know—he still possessed . . . [an] attentiveness [in which] he included all living creatures."[130] Costello does not pray herself, though she evinces a secular sense of sacrifice in speaking about our treatment of other animals and therewith risking opprobrium. But her thoughts are indeed attentive.

Having mostly asserted that she has no belief, Costello finds something at her narrative's end in which she *can* believe: the frogs of Dulgannon, whom she remembers from her childhood. And in her image of them, she finds a small detail: "the fingers of their hands, fingers that end in little balls, soft, wet, mucous."[131] "*Fidelities*," Costello thinks, her last thought before she curses literature. "Now that she has brought it out, she recognizes it as the word on which all hinges."[132] If literature brings us no closer to our most othered others—if opacity should be their protection—it may at least lay down an agonic line: poleward to sympathy, to proto-ethical commitment.

Notes

1 J. M. Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 1.
2 Ibid.
3 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 224.

4 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 19.

5 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 1.

6 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 2, 26.

7 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 117.

8 J. M. Coetzee, *Slow Man* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 151.

9 Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 1. Also quoted in Ato Quayson, *Aesthetic Nervousness: Disability and the Crisis of Representation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 4.

10 Quayson, *Aesthetic Nervousness*, 19.

11 For scholarship that addresses race and gender in *Elizabeth Costello*, see Michael Bell, “What Is It Like to Be a Nonracist? Costello and Coetzee on the Lives of Animals and Men,” in *J. M. Coetzee and the Idea of the Public Intellectual*, ed. Jane Poyner (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006), 172–92; Craig Smith, “Blasphemous Likenesses: J.M. Coetzee’s The Lives of Animals, America, and the Holocaust,” *Safundi* 12, no. 1 (2011): 47–68; Laura Wright, “A Feminist-Vegetarian Defense of Elizabeth Costello: A Rant from an Ethical Academic on J. M. Coetzee’s *The Lives of Animals*,” in *J. M. Coetzee and the Idea of the Public Intellectual*, ed. Jane Poyner (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006), 193–216; Laura Wright, *Writing “Out of All the Camps”* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Aarthi Vadde, “‘Guidance in Perplexity’: Recasting Postcolonial Politics in J. M. Coetzee’s *Elizabeth Costello*,” *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature* 41, no. 3–4 (2011): 231–47.

12 Sunaura Taylor, *Beasts of Burden* (New York: The New Press, 2017), loc 941 of 4691, Kindle.

13 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 98, 78.

14 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 80, 96.

15 Ralph Acampora, *Corporal Compassion: Animal Ethics and Philosophy of Body* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 2006), 101.

16 Philip Armstrong, *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2008), 2–3.

17 Cora Diamond, “The Difficulty of Reality and the Difficulty of Philosophy,” in *Philosophy and Animal Life*, ed. Cary Wolfe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 47.

18 Drew Leder, *The Absent Body* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 84; Laura Giovanelli, “J. M. Coetzee’s Unsettling Portrayals of Elizabeth Costello,” *Acta Scientiarum: Language and Culture* 33, no. 1 (2011): 67, https://doi.org/10.4025/actascilangcult.v33i1.7251.

19 Jack Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2011), 2.

20 Robert McRuer and Merri Johnson, “Cripistemologies: Introduction,” *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies* 8, no. 2 (2014): 137.

21 J. M. Coetzee, “Time, Tense, and Aspect in Kafka’s ‘The Burrow’,” repr. in *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews*, ed. David Attwell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 217, 212, 213. Coetzee’s italics.

22 Coetzee, “Time,” 229.

23 Coetzee, “Time,” 230.

24 Coetzee, “Time,” 229.

25 Coetzee, “Time,” 226.

26 Coetzee, “Time,” 225.

27 Hilary Thompson, *Novel Creatures: Animal Life and the New Millennium* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 96.

28 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 15, 193.

29 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 177. Coetzee’s italics.

30 Teresa Dovey, “Allegory vs Allegory: The Divorce of Different Modes of Allegorical Perception in Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians*,” *Journal of Literary Studies* 4, no. 2 (1988): 141, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02564718808529860.

31 Alice Hall, *Disability and Modern Fiction: Faulkner, Morrison, Coetzee and the Nobel Prize for Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 136.

32 Viktor Shklovsky, “Art as Technique,” in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, trans. Marion J. Reis and Lee T. Lemon (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 4. Note that the text spells *ostranenie* as “ostraneniye,” which is now an uncommon spelling.

33 Shklovsky, “Art,” 21, 13, 4.

34 Shklovsky, “Art,” 13. In her own read of allegory and estrangement in Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Rebecca Saunders emphasizes Bertold Brecht’s *Verfremdungseffekt* over Shklovsky’s *ostranenie* for its “explicitly social” and political impetus. See “The Agony and the Allegory: The Concept of the Foreign, the Language of Apartheid, and the Fiction of J. M. Coetzee,” *Cultural Critique* 47, no. 1 (2001): 217. I use Shklovsky’s *ostranenie* here for its emphasis on aesthetics, ethics, and disruption of “the *reader*’s relationship to the world”—and Costello’s own relationship to it. See Cristina Vatulescu, “The Politics of Estrangement: Tracking Shklovsky’s Device Through Literary and Policing Practices,” *Poetics Today* 27, no. 1 (2006): 38, https://doi.org/10.1215/03335372-27-1-35.

35 Shklovsky, “Art,” 4.

36 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 135.

37 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 139. Coetzee’s italics.

38 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 143.

39 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 173.

40 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 160. Emphasis added.

41 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 167, 159.

42 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 159.

43 Ibid.

44 dECOi Architects, “Technological Latency: From Autoplastic to Alloplastic,” in *Digital Creativity: A Reader (Innovations in Art and Design)*, eds. Colin Beardon and Lone Malmborg (Lisse, The Netherlands: Swets & Zeitlinger, 2002), 158.

45 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 159. See G. Hoppenstand and R. B. Browne, *The Defective Detective in the Pulps* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1983); Jay Dolmage, *Disability Rhetoric* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2014), 145. As an exceptionally bodied “defective detective,” Costello is not, however, a hero of anti-normativity without problematic complexity or contradiction. For instance, she herself uses a few ableist terms or concepts in her arguments, including the epithet “imbecile” (*Elizabeth Costello*, 90).

46 Dolmage, *Disability Rhetoric*, 145.

47 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello,* 90.

48 Brenda Boyle, “Phantom Pains,” *Prose Studies* 27, no. 1–2 (2006): 94.

49 Diamond, “Difficulty,” 55, 47.

50 Diamond, “Difficulty,” 59.

51 Diamond, “Difficulty,” 53.

52 Cora Diamond, “Martha Nussbaum and the Need for Novels,” in *Renegotiating Ethics in Literature, Philosophy, and Theory*, eds. Jane Adamson, Richard Freadman, and David Parker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 49.

53 Stanley Cavell, “Companionable Thinking,” in *Philosophy and Animal Life*, ed. Cary Wolfe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 106; emphasis added.

54 John McDowell, “Comment on Stanley Cavell’s ‘Companionable Thinking’,” in *Philosophy and Animal Life*, ed. Cary Wolfe (New York: Columbia University Press),

134; Ian Hacking, "Deflections," in *Philosophy and Animal Life*, ed. Cary Wolfe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 153.

55 Hacking, "Deflections," 153. By joining Hacking in countering misidentifications of Elizabeth Costello as "mad," or nearly so, I do not intend to reinforce the disability hierarchy, which renders some conditions, such as those arising from paralysis or amputation more authentic or definitive of disability than others, such as chronic illness, exhaustion, and pain. At issue is not mental illness itself but constructions of "madness" that de-agentialize the one named "mad," as well as uses of the construct to stigmatize emotion or difference.

56 Ibid.

57 Susan Fraiman, "Pussy Panic Versus Liking Animals: Tracking Gender in Animal Studies," *Critical Inquiry* 39, no. 1 (2012): 100.

58 Diamond, "Difficulty," 59.

59 Diamond, "Difficulty," 78.

60 Cary Wolfe, "Exposures," in *Philosophy and Animal Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 35.

61 George Kennedy, *Comparative Rhetoric: An Historical and Cross-Cultural Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 13, 5.

62 Kennedy, *Comparative Rhetoric*, 4.

63 Kennedy, *Comparative Rhetoric*, 5.

64 Cavell, "Companionable Thinking," 101.

65 Dolmage, *Disability Rhetoric*, 108, 7.

66 Dolmage, *Disability Rhetoric*, 5.

67 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 75.

68 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 74.

69 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 62.

70 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 63.

71 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 81.

72 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 70–71.

73 Elaine Scarry, "Among School Children: The Use of Body Damage to Express Physical Pain," *Interfaces: Image, Text, Language* 26 (2007): 32.

74 Cavell, "Companionable Thinking," 112.

75 Cavell, "Companionable Thinking," 113.

76 Roman Bartosch, *Environmentality: Ecocriticism and the Event of Postcolonial Fiction* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013), 258; Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet (Posthumanities Book 3)* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 30; emphasis added.

77 See Berlinde de Bruyckere and J. M. Coetzee, "The Old Woman and the Cats," in *Cripplewood: La Biennale Di Venezia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

78 Wright, *Writing*, 122.

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid.

81 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 74.

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid.

84 Geoffrey Baker, "The Limits of Sympathy: J. M. Coetzee's Evolving Ethics of Engagement," *ARIEL* 36, no. 1–2 (2005): 29.

85 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 81; Coetzee, "Time," 3.

86 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 82.

87 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 81–82.

88 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 73.

89 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 75; emphasis added.

90 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 117; Coetzee's italics.

91 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 114.

92 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 115.

93 Ibid.

94 J. M. Coetzee, "Into the Dark Chamber: The Writer and the South African State (1986)," in *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews*, ed. David Attwell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 368.

95 Coetzee, "Dark Chamber," 364.

96 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 104.

97 Coetzee, "Dark Chamber," 364.

98 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 159.

99 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 75, 65.

100 Sam Durrant, "J. M. Coetzee, Elizabeth Costello, and the Limits of the Sympathetic Imagination," in *J. M. Coetzee and the Idea of the Public Intellectual*, ed. Jane Poyner (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2006), 127.

101 Bartosch, *Environmentality*, 269; emphasis Bartosch.

102 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 83.

103 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 211.

104 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 98.

105 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 79; Coetzee's italics.

106 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 78.

107 Stephen Mulhall, *The Wounded Animal: J. M. Coetzee and the Difficulty of Reality in Literature and Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 29.

108 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 95; Coetzee's italics.

109 Ibid.

110 Susan McHugh, "One or Several Literary Animal Studies?" *H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online*, 2006, https://networks.h-net.org/node/16560/pages/32231/one-or-several-literary-animal-studies-susan-mchugh.

111 Ibid.

112 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 211.

113 Joel Fineman, "Structure of Allegorical Desire," *October* 12 (1980): 60.

114 Édouard Glissant, *The Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 62, 55.

115 Celia Britton, *Édouard Glissant and Postcolonial Theory: Strategies of Language and Resistance* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1999), 19; Britton's italics.

116 Glissant, *Poetics*, 62, 194.

117 Glissant, *Poetics*, 204.

118 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 70.

119 Elin Diamond, *Unmaking Mimesis: Essays on Feminism and Theatre* (London: Routledge, 2006), 79.

120 One of the exceptional bodies in Benjamin's work is "the little hunchback," a fairytale figure in a German children's poem who mysteriously causes "little catastrophes." By upsetting the applecart of things, this figure seems parallel to the allegorist, who views "the noblest material" as that which "lies broken in pieces." The allegorist, however, makes meaning of these fragments, whereas this fairytale figure does not. See Walter Benjamin, *Origin of the German Trauerspiel* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2019), 189.

121 Benjamin, *Origin*, 174. In allegory, Benjamin writes, history is "untimely, sorrowful, and miscarried" and "inscribed in a face—no, in a death's head."

122 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 19.

123 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 67.

124 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 78.

125 Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1968), 141.
126 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 210.
127 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 225.
128 A. Marie Houser, ed., *After Coetzee: An Anthology of Animal Fictions* (Minneapolis: Faunary Press, 2017), xv.
129 See Matthew Cole and Kate Stewart, *Our Children and Other Animals: The Cultural Construction of Human-Animal Relations in Childhood* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 14.
130 Kafka, *Illuminations*, 134.
131 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 219.
132 Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 224.

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Chapter 13

Of gimps, gastropods, and grief[1]

Feminist new materialist reflections on Elisabeth Tova Bailey's *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating*

Chloë Taylor

This chapter draws on two feminist new materialist approaches to disability—Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's "Misfits" and Elizabeth Wilson's "Gut Feminism"—to reflect on an illness narrative that is also a long thank you letter to a snail: Elisabeth Tova Bailey's memoir, *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating*. Through Garland-Thomson's theory of "misfits," this chapter explores some of the ways that both Bailey and her companion snail came to misfit and refit their worlds. In turn, this chapter suggests that Wilson's theory of "gut feminism" sheds light on Bailey's memoir as a story of grief in which interspecies relations soothe the gut.

Interspecies encounters

> One has to respect the preferences of another creature, no matter its size, and I did so gladly.
>
> —Elisabeth Tova Bailey[2]

Elisabeth Tova Bailey was 34 years old when, encountering a mysterious pathogen while traveling in Europe, she contracted an autoimmune illness. Bailey describes the viral or bacterial agent's taking up residence in her body much like she considers her later cohabitation with a gastropod, as a meeting between species that changes her life. Even while lamenting the pathogen's destructive effects, Bailey approaches it with some of the same biophilic curiosity as she will display with the snail. "Pathogens," she writes, "those critical ingredients in the primordial soup from which life originally emerged, helped shape all species, and it was because of a pathogen that I had found myself nose-to-tentacle with a snail."[3] As Bailey tells us, the particular pathogen that she contracted was one of millions of pathogens on earth, and one of around a thousand that depend on human hosts.[4] Bailey argues that this pathogen was "in its own way, an author; it rewrote the instructions followed within every cell in my body, and in doing so, it rewrote my life, making off with nearly all my plans for the future."[5]

Returning home to Vermont following her fateful trip to Europe, Bailey writes that initial flu-like symptoms "turned into systemic paralysis-like weakness with life-threatening complications."[6] Due to autonomic dysfunction Bailey would spend years horizontal, her blood vessels unable to "maintain circulation against the pull of gravity."[7] As she explains, "the ability to be upright is a recent evolutionary adaptation, and it is still surprisingly fragile."[8] In the initial years of her illness and during the relapses that followed, Bailey was often too weak to hold a book or to sit up to watch television and was so sensitive to sound that the only music to which she could listen was Gregorian chants.

In the first years of her illness, Bailey remained in her 1830s farmhouse, where she could look at hand-hewn beams above her head and enjoy colorfully painted walls and trims—deep blue, green, red, and a soothing shade of gray.[9] From the windows situated beside and at the level of her daybed, Bailey could see the sun rising and setting, her garden growing increasingly wild, cats hunting in the long grass of the fields, and friends and neighbors passing by. Eventually, however, Bailey was moved to a studio in a city where she could more easily receive care. Here, the walls and ceiling were a monotonous white, and she felt "trapped inside a stark white box."[10] The bed was not beside a window, and the window was too high to see out of from the bed. A bookshelf was at the far end of the room, but she could not make out the titles of the books. As Bailey writes, there was nothing in this room that "delighted," "sustained," or "enriched" her.[11] Over time, Bailey's friends traveled the long distance to the city less and less often, and her company was often reduced to the half-hour visits from her caretaker at mealtimes.[12] When friends did visit, Bailey recognized that the sight of her ill, still body filled them with fear and discomfort, while their energy and anxiety depleted her.[13] Visits from Bailey's dog, Brandy, were also a source of pain, as Brandy was full of exuberance and desire for her human, which Bailey could no longer satisfy. As she writes, "From my bed I could give her scraps from my dinner and manage a few strokes of her soft ears. I loved her so, and her intense longing for more made me ache."[14]

Despite finding visits from both her human and canine friends painful and exhausting, Bailey longs for community. She writes,

> My bed was an island within the desolate sea of my room. Yet I knew that there were other people homebound from illness or injury, scattered here and there throughout rural towns and cities around the world. And as I lay there, I felt a connection to all of them. We . . . were a colony of hermits.[15]

Again indicating her strong desire to connect to other people who are like her, she describes the excitement of being "[w]heeled into the doctor's reception room." Here, she writes,

> I'd find myself surrounded by quietly waiting patients. We had each journeyed to this office from our distant planet of illness. Though strangers, we

> became instant, silent companions. . . . The chance to be with other patients brought a catch to my throat; despite our individual ailments, we shared the burden of illness. Yet even here my participation was limited, as I was too weak to sit upright for more than a few minutes. As quickly as possible I'd be taken straight back to an examination room so that I could wait lying down.[16]

As this experience indicates, Bailey finds that the human world is inaccessible to those who are not vertical.[17] As she describes, trips to her doctor were her only outings, for

> there were few other accessible destinations. Offices, stores, galleries, libraries, and movie theaters are not designed for horizontal people. The most satisfying adventure was when my driver had errands to run and I could lie in the back of the car in a parking lot and watch my own species bustle about its business. This brought a sense of connection and contentment, yet was a striking reminder of how entirely cut off I was from the most basic activities of life.[18]

Here, like many disabled writers, Bailey notes the ableism of built environments, or the ways that architectural and urban design and social expectations of how bodies should appear in public exclude and thus contribute to the isolation and marginalization of disabled people.[19]

Soon after Bailey is moved to the studio, a friend comes across a woodland snail and brings the mollusk to Bailey. The friend digs up some wild violets and places them in a pot to create a home for the snail. Delivering the pot to Bailey's studio, she explains that she thought Bailey would "enjoy" the snail. At first Bailey is exasperated by this gesture. Why would she enjoy a *snail*? Moreover, since she is unable to take care of herself, Bailey feels overwhelmed at the thought of caring for another creature, however small, and nor can she get out of bed to return the snail to the woods, where they belong. Since the snail is tucked in their shell when they arrive, Bailey is not even sure if they are alive, and if they are, she initially hopes that they will disappear on their own overnight.

As it turns out, the snail is very much alive and soon comes out of their shell to explore their new environment and forage for food. The snail leaves the violet pot beside Bailey's bed and finds pieces of paper to eat, gnawing strangely square holes in envelopes, lists, and postcards, making Bailey curious about what kind of teeth a snail has. Worried that paper is not a good diet for the snail, and observing that the snail has no interest in eating violets, Bailey tries feeding the snail petals from dead flowers in a vase beside her bed. From this experiment, Bailey realizes two things: that snails prefer foods that are dead or rotting, and that if you are still and quiet enough, it is possible to hear the sound of a wild snail eating. As she describes it, the sound is a bit like that of a person steadily crunching celery.[20]

After a few weeks of feeding the snail petals from dead flowers, Bailey begins reading about gastropods and realizes that her snail would like mushrooms even better. She offers the snail a slice of portobello and is thrilled by the snail's delight at this feast. Bailey has her caretaker add some garden soil to the snail's pot, only to discover that the snail will not touch it.[21] Embarrassed, she asks the caretaker to remove the garden soil and replace it with humus from the woods from which the snail came, which appears to makes the snail much happier. Encouraged by these successes, Bailey continues to find ways to accommodate the snail. Soon, she has her caretaker create

> a roomy terrarium filled with fresh native plants and other materials from the snail's own woods: goldthread—aptly named for its colorful roots—holding its trio of delicate, paw-shaped leaves high on a thin stem; partridgeberry, with its round, dark green leaves and its small, bright red berries, which lasted for months; the larger, waxy leaves of checkerberry; many kinds of moss; small polypody ferns; a tiny spruce tree; a rotting birch log; and a piece of old bark encrusted with multicolored lichen.
>
> Gulls flying over the coastline sometimes drop mussels, and in the woods one often finds the empty blue shells where they've landed in the moss. Such a shell, with its silvery inside, now served as a natural basin for fresh drinking water. With an old leaf here and a pine needle there, the terrarium looked as though a bit of native forest floor, with all its natural disarray, had been lifted up and placed inside.[22]

Although Bailey never makes the contrast explicit, she juxtaposes her description of her own sterile environment, in which nothing had delighted, sustained, or enriched her, with her vivid account of the terrarium. Bailey observes that she and the snail "were both living in altered landscapes not of our choosing," and she thinks that they "shared a sense of loss and displacement."[23] Empathizing in this way, Bailey provides the snail with an environment in which they can flourish, although she herself is not provided with such a space. By accommodating the snail, however, Bailey is herself inadvertently accommodated; although her caretaker creates the terrarium for the gastropod, the terrarium and its inhabitant become sights in Bailey's environment that enrich her life. As Bailey writes of the terrarium; "It was a world fit for a snail, and it was a welcome sight for my own eyes as well."[24] While Bailey observes the snail taking advantage of the terrarium's amenities, she is also comforted by the colors, hues, texture, and variety that it brings to the white space of the studio and the way it transports some of her beloved woods to her home when she can no longer carry her body to the woods.

Although she attempts to recreate the snail's natural environment within the terrarium, Bailey expresses guilt that she didn't ask her caretaker to return the snail to the woods instead.[25] She imagines that the snail is as "homesick" as she is and observes, "As tiny as it was, it had been going about its day when it was picked up. What right did my friend and I have to disrupt its life?"[26] After a year Bailey *does* have the snail returned to the woods—along with 117 of the 118 baby snails they have hatched in the meantime, and eventually she returns the 119th snail to the woods as well.[27] Bailey delays returning the snail, however, because the snail has become a lifeline to her. Although the mollusk was initially unwelcome, Bailey quickly describes herself as "attached."[28] Indeed, when the snail disappears for a time, Bailey is "bereft" and realizes that she is "almost more attached to the snail than to [her] own tenuous life."[29] Unbeknownst to Bailey, the snail has disappeared to care for their eggs; when Bailey eventually locates the snail under some moss in the terrarium, she realizes that many more snails are on their way.

Before finding companionship in the snail, Bailey suffered from acute loneliness and feelings of uselessness and wondered whether it would have been better to die of her illness.[30] She describes awakening in the morning full of "pure, sweet, uncontrollable hope" before the reality of her situation returns to her. In the moments of despair that would follow this realization, Bailey would look for the snail, and finding their familiar shape would bring her comfort.[31] As Bailey writes, "Illness isolates; the isolated become invisible; the invisible become forgotten. But the snail . . . the snail kept my spirit from evaporating. Between the two of us, we were a society all our own, and that kept isolation at bay."[32] Indeed, Bailey writes to one of her doctors that she would not have "made it" without the snail: "Watching another creature go about its life . . . somehow gave me, the watcher, purpose too. If life mattered to the snail and the snail mattered to me, it meant something in my life mattered, so I kept on."[33]

Bailey's snail is not merely a poor substitute for the human companionship that Bailey lacks but is, for a time, an ideal companion. Bailey writes:

> Whereas the energy of my human visitors wore me out, the snail inspired me. Its curiosity and grace pulled me further into its peaceful and solitary world. Watching it go about its life in the small ecosystem of the terrarium put me at ease.[34]

Bailey increasingly relates to the snail in her illness. She learns that snails are nocturnal in their activities, and it comforts her that there is someone else awake when she passes nights of insomnia. By day, Bailey had previously felt useless lying in bed, knowing that other humans were going about their busy lives. Now, however, she is soothed by the companionship of another creature who guiltlessly passes the daylight hours sleeping. "I was not the only one resting away the days," she writes. "The snail naturally slept by day, even on the sunniest of afternoons. Its companionship was a comfort to me and buffered my feelings of uselessness."[35] Like the ill, Bailey also realizes that snails are "colonies of hermits." Carrying their shell everywhere, the snail, like Bailey, is "home-bound."[36] Moreover, the snail moves at something like Bailey's own velocity, and while time had previously seemed to stand still, she finds that it has "flown by, unnoticed," when she is "absorbed in snail watching."[37] "Naturally solitary and slow paced," Bailey writes that the snail "entertained and taught me, and was beautiful to watch as it glided silently along, leading me through a dark time into a world beyond that of my own species."[38] Spatially as well as temporally, Bailey feels kinship with the snail, for the mollusk traversed similarly short distances in a day.[39] As Bailey's bones lose their density due to her illness, she even identifies with the boneless structure of the gastropod and envies the snail for their external supporting structure—their beautifully designed shell.[40]

Researching snails through observation and reading, Bailey discovers that they lead rich and fascinating lives and have survived several mass extinction events, while humans have yet to survive one—although, unlike any gastropod, a particularly destructive subsection of our species is causing one.[41] As Bailey writes, "Snails may seem like tiny, even insignificant things compared to the wars going on around the world or a million other human problems, but they may well outlive our own species."[42] The "humble snail," writes Bailey, has a "far older, and stickier, foothold on the earth than we more recent creatures."[43] At times Bailey argues for the equality of snails and humans, while at other times, she reflects on their superiority. She notes that while snails and worms create soil, and blue-green algae create oxygen, "mammals seem comparatively dispensable."[44] Indeed, Bailey admires many characteristics of the snail, such as their ability to hibernate and estivate when conditions are not conducive to flourishing.[45] Finding her body unable to regulate its temperature, Bailey longs for the cold-bloodedness of the snail.[46] Having only 32 teeth to last a lifetime, she experiences "tooth envy" for the self-renewing 2,640 teeth of a woodland snail.[47] Beyond envy, the more Bailey educates herself about gastropods, the more she describes herself as "respecting" them.[48] Experiencing her illness as placing "boundaries" around her, Bailey thinks "of the terrarium's limited space, and how the snail had seemed content as it ate, explored, and fulfilled a life cycle. This gave me hope that perhaps I, too, could still fulfill dreams, even if they were changed dreams."[49] In sum, Bailey's year of cohabitation with a snail demonstrates to her that a life can be lived and that a life can matter despite being solitary, slow, and spatially limited. She describes the snail as "a true mentor," adding that "its tiny existence had sustained me."[50]

Misfits

> As the snail's world grew more familiar, my own human world became less so; my species was so large, so rushed, and so confusing.
>
> —Elisabeth Tova Bailey[51]

Bailey never uses the term "disability," writing instead of illness. Following Susan Wendell's important article, "Unhealthy Disabled: Treating Chronic Illnesses as Disabilities," however, we can situate chronic illnesses such as Bailey's on the spectrum of disability.[52] Also following authors such as Wendell and Elizabeth Crow, it can be seen that chronic illnesses are among the harder kinds of disability to fully reconcile with a social model of disability or to reduce to social barriers and stigma.[53] Certainly Bailey views her life-threatening illness as inherently devastating, and she longs for a cure. She describes intense grief that results from her inability to engage in activities she once loved. Beyond the emotional impacts of illness and isolation, Bailey explains her physical limitations, writing that the effort to simply roll over onto her side to get another view of her room would cause her "heart to beat wildly and erratically."[54]

Although in some ways Bailey's experience of illness seems inherently painful, she makes clear that there are significant social factors in her unhappiness. These include her isolation and lack of a disability community, an inadequate care community, and the lack of accommodation she experiences in a studio that meets only her physical needs, within a larger world that is not designed for horizontal people. We can imagine many ways in which Bailey might have been better accommodated and suffered less in her years of illness, including more visits from loved ones and less stigmatizing attitudes toward illness on those people's parts; opportunities for community-building with other people experiencing illness or disability; more opportunities for excursions that would accommodate the horizontal (such as movie theatres and waiting rooms with couches or daybeds); and a more thoughtfully designed studio (a window at bed-level; color and art to stimulate her eyes) or, even better, the continuation of care in Bailey's own farmhouse. While such measures might have assuaged Bailey's feelings of homesickness, boredom, and isolation, a less capitalist society in which people were not primarily valued for their productivity would have prevented Bailey from suffering feelings of uselessness when she could no longer work.[55] Nonetheless, even if Bailey had been accommodated in all of these ways and lived in a non-capitalist world, it is clear that she would have still suffered in her illness; for instance, these accommodations would not have prevented her from experiencing severe limitations on her energy, fear that she might die in her 30s, and grief for the companionship of her dog and the many activities she could no longer enjoy.

Whether we read Bailey's illness narrative as about social barriers, physical limitations, or a complex interaction between the two, *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating* is a book about grief. Invoking her depression, she writes: "Sometimes my mind went blank and listless; at other times it was flooded with storms of thought, unspeakable sadness, and intolerable loss."[56] Describing why she is "bereft" when she believes she has lost the snail, Bailey explains:

> There is a certain depth of illness that is piercing in its isolation; the only rule of existence is uncertainty, and the only movement is the passage of time. One cannot bear to live through another loss of function, and sometimes friends and family cannot bear to watch. . . . Even if you are still who you were, you cannot actually fully be who you are. Sometimes the people you know well withdraw, and then even the person you know as yourself begins to change.[57]

At the same time, however, Bailey's memoir is a book about discovery—discoveries that Bailey would never had made had she not been ill. Bailey observes that she had always wanted to write, but prior to falling ill, she had never had the time.

Before her illness, Bailey also appears to have had no appreciation for snails and remarks on never having noticed them on her hikes in the woods.[58] More specifically, Bailey had not known that one could hear the sound of a wild snail eating. This remarkable experience, which gives her book its title, is, like many of the other experiences and insights described in her book, one that Bailey would never have had if her illness had not made her become so still and quiet. This is not to say that Bailey was lucky to contract the pathogen that she did, for she describes losses that surely outweigh the benefits of becoming an author or having heard a wild snail eating. Nonetheless, even while *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating* provides an oftentimes negative account of disability, like the work of many disability studies authors, Bailey's book also demonstrates some of the richness of a crip[59]—or as she says, a "cryptic"[60]—existence. Bailey's illness narrative thus illustrates and also shows the limits of a social model analysis of disability and hence the need for what Crow calls a "renewed social model of disability." In the remainder of this section, I turn to Crow, Wendell, and feminist new materialist writings on disability to read Bailey's memoir in a way that sees the natural and the social aspects of disability as significant, inextricable, and interactive.[61]

In her important article, "Including All Our Lives," disability studies scholar Elizabeth Crow begins by acknowledging the theoretical, political, and personal importance of the social model of disability, which she observes has given her words for what she always knew, saved lives, and been central to disability rights movements and legislation. As she argues, however, the social model focuses so exclusively on the disabling effects of social barriers, built environments, and stigma that it has made it all but impossible to discuss negative experiences of impairment within critical disability studies and disability activist communities. According to Crow, while the social model's comparisons of disability oppression to sexism, racism, and heterosexism are useful and correct in many ways, disability experience remains different from the experience of sex, race, and sexuality in that there is nothing "inherently unpleasant or difficult" about being a woman, a person of color, or gay, whereas some impairments are inherently unpleasant and difficult to live with. While we may thus imagine worlds in which sex, race, and sexuality, as well as some types of impairment are insignificant, neutral, or consistently positive aspects of identity, this is not true of all impairments.

Disability is an enormous, shifting, and amorphous category, and while the social model of disability may be able to explain everything that is difficult about being Deaf in a predominantly hearing society, or having a mobility impairment in a world of staircases, Crow argues that it cannot explain everything that is hard about "pain, fatigue, depression, and chronic illness" or a shortened life expectancy.[62] As Crow emphasizes, "this does not mean our campaigns against disability are any less vital than those against heterosexism, sexism or racism; it does mean that for many disabled people personal struggle related to impairment will remain even when disabling barriers no longer exist."[63]

Crow recognizes why some disabled people are reluctant to chip away at a comparison to liberation struggles that has proven empowering. Nonetheless, she insists that failing to acknowledge or address many of the most common and difficult experiences of the unhealthy disabled because they cannot be explained away by oppression does a disservice to these members of the disability community. As she explains:

> Many of us remain frustrated and disheartened by pain, fatigue, depression and chronic illness, including the way they prevent us from realizing our potential or railing fully against disability (our experience of exclusion and discrimination); many of us fear for our futures with progressive or additional impairments; we mourn past activities that are no longer possible for us; we are afraid we may die early or that suicide may seem our only option; we desperately seek some effective medical intervention; we feel ambivalent about the possibilities of our children having impairments; and we are motivated to work for the prevention of impairments. Yet our silence about impairment has made many of these things taboo and created a whole new series of constraints on our self-expression.[64]

Crow thus calls for a "renewed" social model of disability. Importantly, this is not to reject the social model of disability or to return to a medical model but rather to "broaden and strengthen" the social model such that it allows for honest discussions of the lived experience of bodily impairment and the ways these interact in complex ways with social factors.[65] For example, Crow discusses the fact that what is considered impairment changes, particularly in cases of mental and psychological disabilities. It would be wrong, therefore, to say that impairment is purely biological or factual, while disability is social and contingent. On the contrary, that a condition gets taken up as impairment at all is social and contingent, and Crow argues that we could greatly reduce the number of conditions that are considered impairments. Crow also describes some of the ways that race, class, gender, and sexuality determine who becomes impaired or gets diagnosed as impaired and what resources are available to a person who is impaired, which in turn impacts how that impairment is experienced. Although she is inconsistent on this point, sometimes calling for a clear distinction between disability and impairment, at its best moments, Crow's argument muddies these waters, describing complex interactions and imbrications between the material and social.

Numerous disability studies scholars have echoed and complexified aspects of Crow's argument.[66] Most relevant to Bailey's memoir, Wendell has taken up Crow's argument with a focus on chronic illness. As Wendell argues in a passage that sheds light on Bailey's memoir:

> Illness is not by definition an evil, but people fear and try to avoid illness because of the suffering it causes. Some of that suffering is social and could be eliminated by social justice for people with disabilities, but some of it is not. Solidarity between people with chronic illnesses and people with other disabilities depends on acknowledging the existence of the suffering that justice

> cannot eliminate (and therefore on our willingness to talk about impairment). It also depends on acknowledging that illness is not only suffering. Like living with cerebral palsy or blindness, living with pain, fatigue, nausea, unpredictable abilities, and/or the imminent threat of death creates different ways of being that give valuable perspectives on life and the world. Thus, although most of us want to avoid suffering if possible, suffering is part of some valuable ways of being. If we could live the ways of being without the suffering, some of us would choose to live them. Some of us would choose to live them even if they were inseparable from the suffering. And some of us are glad to have been forced to live them, would choose to be rid of the suffering even if it meant losing the ways of being, but would hope to hold on to what we have learned from them. There are, I think, many versions of disability pride.[67]

While it is difficult for healthy people to appreciate that there is anything positive about illness—much like it is difficult for nondisabled people to accept that there is anything positive about disability more generally[68]—Wendell concludes her article by stressing something that *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating* makes evident: that chronic illness, although it is not an experience that many people would desire to live or to relive, produces valuable "ways of being human."[69]

Much as feminist new materialists have critiqued the erasure of biological difference, sex, and science in discussions of gender, feminist disability studies scholar Rosemarie Garland-Thomson has joined Crow and Wendell in critiquing disability politics in which experiences of suffering and desire for medical intervention are silenced.[70] As Garland-Thomson writes, a feminist new materialist approach to disability explores the "embodied aspects of disability such as pain and functional limitation without giving up the claim to disability as a social phenomenon."[71] As she continues, such an approach would "emphasize the particularity of varying lived embodiments and avoids a theoretical generic disabled body that can dematerialize if social and architectural barriers no longer disable it."[72]

Following Karen Barad, Garland-Thomson stresses that feminist new materialism is not a return to the old materialism or to biological essentialism. Rather, it critiques the Cartesian dualism that draws a bright line between biologistic or social constructivist explanations of phenomena. Feminist new materialisms is "new" much in the way that Crow's argument for a "renewed" social model is *re*newed; that is, it rejects the either/or of the old models that make us choose between medical/biological and social/political accounts. Much as Crow shows that impairment is itself social but not reducible to the social, so feminist new materialist scholars argue that biology and society are irreducible to one another but are also inextricable and interactive. Both a "renewed" social model of disability and a "new" feminist materialism incorporate and build on the insights of the social model of disability and theories of social construction, without being allergic to insights and interventions from the sciences and medicine.

In her argument for a feminist new materialist approach to disability, Garland-Thomson proposes the explanatory concept of disability as "misfit." For

Garland-Thomson, the concept of misfit is a contribution to a materialist feminist theory of disability insofar as it emphasizes the materiality of bodies and the worlds they navigate. As she writes,

> Misfit, then, reflects the shift in feminist theory from an emphasis on the discursive toward the material by centering its analytical focus on the co-constituting relationship between flesh and environment. The materiality that matters in this perspective involves the encounter between bodies with particular shapes and capabilities and the particular shape and structure of the world.[73]

At the same time, Garland-Thomson's examples of the world in which certain people fit or misfit are examples of the built and interpersonal world, and disability stigma and attitudes about disability are inextricable from the ways these environments and relationships have materialized and the ways that those materializations exclude or include particular bodies. Although social factors determine in part the morphologies of our bodies and worlds, disabled people are "misfits" in the sense of being "incongruent": square pegs in round holes.[74] Disabled people are not the only people who are misfits, however, as Garland-Thomson also offers examples such as a woman who does not fit smoothly in a boardroom full of misogynists; indeed, as she writes, any of us "can fit here today and misfit there tomorrow."[75]

That there is a misfit, Garland-Thomson stresses, is not inherent to either the peg or the hole but to the relationship between the two. Misfitting thus has to do with context and location. In another context, the round peg fits perfectly, and a square peg would be out of place. Contexts can also change, creating greater fit. For example, in the "desert like" and "alien territory" of Bailey's studio, the snail was initially a misfit; however, the terrarium that is created in the studio is "a world fit for a snail."[76] After falling ill Bailey finds that she no longer fits in an outside world built for vertical people; however, it is her healthy friends who are out of place and ill at ease when they come to visit Bailey in her studio. The studio has become the space of Bailey and the snail, a space of slow pace, crip time, and quiet contemplation. In this context and location, it is the agitated and pacing bodies, twitching feet, gesticulating hands, and hectic lives of Bailey's human friends, and the exuberant energy of her dog Brandy, that are out of place.

As Garland-Thomson observes, misfitting often results in "segregation," "isolation," and "alienation from a majority community," as occurred in Bailey's case.[77] The experience of misfitting can also lead, however, to solidarity and community among misfits—an experience for which Bailey longs but does not find until she meets the woodland snail. With the snail, initially another misfit in the studio, Bailey finds a surprising fit and helps the snail to fit too, thus opening up worlds. Other benefits of misfitting that Garland-Thomson describes include subjugated knowledges, oppositional consciousness, politicized identity, and a "vivid recognition of our fleshliness and the contingencies of human embodiment."[78] Although she lacks the nourishment and solidarity of a disability community, Bailey's memoir nevertheless illustrates and extends Garland-Thomson's argument: *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating* teems with disability-inspired philosophical reflections on the vulnerability, ephemerality, beauty, and complexity not only of human embodiment but of gastropod embodiment and of life itself.[79]

Gutted

> The snail and I both had a gut and a heart and a lung, though I had two lungs to its one.
>
> —Elisabeth Tova Bailey[80]

I first read Bailey's book, which I have described as a book about grief, when I was myself in a months-long state of grief—or, to use a more pathologizing term, "major depression." Although, physiologically I was perfectly healthy and could have done any of the activities I normally do, I was, in this time, also living a snail-like existence, moving very little and very slowly. I was spending most of my time in bed or moving between my bed and my couch. In this period, like Bailey, I was sleeping through many sunlit days, seeing no one except cats—who, a bit like Bailey's snail, provided the comfort and companionship of other creatures who sleep days away and, unlike the indifferent gastropod, are glad when their human does too. Like Bailey, then, I experienced in this period a changed relationship to time—or what has been described in the disability studies literature as "crip time." In *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, Alison Kafer writes:

> Crip time is flex time not just expanded but exploded; it requires reimagining our notions of what can and should happen in time, or recognizing how expectations of "how long things take" are based on very particular minds and bodies. . . . Rather than bend disabled bodies and minds to meet the clock, crip time bends the clock to meet disabled bodies and minds.[81]

In an article that builds on this celebratory understanding of crip time but also considers other, more ambivalent senses of the phrase, Ellen Samuels has argued that "*Crip time is grief time*. It is a time of loss, and the crushing undertow that accompanies loss."[82] Moreover, for Samuels,

> *Crip time is broken time*. It requires us to break in our bodies and minds to new rhythms, new patterns of thinking and feeling and moving through the world. It forces us to take breaks, even when we don't want to, even when we want to keep going, to move ahead.[83]

Resonating with Bailey's experience of chronic illness and my own, Samuels invokes a time of "late nights and unconscious days, of life schedules lived out of sync with the waking, quotidian world."[84]

During the time of my depression, much as Bailey took a woodland snail into her home, I added several foster cats to my already large household of cats. In my year of fostering, much like Bailey during her year with a snail, I read the foster cats' stories on the animal rescue website and found myself reflecting on the ways in which they had also undergone traumatic losses immediately before I met them—in some cases the loss of their former homes and humans; in other cases the loss of their mothers and littermates; and, in one case, the loss of an eye as well as his home and humans. As I watched the foster cats transition from petrified newcomers to intrepid explorers, affectionate companions, and sensualist enjoyers of their new lives, I admired their courage and resilience, and I took heart that I might recover and embrace life again too. I watched Antoine, the cat who had lost an eye as well as his home and humans, learn to navigate the world differently. When two of the foster cats, Buttercup and Antoine, fell madly in love, I adopted them both rather than let them be separated. This allowed me to think that my own loss had opened the way for this feline gain, and I was comforted. When I watched them sleeping, orange paw wrapped around black paw, I thought that perhaps it had all been worthwhile.

Other than caring for cats and sleeping, the one thing I was doing in this period was reading—and, lacking the focus to work, I was reading books I would not normally have read. It was in this context that I came across Bailey's book, and in the hours that I first read it, I felt nourished and enchanted in a way that nothing in Bailey's studio sustained or enriched her before the arrival of the snail. In my own way, I also learned from and delighted in the woodland snail and took comfort in the example that a life could be lived and a life could matter, despite being solitary, circumscribed, and slow. Much as Bailey would very much like to be cured, I would happily accept to never be depressed again, and yet, like Bailey and many other disabled authors, I can say that from that unwanted period of stillness and quiet—when my normally busy life was suspended, and most of my relationships withdrew—there were experiences I had, insights into life that I derived, and new, crip, and interspecies relationships that grew, which I would never have had otherwise, that changed me, and for which I am grateful.

Feminist new materialist Elizabeth Wilson has examined the science and politics of depression in two books: *Psychosomatic: Feminism and the Neurological Body* and *Gut Feminism*.[85] In each case, Wilson resists the inclination of much feminist theorizing to reduce the entirety of a gendered phenomenon—in this case depression—to the social, even while she also resists the psychiatric impulses to equate depression with a disease model and to locate it entirely in the brain. Instead, Wilson tirelessly explores the ways that the social and the biological interact in depression, and shows that melancholy is in the gut as much as it is in the head. Indeed, as Wilson notes, we are gutted by grief: we lose our appetites, we cannot swallow, we cannot digest our food, we are hollowed out. As Wilson also shows, anti-depressants, like the condition they are meant to treat, impact serotonin levels and have adverse side effects not only in the brain but in the gut, causing indigestion, bloating, constipation, gastric pain, vomiting, and nausea.

Depression and the pills that treat it are somatized—and somatized in the stomach; the gut is both an affective and a cognitive organ of the body: it responds, "ruminates, deliberates, [and] comprehends."[86] As Wilson puts this point later in *Gut Feminism*, the "viscera" are "minded."[87]

In *Psychosomatic* Wilson offers an intriguing and quite material explanation for why the stomach is a "particularly potent psychological organ."[88] As she remarks, the long tube from mouth to anus that passes through the gut is the main way in which the external world enters our internal worlds, in which relations with others and hence our affective lives pass through us. As she writes: "The open tube that begins at the mouth ends at the anus. Paradoxical as it may seem, the gut is a tunnel that permits the exterior to run through us."[89] This is significant because

> [w]hat the outside world engenders in the psychological sphere is relations to others, and through this the development of the self. It is the dynamics of intersubjective relations that allow the self to emerge and stabilize. These relations to others are psychologically generative only to the extent that they are internalized (ingested, absorbed, excreted).[90]

Depression, according to Wilson, is a physiological-affective response to a major deprivation or loss in our social world. As she writes,

> Depression is a breakdown in relations to others. The sustaining effects of others have been removed, either chronically or suddenly, and the self is unable to hold itself together, disintegrating into either an affectless immobilization or agitation (or sometimes, paradoxically, both).[91]

We thus appropriately experience this loss through the length of the tube from our mouths to our anuses—a lump in our throats, inability to swallow food, nausea, loss of appetite, pain in our chest, stomach pain, indigestion. We have lost something in our external world and our body responds by closing this passage from the outside to the inside. "The struggle to eat," Wilson writes, "(or to stop eating) when depressed is a struggle to mediate difficult, attenuated, or lost relations to others and to the outside world."[92] By reconnecting to others and to the external world again, eventually our guts settle and our mood lifts. To understand depression and its treatment, Wilson thus argues that feminists would do well to attend not only to social factors but to science—and, as science goes, to attend not only to serotonin levels in the brain but also to serotonin levels in the stomach, and the mucous world of the gut and of biological processes generally.

Bailey, like Wilson, is enamored by science and by biology in particular. As she writes, "I combed through scientific gastropod literature, eager to know more about my companion."[93] She reads biology, physiology, ecology, and paleontology to learn more about "gastropods"—a word that, resonating with Wilson's work, means "gut-foot."[94] Bailey even reads about the biochemistry of snail slime. Much as Wilson mines Freud and his contemporaries, as well as even earlier scientists, putting their voices in conversation with and sometimes as correctives to those of contemporary science, so Bailey also reads the writings of nineteenth-century naturalists and finds something in the words of these "intrepid souls" that is lacking in the more austere writings of contemporary science.

In her scientific studies, Bailey, like Wilson, dedicates significant attention to the gut, mucous, alimentation, and digestion. As she writes, the soft body of the snail contains "a lung, a heart and a gastrointestinal system."[95] Bailey describes experimenting with the snail's diet, offering them a concoction of cornstarch and cornmeal. Unfortunately, the snail overeats, and the starchy meal does not agree with them. Suffering from a severe case of "indigestion," the snail is described as "staggering" to the top of the terrarium, where they stayed for hours "excreted wastes from all orifices."[96] Easier on the snail's gastrointestinal system are fungi, such as mycelium, and Bailey observes that snails can eat mushrooms that are toxic for humans. Bailey tells us that snails have a special enzyme in their stomachs that allows them to digest cellulose, and hence paper. Some snails also eat algae, and, if they eat living plants, they prefer deteriorating leaves.[97] Snails also eat soil, from which they derive calcium—a crucial part of a snail's diet as it is required for shell growth.[98] Indeed, so essential is calcium to the snail that they can detect it by smell, and Bailey discovered that her snail was ecstatic—waving their tentacles "as rapidly as a snail can"—when offered a meal of crushed eggshells.[99] Although Bailey's snail seems to have forgotten this rule in the unfortunate cornstarch incident, snails generally "proceed cautiously" when eating something new: they first inspect the novel substance with their lower tentacles, then taste a small amount, and return later to eat more if no adverse reaction occurs.[100] More disturbingly, some snails are cannibalistic.[101] As for beverages, in what is known as "foot drinking," snails flatten their stomach-foot across a water source, absorbing the fluid directly through their skin.[102] Snails might also be said to cook, and Bailey spends considerable time describing gastropod "recipes" for slime—a substance that she describes as the "sticky essence of a gastropod's soul."[103]

In *Psychosomatic*, Wilson describes a depressed young man named Solomon, who, unable to eat, is fed by his father. Solomon's father sits patiently with him at meal times, cutting his son's food for him, even lifting the fork to Solomon's lips and feeding him as he did when he was a child. As the father feeds his adult son, he explains that he hopes his son will also feed him when he is old and unable to feed himself. As Wilson writes,

> Largely unable to feel or connect with others, Solomon is able to enter into a relation of reciprocated care with his father through the gut. At this moment, the gut has become Solomon's most viable, most dexterous means of accessing others. Where Freud was able to intervene in Frau Emmy's gastric depression with hypnosis and stroking of the abdomen, Solomon's father has worked more intersubjectively on the inside of the gut (we will have fed each other) to reestablish his son's relations to the world and to lift the depression that threatens to kill him.[104]

In *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating*, Bailey never mentions her diet, although we learn a great deal about what gastropods eat. In contrast to the alimentary preferences of the woodland snail, all we know about Bailey's meals are that her caretaker visits for a half hour at these times, and that the portobello mushroom that the snail enjoys was in the studio fridge. We also know one thing Bailey *won't* eat, for she wishes she could reassure the snail that she would not eat *escargot*. Like other animals, snails do everything they can to resist being eaten. As Bailey writes:

> Farmed snails unhappy with their lot in life have found ways to break free. In the mid-nineteenth century, Sir George Head described the single-minded survival instinct of snails for sale at a street market in Rome: "The proprietor," Sir George commented, "is obliged to exert his utmost vigilance and dexterity in order to restrain their incessant efforts to crawl over the edge of the basket and escape."
>
> A U.S. Department of Agriculture's snail-farming bulletin notes that confined snails may form an aggregate, their combined strength and skills leading to escape.[105]

Reading about the alimentary and medicinal uses of snails, as well as the resistance of snails to meeting such ends, Bailey writes, "I avoided glancing toward my small companion as I read, fervently hoping that it did not have any sort of gastropod telepathy and, if it did, that it understood that it was most helpful to me alive."[106]

Beyond this, Bailey describes her depression far more than her diet. While Bailey does not seem to be delighting in food herself at this time, it is clear that she enjoys feeding the snail and observing what the snail eats and how they eat it. Like the son who begins to recover from depression through the sociality of sharing meals with his father, partaking in mealtimes with the snail, if only as a witness, provides Bailey with a relation to the external world that soothes her gut and alleviates her depression. In contrast to the loneliness that otherwise occupies her life, Bailey writes that "[t]he tiny, intimate sound of the snail's eating gave me a distinct feeling of companionship and shared space."[107] So important is this experience of hearing another being eat that it infiltrates the life-threatening isolation of illness and gives Bailey the title for her memoir.

Conclusion

In *Gut Feminism*, Elizabeth Wilson asks: "What conceptual innovations would be possible if feminist theory wasn't so instinctively antibiological?"[108] As Wilson and Bailey both demonstrate, biology can be a source of inspiration as well as well-warranted suspicion for feminist theory and disability studies. While Wilson focuses on the positives that result from moving past feminist antibiologism, in concluding this chapter, I would dwell with the inverse side of this coin: the harmful effects of our ongoing antibiologism, both in feminist theory and critical disability studies. More specifically, I suggest that antibiologism—the idea that humans, unlike any other animal, are purely social beings, and that nothing about our lives should be explained by biology—if undiluted or totalizing, reinforces a humanism that has always functioned to posit a moral abyss between ourselves and other animals. What I fear is that the antibiologism we see in much feminist and some disability theory leads directly to the human exceptionalism that is at the root of our oppression of other animals and our exploitation of the earth. Such human exceptionalism will almost certainly be our own downfall, as Bailey frequently reminds us in her references to the current mass extinction event—an extinction that humans will likely not survive, even as gastropods continue on their slimy way well into a future without us. Following feminist disability studies scholars such as Crow and Wendell, and feminist new materialist scholars of disability such as Garland-Thomson and Wilson, I thus argue that we should renew and build on social constructivist arguments of both gender and disability with the kind of biophilia and curiosity for the more-than-human world that is exemplified in Bailey's memoir. By putting Elisabeth Tova Bailey's biophilic memoir, *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating*, into conversation with feminist new materialist approaches to disability, I have hoped to take some steps along this path.

Notes

1 I borrow the term "gimp" from critical disability studies scholar Danielle Peers, who uses the term similarly to "crip." See, for instance, their brilliant video "G.I.M.P. Bootcamp": http://www.daniellepeers.com/art.html. I would also like to acknowledge Danielle for prompting me to think about disability through a feminist new materialist lens, years before this was being done within Critical Disability Studies to my knowledge.
2 Elisabeth Tova Bailey, *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 2010), 13.
3 Bailey, *Sound*, 169.
4 Bailey, *Sound*, 166.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Bailey, *Sound*, 167.
8 Ibid.
9 Bailey, *Sound*, 14.
10 Bailey, *Sound*, 13.
11 Bailey, *Sound*, 15.
12 Bailey, *Sound*, 83.
13 Bailey, *Sound*, 40.
14 Ibid.
15 Bailey, *Sound*, 84.
16 Bailey, *Sound*, 34–35.
17 Disability studies scholar Ellen Samuels also describes navigating a world intended for the vertical. In her account of going back to graduate school as a disabled person, she writes: "I worked lying down as much as possible, in the days before lightweight laptops and wireless internet. I lay on the floor in my classrooms and stared at the

scratched undersides of desks while my classmates talked." See "Six Ways of Looking at Crip Time," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (2017). See also Nancy Mairs, *Waist-High in the World: A Life among the Nondisabled*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1996.

18 Bailey, *Sound,* 35.

19 See also Tanya Titchkowsky, *The Question of Access: Disability, Space, Meaning* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011); Ami Hamraie, *Building Access: Universal Design and the Politics of Disability* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017).

20 Bailey, *Sound*, 12.

21 Bailey, *Sound*, 18.

22 Bailey, *Sound*, 27.

23 Bailey, *Sound*, 20.

24 Bailey, *Sound*, 27.

25 Bailey, *Sound*, 22.

26 Bailey, *Sound*, 130, 7.

27 Bailey, *Sound*, 157.

28 Bailey, *Sound*, 22.

29 Bailey, *Sound*, 130.

30 Bailey, *Sound*, 131.

31 Bailey, *Sound*, 16.

32 Bailey, *Sound*, 132.

33 Bailey, *Sound*, 154.

34 Bailey, *Sound*, 41.

35 Bailey, *Sound*, 22.

36 Bailey, *Sound*, 117.

37 Bailey, *Sound*, 37.

38 Bailey, *Sound*, 160.

39 Bailey, *Sound*, 37.

40 Bailey, *Sound*, 66.

41 Bailey, *Sound*, 89. See also Elizabeth Kolbert, *The Sixth Extinction* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2014); Ashley Dawson, *Extinction: A Radical History* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Publishing, 2016); Richard Grusin, ed., *After Extinction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018); Thom van Dooren, *Flight Ways: Life and Loss at the Edge of Extinction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); Thom van Dooren, Deborah Bird, and Matthew Chrulew, *Extinction Studies: Stories of Time, Death, and Generations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

42 Bailey, *Sound*, 154.

43 Bailey, *Sound*, 90.

44 Bailey, *Sound*, 87.

45 Bailey, *Sound*, 109.

46 Bailey, *Sound*, 59.

47 Bailey, *Sound*, 50.

48 Bailey, *Sound*, 100, 113.

49 Bailey, *Sound*, 146.

50 Bailey, *Sound*, 160.

51 Bailey, *Sound*, 39.

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