

BOOK of ABSTRACTS in Alphabetical order:

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Title: The (Animal) Power: retelling human history through the eyes of a cat

Narratives are powerful tools; they help humans understand and make sense of the world around us. Often, they turn into stories that, exactly through their retelling, shape the way in which we behave in the present. At the same time, through practices of exclusion of the most marginalized, they reconstruct the past to hide its inherent violences and struggles. In particular, animals' voices have often been silenced or removed from human narratives. Several human histories objectify animals rendering them passive onlookers to the greater lives of 'anthropos'. As Chakrabarty argues, there has been a tendency to separate human histories from natural histories and sometimes this separation has meant a fierce denial that "nature could ever have history quite in the same way humans have it" (2009: 201). However, stories can also be reappropriated to challenge anthropocentric narratives of development and modernization in order to actively criticize the exploitation of the nonhuman. Kobayashi Erika's 2014 novel *Breakfast with Madame Curie*, 『マダムキュリーと朝食を』, is one such compelling example. Kobayashi's cat narrator travels through time and space to retell the human history of the development of the electronic current. The historical events of the 'war of currents' (1880s – 1890s) become the background against which, through the eyes of the cat, the readers witness the violence animals – and marginalized humans such as convicts – underwent for the sake of capitalistic development. The processes of othering that led to the separation between 'human' and 'animal' also created a shift in ethics. Inasmuch as the animal is perceived as 'other' then violence becomes ethically admissible (Wolfe 2009; Haraway 2007). And precisely this difference in ethics is criticized in Kobayashi's novel. Her nonhuman narrator is reframing a capitalistic 'success story' as a story of violence, exploitation and exclusion, and in doing so, anthropocentric hierarchies are destabilized and animals' lives are reconfigured as 'grievable' (Butler 2016). At the same time, human exceptionalism is questioned and the borders of what constitutes a 'human' become porous. In the end, this paper will argue that *Breakfast with Madame Curie* is one example of a narrative that tries to reconcile human and natural histories and, by letting the cat 'speak', Kobayashi is positively arguing for the reconfiguration of the past without the exclusion of nonhuman experiences.

Keywords: Japanese literature, ethics of violence, anthropocentrism, animal narrator, natural history.

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Title: This (meatless) meat is not dead: eating and caring in the space of heterotopia

«While the cultural meanings of meat shift historically, one essential part of meat-eating is static: one does not eat meat without the death of an animal» (Adams 2010, 66). What if, in the future, it will be possible to produce or cultivate “meat” that does not come from non-human animals’ dead bodies? Plant-based meats, which are already on the market, precisely offer this possibility. Yet, these novel foods raise an urgent question: is the consumption of meat alternatives a symbolical consumption of animals, a reaffirmation of the carnist ideology? When we use the language of meat to refer to meatless meats, are we perpetuating or disrupting the conceptualization of animals as foods and our right to dispose of their lives? Meat is constantly taken as the model for designing and selling meat alternatives – with the result that these products can be interpreted as a reminder of humans’ desire for meat, a desire that has been cultivated at the expense of those non-human animal species categorized as food sources. Moreover, these products have been criticized because they offer the illusion of victimless eating (Sinclair 2016), thus distancing us once more from our material relationships with the non-human world. And yet, isn’t it a radical – and ironical – subversion to claim that the meat of our meals can be replaced by its mere copy? The appearance of meat un-cruel doppelgangers highlights the violence that is required for producing the “authentic” one, as it is the only feature that distinguishes them. Calling these foods “meat” could be a way to destabilize the carnist ideology from within: when the core of the concept of meat – the death of an animal- is removed, could the symbolism that is built upon it, start to crumble? Meat-eating prevents us to develop a true relationship of care with farm animals. We do not allow ourselves to see them differently or the sacrifice we require from them will become unbearable. Meat alternatives, which are characterized by the rejection of animal deaths, could allow the flourishing of a new relationship with animals. However, as they are placed inside a carnist ideology, even the possibility to imagine a future in which meat no longer represents the death of an animal seems a delusional utopia. To challenge this framework, one could look at those materialized utopias that contain contradictions without resolving them. Such places, the heterotopias (Foucault 1986), can take the form of animal sanctuaries. The aim of this paper will be to inquire whether inside these places meatless meats could be the vehicle of a relationship of care with non-humans, thus being the symbol of animals’ lives rather than death.

Keywords: Meat Alternatives; Heterotopia; Carnist ideology; Philosophy of Food; Animal Sanctuaries.

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Title: Limen

In our contribution we elucidate in a scientific-artistic way how the concept of limen (Turner, 2011) can be applied for questioning dualisms, like human/animal, as we regard this as one central task of Critical Animal Studies. We criticise the construction of ‘the human’ that is by definition opposed to nature (and other animals) and turn instead towards practices based on corporeal vulnerability that encompass animal nature as part of being human. For although every species, and probably every individual of a species, has its own reality and perceives the world differently and, depending on the individuals or species compared, maybe in incomparable ways, “they relate [...] to each other, in some way or other in a world that is, at least hypothetically, undeniably common to both” (Derrida, 2011, p. 262). Furthermore, our scientific-artistic approach considers people as both human and animal, and thus, in an ambiguous and uncomfortable in-between, in our terms, as liminal beings. The concept of limen opens up a non-binary perspective in which hierarchy producing dichotomies, such as animal/human and culture/nature, can be overcome. Our argument is that this uncomfortableness demonstrates the fragility of the construction of human supremacy as it reminds ‘the human’ of his own exposure and vulnerability to the world and his own liminal being as human and animal. Continuously confronted with his liminality he desperately seeks to find ever new reasons why he is not an animal and superior to everything which is animalised or nature. The practical basis for our inquiry are observations on biocyclic-vegan farms, and interviews in which farmers share their worldviews, as well as their experiences with interspecies interactions. Encounters with deer demonstrate how various species cross the boundaries imposed on them by anthropocentric ideology and laws and in doing so also become liminal. Moreover, we analyse the potential of biocyclic-vegan agriculture to respect and integrate the demands of more-than-human vulnerability and agency when trying to produce food in an ethical way. It is this avenue of interrelationality based on feminist care theory and response ethics that we are interested in. In addition to verbal data, our methodologies consider other senses. The film ‘limen’ by Rosie Benn is inspired by the method of ethnographic fiction (Rogers, 2020) and takes on the form of a video poem approach to documentary. Sounds, images and the stories within them disrupt conventional representations of non-human life on sites where farming takes place and poetically hint at practical and ethical entanglements.

Keywords: Liminality, Biocyclic-Vegan Agriculture, Non-Human Vulnerability, Human Supremacy, Conviviality

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Title: Tracing the Continuum of Zoébios Through the Queer Fox Spirit Motif in Chinese *Zhiguai*

This paper will examine the representation of queer fox spirit in *Strange Tales from Liao-zhai* which is *zhiguai* (Records of Anomalies), a kind of historical genre in medieval China. And it will argue that the male same-sex eroticism between queer fox spirit and male scholar contributes to diminishing the Confucian anthropological machine, a variant of Giorgio Agamben's anthropological machine.¹ The short story "The gallant woman" in the *Liao-zhai* collection would be selected for the explication of my argument, in which a traditional chaste woman killed the queer white fox spirit who secretly had sexual affairs with her lover, a male human scholar. Drawing on Eske Møllgaard's argument that "Confucianism is an anthropological machine in the sense of the term used by Giorgio Agamben," I will look into the interplay between the Confucian regulations on sexuality and the Confucian split of humans and nonhumans.² Furthermore, by employing Stacy Alaimo's influential work on queer animals that foregrounds their potential to "account for the diversity and 'exuberance' of a multitude of naturecultures," I will argue how queer animals also contribute to bringing the nominally separate zoé and bios into an unstable continuum in the context of the Confucian anthropological machine.³

The narrative unfolds against the changing history of China which, in the seventeenth century, was marked by considerable insecurity in social, political, and economic affairs. Though kept in *zhiguai*, specifically the records of anomalies, the queer phenomenon was not anomalous in itself at that time, as indicated by *Liao-zhai*'s compiler Pu Songling in the book. Therefore, the interpolation of the queer fox spirit in "The Gallant Woman," and the promiscuity that accompanies it, are deliberate violations of Confucian norms on sexuality, which ultimately defends the feudal ethics that help determine the rules and regulations of human society. If, broadly speaking in the West, sexual pleasure is a characteristic that is used to distinguish human beings from other animals, in Chinese Confucianism it is the ability to restrain the natural desire for sexual pleasure that is a marker of humanity. Paradoxically, the reproduction of an heir for the family is also of significance for Confucian filial piety. Therefore, same-sex eroticism queers this orthodox Confucianism as it acknowledges the presence of natural sexual desires that may fall outside of social rituals, and separates reproduction from sexuality in both human and non-human contexts.

Keywords: Zoé, bios, the anthropological machine, queer animals, *zhiguai*

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¹ Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. by Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

² Eske Møllgaard, 'Confucianism as Anthropological Machine', *Asian Philosophy*, 20. 2 (2010), 127-140 (p. 127).

³ Stacy Alaimo, 'Eluding Capture: The Science, Culture, and Pleasure of 'Queer' Animals', in *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, ed. by Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), pp. 51- 72 (p. 52).

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Title: The capitalized dy(e)ing of domesticated scale insects

Animal products have been assigned prominent places in human markets and societies for millennia. Next to meat, milk, eggs, leather and other goods deriving directly from animals in an obvious manner, there are plenty more, receiving much less attention. One example is carmine red dye that is used in drinks, foods, and cosmetics. Caught in a politics of life and death, the minuscule producers of the dye - little scale insects named cochineals of the genus *Dactylopius* - are embedded in overlapping hierarchical structures reaching a global scale. Originally deriving from Mexico, the production of carmine dye is an old traditional practice carried out today by only a few skilled remaining individuals. Carmine dye was once one of Mexico's most valuable exports, besides gold and silver. Especially for indigenous individuals, raising cochineals is a greatly valued task to keep ancestral knowledge alive. The insects are raised indoors, protected from predators, on cut-off parts of prickly pear cactus (genus *Opuntia*), and closely tended to for months until they have produced enough carminic acid within them, then they will be carefully removed from the cactus and dried. Once dry, they are either ground up into powdered dye or sold whole.

However, between being valued companions in dye production, acting as an introduced task force for controlling the quick unwanted spread of the prickly pear cactus in arid regions across the world, and, having exceeded their job by decimating the plant growth to an unwanted low, the critters tread a thinly spun line between being considered a blessing and an unstoppable pest. Characterized by alternating elevation and degradation - cochineals have played an enormous role in human societies of diverse geography and make-up in history and today, having become intrinsically entwined with peoples' livelihoods, definitions of human social status, landscape planning, and global economic trade. By shedding some light upon this complex web of entangled significances and fates, I hope to emphasize the strong need for an expansion of biopolitical attention towards zoopolitical consideration of the question of welfare regarding the multifaceted network of actors and the interspecies assemblage cochineals, humans, and prickly pear cacti engage in together.

Lately, the demand for carmine dye for foods, cosmetics, and paint has been fluctuating due to the competition with newly-emerged synthetic dyes, the recent COVID-pandemic, and the divergence of attitudes towards consuming and using a product deriving from insects, as well as the "harvesting" of cochineals in general, in connection to veganism and animal welfare concerns. This instability of the market has left traditional Mexican cochineal farmers either without orders or unable to produce the high amounts of dye required by large international companies. Therefore, numerous cochineal farmers were forced to give up their craft.

Keywords: Cochineals, Indigenous Environmental Knowledge, Animal Capitalization, Zoopolitics, Multispecies Vulnerability

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Title: Food politics is zoopolitics, and vice versa. Speculative insights from the European food re/production context

This is the title I came up with for the purpose of this conference, to which I wish to contribute by exploring the dense network of connections linking the ways in which food re/production is ruled in the European Union, including that of nonhuman farm animals. Through this conference, and more generally throughout my Ph.D. project, my aim is to start placing the premises to bridge an existing knowledge gap within the epistemological debates from feminist legacies dealing with the nonhuman animal issue, which in my understanding would miss the opportunity to critically look at the role played by food policies in shaping the ways in which nonhuman animals' lives would be represented and thus disciplined. In this respect, at this conference, I intend to propose a posthuman feminist comprehension of the scenario(s) currently appearing in the European food re/production context, by delving into the serious biopolitical waves relating to the expanding control towards nonhuman animals' lives and generative power, especially in a complex entanglement of events characterized by wars, post-pandemic effects, and rising temperatures. Against this background, the presentation will briefly count four main parts. The first part will consist in situating the background and the purpose of this contribution, meaning the theoretical framework that inspires this piece of research, including its conceptual, spatial and temporal coordinates. The second part of the intervention will focus on the emergence of a productivist trend underpinning European agricultural context, in which it would be possible to detect a growing interest from European institutions and policymakers in science and technology-based solutions to continue producing nonhuman animal-based food while meeting current ecological challenges and maintaining certain eating habits. I am here referring to the case of the latest frontiers of new animal breeding techniques (e.g., CRISPR/Cas-9, etc.) as well as that of synthetic meat, which would allow European eaters to keep eating meat, reduce their impact on the environment and ensure nonhuman animals' welfare. The third section will be devoted to discussing the common grounds and purposes underlying these examples, to disclose the role of nonhuman animals as key actors in feeding human social re/production. To this end, narratives and representations concerned with managing human and nonhuman animal relations will be explored, shedding light on how they have shaped the current system of food re/production (in fields and laboratories) accordingly. In the fourth and last section, I will conclude by engaging in dialogue with the most radical neo-materialist and compostist contributions from posthuman feminism, encouraging a speculative re-thinking of multi- and inter-species relational imaginaries also with regard to food production.

Keywords: Food re/production; zoopolitics; nonhuman animals; posthuman feminism; inter-species relationalities.

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Title: Learning to 'fish' on multispecies pilgrimage

This is a guidebook, of sorts. It is a braiding of many streams of thought to inform an experimental multispecies pilgrimage called 'A Salmon's Walk', a journey that followed the path of spawning Atlantic Salmon up the River Dart in Devon, England. Collecting questions and inspiration from multispecies studies, walking art, angling, pilgrimage-centred enchantment and onto-poetics, we find that at the confluence of these fields are profound and embodied ways to be attentive to, and be moved by, an emerging and dynamic relationship with the river, the salmon, and each other.

Keywords: salmon, multispecies, pilgrimage, walking arts

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Title: Voltairine de Cleyre, Syl Ko, Audre Lorde: exploring Anarchism and Antispeciesism through Powerful Differences

Abstract:

Theories of anarchy/anarchism take into account a number of broad concepts, namely: difference, (social-political) categories, hierarchy, relationships, nature-culture interplay – that is, insofar as they relate to notorious Anarchist aims: freedom, no compulsion; independence, inter-dependence; protection/enhancement of self-hood (identity); pluralism; and the like. The very simplicity of this proposition makes it compatible with antispeciesist aims. The purpose of this presentation is that of articulating and, possibly, *thickening* the web of relations, analogies, cross-contamination – existing or envisaged – between these two political movements. The works of three authors in particular will assist us.

Voltairine de Cleyre brilliantly addresses what anarchism means to her, at once staying true to the mentioned elementar outline, while greatly exceeding it: she regards anarchism as ground for growth, exploration, creation – virtually limitless. An extensive work on defining, categorizing or undoing existing categories is carried out by authors Syl Ko and Audre Lorde: redefining ourselves, self-definition, in A. Lorde; redefining humanity, for instance, in Ko. We are presented with an unprecedented way of relating to differences: in Audre Lorde's theory, we have differences without hierarchy; and without separation – therefore, unity without homogeneity/homologation; as opposed to the well-established “distortions of relationships” that only see difference in terms of deviance from the “ideal”, thus leading to

dehumanization. Ko explores Others' perspectives, human and non-human alike, particularly through the lens of the "human-animal divide", the backbone of social hierarchy. The notions of "human" and "animal" are broken down into their biological vs. ontological vs. social meanings, and understood in terms of the latter. The power-less of society (where more/less is on a spectrum) are *socially* animals: which calls the need for reclaiming the "animal within us". In de Cleyre's focus on certain themes, we recognize elements present in Ko's and Lorde's respective theories: e.g., the stress on self-definition, vs. the externally imposed; the appeal to the most neglected parts of one's identity – the beast or the criminal *within*.

We encounter anarchist premises in Ko's as well as in Audre Lorde's ideas; and effective tools for anti-speciesism are to be found in both Lorde's essay and in (de Cleyre's) anarchism. In Ko's conceptualization, the social hierarchy among humans/animals is granted a pivotal role: her studies allow anarchism – deeply invested in the abolition of hierarchical powers – to reach a better understanding.

keywords: anarchism; Voltairine de Cleyre; Audre Lorde; antispeciesism; Aphro-ism

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Title: Willful hermeneutical ignorance and nonhuman animals: a reassessment in light of conditioned ethical blindness

Hermeneutical injustice is a kind of epistemic injustice that occurs when an area of one's social experience is obscured from the collective understanding due to unequal power relations (Fricker 2007). More detailed discussions on hermeneutical injustice have focused on the willful ignorance of this obscuring owing to a perceived benefit by those who profit from these inequalities and actively ignore them in order to continue benefiting from them. In this paper, I advance revisions to this analysis that include the injustice committed against nonhuman animals as instantiating a sub-kind of hermeneutical injustice, i.e. other-oriented hermeneutical injustice (Podosky 2018). Then, I argue that not only are bodies of active ignorance aimed at obscuring nonhuman animals' social experience, but they also exist at a meta-level, concealing even the intentions of those who try to bring them to light. This poses a significant problem for animal liberation activists who aim to expose nonhuman animal conditions in order to ultimately improve them. By describing what I refer to as a higher-order willful ignorance, I intend to reveal a limitation to certain kinds of coercive visibility initiatives that aim to present these experiences to human audiences in order to incorporate them into the collective hermeneutical resource, but fail to do so because of this second (or third, ... nth) layer of willful ignorance. I base some of my analyses on discussions surrounding the legacy of standpoint epistemology (Grasswick 2018) and the politics of liberation in the human/nonhuman relation context (Best 2014), as well as support my claims with empirical studies on intra- and interspecies social dependency. In order to

explain the phenomenon under exploration, I revisit Donald Barnes's (1985) conditioned ethical blindness hypothesis to help me explain one possible reason why this higher-order willful ignorance exists and appears so prevalent in our current speciesist societies. This problem then opens some discussion on moral responsibility and epistemic normativity, which has a precedent in Peter Singer's (2009) *Animal Liberation*. Lastly, if time permits, I discuss some potential ameliorative strategies that take a virtue theoretical approach as the starting point for the animal liberation cause.

Keywords: Epistemic injustice, willful ignorance, nonhuman animals, virtue epistemology, moral responsibility

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Title: "Boe zegt de koe": Farmed animals in the Dutch cultural imaginary

In *The War Against Animals*, Dinesh Wadiwel explores how biopolitics is fundamentally connected to the distinction between 'human' and 'animal', and argues that this distinction causes various forms of violence towards non-human animals. This includes industrial farming, which is exemplary of biopolitical exploitation as it maximizes reproduction for large-scale killing and optimizes production for profit. Additionally, Wadiwel employs Foucault's conceptualization of "war" in a broader sense, also considering the way violence is organized in civil political spaces in an invisible way. This includes the human/animal distinction, but also cultural apparatuses that function to hide evidence of this violence in ways that do not betray that it is, in fact, violence. In the Dutch cultural context, one of these apparatuses is in the conditional visibility of farmed animals. The black-and-white dairy cow, for example, is a popular cultural marker for the Netherlands. Though they are in this sense highly visible, their position in society simultaneously renders them invisible. Cows feature in various cultural objects, including advertisements, product designs, TV programs and literature, and they also function as an international mascot for the Netherlands. The dairy cows in these cultural objects are represented in the same way: a handful of cows grazing in a green meadow with a blue sky. As a consequence, representations like these not only fail to realistically represent the lives of farmed animals, but in fact generate a powerful narrative that serves to replace that reality. In this way, Dutch people are generally aware of where their food comes from and they are familiar with the non-humans that produce their food, but they connect the products to alternative, idealized versions of animal lives. This is what Wadiwel outlines as "the sublimation of hostility and aggression into forms of apparent civil peace-ability" (28). A striking example of this is in children's literature. Though the representation of farmed animals in children's books has been investigated in the US context by Janae Dimick for example, this has not yet been done in the Dutch context. Still, it is

highly relevant in the Netherlands, especially as public debate about animal farming and its consequences for animal welfare and the climate has recently culminated. Dutch children's books are very often about farms, especially books for younger children under six years old. Through an analysis of children's literature, this paper will argue that in the Dutch context, the industry of intensive animal farming is maintained by a cultural structure that strictly determines non-human visibility in order to generate an alternative story for the lives of farmed animals.

Keywords: farmed animals; representation; children's literature.

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Title: Kojève's Zoo: Can Animals be Snobs?

Mainly known for his infamous idea of an "end of history", Alexandre Kojève's philosophical cosmos is populated by numerous non-human creatures: black cows, bulls ("non-emasculated bovines"), bees, angels, cats, Amazons, "cold-blooded" fish, gods, frogs, cicadas, dogs, spiders and birds. Mobilizing these figures, Kojève sketches out post-historical forms of life that transcend traditional divides such as culture/nature or human/animal. If history is distinctly human, our "new world" is shaped by non-human subjectivities, including animals, machines and simulacra. In this paper, I will take a fresh look on Kojève's vision of post-history through the lens of animality, drawing on Giorgio Agamben's zoopolitics, Oxana Timofeeva's animal philosophy and Hiroki Azuma's "database animals." As I show, all three contemporary theorists explicitly draw on Kojève's distinction between human and animal desire. And yet, the central role that animals occupy in Kojève's work more broadly remains unexplored. In my talk, I will retrace animality from his early texts on physics to the Hegel lectures into his late writings of the 1950s. I argue that an analysis of animals in Kojève contributes a fruitful perspective to contemporary discourses around biopolitics, capitalism and animal ethics. In Kojève's theory, the end of history is (ambiguously) described as a state of perfect happiness. After history, once all desire has been satisfied, "our deaths mean nothing to us." Man as a desiring creature has died but remains alive as an animal. Sooner or later, men ("animals of the species *Homo sapiens*") will enter a state of full automation, abundance and security, with no danger threatening their lives anymore. Animals will participate in man's bliss as equal agents: while bulls "are currently used to realize the virtual virility of a few authentic (and mostly Iberian) human males" society will soon "put an end to the sufferings (and they are cruel and so humiliating) inflicted upon these poor vegetarian animals who have never done anyone any harm." After several trips to Japan in the late 1950s, Kojève's view on animals crystallized: "since no animal can be a snob," he argued, "every 'Japanized' post-historical period would be specifically human." Rather than men returning to animality, humanity is now preserved in

animals of the species *Homo sapiens* that serve as the “natural” support for what is (and remains) human in men, or what Azuma calls the "database animals."

Keywords: Kojève; Azuma; animal studies; desire; zoopolitics

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Oxana Timofeeva: *The History of Animals: A Philosophy*. London: Bloomsbury, 2018.

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Title: Non-Human Animals and Determinisms: The Damaged Agency

Critical thinking is irrevocably based on a deterministic reading of the social world. It is concerned with analysing the constitutive force of social and historical determinisms that fall upon individual and collective existences. These are the social and historical verdicts that take hold of individuals from the moment of their birth according to different variables: race, ethnicity, sex, social class, species, geographical location, historical period, etc. The principle of determinism is always articulated with the one of immanence, meaning that being social and historical, these determinisms are not necessary (logical, political, psychic, legal) and, as such, are susceptible to transformation (Eribon 2016). Theoretical analysis and political activity can prove to be powerful factors of transformation. Animals, too, are caught up in social and historical structures. The actions, practices, behaviours and perceptions of animals are governed by relentless mechanisms. Moreover, anthropozoological relationships and interactions carry a history of domination, exploitation, domestication and subjugation that goes back thousands of years. And every interaction, every relationship, every gesture that is not subjected to the reflexivity of its own history is, in fact, merely a mechanical reproduction of domination. An encounter between two individuals is not only an encounter of two names, it is an encounter of two subjects being incorporated by the social history of the categories to which they have each been assigned. In the light of these principles and the assimilation of animals into historical social structures, how can we ensure that social thought does not reproduce the symbolic force of structures when we analyse animal actions and anthropozoological interactions? How can we avoid trapping thought in the unthought? The use of the concept of 'agency' is an exemplary case for developing our argument. It is omnipresent in the literature of animal studies and is also invested in the animalist movement (El Khoury & Jacquemin 2022). However, this concept is part of a depoliticising approach, or rather a politicising approach in a depoliticised way insofar as it tends to evacuate the force of social and historical determinisms. It tends both to singularise the processes it is intended to account for (Guillo 2015) and to universalise them. Thus, the functioning of a particular case is mobilised to formulate a set of major analytical categories: Agency, Sentience, Actor, etc. Critical thinking can only be 'collectivising', that means historical, social and political. Thus, agency is not a universal capacity but a capacity submitted to social and historical mechanisms that extend or mutilate it. Thus, describing the agency of an individual consists, in fact, in revealing the social and historical mechanisms that mutilate it, i.e. that mutilate the agency of the social group to which he belongs.

Keywords: Critical theory ; social structures ; Determinism ; Agency ; Animals.

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Title: Curating Suffering. State-Animal Relation and the Monitoring of Care on Danish Farms.

My point of departure in this paper is animal welfare policies in Denmark to contemplate broader aspects of the current state of animal politics in the 21st century. Focusing on regulatory schemes introduced to improve the ‘well-being’ of animals on Danish farms, the paper foregrounds sites of law enforcement and industry regulation in which animal suffering is (‘carefully’) curated. The analysed material comprises inspection reports and interviews with veterinary officers and technicians charged with controlling the welfare of pigs. The paper explores how these inspectors, through what I describe as acts of juridical eyewitnessing, monitor the level of care on farms. In analysing animal care as mandated, enforced and negotiated between law, state bureaucracy and veterinary practices, I emphasise the role of agro-industrial policies in defining what is deemed acceptable responses to the suffering of animals on farms. In this regard, the paper foregrounds the role of the state in shaping human-animal relations and – by extension – offers an alternative interpretation of the evolution of anti-suffering sentiment. Finally, the paper also includes the example of the Danish colonial project of commercialising whaling in Greenland (Graugaard, 2019). In juxtaposing present-day attempts to ‘instill’ a particular sense of care and sensitivity in Danish farmers with similar efforts employed to foster ‘effective’ Inuit whale hunters in the past, the paper demonstrates how state-based attempts to create distance and closeness between ‘animals’ and people ensure the continuity in animal politics across time – a perspective I situate in the growing body of cross-disciplinary scholarship on interspecies relations, the state and politics (Garner & O’Sullivan 2016) (see also, Tyner & Rice, 2022 for a stimulating analysis of the role of nonhuman animals in state-making).

Keywords: animal politics, anti-suffering sentiment, juridical eyewitnessing, law enforcement, veterinary care.

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Title: (Animal) governmentality and police dog depictions on Instagram

Since 2019 official personalized Instagram accounts of a North German state police post visual depictions of their supposed professional everyday life. The accounts are part of a larger campaign within the Lower Saxony police force and are supposed to build a digital connection to citizens, show police presence in digital space, and rebuild trust in the police (Polizei Niedersachsen 2020a). Part of this orchestrated, personalized visual image that the state police controls and designs, are various accounts, which display the work of police dog handlers. Since cute puppies specifically, and animal content at large, generate numberless clicks and therefore, they are supposed to serve the purpose of enhancing police visibility and likeability online (Lee & McGovern 2013). Drawing on those sketched cases, the presentation investigates how those visual police dog depictions can be better understood through the lens of animal governmentality (Shukin 2013). The concept draws our attention towards the similarities of human and non-human subjectivation mechanisms. These become specifically apparent in the digital sphere, where non-human subjectivities and their visualities are being integrated in human security ambitions in order to produce human subjects complying with police perspectives. Looking at visualized animal bonds between police handlers and police dogs, parallel dynamics of governmentality become apparent. On the one hand, the human spectators' affective capacities are intrigued by the police performances of care and control, cuteness and dangerousness. On the other hand, the exposed interspecies relationship is characterized by emotional intimacy and the integration of the dogs' resources in human security ambitions. Therefore, the policed subjects in their functions as spectators, as well as the animal subjects in their function as visualized police images are integrated in similarly sophisticated mechanisms of affective mobilization and compliance into the police perspective. Or as Shukin writes: "It is not simply a question of how the social affection of other species is unwittingly instrumentalized or dumbly conscripted into serving the ends of security; also at stake is the possibility, that nonhumans are themselves treated, as amenable to techniques productive of subjectivities that experience the state of security as their own desire." (Shukin 2013: 812) The paper contributes to the question, how subjectivity of non-human living agents can be conceptualized in ways, that pay attention to affective, non-anthropocentric and productive aspects of (non-human) subjectivity.

Keywords: Dogs, Instagram, Police, Animal Governmentality, Visuality

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Title: The Abuse of Non-Human Animals addressed through Poems and Photographs

It is my intention to give a poetry reading from two of my most recent collections, *Zoospeak* (Enthusiastic Press 2020), and *EX-Posed: Animal Elegies* (Lantern Publishing and Media 2022), both of which use poems and photographs to highlight the abuses of non-human animals throughout the world. My presentation would consist of both my reading of the poems and the display of the photographs to which the poems refer. I would also leave time for a Q & A session.

Keywords: Zoochosis, Abuse, De-extinction.

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Zoospeak (Enthusiastic Press 2020),

EX-Posed: Animal Elegies (Lantern Publishing and Media 2022)

The Second Coming (as yet unpublished).

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Title: Bear Zoopolitics: Control, Risk and Power in Human-Nonhuman Relations

On 5th April 2023, a bear attacked a man, Andrea Papi, in Trentino, Italy. The bear was with her cubs, and the event took place within what is called her life perimeter, the area a bear normally inhabits. Andrea Papi died, and the bear was taken prisoner. She, numbered (rather than called) JJ4 in the faunistic control apparatus which follows the introduction of bears in the Central Alps, is now awaiting her sentence in the “Centre for the Recuperation of Alpine Fauna Casteller”, which resembles a prison more than anything else. How is the story being told in the media? How much voice is given to the human actors in the story (the vets, officials, politicians, local inhabitants), and how much to the nonhuman actors? As all traumatic events, this episode sparked divisions: activists demand the liberation of the bear, while some officials wish for her to be killed – or rather “abbattuto”, in Italian, which, apart from being often used in the masculine rather than the feminine, wants to appear as a death-sentence objectively decided upon in a tribunal, as an act of state-power, but also, in its twisted logic, as an act of pity towards a nonhuman animal defined “problematic”. *Abbattere* is very different from *uccidere*, the direct translation of killed. The man was *ucciso* by the bear, but the bear is *abbattuto* by men – “put to death”. This difference, which is not an exception from the norm, but falls into the zoopolitics (Agamben, Derrida) performed by human capitalist societies on nonhuman animals, accounts for the imbalanced power dynamics at work, and lets us grasp the extent of the human wish to control all that falls outside of the boundaries of “us”. When nonhuman animals escape control, when they do not behave as humans would like them to, they are put to death. And if not put to death, they are enclosed within the clearly defined spatial boundaries of a prison. In this paper, we wish to analyse the mediatic reaction to this event and, through discourse analysis and from the point of view of Feminist Critical Animal Studies, enlarge the scope of this episode and ask what this story, and the way it is being told, is telling us about human-nonhuman relations, about risk, power, and control. The reactions and decisions applied to JJ4, to her cubs, to the bears of the Central Alps, many of whom were introduced there through a human conservation project, stem from a capitalistic desire of control of nonhuman animals’ bodies. The

capitalistic extraction of value from them in the name of tourism also justifies repression whenever their actions appear "uncivil". Thus, nature is artificially separated from what is human, and at the same time drawn under the same laws. We believe that another way of co-inhabiting the mountains is possible, one based on mutual respect rather than oppression.

Keywords: bears, control, power, risk, zoopolitics

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Title: "Dying for the Other": a parallel between the "sacrificial logic" in laboratory experimentation and endangered species preservation

In the installation "Dying for the Other" (2011-2012), her last work before dying of cancer, interdisciplinary artist Beatriz da Costa presents a three-channel video that alternates footage of her experience as a cancer patient with the suffering of laboratory mice, highlighting the contradiction of living at the expense of others. Oncomice – along with other nonhuman animals used in laboratory experimentation – are part of a "sacrificial logic" that produces "killable bodies" (Haraway, 2008). These animals suffer so that we can be saved, and they can be killed without the charge of murder. Laboratory experimentation raises the question of which lives are worth living and preserving, and which are instead replaceable and killable, asking to critically address the biopolitics of nonhuman animals. Matthew Chrulew (2011) furthers this analysis by questioning the ambiguous biopolitics of conservation of endangered species in zoos. Chrulew refers to the conservation logic as species-thinking, in which "each individual is only perceived as a token of its inexhaustible taxonomic type", and each animal is "in principle replaceable" (p. 141). The logic of prioritizing the care for the species over the care for the individual is, nonetheless, part of the "sacrificial logic". In this perspective, there are "sacrificial populations", of both the endangered species and other species involved, "that live their lives and die their deaths in the shadows, often unseen and unacknowledged, but making possible our hopes and dreams for the ongoing life of this species" (van Dooren, 2014, p. 91). In this perspective, "least concern" becomes simultaneously a conservation category and a "kind of ethical taxonomic category, marking individuals of these species as available and expendable forms of life in the service of other, more needy, beings" (p. 116). Even though we choose the death of mice over the death of cancer patients, or the violence of captive breeding over the violence of extinction, we can't refuse the ethical problems of sacrificial logic, and we can never be completely comfortable with our decisions. Experimental animal research and captive breeding, although necessary, "can never 'legitimate' a relation to the suffering in purely regulatory or disengaged and unaffected ways" (Haraway, 2008, p. 72). Drawing this odd parallelism, in a continuous effort of "staying with the trouble" and inhabit "the messiness embedded in the practice of

maintaining one kind of life by killing another” (da Costa), the attempt will be “to give this messiness a form that disallows simple rationalization” nor ultimate justifications. The ultimate challenge will be to ask whether it is possible to not only dying for the other, but also with the other in attentive and caring relationships.

Keywords: Biopolitics; Sacrifice; Cancer; Conservation; Ethics.

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Title: *Watching and being watched. How human-animal performance is able to rethink the theatrical assumptions of vision and spectatorship*

How is performance art and the unedited question it brings on spectatorship able to produce a glimpse into the animal question? Although performance historically rethinks a series of power dynamics and ontological statutes on co-authorship, it has rarely done so in view of the interspecies relationships on the scene from an antispeciesist perspective, typical of the transdisciplinary field of Critical Animal Studies. Theatre, with its ability to unmask cultural structures of domination, can instead be a generative place where rethinking the animal question in relation to various classical assumptions, in this particular case, that of vision. Beginning from the shift of the question from whether or not animals are able to perform (like humans) to how animals perform for themselves and for others (Cull 2023), the proposal intends to investigate this dynamic with a mapping of the work of some performative artists. These, eager to stay in touch with the problem, situate their practices not in the use of animal bodies – as materials or as symbols – but in the more open field of possibilities of creating affects and unprecedented alliances inside and outside the scene, in the creation of other thinking that takes into account the significance of all lives. In this works a rupture is made with the idea of "landscape" as a nineteenth-century view (in which can often be found also animal portraits), from which the observer is totally excluded, and the aim is to produce a vision which is inside and outside the spectator, who is immersed in it (Ranci re 2011; Neimanis 2017). Applying this thought and "way of seeing" (Berger 1980) on the scene from a multispecies perspective produces the overturning of the viewer-observed relationship. For instance, this happens in spectacles specifically dedicated to an "animal" audience such as the ones by Tuija Kokkonen and David Harradine, or in the voyeuristic and indiscreet looking that takes place in Kira O'Reilly's *Falling Asleep With a Pig* (2009), able to deconstruct the fear of proximity and affection between subjects of different species. Here, it is no longer a matter of what one is looking at, but of what dynamics that gaze is able to highlight and subvert, like the listening disposition of a possible answer. As a result, the proposal research opens up the possibility of a post-anthropocentrist aesthetic capable of shifting the very idea of interspecies co-creation, as well as undermining the sense of aesthetic creation tout court.

Keywords: Performance; Animality; Spectatorship; Vision; Alliances

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Title: Working animals?

While everyday language such as “beasts of burden,” “busy as bee,” or “working like a dog,” imply that we can speak of working or laboring animals, of animalia laborantes, philosophers such as Bataille and those who inspired him, Kojève and Hegel, argue otherwise. In contrast to the likes of Nietzsche and Arendt, who argue that work in the form of labor is a natural, animal activity born of necessity, Bataille et al. argue that work is a distinctively human activity. While the idea that working is an exclusively human activity may have found ready acceptance in the past, today, as can be gleaned from recent work in the humanities and social sciences as well from some recent high-profile cases, it has become harder to argue that animals do not labor or work. Among animal advocates, Bataille’s claims are often met with suspicion – perhaps, justifiably so. In this paper, I seek to clarify Bataille’s claims, particularly those made in his Theory of Religion, by appealing to both Kojève’s and Hegel’s theory of work as presented in The Introduction to the Reading of Hegel and the Phenomenology of Spirit, respectively. I aim to demonstrate that animal advocates need not eschew Bataille (or, for that matter, Hegel, Marx or Kojève) and that he may indeed still prove helpful for thinking about the nature of (animal) labor. That said, I will also be aiming to demonstrate that, while many contemporary Hegel scholars regard both Bataille and Kojève as ‘bad’ readers of Hegel, they nonetheless follow Hegel’s account of work closely and call to attention to oft ignored connections between work and (human) consciousness as well as religion. Like Hegel, Bataille maintains that the animal does not hesitate before sensible things, but, convinced of their inherent nothingness, devours them immediately. Between the animal and its prey, there is no question of subordination like we find, for instance, between the lord and the bondsman in Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit or, more generally, between human beings and things in the sphere of utility. The animal cannot be said to utilize its prey in any way because it does not posit its prey as an object, as some thing which could be said to stand in between it and the satisfaction of its desires. Indeed, it is precisely for this reason that the animal cannot be said to work. Yet, for Bataille, this is not an empirical claim; it is simply the way things must appear for us.

Keywords: work, labor, desire, tools, consciousness

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Title: Designed to control: The architecture of animal farming

Barns and warehouses for animal farming are some of the most common buildings in human landscapes at a global scale. Yet, these typologies are seemingly invisible, hiding at their core an industrial process which transforms living beings into commodities. The architecture of factory farming is largely anonymous, unsophisticated, and banal. However, it can be interpreted as the place of the utmost colonial project: that of human domination on non-human species. What are the historical roots of intensive animal farming and how did it become such a popular paradigm at a global level? Which technical literature (handbooks, publications) and what models supported the widespread application of factory farming to a great number of species and in different contexts? This talk aims at investigating the history of this invisible architecture, which has long sustained the development of our species since the industrial revolution and has tragically imposed our dominion on a vast majority of living beings on earth. This talk will discuss the research results of a two-month residency at the Canadian Centre for Architecture (July-August 2023), where I am going to develop a research project titled *Cages for non-humans: An architectural history of animal farming*. The research will be based on archival documents owned by the CCA collection, which will allow me to trace the history of animal farming in North America and the twentieth-century architectural experimentations concerning this agro-industrial model. During the talk, I will put forward a few interpretations of the architectural model for animal farming. First, I argue that the architecture designed to host non-humans who are destined for production and slaughter swings between an aesthetic unsophistication and an utmost technological refinement, as it comprises complex machineries which limit the movements of the animals to maximize the economic results. When allowed, the movement of animals must follow strict rules; this is evident in a design case study collected at the CCA: the Westpen project by Cedric Price (1977–79), which includes several diagrammatic sketches controlling livestock movement for activities such as weighing, shearing, and cleaning (CCA Collection, Cedric Price fonds). Furthermore, I suggest that the limitation of livestock movement through architecture is aimed at transforming non-human entities into disabled bodies that are unfit for existence and ready for consumption (Taylor 2017). Finally, I touch upon the silent but pervading presence of the structures for animal farming on today's industrial landscapes, where they act as efficient machineries that produce capitalistic goods and eject bones, liquids, and gasses – generating clear geological evidence of the Anthropocene.

Keywords: Animal farming; architecture; industrial landscapes; livestock; machines

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Title: Animal bodies, human spaces: a spatialized recount of human and nonhuman animal relationships

In our presentation we wish to interrogate the relationship between animal bodies and the space which they occupy. In our everyday lives and routines, we rarely encounter animals, physically or imaginatively, outside of places which often entail their oppression and exploitation: farms, zoos, laboratories, circuses, protected areas, urban spaces and so on. Our proposal is that, although they have very different purposes and scopes, all these spaces are tied together as ontological and epistemological dispositifs: not only do they affect the quality of life of the animals living in them, but they are also part of the very constitution of those nonhuman animals as living beings. These spaces are a primary agent in the construction of the “animality” of nonhuman animals, that is as “animals” opposed to “humans”, but also in the internal differentiation of a variety of nonhuman animals, namely the fact that animals are treated differently based on the space that they (are made to) inhabit. Moreover, by thinking space critically and anew, we can better understand how certain bodies are made to matter and how others are rendered disposable. Starting from this set of considerations, we wish to unravel a series of questions, following two main lines of research: first, how do these spaces affect the animals themselves and shape their subjectivities? Second, how do they affect the development of interspecies relationships and the production of knowledge about other animals? One crucial example is surely the industrial farm and the ways in which it informs our relationship with the animals that live and die inside it: if one only conceives a nonhuman animal as meat, as something instead of someone (Adams, Morin), how will their conceptualization and behavior towards animals be informed by this understanding of nonhuman animals as something to eat? Drawing from a variety of resources, from Foucault’s analytics of power, knowledge and space (as through the work of Chrulw and Wadiwel) to Acampora’s dialectic of the carnal and the carceral at play in the use of cages, to Piazzesi’s reflections on the history of zootechnology, we wish to propose a “zoology of spaces” in order to address both the ideological lines that divide humans and nonhumans and the material entanglements that unite them. In order to do so, we will analyze the laboratory and the farm, comparing differences and similarities in the production of animal individuals. By doing this, we can point out some of the ways in which animal subjects are constructed as place-specific individuals and what role does this mechanism play in today’s animal-industrial complex.

Keywords: Space; Laboratory; Farm; Carnal/Carceral; Power/Knowledge

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Title: Death on Display – Working with art by Toni R. Toivonen in a museum context

In my paper, I discuss art by Finnish artist Toni R. Toivonen from the perspective of displaying the remains of nonhuman persons in a museum context. Toni R. Toivonen is an internationally recognized contemporary artist, whose works have been displayed in London, New York, and Berlin. In his latest works, he presents the process of decomposing by placing nonhuman-animal carcasses on a brass plate. The gradual process of decomposition of the body leaves its mark on the plates creating landscape-like forms. Toivonen emphasizes that he does not represent dead animals, but that the artwork is the dead animal. Toivonen's work raises a question about the politics of displaying the death of nonhuman animals in museum space. During my curatorship of the Finnish National Gallery's new collection exhibition, I decided to include Toivonen's *Giving Birth and Dying Still* (2016) in the rehang. On the large brasswork, there are the remains of mother and child, a cow, and her calf, who died during childbirth. The charismatic work has already raised questions and comments among the audience of the Finnish National Gallery. I use the displaying of the *Giving Birth and Dying Still* as a case study. In Finland, the death of a cow is a more common event than a death of a human. Yet the death of a cow, as of any animal living and dying to become food, is unnoticed, invisible, and unmourned (McArthur 2016, 201). Nonhuman remains, such as leather and fur, are familiar to audiences from museums of natural history, and many contemporary artists apply taxidermy in their work (Aloi, 2018). However, taxidermy does not profoundly unsettle the human/animal power structure as the process of taxidermy does not question the commodification of flesh. As Bill Brown (2001) argues, when something is considered an object, having lost its expected functionality (eg. a broken window) its agency is revealed. This revelation of agency disrupts the subject/object power structure and anthropocentrism. In Toivonen's work, the evidence of the decomposition of the mother cow and her child radically disturbs the cultural objectification of the cow's body. As cows are part of industrialized agriculture, the act of letting the edible body decay to become art, reveals the agency of the nonhuman body. As I will argue in my paper, Toivonen's art with decaying bodies unveils the nonhuman agency, the liveliness and livability of a cow, by letting a cow be visible, and not for food. I will argue that this allows museum visitors to reconsider their relationship with bodies they share the same functionality with; being able to decay.

Keywords: Nonhuman death, Contemporary art, Marginalized animals, Decomposition, Museums

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Title: The dead pig's photo album: affective visual rituals in collective identity formation

Recent research on visually mediated activism in environmental and animal rights movements has focused on visual practices as forms of political expression. Conversely, this paper will demonstrate that visibility is not only used for personal expressions in protest action, but that it plays a significant role in solidifying movement-internal collective identity through a set of distinct visual rituals, an increasingly significant aspect of technologically mediated biopolitics. Towards illustrating this, the article demonstrates how collective identity was constructed and solidified through affective visual rituals in the Save Movement, a vegan animal rights and social justice network attempting to save animals/pigs from slaughter. While environmental protest campaigns have garnered significant interest, above all through Extinction Rebellion and Fridays4Future (e.g. Boulianne et al., 2020; Haßler et al., 2021), cruelty-focused vegan sub-movements (rather than vegan lifestyle sub-movements) are at times positioned differently. They often focus on more tangible current conditions such as biopolitics, spatial negotiations, and industry standards (e.g. in farming), and embodied or physical suffering (e.g. Lockwood, 2018; Adams, 2010; Giraud, 2021: 74-77) - compared to the more often metapolitical, sustainability-focused, and future-oriented concerns of climate movements. As such, animal rights activism has at times had less visibility than more mainstream environmental movements. This may mean that affect and emotions, often captured through backstage practices and semi-public forms of mourning and bearing witness, play a particularly significant role in animal justice networks such as Save, where bodily harm and death are witnessed, collectively experienced, and recorded at close proximity (see Lockwood, 2018; Giraud, 2021: 74). Based on an ethnography of everyday visual practices and social experiences of visibility (online & offline) in the Save Movement's "Pig Save" protest events, we demonstrate how visual rituals bridge boundaries and produce a shared understanding through affective visibility. We identify three forms of affective visual rituals: (1) witnessing; (2) mourning; and (3) ritualistic semiotic practices. We argue that these visual rituals are not only expressions of shared values, but construct collective political identity through visual emotion work (affect), a process emerging from social movement actors' biopolitical activist practices.

Keywords: vegan activism; collective mourning; visual rituals; collective identity; animal death/ witnessing

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Title: Psychiatric animals: a connection between antispeciesism and antipsychiatry

The connection between forms of psychiatrization and non-human animal oppression has become more and more evident in the field of mad and disability studies, where the common ground of said marginalization has begun to be examined more in-depth. In particular, this abstract aims at describing the states of vulnerability forced on non-human animals and psychiatric patients, showing how these two kinds of lived experiences share similar processes of contention, objectification and sub-humanization moulded by a society constructed around specific paradigms which lead to such discriminations. Adopting a multispecies perspective, for example, it can be noticed how trauma reactions, acts of resistance and divergent ways of thinking that are attributed to animals and mad people can be collocated beyond the implicit dictates which rule social behaviour and expectations. One case that is particularly relevant in this sense is the parallelism between psychiatrization and the societal approach to dogs: feelings of anxiety, phobias, aggressive traits or non-social attitudes are pathologized - according to the human gaze that would want the figure of dog to be aligned with an idea of likeability, domesticity and sociability. Therefore, being seen as kind of diseases, these features bring out a need to be fixed, tamed, corrected, because they deviate from what is considered the norm. In addition, despite the fact that the vulnerability that different non-human animals experience is specific - even amongst the same species - it is evident that a correlation between their positioning in a range that varies between the extremities of “normal” and “not normal” and their marginalization is very present: an element that recurs specifically even in the psychiatric field. In this way, said lives – which are either cloaked and physically located in peripheral spaces, considered as intrinsically damaged or labeled as dangerous in a prejudicial way – are acknowledged only as tokens whose value is based on their expendability. In fact, by creating the human through the act of separation – on one hand by defining the figure of man that emerges from nature and on the other hand by forging the concept of disability as a discriminating tool – in this societal paradigm both subjectivities lose importance to the extent of their objectification. The condition of subordination almost belongs to the non-human status, to which also people who are diagnosed with a psychiatric illness are referred to due to the process of their animalization. However, this strong connection based on vulnerability could be seen a heterotopic territory, in which marginalization is reclaimed as an instrument for creating possibilities and new alliances in order to subvert the dichotomous social order.

Keywords: antispeciesism, antipsychiatry, mad studies, disability studies

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Title: Multispecies Ethnography & the war in Ukraine: co-existing during the catastrophe.

The research focuses on how a multitude of organisms' livelihoods are shaped directly and indirectly by the ongoing (2022-present) Russian invasion of Ukraine. After an introduction of the key concepts of Multispecies Ethnography and why it is important to study it within specific geography and timeline of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we will delve further into three specific very different examples of multispecies entanglement: one dedicated to how war blurs the line between companion and other species with an example of a rooster evacuated from Mariupol, the other is about the contact with contaminated soil of the Chernobyl area that killed Russian troops and the last case is dealing with solely imaginary scapes of Russian propaganda and how it used pigeons to dehumanize an opponent.

It is difficult to scale down and study the processes such as a war, but this research provides a unique lens on the conflict and processes that remain overlooked. Proposed cases are examples of different relations humans tend to establish toward other species outside of catastrophic events: companionship, exploitation, and violence as a response to inner biophobia. How the rooster became a companion animal after the siege of Mariupol, when, with the scarcity of food, we would assume seeing animals as a resource would reach its peak.

Keywords: Multispecies Ethnography, Animal Studies, Companion Species, War

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Title: But What about the Butcher? A Treatise on Species Privilege & Human Innocence

This paper discusses and critiques Gloria Wekker's work *White Innocence: The Paradoxes of 400 years of colonialism*. The notion of white innocence that Wekker distills from the social privilege of race or whiteness, is used to shed light on yet another social group category that tends to be hidden for most part, namely species. The reason for doing so is that similar to how white privilege and male privilege expose the unfair and exploitative relations that result from oppressive systems such as racism and sexism, human privilege can expose the mechanisms (epistemic, institutional, psychological, etc.) that ensure successful reproduction of animal oppression. Getting a clear picture of how species privilege operates can help make us more privilege literate (Joy, 2020), with regard to our unexamined privilege we enjoy in virtue of belonging to the socially constructed human group. In order to realize this, the paper is structured as follows. The first chapter will critique the work of Wekker, and use her analysis of white privilege and white innocence to introduce the concepts of species privilege and human innocence. Wekker accurately describes the psychological mechanisms and ways of thinking that maintain white privilege and keep racism alive, both on an individual level

and institutionally, but paradoxically reproduces some of the very same mechanisms regarding human supremacy and animal oppression. The second chapter will discuss animal agency by looking at animal resistance. Discussing animal resistance is important because it is a phenomenon that is necessarily associated with oppression. As Foucault already famously stated: “Where there is power, there is resistance”. When animals resist their enslavement and oppression they themselves challenge the socially constructed position of human privilege. They challenge the unjust categories and spaces they have been assigned to against their will. This means that in order for people to become aware of their human species privilege, besides animal rights advocates and activists, the nonhuman animals themselves can play a vital role in communicating the unjust social power imbalances that exist between species. Animal resistance is a testament to their agency, and animal agency is essential to deconstruct the social category of the human and its superiority. The third chapter looks at institutional violence in order to understand how this enables animal exploitation, and how the epistemic violence embedded in our institutions plays an essential role in shaping human innocence. I conclude with a discussion on how blackness is co-constructed in relation to the place of the animal or animality. The purpose for doing so is to demonstrate the entanglement of white- and human supremacy and how they mutually reinforce one another i.e. the epistemic violence against one tends to reinforce the oppressed and subjugated status of the other.

Keywords: Animal Resistance - Human Innocence - Species Privilege - Epistemic Violence -Intersectionality

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Title: please choose a title

In the *Order of Things* Foucault famously described the fossil’s role at the center of the increasingly irreconcilable differences between the Renaissance and Classical epistemes as bearing a new form of “monstrosity.” Departing from Lynn Huffer’s work and namely the scholar’s 2017 translation of Foucault’s lecture “Cuvier’s Situation in the History of Biology” this text proposes to extend Foucault’s analysis of the shifting roles of the fossil into the modern episteme and in relation to the nascent category of life. Furthermore, the text will argue that this line of inquiry allows construct a Foucauldian take on the biological notion of species extinction, despite the author’s sparse engagement with the theme.

At the turn of the classical episteme, naturalist George Cuvier’s use of comparative anatomy (and fossil remains) to prove species extinction increasingly placed, for the scientific community, “the burden of proof” in material evidence (Sepkoski). Darwin questioned the use of the fossil record in establishing past extinctions given the incompleteness of the record (Sepkoski), and doubts regarding the “legibility” of the record mired the first uses of statistical analysis in paleontology with controversy (Sepkoski, Tamborini). It is against this

background the text will inquire on the processes involved in the historical emergence of the use of fossils as material evidence within paleontology, biology, and geology. If as W.T.J. Mitchell states, it is possible to speak of a “fossilism”—beyond the confines of natural history—it should be done in parallel with the rise of anthropology and psychoanalysis’ interest in “totemism.” For Mitchell these two parallel lines of inquiry are foundational in the modern division of nature and culture:

“If totemism adumbrates the romantic longing for a reunification with nature, akin to Hegel’s notion of the “flower” and “animal” religions that lie at the origins of spirit’s encounter with nature, fossilism expresses the ironic and catastrophic consciousness of modernity and revolution. As a petrified imprint, both icon and index, of a lost form of life, the fossil is already an image, and a “natural image” in the most literal sense we can give these words.”

From here, it is possible to argue, beyond Foucault and with Mitchell, that in the modern episteme, fossils and extinction became media and mediators between life and nonlife, evidence and myth in a drastically different configuration of what would become a necropolitical “monstrous.”

Keywords: history of extinction, geology, paleontology, Michel Foucault,

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Title: The ducks are where the reeds: environmental justice and extinction in the dried out Aral Sea

“The ducks are where the reeds are”
“Life only lasts till the waterline”
— traditional Karakalpak idioms

The ecological collapse of the Aral Sea, resulting from political decisions and policies, has led to disastrous consequences for the surrounding communities, particularly the Karakalpakstan region of Uzbekistan and its once-thriving fishing hub, Moynaq. This presentation critically examines the Aral Sea ecocide through the lens of Critical Animal Studies and Political Ecology, exploring the interplay between human-nonhuman relations and the broader socio-political implications. In the 20th century, the Aral Sea fishing industry employed some 40,000 people and reportedly produced one-sixth of the Soviet Union's entire fish catch.

However, commercial harvests were becoming unsustainable in the 1980s and by 1987 commercial harvest became nonexistent due to declining sea levels and high salinity levels that became too high for the 20 native fish species to survive. Moynaq, formerly Uzbekistan's main fishing port on the Aral Sea, suffered dramatically from the ecological disaster, which led to the disappearance of the local fishing industry, unemployment, and poverty. The decline of the Aral Sea also led to a loss of habitat and life for the 20 native fish species, due to declining sea levels and increased salinity. In my ongoing research on the Aral Sea region, I investigate the multifaceted impact of the ecocide on nonhuman animal life, human communities, and the environment, emphasising the need to confront shared exploitation, vulnerability, and the blurring boundaries between human and nonhuman life. The study critically addresses the political dimensions of the Aral Sea ecocide and the consequences for the affected communities, particularly in Karakalpakstan, and the cities of Moynaq and Nukus. Moreover, I am exploring the significance of preserving the cultural heritage of the Karakalpaks, exemplified by the fishing iconography, crafts and art in the region. This cultural heritage not only reflects the traditional human-nonhuman relationships but also serves as a powerful tool in raising awareness about the ecological and socio-political issues resulting from the Aral Sea crisis. I also examine the political responses to the Aral Sea disaster at both national and international levels, evaluating their effectiveness in addressing the ecological and socio-economic challenges faced by the communities of the Aral Sea region. I investigate the role of grassroots activism, community-led initiatives, and non-governmental organisations in advocating for environmental justice, and the recognition of nonhuman life. By critically examining the case of Moynaq and its fishing industry, this research underscores the importance of political accountability, international cooperation, and the adoption of a holistic approach that acknowledges the interdependence of human and nonhuman life in addressing ecological crises and ecocide.

Keywords: ecocide, environmental justice, post-soviet landscapes, Aral Sea, fishing industry

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Bram Büscher and Robert Fletcher's "The Conservation Revolution: Radical Ideas for Saving Nature Beyond the Anthropocene"

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Title: A good death in a material-cyclic world – Ethnographic notes of composting

“Most of the compost is in the cemetery, because in the end we are all compost.” This quote, translated from a German interview with one of my ethnographic participants, shows how intertwined the ideas of death and composting are. For something to decompose, it first must die. In my master thesis “Dense compost – Practices and Discourses about composting in two portraits”, which was created with a compostist approach (Donna Haraway, *Staying with Trouble*) in mind, I investigated the different concepts of death expressed by the interviewees while talking about their composting practices. The death of non-humans has an ambiguous role during composting and is seen in some contexts as acceptable and to some degree even as

good, especially if the death of the non-human animal is regarded as being part of an endless cycle of life. This idea often goes hand in hand with the myth of composting as a material cycle without any waste. In this presentation, I will explain how this belief in an endless, wasteless cycle has been formed in the last decades, especially in German-speaking countries, and how the notion of a good and moral death in this cycle is connected to social, neoliberal structures. Furthermore, I will discuss how the binary opposition pests–beneficial animals has emerged as a byproduct of this discourse. Dying outside of this cycle is often seen as cruel and unnecessary. For example, one of my interviewees mentions explicitly how disgusted they are by flower chafer larvae, that they pick them out of the compost, throw them in the trash and hope that the larvae will burn in the waste incineration. For me as an interviewer, this seemed at the first moment quite brutal. The most common tip in Austrian media to dispose of unfavourable larvae in compost is to displace them somewhere, where they can be eaten by other animals. The death of pests is often seen as easily morally justifiable but even the death of so-called beneficial animals is deemed acceptable, as long as it is embedded in the myth of an endless cycle. In the example above, the act of burning the larvae seems cruel because it breaks the idea of an endless, wasteless cycle even though the outcome – dead larvae – is the same.

Keywords: Composting, Material Cycle, Disposable lives, neoliberal bodies

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Title: A reflection on colonialism, patriarchy and anthropocentrism in natural history museums

For my master's thesis I decided to focus on the presence of colonial narratives in natural history museums - using the natural history in Venice as an example - and how they are influenced by the human/non-human animal dichotomy. I chose this topic because I felt the urge to have a deeper and broader conversation about colonialism and its role in order to better understand how concepts such as anthropocentrism (and *anthroparchy* - Cudworth, 1998), patriarchy, ableism, racism, and eurocentrism emerged and spread. Therefore, I examined and contextualized the role of natural history museums, starting from a historical analysis of their origins, their development, and their connection with colonial ideologies. Then, I focused on the Italian situation and its "colonial amnesia" (Wildenthal et al. 2008), ending in being a nation that is barely aware of its colonial past and its consequences. I also analyzed how and why stuffed non-human animals present in museums were bearers of colonial messages, ideologies and narratives too. In other words, by applying a CAS perspective I have tried to show how fundamental it is to consider not only humans but also non-human animals as colonized bodies. The analysis took inspiration from the one proposed by Donna Haraway in *Teddy Bear Patriarchy* (1984-1985), but it is applied to the current Italian situation - taking also into consideration the ICOM indications that followed the expansion of the Black Lives Matter movement at a global level. The *educational spectacle* (Rose 2007) which is the museum can therefore be a point where various struggles and

movements intersect, overlap and complement each other: the museum, as an agent that creates contemporaneity, is in this way a box that encloses the identity of individuals, cultures and memories within *heterotopias* (Amselle 199, recalling Foucault) and so it could be a place where social justices can be made. In this light, museums thus become places where *absent referents* (Adams 1990) can be seen in taxidermy works, patriarchal ideologies in taxonomic names, heteronormativity in the choice of the representations, eurocentrism in the organization and, in general, spaces where non-human animals are considered objects rather than subjects.

Keywords: Museums, Colonialism, Decolonialism, Animal studies

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Title: Georges Bataille On The Birth of Art. Animal Bodies in Primitive and Contemporary Artworks

A few years after the discovery of the Lascaux cave in southwestern France, the philosopher and anthropologist Georges Bataille decided to confront these discoveries dating back some 17000 years. The philosopher's contact with what was considered at the time to be one of the oldest rock caves ever discovered led a few years later to the publication of the book "Lascaux; Or, the Birth of Art (1955)", containing controversial considerations about the concept of human and animal in relation to artistic creation. I would like to briefly highlight two central theses in Bataille's discussion on primitive art. The first one is controversial because of the assumption that animal and human are different and that there is an element that makes human other than animal. According to this, art would indeed represent what makes that being similar to us, who already in the Paleolithic period worked, built and used tools, "truly" a human being. On the other hand, Bataille reflects on the nature of these early paintings and the subject pictured, which is almost always animal, with a few exceptions of human bodies that nonetheless retain an animal face. To the theory that wants to attribute to cave painting the role of a propitiatory rite for hunting, Bataille counters with the thesis of a primordial shame of the human towards himself; a shame that also translates into the inability to portray himself and therefore to prefer an animal subject. The animal has always remained, more or less, at the center of artistic representation in the whole art history. In contemporary art, however, there is a sense that this returns to a prominent place, either in the role of an object or as a mere material. In this regard, one only needs to think of Damien Hirst's famous work "The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living", where the shark's body loses its meaning and becomes a tool, in the same manner as color, marble or wood, used by the artist exclusively to create. This was just one example, but actually installations or artworks using animal bodies or parts of animal bodies are countless. Now, if we think of art as the act of subjective and social self-consciousness, this can be the mirror that allows us to look at the human idea of self in relation to the animal world and how this has changed radically throughout History. In my talk, I want to highlight this positioning of

humans in relation to the animal world through the analysis of selected works of art and, starting from the anthropological research handed down by Georges Bataille, trace the differences between a humanity that conceives of itself as belonging to the animal world and respects its image, from one that ascribes to itself the right to dispose of organic bodies at its will.

Keywords: Georges Bataille, Primitive Art, Contemporary Art, Animal Body

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Title: “I see *human* faces everywhere”: The risks of facial pareidolia gazing at non-human animals

Pareidolia is the visual effect and cognitive process of recognising human faces in natural and artificial non-living elements, aiming to reassure humankind especially in the presence of the unknown, because it reveals familiar characteristics. But what happens when we look at the facial attributes of non-human animals? In the scientific literature there are many examples of people identifying an humanised face by looking directly at an animal (Akeley 1923: 230; Milstein 2007; others). This is part of the great debate on the anthropomorphisation of other-than-human animals, which can be seen in everyday contexts such as pets and the way their owners treat them (Empley et al. 2013). In this case, it is a need to attribute a human mind to these creatures, and it has negative effects on the well-being of the domestic animal (Morris 1991). But in regard to wild animals, pareidolia may be another symptom of the human tendency to anthropomorphise 'inferior animals', seeing in them only a mirror of one's own being. In this way, humans may have found an excuse to treat with animal dignity certain species considered 'too wild', and with human dignity other species seen as 'almost human'. And here is the trope of the ferocious animal, to be left untouched only because its violent expression is unrecognisable to the human eye, 'it is too different from us'. While animals so similar to us deserve to be in our good favour and to be treated like us, as so many examples of primates studied in scientific experiments show, first and foremost the gorilla Koko. But in doing so, we have corrupted their animality, forcing them into human behaviour just because they looked so human (Hu 2014). In addition, it is interesting to note the studies that look at whether animals themselves (chimpanzees in particular) are prone to face pareidolia (Tomonaga & Kawakami 2023), and others that have reported that they too have a preference for the eye and mouth regions when seeing face-like objects (Kuwahata et al. 2003), the importance of a "superior" gaze. This essay will analyse all these bibliographical sources from the perspective of Critical Animal Studies, to understand whether or not this pareidolic gaze of the Global North man towards non-human animals is beneficial or not in our mutual relationship and what the alternatives might be.

Keywords: Pareidolia; Face perception; Human gaze; Non-human animals; Anthropomorphisation

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Title: Animal-assisted therapy in Italian prisons : rethinking marginalization and caging through qualitative research

The aim of our research is to critically analyze through a feminist, multispecies, and intersectional approach the context of Italian prisons that use animal-assisted therapy (IAA) as a form of rehabilitation, correction, and social reintegration of the prisoners. More specifically, the research will be based on interviews with some associations proposing IAA in Italian prisons. The elements we aim to criticize are those of the cage as a physical and mental space, but also as an instrumentalization carried out by a social binarism. Our society is built on the fear of the Other, with the consequent annihilation of marginalized identities, both human and more-than-human, that are perceived as a threat to the order, surveillance, and “security” of the white Italian supremacy. In the public discourse, caging is often justified as a necessary modality to protect the social order from the bodies that are portrayed as animalised by applying the zoopolitical threshold. By doing so, the supreme narrative reinforces the nature-culture binarism, considering prisoners as “savage” and “uncivilized”, namely without the *lògos*. The system behind biopolitics and necropolitics defines which bodies are disposable, identifying the prisoners - human and more than human - that are more suitable for the IAA programs, excluding those who are not considered valuable from a moral and ethical perspective, and for the (re)production of the capitalist system. As a matter of fact, animal-assisted therapy mostly involves possible “redeemable” prisoners and pets highlighting once again institutionalized racism, classism, sexism, and speciesism. The protests that took place during the Covid-19 lockdown in several Italian cities, where prisoners through their voice and bodies tried to draw attention to the terrible conditions of prisons, and the consequent violent mainstream narrative are an example of how these subjects are perceived as infectious. While animal-assisted therapy was interrupted due to the lockdown, pets were one of the few exceptions that allowed people outside prisons to escape their homes, for those who had one. The alternative approach we want to propose is based on the reconsideration of the common lazy - irresponsible - gaze that tends to ignore the complexity of the system in which we live. Since animal-assisted therapy often perpetuates a dynamic of asymmetric power in which the non-human animal is instrumentalized for the purpose of the capitalist society, we aim at addressing forms of alliances and reciprocal interdependence based on a “response-ability” that includes all species (de la Bellacasa,

Haraway). As a matter of fact, cross-species relationships can be seen as a form of reclamation and mutual protection between prisoners and non-human animals (Leder). Finally, the starting point in our analysis necessarily corresponds to the marginalized and conflictual spaces for which we claim a total multispecies liberation.

Keywords: Prisons, Animal-Assisted Therapy, Ethics of Care, Biopolitics, Zoopolitics

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Title: The white rabbit's (smart) watch animals and new media: an exploratory study

This article aims to explore the phenomenon of animal influencers, which is becoming increasingly popular on social media. Interest in this trend stems from research on the animal care industry conducted by UCSC's ModaCult study center. Starting with a small literature review aimed at showing the various trends of investigation, the research in question set out to explore the different meanings of the phenomenon within the Italian context, approaching it from a mixed methods perspective to illuminate some of its dimensions and perspectives. Focus groups were conducted with petlovers and an online questionnaire was administered to users of an e-commerce platform dedicated to pets. In the work presented here, we intend to investigate more specifically the phenomenon of pet influencers: as all social media users are well aware, content of various kinds in which animals (domestic and otherwise) are protagonists is spopulating on platforms (Maddox 2022). By the term pet influencer we mean, here, animals that are absolute protagonists, narrators in the first "person" of a specific storytelling, around which the whole phenomenon of engagement revolves. As protagonist actors in these profiles, animals have a voice of their own; the texts and narratives of these profiles are the "voice of the animals," constructing an imaginary, often triggering anthromorphization (Cudworth et al. 2022). From the preliminary research conducted by ModaCult, the phenomenon of anthropomorphization had emerged consistently as a feature of online animal communication, but it is precisely on social networking platforms that the phenomenon is exacerbated. Based on these assumptions, a netnography was developed to structure the sample and extract the texts, with the aim of reconstructing an imaginary and vocabulary-the words through which animals "speak" to us and tell their stories, in the first person, on social media (Ngai 2022). The goal is to shed light on the increasingly common (and often dismissed as futile) phenomenon of animals and their relationship with new media, and to curb in part one of the possible, often conspicuous side effects: over-caring.

Keywords: #Animal care #Non-uman animals #Social media #Anthropomorphization #Mixed methods

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Title: Birds on the Air: The Silent Recordings of Sally Ann McIntyre

This paper will focus on the aural art of New Zealand-based sound artist Sally Ann McIntyre, and how her sonic mediation of extinct animals helps to investigate and foreground human complicity in multispecies histories and sensibilities. In her work, McIntyre attempts to convey the environment as a dynamic and constantly changing system, in which the human is deeply implicated. She uses radio transmission and field recordings to pay critical attention to the way in which nature has been constructed technologically, historically, and through specific institutions. By doing so, McIntyre is able to problematize, for instance, what Joeri Bruyninckx has described as the “sterilization” of the soundscape of the field (19). He states that this process occurred from the 1920s onwards when huge parabolic dish microphones, left over from World War I, were first used to successfully filter out background noise. Rachel Mundy similarly refers to these new forms of aural information as the “sonic specimen” and calls them “the musical analogue of the stuffed birds’ skins and preserved beetles arrayed in the natural history museum’s specimen drawers” (43). The use of these first recordings was mainly taxonomical, and this meant that the goal became to isolate and capture an ideal version of the bird’s vocalizations and to identify it with a specific species, rather than understand their sound in relation to other entities and events in the bird’s environment. What these early sound recordings came to mediate then, was an isolated sonic identity that served to further separate human songs from animal bodies and the sounds they produced; the animal sound specimen became a research object which helped to keep an anthropocentric grip on sense and meaning (Jodi Berland 185). Rather than reify these supposed binaries where an (often human) audience listens in on an isolated song or call, McIntyre thus aims to reintroduce and foreground the noises, silences, and ideological distortions that are often suppressed in sound recordings of the nonhuman. In her work *Collected Silences for Lord Rothschild* (2012), for instance, McIntyre engages emphatically with the (sonic) specimen of the now-extinct Huia and Laughing Owl, the collusion between commerce and science during the Victorian age in New Zealand, and the mediated traces this has left in narratives of extinction. As I will show, McIntyre’s mediations of animal sounds and silences manage to create an attentive and responsible sonic modality from which we can learn to listen again in the Anthropocene.

Keywords: Extinction, nonhuman sound recordings, Sally Ann McIntyre, critical animal studies, multispecies histories

References:

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