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**SPECIAL ISSUE:
Communication
and Advocacy**

Animal Ethics Review (AER) is a peer-reviewed, open-access, multidisciplinary journal published by the UPF-Centre for Animal Ethics. Its aim is to encourage a non-speciesist academic approach to the various forms of discrimination, oppression and abuse against animals, including, among others, farmed animals, animals used for experimentation or entertainment, urban animals and animals living in nature. The journal publishes both empirical and theoretical works from all the disciplines in humanities, legal scholarship, and the social and natural sciences.

Scope: animal ethics, critical animal studies, non-speciesist studies, vegan studies

FRONT PAGE PHOTO: David Clode.



Universitat
Pompeu Fabra
Barcelona



● EDITORS

Núria Almiron, Department of Communication, Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Laura Fernández, Department of Communication, Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Catia Faria, Centre for Ethics, Politics and Society, Universidade do Minho

Eze Paez, Centre for Ethics, Politics and Society, Universidade do Minho

● CONTACT

UPF-Centre for Animal Ethics
Department of Communication
Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Roc Boronat 138
08018-Barcelona (Spain)

● Principal contact

Núria Almiron
Co-Editor
Animal Ethics Review
cae@upf.edu

● Support Contact

Laura Fernández
Co-Editor
Animal Ethics Review
cae@upf.edu

● Design & Editing assistance for this issue

Gabriela Parada / Guajira Estudio
Thais Sánchez

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Introduction: Special issue on Communication and Advocacy

By Laura Fernández and Núria Almiron, editors

It is our great pleasure to inaugurate the *Animal Ethics Review* journal with a selection of articles arising from the best works of a group of graduates from the MA in International Studies in Power, Media and Difference and one student from the Bachelor's degree in Political and Administration Sciences – all from Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF). All the texts bring new, original and fresh contributions to the discussion of animal oppression through the lenses of communication and advocacy. The articles include theoretical and empirical works in English, Spanish and Catalan – embodying the international, open spirit this new journal aims to embrace.

In “**Dissonància identitària: del carnisme a l'antiespecisme**” (“Identity dissonance: from carnism to antispeciesim”), Adrià Gibernau addresses the concept of cognitive dissonance from a psychopolitical point of view. Through it, he explains how the clash between beliefs and behaviors is of major relevance for understanding the individual, emotional and identity framework of oppressions such as carnism and speciesism.

In “**Who is responsible for reinforcing the different treatments between different species?**”, Gizem Uygun addresses the problem of cognitive dissonance as well, in this case to highlight the speciesist contradictions in the advertising campaign of Eti, a Turkish biscuit company. Eti donates money to protect certain nonhuman animals while engaging in the exploitation of others for the manufacture of food products. To explicate these contradictions, Uygun applies Hannah Arendt's concept of the “banality of evil”.

In “**Who's the ‘wild’ one now? Exploitation of non-human animals as seen in the animal advocacy documentary *The Ghosts in Our Machine***”, Danial Azhar analyzes this documentary depicting photoactivist Jo-Anne McArthur in her fieldwork to document animal exploitation industries and animal defense organizations at an international level. Azhar brings to the table past and current discussions about the ethics of representation and strategic visual communication.

In “**¿Rompiendo o reforzando premisas especistas en la infancia? Comentario sobre dos películas: *Chicken Run (2000)* y *Zootropolis (2016)***” (“Breaking or reinforcing speciesists assumptions among children? A reflection on two films: *Chicken Run (2000)* and *Zootropolis (2016)*”), Bruna Suja Thauvin examines the potentialities of these children movies for the promotion of intergenerational conversations about speciesist oppression. She also addresses the symbolisms and cross-references between different forms of oppression depicted in the pictures, both to question speciesism and other forms of oppression, as well as to perpetuate them.



In “**Being wild, being delicious, being dangerous**”, Kai Luo exposes in a situated way the problem of the consumption of wild animals as food in China. Luo also addresses in her analysis how this habit is related to cultural constructions on health and taste, as well as the ethical contradictions and the dangers for human health derived from such practices.

In “**Fur farming. Skin for skin?**”, Romaniia Gorbach explores the fur industries in Europe and their consequences for non-human animals and the environment, as well as the current legislative situation and animal rights movements that have driven a change in the social perception of fur as clothing.

In “**Vegan environmentalism: Mitigating climate change through diet change**”, Alexandra Meregildo-Santos examines the scientific evidence that supports an environmental defense of the vegan diet, pointing to the close relationship between the animal exploitation industries and climate change, and how the devastation of the planet might be slowed down through a dietary change.

In “**Farmed nonhuman animals in newspapers and Aphro-ism**”, Lukas Leitinger addresses the speciesist representations of farmed animals in the press using the decolonial perspective of *Aphro-ism* by Aph Ko and Syl Ko as a theoretical framework. Leitinger reviews current academic works that have made a critical analysis of the discourse of speciesist media. His analysis broadens and questions the critique of the speciesist representations of farmed animals.

In “**Los santuarios de animales no humanes en España**” (“Nonhuman Animal Sanctuaries in Spain”), Abril Fabà shares the main results of her research on the impact of nonhuman animal sanctuaries and their communication strategies on people's behavior. By means of surveys and interviews, Fabà analyzes the potential of these spaces as promoters of social change in the direction of greater respect for all animals.

The selection of articles is complemented, in the Commentaries section, with an article in Spanish by the South African philosopher David Benatar addressing the connection between pandemics and animal exploitation, thanks to the translation by the Colombian philosopher Sonia Juliana Granados Mora.

We warmly welcome the readers of this first issue of *Animal Ethics Review* and hope they find in these pieces the inspiration and strength which the defense of nonhuman animals requires of us.



Introducció: Número especial sobre comunicació i activisme

Per Laura Fernández i Núria Almiron, editores

És un gran plaer inaugurar la revista *Animal Ethics Review* amb una selecció d'articles sorgits dels millors treballs d'un grup de graduades en el MA en Estudis Internacionals de Mitjans de Comunicació, Poder i Diferència i una estudiant del grau en Ciències Polítiques i de l'Administració, totes elles de la Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF). Tots els textos aporten contribucions originals i noves a la discussió sobre l'opressió animal a través de les ullenres de la comunicació i l'activisme. Els articles inclouen treballs teòrics i empírics en anglès, castellà i català, que encarnen l'espiritu internacional i obert que aquesta nova revista vol adoptar.

A “**Dissonància identitària: del carnisme a l'antiespecisme**”, l'Adrià Gibernau aborda el concepte de dissonància cognitiva des d'un punt de vista psicopolític. A través d'ella, explica com el xoc entre creences i comportaments és de gran rellevància per entendre el marc individual, emocional i identitari d'opressions com el carnisme i l'especisme.

A “**Who is responsible for reinforcing the different treatments between different species?**” (“Qui és responsable de reforçar els diferents tractes entre les diferents espècies?”), la Gizem Uygun també aborda el problema de la dissonància cognitiva, en aquest cas per posar de manifest les contradiccions especistes de la campanya publicitària d'Eti, una empresa de galetes turques. Eti dóna diners per protegir determinats animals no humans mentre es dedica a l'explotació d'altres per a la fabricació de productes alimentaris. Per explicar aquestes contradiccions, Uygun aplica el concepte de Hannah Arendt de la “banalitat del mal”.

A “**Who's the ‘wild’ one now? Exploitation of non-human animals as seen in the animal advocacy documentary *The Ghosts in Our Machine***” (“Qui és el ‘salvatge’ ara? L'explotació d'animals no humans com es mostra en el documental de defensa dels animals *The Ghosts in Our Machine*”), el Daniel Azhar analitza aquest documental que retrata la fotoactivista Jo-Anne McArthur en el seu treball de camp de documentació de les indústries d'explotació animal i les organitzacions de defensa animal a escala internacional. Azhar posa sobre la taula debats actuals i passats sobre l'ètica de la representació i la comunicació visual estratègica.

A “**¿Rompiendo o reforzando premisas especistas en la infancia? Comentario sobre dos películas: *Chicken Run (2000)* y *Zootropolis (2016)***” (“Trencant o reforçant premisses especistes a la infància? Comentari sobre dues pel·lícules: *Chicken Run (2000)* i *Zootropolis (2016)*”), la Bruna Suja Thauvin examina les potencialitats d'aquestes pel·lícules infantils per a la promoció de converses intergeneracionals sobre l'opressió especista. També aborda els simbolismes i les referències creuades entre les diferents formes d'opressió



representades a les pel·lícules, tant per qüestionar l'especisme i altres formes d'opressió, com per perpetuar-les.

A “**Being wild, being delicious, being dangerous**” (“Ser salvatge, ser deliciós, ser perillós”), la Kai Luo exposa d'una manera situada el problema del consum d'animals salvatges com a aliment a la Xina. Luo també aborda en la seva ànalisi com aquest hàbit es relaciona amb construccions culturals sobre la salut i el gust, així com les contradiccions ètiques i els perills per a la salut humana derivats d'aquestes pràctiques.

A “**Fur farming. Skin for skin?**” (“Cria de pells. Pell per pell?”), la Romanija Gorbach explora les indústries de la pell a Europa i les seves conseqüències per als animals no humans i el medi ambient, així com la situació legislativa actual i els moviments pels drets dels animals que han impulsat un canvi en la percepció social de la pell com a vestimenta.

A “**Vegan environmentalism: Mitigating climate change through diet change**” (“Ecologisme vegà: mitigar el canvi climàtic a través del canvi de dieta”), l'Alexandra Meregildo-Santos examina l'evidència científica que dóna suport a la defensa ambiental de la dieta vegana, posant en relleu l'estreta relació entre les indústries d'explotació animal i el canvi climàtic, i com la devastació del planeta es podria alentir mitjançant un canvi dietètic.

A “**Farmed nonhuman animals in newspapers and Aphro-ism**” (“Els animals no humans considerats de granja als diaris i Aphro-ism”), el Lukas Leitinger aborda les representacions especistes d'animals considerats de granja a la premsa utilitzant la perspectiva descolonial de *Aphro-ism* d'Aph Ko i Syl Ko com a marc teòric. Leitinger revisa treballs acadèmics actuals que han fet una ànalisi crítica del discurs dels mitjans especistes. La seva ànalisi amplia i qüestiona la crítica de les representacions especistes dels animals de granja.

A “**Los santuarios de animales no humanos en España**” (“Els santuaris d'animals no humans a Espanya”), l'Abril Fabà comparteix els principals resultats de la seva investigació sobre l'impacte dels santuaris d'animals no humans i les seves estratègies de comunicació en el comportament de les persones. Mitjançant enquestes i entrevistes, Fabà analitza el potencial d'aquests espais com a promotores de canvis socials cap a un major respecte per tots els animals.

La selecció d'articles es complementa, en la secció de Comentaris, amb la versió en castellà d'un article del filòsof sud-africà David Benatar sobre la connexió entre pandèmies i explotació animal, gràcies a la traducció de la filòsofa colombiana Sonia Juliana Granados Mora.

Donem una calorosa benvinguda als lectors i lectores d'aquest primer número de la revista *Animal Ethics Review* i esperem que trobin en aquestes peces la inspiració i la força que la defensa dels animals no humans necessita de nosaltres.

Introducción: Número especial sobre comunicación y activismo

Por Laura Fernández y Núria Almiron, editoras

Es un gran placer inaugurar la revista *Animal Ethics Review* con una selección de artículos surgidos de los mejores trabajos de un grupo de graduadas en el MA en Estudios Internacionales sobre Medios de Comunicación, Poder y Diferencia y una estudiante del grado en Ciencias Políticas y de la Administración, todas ellas de la Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF). Todos los textos aportan contribuciones nuevas y originales a la discusión sobre la opresión animal a través de las gafas de la comunicación y el activismo. Los artículos incluyen trabajos teóricos y empíricos en inglés, castellano y catalán, que encarnan el espíritu internacional y abierto que esta nueva revista quiere adoptar.

En “**Dissonància identitària: del carnisme a l'antiespecisme**” (“Disonancia identitaria: del carnismo al antiespecismo”), Adrià Gibernau aborda el concepto de disonancia cognitiva desde un punto de vista psicopolítico. A través de él, explica cómo el choque entre creencias y comportamientos es de gran relevancia para entender el marco individual, emocional e identitario de opresiones como el carnismo y el especismo.

En “**Who is responsible for reinforcing the different treatments between different species?**” (“¿Quién es responsable de reforzar los diferentes tratos entre las diferentes especies?”), Gizem Uygun también aborda el problema de la disonancia cognitiva, en este caso para poner de manifiesto las contradicciones especistas de la campaña publicitaria de Eti, una empresa de galletas turcas. Eti dona dinero para proteger determinados animales no humanos mientras se dedica a la explotación de otros para la fabricación de productos alimenticios. Para explicar estas contradicciones, Uygun aplica el concepto de Hannah Arendt de la “banalidad del mal”.

En “**Who's the 'wild' one now? Exploitation of non-human animals as seen in the animal advocacy documentary *The Ghosts in Our Machine***” (“¿Quién es el 'salvaje' ahora? La explotación de animales no humanos como se muestra en el documental de defensa de los animales *The Ghosts in Our Machine*”), Danial Azhar analiza este documental que retrata la fotoactivista Jo-Anne McArthur en su trabajo de campo de documentación de las industrias de explotación animal y las organizaciones de defensa animal a escala internacional. Azhar pone sobre la mesa debates actuales y pasados sobre la ética de la representación y la comunicación visual estratégica.

En “**¿Rompiendo o reforzando premisas especistas en la infancia? Comentario sobre dos películas: *Chicken Run* (2000) y *Zootropolis* (2016)**”, Bruna Suja Thauvin examina las potencialidades de estas películas infantiles para la promoción de conversaciones intergeneracionales sobre la



opresión especista. También aborda los simbolismos y las referencias cruzadas entre las diferentes formas de opresión representadas en las películas, tanto para cuestionar el especismo y otras formas de opresión, como para perpetuarlos.

En “**Being wild, being delicious, being dangerous**” (“Ser salvaje, ser delicioso, ser peligroso”), Kai Luo expone de un modo situado el problema del consumo de animales salvajes como alimento en China. Luo también aborda en su análisis cómo este hábito se relaciona con construcciones culturales sobre la salud y el sabor, así como las contradicciones éticas y los peligros para la salud humana derivados de estas prácticas.

En “**Fur farming. Skin for skin?**” (“Cría de pieles. ¿Piel por piel?”), Romaniia Gorbach explora las industrias de la piel en Europa y sus consecuencias para los animales no humanos y el medio ambiente, así como la situación legislativa actual y los movimientos por los derechos de los animales que han impulsado un cambio en la percepción social de la piel como vestimenta.

En “**Vegan environmentalism: Mitigating climate change through diet change**” (“Ecologismo vegano: mitigar el cambio climático a través del cambio de dieta”), Alexandra Meregildo-Santos examina la evidencia científica que apoya la defensa ambiental de la dieta vegana, poniendo de relieve la estrecha relación entre las industrias de explotación animal y el cambio climático, y cómo la devastación del planeta podría ralentizarse mediante un cambio dietético.

En “**Farmed nonhuman animals in newspapers and Aphro-ism**” (“Los animales no humanos considerados de granja en los periódicos y *Aphro-ism*”), Lukas Leitinger aborda las representaciones especistas de los animales considerados de granja en la prensa utilizando la perspectiva descolonial de *Aphro-ism* de Aph Ko y Syl Ko como marco teórico. Leitinger revisa trabajos académicos actuales que han hecho un análisis crítico del discurso de los medios especistas. Su análisis amplía y cuestiona la crítica de las representaciones especistas de los animales considerados de granja.

En “**Los santuarios de animales no humanos en España**”, Abril Fabà comparte los principales resultados de su investigación sobre el impacto de los santuarios de animales no humanos y sus estrategias de comunicación en el comportamiento de las personas. Mediante encuestas y entrevistas, Fabà analiza el potencial de estos espacios como promotores de cambios sociales hacia un mayor respeto por todos los animales.

La selección de artículos se complementa, en la sección de Comentarios, con la versión en español de un artículo del filósofo sudafricano David Benatar sobre la conexión entre pandemias y explotación animal, gracias a la traducción de la filósofa colombiana Sonia Juliana Granados Mora.

Damos una calurosa bienvenida a los lectores y lectoras de este primer número de *Animal Ethics Review* y esperamos que encuentren en estas piezas la inspiración y la fuerza que la defensa de los animales no humanos necesita de nosotras.



Dissonància identitària: del carnisme a l'antiespecisme



Adrià Gibernau

Departament de Traducció i Ciències del Llenguatge, Universitat Pompeu Fabra



adria.gibernau@upf.edu



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Resum

La lluita en contra del maltractament animal cada vegada té una rellevància social més elevada, però els hàbits de consum de la població no semblen seguir la mateixa direcció. Aquest treball investiga tant a nivell social com en l'àmbit ideogràfic els processos i reaccions que es donen quan les persones es plantegen la seva alimentació en clau antiespecista. Agafant el testimoni d'autors com Melanie Joy (2013), que diagnostiquen els motius sociopolítics de l'explotació, la mercantilització i consum d'animals no humans, tractem d'anar un pas més enllà i explorar les motivacions psicopolítiques d'aquelles accions que o bé donen suport o bé rebutgen el carnisme com a ideologia hegemonica.

Prencent com a referència la noció de dissonància cognitiva de Festinger (1962), es proposa que el fet de compartir creences pròpies del moviment antiespecista mentre es legitima l'explotació dels animals no humans a través dels hàbits alimentaris genera una tensió entre creences i conductes. Ara bé, s'entén que aquesta incoherència interna no només té a veure amb conductes i creences puntuals, sinó que es veu reflectida en l'autoconcepte. Apareix una incongruència dins el relat vital, que es voldrà resoldre a través de múltiples estratègies per tal de mantenir un autoconcepte sólid i estable (Erikson 1968) que, inevitablement, repercutirà en l'autoestima.



Paraules clau:

Carnisme, antiespecisme, dissonància cognitiva, autoconcepte, identitat, relat vital, representació social, hegemonia, ideologia.

1. Introducció

Semblaria que en ple 2020 el discurs en contra de l'explotació dels animals no humans ja no hauria d'agafar ningú per sorpresa. Qui més qui menys, s'ha topat amb algun dels nombrosos moviments que han alçat la veu en favor dels drets dels animals no humans durant les últimes dècades i, tot i que inicialment es poguessin etiquetar com a radicals, amb el pas dels anys s'han anat acceptant i, fins a cert punt, legitimant. És més, molt possiblement, moltes de les persones que han escoltat els postulats del discurs antiespecista comparteixen la perspectiva que hi ha una explotació desmesurada i excessiva dels animals no humans en favor dels éssers humans i que cap ésser viu hauria de viure sota condicions de maltractament o d'abús.

Tanmateix, els hàbits de consum —i concretament els alimentaris—, no s'adiuen a aquesta revolució animalista. Es podria esperar que si hi ha una major conscienciació social sobre les condicions en les quals viuen els animals no humans, també hi hauria d'haver una disminució del consum dels anomenats

“productes cèrnics o làctics”. Però, per desgràcia, no és així. De fet, segons l’Organització de les Nacions Unides per a l’Alimentació i l’Agricultura (FAO 2020), el consum de carn a Espanya es va multiplicar per cinc entre 1961 i 2015.

D’acord amb aquestes dades, es pot establir que hi ha una apparent contradicció entre allò que es pensa —que els animals no humans no haurien de ser maltractats i assassinats per al benefici dels éssers humans— i allò que es fa —augmentar el consum d’animals no humans—, l’anomenat “knowledge-translation gap” (Bekoff i Pierce 2017). L’objectiu d’aquest treball, doncs, és fer una reflexió teòrica des d’una perspectiva psicosocial que englobi els motius personals i socials pels quals apareix el “knowledge-translation gap” i, per tant, es legitima l’explotació animal alhora que es condemna.

2. Llenguatge

Entenem que el llenguatge que s’empri a l’hora de referir-se als animals no humans té una importància cabdal a l’hora de representar socialment el col·lectiu, i aquestes pàgines no poden ser una excepció. Així doncs, aquest treball, travessat per una perspectiva crítica pel que fa a la representació establerta i hegemònica dels animals no humans, intentarà fer servir termes que no objectifiquin els individus o col·lectius dels quals es parla, ni legitimin accions de maltractament, violència o supremacisme per part dels éssers humans.

Val a dir que, per qüestions de formació prèvia, l’autor no està familiaritzat amb la terminologia que s’utilitza a l’acadèmia per tractar la representació dels animals no humans. Tot i això, es posarà especial atenció en emprar un vocabulari políticament compromès amb la lluita en favor dels drets dels animals i en contra d’un sistema normalitzat i hegemònic que tortura, tant a nivell físic com simbòlic, els animals no humans. Ara bé, quan es faci referència a algun text, s’adaptarà la terminologia del mateix text citat, per tal d’evitar males interpretacions. Per tant, malgrat que s’evitaran conceptes com *carn*, *pell* o qualsevol altra paraula que naturalitzi l’explotació dels animals no humans, quan se citin fonts oficials com la FAO i el Ministerio de Sanidad, Consumo y Bienestar Social, s’empraran els termes que aquestes facin servir.

3. Revisió de l’estat de la qüestió

Si bé és cert que no és un dels països que més destaca pel seu activisme antiespecista, a Espanya hi ha multitud d’organitzacions que lluiten pels drets dels animals no humans i s’esforcen, diàriament, per a fer visible les condicions en què viuen i moren milions d’animals cada any. Paral·lelament, des de l’any 2004 existeix un partit polític, el PACMA, que té com a eix vertebrador del seu programa electoral “la defensa de los animales y la consecución de una sociedad más justa e igualitaria para todos” (PACMA 2018). Finalment, entre molts altres elements de conscienciació, val la pena esmentar les múltiples protestes en contra de la tauromàquia o reportatges com *Stranger pigs*, del programa Salvados, que es va emetre el febrer del 2018 i va tenir una audiència de més de 2,6 milions d’espectadors. En altres paraules, hi ha estímuls més que suficients

perquè la població sigui conscient del maltractament animal que succeeix cada dia al país.

Així doncs, sembla evident que és molt fàcil —i gairebé inevitable— accedir al coneixement sobre les circumstàncies en les quals es dóna el maltractament animal amb finalitats alimentàries. Aleshores, per què en lloc de reduir-se el consum, aquest augmenta?

Bekoff i Pierce (2017) anomenen “knowledge-translation gap” a aquesta manca de coherència entre els fets que demostren els grups activistes —amb el suport de diverses faccions de la comunitat acadèmica— i la conducta que es porta a terme. D’entrada, podria semblar que el gran gruix de la població nega l’evidència que existeix un maltractament animal però, tot i que en certs casos és així, en molts d’altres —sobretot en els individus que estan compromesos socialment amb alguna causa antihegemònica—, la persona que compra cadàvers d’animals no humans comparteix, encara que només sigui a nivell cognitiu o discursiu, algunes de les idees animalistes.

De fet, segons els marcs mentals que han construït les grans narracions culturalment compartides (veure Ochs 2000 o Bruner 2003), l’argumentari animalista té diverses característiques que s’assimilen a una sèrie de valors que s’entenen com a socialment desitjables, com poden ser la compassió, la igualtat i la lluita per a un món més just. Per tant, en tant que éssers que volem tenir autoconcepte que s’ajusti als arquetips socials acceptats (Gergen 1991/2006), hi haurà una àmplia porció de la població que voldrà subscriure com a propis aquests valors socialment desitjables i, per extensió, a nivell declaratiu estarà d’acord amb les idees animalistes. A més, com que en una gran majoria d’ocasions, l’activisme animalista aporta proves empíriques del maltractament animal, el mateix subjecte que subscriu els valors anteriorment esmentats, també adoptarà una etiqueta d’objectivitat, ja que basarà el seu coneixement i la seva representació mental sobre el maltractament animal en dades verídiques. És a dir, la lluita antiespecista, forma part d’una representació social que conforma una identitat entrelligada amb posicions justes, objectives i antiopressores.

Aleshores, per què algú que considera que la lluita animalista encarna uns valors que el representen, segueix recolzant la indústria càrnica?

Cal tenir en compte que el consum d’animals no humans està fortament ancorat a la cultura espanyola, ja no només per qüestions de tradició històrica, sinó que també està recolzat per les legislacions actuals i per la manera com es conceptualitzen nocions com “salut” o “dieta equilibrada” per part dels òrgans oficials. El mateix Ministeri de Sanitat té com a recomanació per a una dieta equilibrada a la seva pàgina web: “No te olvides de los lácteos. Son muy importantes para que tus huesos tengan todo el calcio que necesitan. Si tiendes al sobrepeso selecciona los desnatados o semidesnatados” (Ministeri de Sanitat, Consum i Benestar Social 2020). Paral·lelament, a nivell social i cultural val la pena destacar dues qüestions que cal tenir presents a l’hora d’analitzar per què està normalitzat el consum de carn animal i que formen part de l’imaginari

col·lectiu: entendre que el consum d'animals és un símbol d'estatus socioeconòmic, propi de la gent adinerada, i les tradicions i festivitats culturals.

Durant els períodes de la guerra civil espanyola i de la postguerra, l'accés a productes cèrnics era molt limitat a causa de la pobresa i l'escassetat generalitzades, de manera que només podia consumir-ne qui tenia un nivell econòmic elevat. Això, juntament amb la idea que consumir animals era una conducta pròpia de les persones benestants, va fer que tenir carn al plat connotés, durant gran part del segle XX, un estatus socioeconòmic desitjable. Si bé és cert que, actualment, els productes de les carnisseries són assequibles per a la gran majoria de butxaques, la creença que menjar carn és un símbol de benestar, segueix incrustada a nivell implícit en el sentit comú, especialment entre les persones que van viure els períodes de restriccions i cartilles de racionament.

De manera similar, hi ha tota mena de tradicions pròpies de la cultura ibèrica, ja siguin presents o pretèrites, que van associades amb el consum d'animals. Des de les festivitats religioses com l'anomenat dijous gras i els àpats de Nadal, passant pels esdeveniments "econòmics" com la matança del porc, fins als estereotips culturals que situen els embotits com a un símbol de la marca Espanya.

Però no es tracta d'una qüestió estrictament nacional. Com proposa Melanie Joy (2013), al conjunt de les societats occidentals el carnisme està establert més com a una norma alimentària que no com a una opció. Per tant, per a un individu que ha nascut i crescut a Espanya, el consum de carn tindrà una sèrie de significats associats que faran que s'entengui com a una opció naturalitzada, normalitzada i necessària (Joy 2013), legitimada per les institucions i el personal suposadament expert. És a dir, que des de l'imaginari col·lectiu ni tan sols es visualitzarà que el carnisme és una elecció, sinó que s'entendrà com a una condició per a la vida; una veritat que no és ideològica, sinó natural. En canvi, com que el moviment antiespecista no es troba dins del discurs de les institucions oficials i, a més, s'acostuma a associar a l'activisme, s'etiquetarà ràpidament amb la categoria d'ideologia, entenent que té un caràcter d'opinió, malgrat que es trobi recolzat per multitud de veus acadèmiques.

Per tant, d'entrada trobem una relació desigual entre les dues opcions. Donar suport al carnisme semblaria una conducta aparentment neutra i legitimada, mentre que l'antiespecisme té una connotació no-oficial i activista. Però què succeeix quan a una persona se li presenten els arguments animalistes? Es poden distingir dos grans tipus de respostes.

D'una banda, hi ha la reacció que anomenarem *negativa*. En aquest cas, el subjecte té molt clar el seu sistema de valors en relació a l'alimentació i al maltractament animal, i tot i que pugui subscriure algunes de les idees de l'animalisme —com pot ser el rebuig al fet que els animals pateixin—, no estableix una relació directa entre els seus hàbits de consum i la situació que considera com a injusta. Entén que qüestions com la suposada dieta equilibrada, la salut o la tradició, són indiscretibles i, per extensió, no té sentit

polemitzar-les. En tot cas, veurà un problema en punts que són externs a la seva agència —com pot ser dir que és culpa de la pagesia, que maltracta les vaques—, però no veurà una necessitat de canviar els seus propis hàbits. Per tant, no hi ha cap mena de qüestionament profund sobre la conducta alimentària ni cap tensió cognitiva o identitària.

Si ens imaginem un escenari exagerat, i ens figurem que tota persona a qui se li proposa el plantejament animalista respongués d'aquesta manera, parlaríem d'un "knowledge-translation gap" social. De fet, aquesta és la situació en la que es centra de manera exhaustiva Joy (2013). Ella entén que si no es dóna un canvi en els hàbits de consum o en la mentalitat de la població, és principalment perquè, a nivell social, les pressuposicions hegemòniques no permeten veure amb claredat la realitat. És a dir, Joy entén que el carnisme és una ideologia —entenent la ideologia com una falsa consciència (Marx i Engels 1846/2014)— i, per tant, els supòsits d'aquesta doctrina no deixen espai per a la reflexió. Creiem que la proposta de Joy (2013) és molt acurada a nivell sociopolític, ja que es centra en explicar els mecanismes que utilitzen els mitjans de comunicació i els poders oficials per tal que la reacció negativa sigui la predominant. Tanmateix, entenem que es tracta d'una explicació parcial de la realitat, que nega el component de reflexió individual i pressuposa una reacció determinada per part de l'individu, que sembla no ser capaç de pensar a causa del carnisme. Concep al subjecte d'una manera totalment passiva i preprogramada, i això no permet endinsar-se en un pla intrapersonal on l'agència té un paper protagonista.

Aquestes consideracions es poden tenir en compte en la segona reacció, que anomenarem *permeable*. En aquest cas, l'individu, tot i tenir hàbits de consum propis del carnisme, quan escolta l'argumentari antiespecista, es deixa travessar pel discurs, i es planteja, encara que sigui a nivell embrionari, l'animalisme com una opció alternativa? oposada? al carnisme. A diferència de la resposta negativa, el subjecte està obert a incorporar —total o parcialment— les categories i els raonaments propis de l'antiespecisme al seu sistema de pensament.

Ara bé, que l'individu accepti els postulats anticarnistes, no implica, necessàriament, una modificació automàtica en la seva conducta envers els animals no humans. Contràriament al que deixa entendre Joy (2013), desnaturalitzar el carnisme no té per què comportar un canvi immediat en els hàbits de consum, sinó que abans de variar qualsevol comportament, la persona entra en un procés de qüestionament intern; de tensió. Si bé és cert que el coneixement antiespecista és emancipador, entendre que la mera incorporació d'arguments racionals ja implicarà una modificació en la conducta de l'individu, ens sembla partir d'una concepció de l'individu extremadament racional, que no té en compte factors socials o culturals que no tenen per què ser purament lògics. A més, si tal i com postula Joy (2013), entenem que el simple fet de ser conscient de l'explotació animal ja comporta un canvi en la conducta alimentària, deixem de banda el component ideogràfic, propi de cada individu, que resulta clau per a entendre les motivacions i intencions personals que guien

les accions del dia a dia. En aquest cas, doncs, ens topem amb un “knowledge-translation gap” individual; que d’entrada podria semblar cognitiu, però que, com es desenvoluparà al següent apartat, acaba resultant identitari.

4. Dissonància identitària

Segons la terminologia emprada per la psicologia social, el fenomen anomenat “dissonància cognitiva”, consisteix en el fet que la ment de l’individu hi ha dues idees —o creences— en tensió que es contraposen, i d’aquesta manera, es genera una reacció d’estrès i ansietat (Festinger 1962). Però la dissonància cognitiva no només es dóna perquè dues creences xoquin, sinó que també pot aparèixer quan hi ha una disharmonia entre dues emocions o entre una idea i un comportament. En el cas que ens ocupa, la dissonància es dóna entre les conductes de consum d’animals no humans i les idees que l’antiespecisme planteja, ja que, a diferència del que succeeix en la resposta negativa, la persona amb dissonància sí que estableix una causalitat entre les seves accions i el maltractament animal. Per tant, com que aquesta tensió provocarà patiment mental, la voluntat de l’individu serà superar aquesta tensió interna de la manera més ràpida possible, i segons Festinger (1962) ho farà a través de tres estratègies:

1. Afegir elements consonants amb una creença determinada —a través de recordar o inventar raons que li donin suport— i restar-li elements dissidents, evitant, negant i reprimint qualsevol component que pugui restar valor a la creença que es vulgui mantenir.
2. Reduir la importància que se li atorga a les cognicions dissonants, canviant la percepció d’alguna acció realitzada fins que es dissipin les inconsistències amb la creença que es vol mantenir.
3. Canviar la validesa dels elements dissonants a través del canvi de creences.

A més, també es faran servir estratègies de racionalització, sil·logismes (veure Santamaría 1995) i redefinició de valors (veure Polkinghorne 1988), per tal d’evitar la incongruència, ja que aquesta acaba danyant l’autoestima.

Així doncs, la voluntat del subjecte davant la situació de dissonància és establir-se com a coherent. Però abans de tot, haurà de decidir, d’acord amb el seu sistema de valors, quin dels dos sistemes de creences s’adequa més a la seva autoimatge. En altres paraules, l’elecció que es farà estarà basada en la percepció que es té sobre un mateix i sobre les pròpies prioritats, per tal de mantenir una trama vital contínua i, sobretot, coherent.

D’acord amb el psicoanalista Erik Erikson (1968), l’objectiu principal del Jo —que està patint la dissonància cognitiva— és el d’establir un sentiment profund d’identitat ferma i estable, i, així, evitar caure en un abisme existencial on els motius de qualsevol acte o voluntat no fossin deguts a un Jo fort i essencial, sinó a una simple qüestió de context. Per tant, no adoptarà qualsevol

de les opcions com a una part més de la seva vida, sinó que intricarà la decisió dins la seva narració vital. Així doncs, el resultat de la dissonància no només serà social i polític, sinó que també tindrà un impacte en la identitat de l'individu, que es veurà inevitablement emmotllada. I l'individu, encara que sigui a un nivell implícit, és conscient d'això.

L'alimentació i el comportament com a consumidor són, de ben segur, dues qüestions de rellevància a l'hora de narrar-se a un mateix; de construir l'autoconcepte. No es tracta de dues coses menors, sinó de components clau de la identitat, de manera que la disputa interna no serà només sobre com entendre aquestes qüestions, sinó sobre quina identitat es vol encarnar.

D'una banda, mantenir uns hàbits carnistes tenint present la situació dels animals no humans implica saber-se conscient d'una injustícia i legitimar-la en base als patrons que estan socialment establerts, a la inèrcia i a la tradició no qüestionada. Significa ser còmplice d'un sistema amb el qual no s'està d'acord i, per tant, incongruent. Tot i això, seguir el carnisme també implica tenir una comoditat a l'hora de consumir tota mena de productes, no iniciar una lluita que segurament desgasta i totes les altres pressuposicions que s'han comentat a l'apartat anterior —estatus, sabor, dieta equilibrada, etc.

D'altra banda, canviar d'hàbits alimentaris implica una coherència a nivell de valors desitjables, saber-se agent actiu per a la lluita contra una situació que s'entén com a injusta —maltractament animal—, objectiu, racional i estar del bàndol dels més dèbils. Ara bé, també comporta un distanciament dels hàbits hegemonics del grup d'iguals, un qüestionament constant per part de la societat i un esforç que no es feia fins ara per tal de seguir unes noves normes de consum.

5. Conclusions

Per tant, hi haurà una reconsideració, no només dels actes que es porten a terme, sinó que també es farà una valoració de les accions en funció de l'autoconcepte que es té i dels valors que es volen projectar com a definitoris d'un mateix. Així doncs, si hi ha una tensió no serà només a nivell de creença i acció, sinó a nivell d'identitat, i aquesta tensió repercutirà directament sobre l'autoestima de l'individu.

Tal com presenta Spence (1984), els arguments que es faran servir per a resoldre aquesta tensió, estaran relacionats amb la veritat narrativa enlloc de la veritat històrica; en el relat de cadascú en lloc de les condicions materials reals. Resulta interessant, doncs, plantejar que si es fa un canvi en els hàbits de consum i alimentació, no és únicament perquè es vulgui fer un canvi social i polític, per tal d'aconseguir un món millor, sinó que també es deu a la necessitat individual de sentir-se coherent i de seguir uns valors desitjables segons l'autorelat personal.



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Who is responsible for reinforcing the different treatment between different species?



Gizem Uygun

Department of Communication, Universitat Pompeu Fabra



gzmuygun@gmail.com



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PHOTO: Cotton. Video and graphics.

Abstract

Eti, one of the leading snack companies in Turkey, launched in 2019 a new corporate social responsibility campaign for one of their biscuits. The company committed to donating to three Turkish NGOs working for the welfare of stray cats and dogs. The ingredients of the biscuit include cow's milk and bovine gelatin. Therefore, while the campaign supports the welfare of some species, it reinforces the suffering of some others. The production of this campaign in combination with the lack of response from the general public or the animal rights organizations showcase the widespread normalization in the different treatment of the different species of nonhuman animals among the actors of society. Melanie Joy (2010) suggests that the contradiction of loving some species of nonhuman animals while normalizing the suffering of some others is possible through the learned psychic schemas which are the constructs of deeply structured belief systems. David Nibert (2013) proposes that transcending capitalism is a prerequisite for ending animal domesecration. Nibert provides three reasons for his proposition: the use of mass media by the elites to shape public opinion, the capitalists' power over government and capitalism rendering the individuals incapable of questioning through constant insecurity, poverty and deprivation. The paper argues that capitalism as the dominant system creates the psychic schemas that are reinforced by Eti's campaign. Lastly, the paper suggests using Arendt's (1964) lesson of "The Banality of Evil" to assign the responsibility on every member of the society for the suffering caused by humans on nonhuman animals.



Keywords:

Animal domesecration, banality of evil, critical animal and media studies, Eti, psychic numbing, psychic schemas, Turkey.

1. Introduction

Eti, a snack company from Turkey, announced in 2019 a new corporate social responsibility campaign for one of their biscuits. The company committed to donating to three Turkish NGOs working on the welfare of stray cats and dogs as well as promoting these NGOs in their ad campaigns. The biscuits' ingredients, including cow's milk and bovine gelatin, makes the campaign a perfect showcase of the contradiction of loving and protecting some nonhuman animals while normalizing the suffering of others. In addition to the company's contradiction, the lack of critique on the campaign by the individuals in society and the appreciation of the campaign by the largest animal rights NGOs in Turkey show that the contradiction is not specific to an actor in the society, on the contrary, it is widespread.

Melanie Joy suggests that the contradiction of loving some members of some species, while normalizing the suffering caused on some others, is due to

the learned psychic schemas. These psychic schemas, which are the constructs of deeply structured belief systems, cause moral discomfort in individuals due to the incongruence of their values (caring for nonhuman animals) and actions (causing the suffering of some nonhuman animals) (Joy 2010). Humans deal with this discomfort through psychic numbing, which is a psychological process that makes it possible for humans to disconnect from their experiences emotionally and mentally (Joy 2010).

The paper draws attention to the difficulty of assigning the responsibility on the reinforcement of contradictions around the different treatments for different species to one group in the society. In the case of Eti, the paper detects three separate actors of society contributing to this reinforcement: the company, including all the individuals that worked on the creation of this campaign; the individuals in the society, including but not limited to the consumers of the product; and the animal rights NGOs in Turkey. The paper argues that the spread of the contradiction among different actors in society, which according to Joy is caused by the psychic numbing, causes a normalization of not thinking about the suffering caused by humans on nonhuman animals. The article later uses the "banality of evil", a term introduced by Hannah Arendt in 1964, which suggests that simply by not thinking and behaving by the rules of the system, ordinary people can cause a great deal of suffering (Arendt 1964). Although the term has been used in understanding the suffering caused by humans on humans, little work has used the "banality of evil" in the sphere of the suffering caused by humans on nonhuman animals. The paper suggests to use the "banality of evil" in combination with Melanie Joy's psychic numbing and assigning the responsibility of the exploitation of nonhuman animals on everyone who fails to think before acting and engaging in behavior that is linked with the exploitation of nonhuman animals.

2. The case: Eti's campaign and the widespread contradictions

Eti, founded in 1961, is one of the deep-seated snack companies in Turkey (Eti 2020). In December 2019, Eti launched a new corporate social responsibility campaign for one of its famous biscuits, Benimo. The campaign was introduced through their video advertisement, which was broadcast on TV as well as on the company's YouTube channel. Solely on YouTube, the advertisement reached 8.5 Million views in 3 months (Eti 2019). Through the campaign, Eti announced its commitment to be a donor for three leading NGOs working for the welfare of the stray cats and dogs in Turkey (HAYTAP, Encander and HEPAD) and called its audience to be donors of these NGOs too. Additionally, the campaign called for its audience to share their thoughts and feelings about the campaign, and the love they have for stray cats and dogs through the hashtag #benimdostum, which translates as "he/she is my friend".

Although Eti helps the stray cats and dogs in Turkey through this campaign, the ingredients of the biscuit, including cow's milk and bovine gelatin creates a contradiction on the company's stance on animal rights (Icerir.com 2017). Through the advertising campaign the company allows the biscuit consumers to feel good about themselves for buying the product, making them

believe that they are helping other animals while rendering the suffering of nonhuman animals who have been exploited in the production of the same product invisible. A company creating such a contradiction is neither a first nor is it surprising. Since Herman and Chomsky's theory of manufacturing consent from 1988, many scholars have extensively studied the public consent being manufactured via entirely legal means through the media and communications by the elites (Almiron 2016, 27).

However, Eti's case becomes interesting to study due to two additional contradictions. The first one is the presence of an assigned hashtag to the campaign (#benimdostumo). On the one hand, the presence of this hashtag makes it easy to monitor the consumer reactions towards the campaign. On the other hand, this opens an easy-to-reach platform for any member of society to raise their concern on this contradiction. A quick analysis of the tweets with this hashtag showed that there is unanimous support for the campaign with not a single tweet calling out the company for their hypocrisy. The second aspect that adds to the interest in studying this case is the stand of animal rights NGOs. The NGOs that get funding from this campaign, as expected, congratulate Eti for its support, and call the company "their new friend" (Haytap 2020). Additionally, no animal rights NGOs in Turkey called out the contradictions of this campaign.

3. Psychic schemas for stray cats and dogs in Turkey

The three contradictions mentioned in Eti's campaign reveal the magnitude of the spread of the normalization of the different treatment of different species by society. Melanie Joy states that finding it acceptable to eat some animals, whereas feeling disgusted with the idea of eating others, is possible because of the difference in the perception of different species (Joy 2010, 14). She mentions what causes the difference between these perceptions is the psychic schemas, which are built by deeply rooted belief systems (Joy 2010). She then adds, dealing with the incongruence between values (caring for nonhuman animals) and behaviors (eating or causing suffering on some nonhuman animals) is achievable with psychic numbing, which is a psychological phenomenon that makes it possible for humans to emotionally and mentally detach from reality (Joy 2010). The takeaways from Joy which will be used later in the paper are two-fold. Firstly, psychic numbing makes it possible for humans not to think or feel about some of their behaviors. Secondly, deeply rooted belief systems construct the psychic schemas telling people which members of which species can be eaten without remorse and which ones cannot and are key in reinforcing this normalization.

Focusing on the psychic schemas around stray cats and dogs requires an understanding of the psychic schemas for stray dogs in Istanbul. In Islam, the dog is sacred like any other living being but is considered unclean. Therefore, it is acceptable for the dog to live on the streets, and these dogs should be taken care of as they are living beings created by God; however, as they are also deemed unclean by Islam, they cannot live in the houses (Fortuny 2014). Through the more pronounced impact of westernization in Istanbul from the early 1900s on, the psychic schema of stray dogs started carrying western values

too (Fortuny 2014). In the West during the early 1900s, stray animals were either domesticated or were sent into the "wild", aiming at making the streets "animal-free" (Fortuny 2014). The blend of these two psychic schemas challenged the stray dogs of Istanbul keeping the streets of Istanbul as their home as both psychic schemas consider them unclean; however, the crossing of the "sacredness of life" from the psychic schema of Islam and the domestication from the psychic schema of the West made it possible for the stray dogs of Istanbul to keep the streets of Istanbul as their home (Fortuny 2014). Currently, it can be suggested that the stray dogs, as well as the cats of Istanbul, are perceived as neighbors by the residents of Istanbul.

A quick look into the animal rights organizations from the time of Ottoman Empire to the current day provides a valuable understanding of the emphasis on the welfare of stray cats and dogs and little to none attention on the suffering of other nonhuman animals, such as farmed animals that are exploited by the dairy industry. The first animal protection organization of the Ottoman Empire, the İstanbul Society for the Protection of Animals, was established in 1912 in Istanbul, with the help of Lady Lowther, the wife of the British Ambassador after the mass mulling of the stray dogs of Istanbul due to the rabies threat on the human animal residents of Istanbul (Gürler, Menteş and Osmanağaoğlu 2011, 903). With the İstanbul Society for the Protection of Animals being the first of the NGOs working on animal welfare, the animal rights organizations that followed the lead of this society mainly focused on the welfare of the animals, some examples including the welfare of stray animals or working on policy proposals to prohibit the slaughter of pregnant farmed animals (Gürler, Menteş and Osmanağaoğlu 2011, 904). From the early 1900s on, the majority of the NGOs working for nonhuman animals in Turkey worked for stray cats and dogs (Gürler, Menteş and Osmanağaoğlu 2011, 904). Furthermore, within the current NGOs in Turkey working for nonhuman animals, only one NGO (Turkish Vegan Association) works for the abolition of nonhuman animal oppression, and all of the other NGOs merely focus on the welfare of nonhuman animals, with a pronounced emphasis on the stray cats or dogs (TVD 2015).

4. Capitalism as the dominant belief system reinforcing the psychic numbing

In 2013, David Nibert suggested that transcending capitalism is a prerequisite for ending animal domesecration, a term he uses instead of domestication to highlight the inherent violence (Nibert 2013). Nibert proposes three reasons why he believes that transcending capitalism is critical in ending animal domesecration. Firstly, the companies' and elites' use of mass media in order to socially engineer public opinion; secondly, the capitalists' power over government through diverse institutions such as interest groups; and lastly, capitalism rendering the individuals incapable of questioning the learned devaluation of some species through constant insecurity, poverty and deprivation (Nibert 2013, 646-654). The case of Eti Benimo exemplifies all three reasons Nibert provides. Firstly, the Eti Benimo campaign announces its financial support to the NGOs working for the welfare of the stray cats and dogs in the advertisement of the product that uses cow's milk and bovine gelatin. The

company uses this advertisement on various media channels, TV ads, YouTube, online and print ads, as well as carrying it to Twitter through their hashtag. Through all these efforts, the company successfully uses mass media and conveys the message of "It is OK to consume products that cause animal suffering and still love animals" successfully. Secondly, although Eti is not a dairy company, the company is one of the members of The National Milk Council (Ulusal Sut Konseyi 2018). The council's mission translates as: "In the name of development of the industry, The National Milk Council works on development of new policies through scientific research, leads the implementations and takes part in market regulation" (Ulusal Sut Konseyi 2018). The council's mission, in combination with Eti's membership, suggests Eti's power on the government, therefore posing an example of Nibert's second reason. Lastly, the absence of even one single call-out of the hypocrisy of the campaign neither by the general public nor by the NGOs, even the activist groups for animal liberation, showcases the terrifying extent of the normalization of this contradiction. This last aspect resonates with capitalism rendering humans incapable of questioning the devaluation of certain species.

Combining Nibert's (2013) view on capitalism and domesecration with Joy's (2010) emphasis on belief systems constructing the psychic schemas as well as using psychic numbing as a tool, I argue that capitalism is one of the deep-rooted belief systems reinforcing the normalization of the different treatment of different species if not the most powerful one. Additionally, remembering that Eti's campaign provides examples for all three reasons why Nibert believes that capitalism needs to be transcended to end domesecration, suggests that Eti's campaign builds a good example on capitalism as a deep-rooted belief system psychologically numbing people and resulting in a continued normalized contradiction between values and behaviors of individuals with regard to nonhuman animals.

5. Difficulty of finding who is responsible: The banality of evil

Through the example of Eti, it can be seen that the actors of society that normalize or contribute to the normalization of the different treatment of different species extend from companies, such as Eti, to the general public. The extent of the normalization makes it harder to pinpoint the entities who are responsible for the normalization in question. The company contributes to it through shaping public opinion using the mass media. In parallel, the NGOs get funding from the company and keep their silence about this contradiction. When it comes to the individuals, whether these are the consumers, individuals working at these companies or at the NGOs, they are either going through psychic numbing which silences them (Joy 2010, 18) or due to the insecurity, poverty and deprivation created by capitalism, they are not in a state to challenge the oppression of devalued nonhuman animals (Nibert 2013, 653). As this example shows us, capitalism as a system distributes the responsibility of this normalization between the entities and makes it almost impossible to name one responsible entity.

I suggest that at this point, it is useful to apply the lesson of "banality of evil" from Hannah Arendt. Arendt says that the "banality of evil" is not a theory nor a term, but a lesson. According to this lesson, the lack of thinking, when thinking refers to reflecting rather than merely being conscious or aware, has the potential of causing a great deal of suffering (Arendt 1964). An ordinary individual, merely following the rules of the dominant system in place and not thinking, could cause a great deal of suffering, and Arendt argues that this individual's intentions being evil or not does not change the responsibility the individual has on the suffering that is caused (Arendt 1964).

After this lesson has been named by Arendt, it has been used frequently in the area of political science to reflect on the suffering caused by humans on humans. However, there is little literature that applies this lesson to the suffering that is exerted on nonhuman animals by human animals. Using Eti's case as a starting point, the dominant system in this case is capitalism. An ordinary human individual could be any individual, from the consumer to the individual working on the creation of this campaign to the individual working at an NGO. As Joy suggests, due to the psychic numbing, the individuals mentally and emotionally block themselves, meaning that they actually do not reflect while acting (Joy 2010). Even though these psychic schemas, which lead to psychic numbing, are created by capitalism, applying Arendt's (1964) banality of evil lesson suggests that each individual that fails to think before they act is responsible for the suffering caused as the result of this act.

6. Conclusion

The paper studied the case of Eti's 2019-launched corporate social responsibility campaign. The campaign showcases the different perceptions human animals have for different species of other animals, as the campaign uses a product that contains cow's milk and bovine gelatin in order to generate funding for the welfare of the stray cats and dogs.

The case of Eti creates an interesting example due to the lack of reaction by the general public or the NGOs to the contradiction posed by the campaign. This lack of reaction draws attention to the spread of normalization of protecting the welfare of members of some species of nonhuman animals, whereas causing suffering to some others. The paper firstly explored the concept of psychic schemas and psychic numbing that are used by the dominant belief systems to understand the normalization of the suffering of some nonhuman animal species as proposed by Joy in 2010. In order to be able to put the case of Eti in context, the paper later explored the psychic schemas of stray dogs and cats in Turkey, and through the history of the organizations working for nonhuman animals, showcased the strong emphasis both the welfarist approach and strong focus on the welfare of the stray cats and dogs in Turkey.

The analysis of the Eti case shows us that the normalization of different treatments of different species of nonhuman animals is very widely distributed between the different actors in society. Through the combination of the works of Joy (2010) and Nibert (2013), the humans' normalization of this contradiction

could be explained through the difficulties exerted on the individuals by capitalism and the psychic schemas constructed by capitalism. However, this approach carries the risk of having no responsible entity for the suffering of the nonhuman animals.

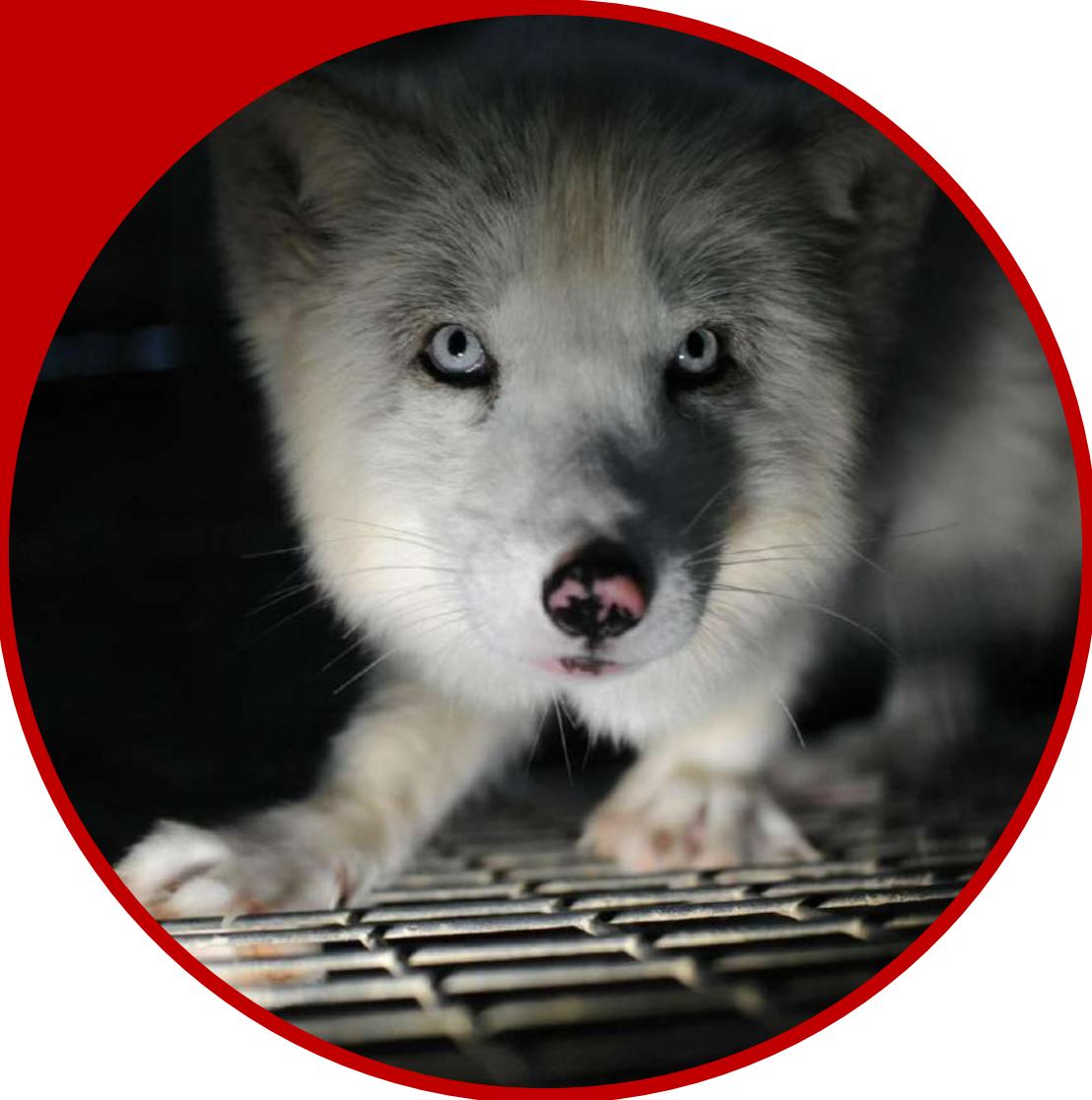
I propose applying the lesson of "banality of evil" from Hannah Arendt for the suffering caused by human animals on nonhuman animals. The banality of evil attracts attention to how an ordinary person simply adhering with the rules of the dominant system without thinking, where thinking refers to reflecting rather than being merely conscious, carries the risk of causing an enormous amount of pain (Arendt 1964). Arendt argues that the ordinary person who does not have any evil intentions but simply fails to reflect before they act should not mean that the person is not responsible for their actions (Arendt 1964). I propose that the use of this notion should put the responsibility for the suffering caused by human animals on nonhuman animals on each one of us. This feeling of responsibility might make it possible for each one of us to reflect before we act and may lead to a change.

Although the lesson of the banality of evil might help with assigning the responsibility on all individuals that act without reflecting, as Nibert suggests, the pressure capitalism exerts on each individual through insecurity, poverty and deprivation is still not resolved through this approach (Nibert 2013, 653). The application of the banality of evil, therefore, might increase the weight of responsibility on the group of people that is already struggling to survive in the cruelty of capitalism.



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Who's the “wild” one now? The Exploitation of non-human animals as seen in the animal advocacy documentary *The Ghosts in Our Machine*



Danial Azhar

Department of Communication, Universitat Pompeu Fabra



danialazh@gmail.com



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PHOTO: Film frame of *The Ghosts in Our Machine*

Abstract

In our consumer-driven societies, nonhuman animals (NHAs) are widely exploited and mistreated to support our consumption habits. The exploitation of NHAs has become common in numerous multibillion-dollar industries, from food to fashion, cosmetics and medicine. Yet amongst all this, NHAs have allies who advocate for their rights, sentience and life without suffering to be recognized. Nonhuman animal activists have several communication strategies at their disposal, with documentary films being one that have grown in popularity and influence. As such, the purpose of this article is to determine the effectiveness of one NHA advocacy documentary, *The Ghosts in Our Machine* (Marshall 2013), through a theoretical discussion of its audiovisual elements. The analysis finds that the documentary is an exercise of empathy and compassion, focusing on the individuality of its nonhuman animal subjects and depicting the fulfilling lives they may lead away from human exploitation. Contrasting the lives of captive NHAs being exploited in the meat, dairy and fur industries with that of a small cast of rescued individuals, *The Ghosts in Our Machine* (henceforth *Ghosts*) takes a contemplative and intimate approach to expose the viewer to the malpractices often hidden from us. The viewer is not shocked through gory images, but rather made witness to the intimacy of interspecies relations.



Keywords:

Nonhuman animal rights, nonhuman animal activism, exploitation of nonhuman animals, animal advocacy documentaries, theoretical analysis.

1. Introduction

Human exploitation of nonhuman animals (NHAs) has become normalized as an afterthought to many people. It should go without saying that nonhuman animals are sentient (Animal Ethics 2021) and have agency (Hribal 2020); possessing a desire to live without suffering. But in truth, too many of us continue to turn a blind eye or fall into cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957). The rights of nonhuman animals are not respected by various industries spreading the chain of responsibility of their exploitation, whilst keeping the cruelty and violence away from the general public. The lack of widespread attention given to the mechanisms that inflict suffering on nonhuman animals, coupled with the estrangement between the production processes and people's values and actions, sees how the demand for NHA products is maintained and the general economy is continually ticking. However, it is not a hopeless battle given the clusters of people advocating for the rights, welfare and liberation of nonhuman animals.

There are a host of different communication strategies activists employ, to varying degrees of effectiveness, yet one strategy that has gained greater recognition is the documentary format. While there are several ways to learn about nonhuman animals and nature, the majority of us do so through television shows, documentaries and videos. The trouble with any media format is the potential distortion of the representation of subjects. Media portrayals of nonhuman animals are no exception, but how do advocacy documentaries approach the subject matter?

Advocacy documentaries seek to "examine, explore, or expose a social, cultural and/or economic issue and, in turn, to advocate (explicitly or implicitly) a perspective and/or action regarding that issue" (Corbett 2013, 129). Yet given the flexibility of styles and narratives, advocacy documentaries have increasingly become not only entertaining but "award-worthy and bankable" (Corbett 2013). One such animal advocacy documentary that epitomizes this is *The Cove* (Psihogios 2009), which went on to win an Academy Award for best documentary feature. *The Cove* took an undercover approach to shed light on the cruel killing of dolphins in Taiji, Japan, for commercial purposes. Yes, it advocates for the killings to stop, but it does so through a narrative construction that, at times, resembles a heist film or a crime thriller. Broadly speaking, how effective are animal advocacy documentaries as an activist communication strategy? And in what ways do such documentaries challenge and subvert the conventions of more popular commercial animal and wildlife documentaries? Through a theoretical discussion, this paper will attempt to answer those questions with an audiovisual analysis of one animal advocacy documentary, *The Ghosts in Our Machine* (Marshall 2013).

2. The focus on the individual in *The Ghosts in Our Machine*

"Wildlife", nature and other nonhuman animal documentaries, commercial and non-commercial alike, have a problematic tendency to distort reality in the eyes of audiences. They present nature to be both stunning yet horrifying, containing the "potential chaos of nature within the thrilling but also generally romanticized visions of the wild" (Sperb 2016, 208). Or they seek to entice viewers through over-sensationalizing life in nature, especially portraying predator animals to be violent and bloodthirsty when really, they hunt every so often. Animal advocacy documentaries, on the other hand, look to undermine these conventions. They present nature as affected by humans and the problematic relations of dominance over, and exploitation of, nonhuman individuals. Advocacy documentaries draw attention to the political economy that governs nonhuman animal oppression and the cruel practices that occur in a lot of industries. *The Ghosts in Our Machine* is one such documentary. Directed by Liz Marshall, it follows Jo-Anne McArthur, a photojournalist and nonhuman animal activist, and her life's work to photograph, document and expose the often unseen exploitation of nonhuman individuals in the food, fur and research industries. The documentary makes several audiovisual and narrative choices in its approach to advocating for NHAs, some of which will be discussed below.

A prominent visual choice the filmmakers made was in the use of close-ups and extreme close-ups of nonhuman animals. This choice, to some extent, replicates McArthur's photographic language, which seeks to concentrate on the personhood of each of her subjects. In one sequence, a series of extreme close-ups on the eyes of individual nonhuman animals is followed by McArthur stating that "the eyes are so soulful". The cinematography underlines this sentiment, capturing the expressiveness of each individual nonhuman animal. To express that they should not be seen as any less valuable than human animals, they are shown to occupy the same types of frames as McArthur and other human subjects. In cinematic language, the close-up connotes intimacy and works to de-objectify the NHAs. Whereas commercial "wildlife" documentaries tend to mislead viewers with the use of telephoto zoom lens — giving the impression that it is possible to get up close and personal with free-roaming animals — *Ghosts in Our Machine* physically brings the camera close to its nonhuman subjects (albeit ones in captivity), without zooming from a distance. These shots also play out as both a figurative and literal symbolism, a commentary on how these individuals are invisible "ghosts" in our capitalist machinery but are no less there, suffering and demanding to be seen.

Ghosts further argues that nonhuman animals are soulful, unique individuals with agency, through a central cast of NHAs: Fanny and Sonny, a rescued cow and calf living on Farm Sanctuary in New York State; Maggie and Abbey, two purpose-bred beagles who have been adopted by a couple; Ron, a chimpanzee who spent 30 years of his life as a research subject in a laboratory; amongst other NHAs, who are name and listed in the credits before the human animals who featured in the documentary. Several of these individuals have intimate connections with McArthur, which in turn demonstrates interspecies relations and co-existence is possible without the need for one to exploit the other. In addition, the nonhuman individuals are shown to have personalities and attributes. And more importantly, their personal stories are conveyed to viewers, providing substance to their appearances thus eliciting compassion. These individuals exist on a spectrum of NHAs with certain species being more valued than others. Wildlife or "exotic animals" elicit fascination for their free-living nature and in some cases, endangered status, whilst companion animals receive the affection of humans given their domestication and ability to cohabit the modern household. But along this spectrum there are the invisible individuals whose presence large, multibillion-dollar industries continually keep in the shadows. McArthur's photography and Marshall's documentary go some way in correcting this. Their work demonstrates that although these individuals are not widely seen, their pain and suffering is no less real, and raises the question: Why should not they receive the affection reserved for free-roaming and companion animals?

3. An alternative approach to activism

Animal activists and liberationists are often represented by some media as violent vandals who stop at nothing to save nonhuman animals and fight for their rights. Documentaries such as *The Cove* (Pshoyos 2009), *Blackfish*

(Cowperthwaite 2013) and *Cowspiracy: The Sustainable Secret* (Andersen and Kuhn 2014) have rebutted this reputation, but it is true they still portray animal activists as individuals who do not shirk in the face of authority or popular opinion. *The Ghosts in Our Machine* takes a different approach in centering the narrative around the intricacies and struggles of McArthur's mission. By choosing to have a primary human subject, the documentary allows viewers to empathize with the cause of nonhuman animals more openly and readily. It does so by understanding that "empathy cannot be coerced or imposed, it must be nurtured" (Drew 2016, 212). And it is nurtured through employing McArthur as the emotional bridge that connects viewers to the individual NHAs, helping us to hear their stories, to see their individual virtues and, ultimately, sympathize with them. What is more, McArthur's form of activism is one that is covert rather than retaliatory, interventionist or aggressive. Her espionage-like missions, photographing captive individuals in fur farms, slaughterhouses and laboratories bring to light the disturbing hidden truths without the need of property damage or confrontations between parties of differing ideologies. Simply put, her manner of endearing herself to others (human and nonhuman alike) as well as to viewers, makes her cause easy to support.

If there is one significant challenge for animal advocacy documentaries, it is that of overwhelming viewers with too many graphic images of exploitation and cruelty which could in turn be counterproductive. It can be so because "the more transparent animal atrocities become, the more the public could become desensitized to their suffering" (Drew 2016, 204). This desensitization or "compassion fatigue", is the point which "images of suffering in fact elicit nothing but the denial and inactivity" (Aaltola 2014, 28). Although *The Ghosts in Our Machine* does portray graphic images, it is careful to balance them out with positive ones. The documentary relies on juxtaposing positive images of NHAs at the New York farm sanctuary, their adopted homes or elsewhere, with footage of captured individuals in cages or trucks. This juxtaposition is not only an exercise in interspecies empathy, but essentially illustrates the lives that nonhuman animals can lead if they are not confined to a cage, victims of suffering or condemned to slaughter. The difference seen in the individuals who have been rescued and rehabilitated from the unfortunate many who could not be saved is stark.

Marshall's documentary largely consists of original footage following segments of McArthur's life and missions/investigations she embarks on. It also incorporates her photographs from the locations shown and parts of her editing process, effectively bringing viewers through every stage of her work until the final product. This acts as a form of inclusivity and, rather than simply telling viewers to believe in the cause, it convinces them through involving them in McArthur's triumphs and downfalls. There is also the use of stock footage depicting factory farms, slaughterhouses and research laboratories, edited with voice-overs of various scholars and activists detailing the arguments on the importance of animal sentience and agency. The stock footage, intercut with voice-overs, is clever for it allows viewers to process the arguments rather than feel patronized by the presence of an expert in the frame. *Ghosts'* largely

observational style and slow pace creates an overall contemplative ambiance, one that does not overwhelm viewers but gently urges them to reflect on the issues at hand.

Perhaps one downside of *Ghosts* is that it offers no real solutions or answers to the problems it documents. Whereas documentaries such as *The Cove* (Psihogios 2009) and *Blackfish* (Cowperthwaite 2013) "are single issue films that expose specific atrocities or injustices and excoriate particular practices (e.g., the Japanese dolphin trade, aquatic theme parks)" (Drew 2016, 207), *Ghosts* isn't. Single issue films are better suited in mobilizing viewers with a call to action, be it by boycotting products, food chains, zoos, aquaria or other means. But *Ghosts* does not possess that factor given the enormity of issues it covers. It does well to uncover the façade of the various industries that exploit nonhuman animals, yet its inability to offer meaningful solutions is understandable. No one could be faulted for attempting to address such an expansive issue, but have no specific solutions. The structural practices these industries have are so embedded and protected that it would take an unprecedented change to overhaul. What Marshall's film can offer is evidence of interspecies bonds between animals — humans and nonhumans alike. It demonstrates what empathy could look like and what lives nonhuman animals may live, if only their rights to do so are acknowledged.

4. Moral shock and cognitive dissonance

If wildlife and nature documentaries idealize and sentimentalize, amongst other representations, free-roaming nonhuman animals and the natural world, advocacy documentaries in part, look to deconstruct those visions. They do so by stressing human agency and intervention into the worlds and lives of nonhuman animals; uncovering the complex structures and capitalist machineries that govern current day existence (as seen in *the Ghosts in Our Machine*). One strategy for animal advocates is addressing the "meat paradox", the dilemma that people "enjoy eating meat but few enjoy harming or killing other sentient creatures" (Loughnan, Haslam and Bastian 2010, 156). This inconsistency of both loving animals but continually consuming animal products has been theorized as a form of "cognitive dissonance", in which a belief and a practice are in conflict, creating an unpleasant emotional state that people are motivated to resolve (Festinger 1957). Such a development is due in part to industries — meat, dairy, fashion, cosmetics, medicine amongst others — obscuring the truth of the production process from the general public. The gap between fathoming an image of live nonhuman animals to seeing consumer products on a shelf is what keeps demand rolling. One strategy that activists use and is seen in various degrees in *Ghosts*, and to a greater extent in *The Cove* (Psihogios 2009), is moral shock.

Moral shocks occur when "an event or situation raises such a sense of outrage in people that they become inclined toward political action, even in the absence of a network of contacts" (Jasper and Poulsen 1995, 498). That sense of outrage can be stirred in several ways, such as releasing graphic images or

exposing heinous industry practices. *The Cove* effectively does both and managed to mobilize clusters of the public to condemn and even travel to Taiji, Japan, to protest the killing of dolphins. But it does so through a problematic cultural and moral relativist lens, creating an "us" vs. "them" narrative. It is easy to denounce a culture different from one's own and whose traditions/practices are alien to oneself. *The Cove* fails to address the problematic nature of a largely "Western" culture taking a morally high ground in criticizing a people for killing and consuming dolphins when they continue to kill and consume cows, chickens and pigs. *Ghosts in Our Machine* looks to rectify this, addressing the dominant industries in the "Western world". For this it can be lauded for its efforts — so too can McArthur's work — yet it remains to be seen whether the general public or wider culture is willing to accept change. *Ghosts* only received limited or niche screenings when its expansive criticism of multiple industries demands to be seen by the many. McArthur knows firsthand that cognitive dissonance remains prevalent, having been turned down by publishing editors who claim the wider public are not ready, or perhaps unwilling to see her powerful yet disturbing photographs. Activists can only continue to advocate, even if it often seems futile, in hopes that one day, the drastic changes in human-nonhuman animal relations will occur.

5. Conclusion

Animal advocacy documentaries have seen a steady rise in their numbers and reputation. They are timely reminders of the effects human agency has over nonhuman animals and the cruel exploitation that occurs on so many different levels. These documentaries further solidify their value in undermining the often distorted and idealized portrayals of nonhuman animals and the natural world, seen in commercial and non-commercial "wildlife" documentaries. They also have the capacity to bring to light the rarely seen systems of exploitation that continually occur in our capitalist societies, with *The Ghosts in Our Machine* being one exemplary case study, as it follows photojournalist and animal activist Jo-Anne McArthur on her life's work to document the struggles of nonhuman individuals in the food, fur and research industries. The documentary takes a contemplative, almost meditative approach in depicting the invisible "ghosts" whose suffering is neglected. *Ghosts* uses its camera to emphasize the individuality of each nonhuman cast member, providing their names and in some instances, conveying their personal traits. The close-ups and extreme close-ups these individuals frequently occupy express the intimacy McArthur shares with them, which only strengthens the exercise of interspecies empathy the documentary seeks to achieve.

The Ghosts in Our Machine does not look to patronize or ostracize its viewers nor does it simply intend to shock them through graphic imagery. Instead, it asks for them to reflect on their complicity and shows them what could be; depicting the content lives nonhuman animals can live if only their rights are acknowledged. The juxtaposition of captive animals and rescued individuals is a distinct communication strategy, one that differs from simply overwhelming audiences with gory images of exploitation, but is no less

effective. By showing positive images, the filmmakers illustrate the lives we frequently rob from these individuals. *Ghosts* is a step in the right direction, whilst McArthur's work should be widely commended, and in spite of cognitive dissonance, an unwillingness to change, compassion fatigue or powerful industries keeping wraps over their cruel practices, the rights and freedom of nonhuman animals remains an uphill battle. Animal advocacy documentaries are no less valuable for trying, they only need to keep doing so, finding different approaches to convince the general public. Change is possible but it rarely comes easy.



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¿Rompiendo o reforzando premisas especistas en la infancia? Comentario sobre dos películas: *Chicken Run* (2000) y *Zootropolis* (2016)



Bruna Suja Thauvin

Departamento de Comunicación, Universitat Pompeu Fabra



brusuj@gmail.com



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FOTOGRAFÍA: Ketut Subiyanto.

Resumen

La infancia es un período privilegiado para asentar determinadas ideologías y relaciones de poder, a través de la exposición a discursos presentes en el entorno social, cultural y mediático. En el caso del especismo, al igual que otros sistemas de opresión, es necesaria toda una socialización y un aprendizaje que permitan a los niños y niñas normalizar y justificar el hecho de explotar y comer animales sin que esto sea contradictorio con su apego por ellos. *Chicken Run* (Park y Lord 2000) y *Zootropolis* (Howard y Moore, 2016) son películas destinadas a un público infantil que cuestionan dos ideas fundamentales de la ideología especista: el supuesto bienestar de los animales en las granjas de producción y la legitimidad “natural” que tienen algunos animales de comer a otros. El presente ensayo tiene como objetivo comentar estas dos películas con relación a su potencial de ruptura o refuerzo de discursos especistas. Se concluye que, a través de referencias a otros sistemas de opresión y a narrativas históricas presentes en el imaginario colectivo europeo y norteamericano, estas películas asocian ciertos discursos especistas con situaciones de injusticia negativas para los protagonistas, por lo que efectivamente cuestionan premisas especistas. Sin embargo, también sustentan el valor de los personajes protagonistas no humanos en su antropomorfización y a través de narrativas humanas, reproduciendo de forma velada un discurso especista que coloca la “humanidad” por encima de la “animalidad”. Por tanto, estas películas cuestionan ciertas creencias especistas y refuerzan otras de forma simultánea.



Palabras clave:

Infancia, películas infantiles, especismo, Chicken Run, Zootopia, Zootropolis, activismo antiespecista.

1. Introducción

El consumo sistemático e industrializado de los cuerpos de otros animales por parte del ser humano solo es posible en un sistema de creencias que lo legitime y justifique. Una de las creencias inconscientes que lo permite, por ejemplo, es la del consentimiento de los animales no humanos a ser consumidos, algo completamente impensable desde un punto de vista racional. A esta idea se suman otras, que poco a poco han sido investigadas desde la academia. Matthew Cole (2017), en su análisis de dos anuncios de leche de la marca británica Cravendale, rescata varias de ellas: por ejemplo, el origen “natural” y primitivo del consumo de productos animales por parte del ser humano, que infiere una inclinación inevitable por el consumo de carne y productos lácteos que trasciende la voluntad del ser humano puesto que radica en su naturaleza. Otro ejemplo es la narrativa de afecto y simpatía que impregna los mensajes culturales relacionados con el consumo de otros animales, mediante la cual los

seres humanos asocian consumirlos con un interés afectivo por ellos: "Me gustan las vacas así que compro su leche". Esto se puede extrapolar a otras formas de consumo y, de una forma más generalizada, a la narrativa de apego por la naturaleza. Otra idea que justifica la explotación de animales no humanos es la creencia cultural de que la capacidad de sentir de los animales no humanos es menor que la de los humanos, con lo cual su sufrimiento carece de importancia (Bekoff 2012, Harnad 2016). El conjunto de estas creencias conforma narrativas capaces de sustentar una ideología de dominación de los humanos sobre las demás especies que habitan el planeta: el especismo. Como toda ideología de poder, ésta se adquiere a través de una socialización en la que la comunicación tiene una responsabilidad mayor (Almiron, Cole y Freeman, 2018).

La infancia es un momento privilegiado en el proceso de socialización especista. La literatura infantil tiene una arraigada tradición de representación de animales no humanos en términos muy específicos, que desaparecen casi por completo de la literatura dirigida a los adultos. Los animales no humanos están presentes como personajes protagonistas o coprotagonistas. En este sentido, muchas creaciones audiovisuales pueden reforzar narrativas especistas, legitimando distintas premisas de la ideología de dominación entre especies a través de su representación. En el caso de *El Rey León* (Minkoff y Allers 1994), por ejemplo, es recurrente la narrativa de la cadena alimenticia según la cual unos animales *deben* ser comidos y otros *deben* comerlos. El personaje principal, con quien la audiencia va a identificarse, es un león para quien es normal comer otros animales. Pero también es pertinente considerar que estas películas pueden animar a los niños y niñas a ver al resto de animales como sujetos con los que empatizar (Lowe 2014, 187).

Existen también algunas películas infantiles cuyo argumento cuestiona explícitamente algunas de las premisas que sustentan la ideología especista. Este ensayo se propone comentar dos películas destinadas a una audiencia infantil: *Chicken Run: Evasión en la granja* (Park y Lord 2000) y *Zootropolis* (Howard y Moore 2016). Ambas películas son pertinentes puesto que, aparte de tener por supuesto protagonistas no humanos, cuestionan a través de su argumento premisas fundamentales de la ideología especista. *Chicken Run* trata de un grupo de gallinas que viven encerradas en una granja e intentan continuamente escapar de ella, conscientes de que su vida depende de su capacidad de poner huevos y conscientes del asesinato que las espera en cuanto dejen de ser económicamente rentables. Esta película escenifica explícitamente que las gallinas no quieren estar encerradas en una granja y que son asesinadas en cuanto dejan de ser productivas. *Zootropolis* está ambientada en una utopía animal —pero sin humanos— donde depredadores y presas viven en armonía en una ciudad ficticia. Cuando por un interés político, alguien envenena a los depredadores para que se vuelvan "salvajes" y agresivos, la población entra en pánico —la heroína del cuento, una coneja agente de policía, descubre que se trata de un montaje cuyo objetivo es dividir a la sociedad reviviendo la creencia de que los depredadores son salvajes y agresivos por naturaleza, creencia que se demuestra falsa al final de la película.

La primera película rompe la premisa de que los animales de granja, en este caso las gallinas, son felices en ese entorno; muestra su deseo vital por escapar y niega que el cometido de las aves sea poner huevos para nuestro consumo. La segunda película rompe con la idea de la legitimidad “natural” de comer otros animales, de que existe un orden en la naturaleza que justifique que algunos animales tienen que ser devorados por otros. Esta última cuestiona también el concepto de “salvaje” y muestra que éste viene acompañado de una violencia que castiga y controla injustamente al sujeto. Ambas películas muestran la ruptura con estas premisas como algo que no es obra de un solo personaje heroico, sino que tiene una dimensión social y depende de la organización de varios personajes contra un sistema establecido. Teniendo en cuenta el papel clave de las películas infantiles como factor de socialización, ¿podemos afirmar que estos dos filmes son ejemplos de ruptura con narrativas especistas? ¿Hasta qué punto y de qué forma construyen significados antiespecistas? ¿Es posible que, a pesar de sus respectivos argumentos, ambas obras sigan participando de alguna forma de discursos opresivos hacia los animales no humanos?

Ninguna de estas dos películas ha sido analizada en profundidad desde una perspectiva exclusivamente antiespecista. El presente ensayo tiene como objetivo hacer un análisis crítico de su contenido. La necesidad de revisar las películas infantiles en estos términos reside en su popularidad, difícilmente comparable con otros medios de comunicación, y en que son un vector de información privilegiado para la infancia, cuando se comienzan a sentar las bases de las ideologías que atravesarán la sociedad adulta. En palabras de Lowe (2014, 190), cabe hablar de “oportunidad estratégica” en cuanto a activismo animalista, dado que el interés de audiencias familiares por películas que muestran personajes no humanos es de tal envergadura desde un punto de vista comercial que su contenido es hoy en día sensiblemente influyente.

2. Conexiones con otros sistemas de opresión

Ambas películas hacen eco de narrativas de opresión presentes en el imaginario social, que aunque los niños y niñas probablemente no vayan a reconocer, puesto que ello requiere de educación y cultura general, sí resuenan en el visionado de los adultos y adultas que las vean y muy probablemente acompañen a los niños y niñas a lo largo de su educación. También son referencias que los niños y niñas irán conectando con futuros aprendizajes.

2.1. *Chicken Run: Ecos de la liberación tras la segunda guerra mundial*

La granja de *Chicken Run* es un espacio con fuerte carga argumental. Es de donde las protagonistas tratan de escapar, y está cerrada por vallas alambradas, con torres de vigilancia y barracas dispuestas de forma ortogonal, todas ellas de madera. Visualmente, se puede argumentar que la estética de la granja, administrada por el matrimonio Tweedy (antagonistas de la película y únicos personajes humanos), recuerda a la de los campos de concentración y exterminio nazi durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Es significativo que las

gallinas sean conscientes de la suerte que les espera si no escapan: al principio, su vida depende de su productividad poniendo huevos, lo cual hace ecos a un campo de trabajo forzado; más adelante, la Sra. Tweedy compra una máquina que hace tartas de pollo, cuya última etapa es un horno. Esto hace un símil con los campos de exterminio y sus tristemente conocidas cámaras de cremación. La Segunda Guerra Mundial y el Holocausto dejaron una indiscutible huella en la memoria colectiva europea y occidental como cúspide del horror imaginable; la equiparación de la situación de las gallinas con ello es por tanto un fuerte mensaje para un público que aún recuerda los campos de concentración nazis como un símbolo de una ideología cruel y enemiga de las democracias europeas.

La lucha que libran las gallinas por su libertad está enmarcada en un léxico a la vez militar y de resistencia clandestina. El componente militar se da a través del personaje del anciano Fowler, único gallo de la granja y con un pasado en el ejército, quien acaba pilotando el avión; en cuanto a la resistencia clandestina, está organizada por Ginger, la protagonista, quien convoca encuentros secretos para trazar planes de escape y encabeza la resistencia. Este subtexto remite de forma más o menos directa a la memoria colectiva de la Segunda Guerra Mundial en Europa —especialmente a la Historia escrita por los vencedores—, durante la cual se sumaron a las fuerzas del ejército grupos de resistencia civiles en la Francia ocupada y en una Alemania autoritaria. La aparición del personaje de Rocky, que no por nada proviene de Estados Unidos y va a ser clave en la liberación, puede ser leída como un guiño más. El hecho de utilizar todo este lenguaje histórico para escenificar la resistencia de las gallinas sitúa su lucha en un espacio ideológico de completa legitimidad, resistencia ante la injusticia y sobre todo defensa de una serie de valores colectivos, presentes en la construcción de los estados democráticos europeos de la segunda mitad del siglo XX.

2.2. *Zootropolis: Ni salvajes, ni adorables*

El argumento de *Zootropolis* está vertebrado por una analogía con el racismo. Marca la tensión que existe entre depredadores y presas dentro de la ciudad, en la que las personas blancas serían las presas —la mayoría dominante, ostentosa de privilegios estructurales, desconfían sistemáticamente de los depredadores a quienes tachan de salvajes— y las personas no blancas serían los depredadores —la “minoría” de la población, víctimas de discriminación y perseguidos por una parte de la clase política. Esta analogía se expresa de forma clara a través de episodios concretos como cuando el elefante de la tienda de helados se niega a servir al coprotagonista Nick Wilde por ser un zorro. Podría parecer contradictorio que la minoría oprimida sean los depredadores cuando precisamente parece que tienen una ventaja física sobre las presas. Sin embargo, el sentido de esta analogía reside en el hecho de que los depredadores generan miedo entre las presas, de la misma forma que opera la xenofobia o el racismo de clase en el mundo real.

La conexión con el racismo que hallamos en *Zootropolis* se desarrolla en gran parte en torno a la narrativa de *lo salvaje*. La intersección entre el racismo y el especismo radica en la superioridad de la humanidad sobre la *animalidad*, asociando el primero a lo civilizado y lo segundo a lo salvaje. La retórica racista, a lo largo de la historia, ha asociado la *humanidad* con el hombre blanco y la *animalidad* con la persona no blanca. Por ello, es significativo que la principal muestra de hostilidad que reciben los depredadores es la etiqueta de “salvajes”. El bozal aparece en la película con una fuerte carga simbólica: se evoca en primer lugar cuando Wilde relata un episodio traumático de su infancia, en el que sus compañeros le tienden una trampa y le ponen a la fuerza un bozal, humillándolo violentamente. Aparece más veces como herramienta de control y opresión hacia los depredadores que han sido envenenados para volverlos agresivos. Aunque parece estar al servicio de la analogía sobre el racismo, la presencia del bozal bajo una luz negativa es muy significativa en una película dirigida a un público tan joven: hace explícita la naturaleza humillante y violenta del bozal, como símbolo del poder que se ejerce sobre determinados animales no humanos al dominarlos.

La película plantea también otra problemática situada en la intersección entre el especismo y el machismo, aunque con menor peso argumental. El personaje protagonista, Juddy Hopps, tiene que hacer frente a una desacreditación sistemática por el hecho de ser *mona* o *adorable* (“cute” en la versión original). De forma muy autoconsciente, el filme problematiza el hecho de que Hopps tenga que demostrar constantemente que es algo más que una “conejita adorable”. Tanto Wilde como los compañeros de Hopps de la academia de policía, de la comisaría o en cualquier circunstancia, la ridiculizan en algún momento, cuestionan sus capacidades con el calificativo de “mona” o “adorable” y aluden a características como la suavidad de su pelaje para reforzarlo en clave degradante. Hopps expresa frontalmente y en varias ocasiones su rechazo a tales calificativos. Esto conecta con una expresión del patriarcado en la que lo femenino es sistemáticamente relegado a ser atractivo, frágil, vulnerable, y deseable, y por tanto desacreditado y aminorado. Se trata de una forma de dominación más sutil que la violencia física, pero que implica un control y un refuerzo de la superioridad masculina sobre lo femenino, y mediante el mismo proceso, la superioridad humana sobre los animales cuyo único valor reside en su capacidad de provocar atracción por parte de los humanos. En ambos casos, el hecho de repetirlo constantemente relega a la fuerza al sujeto a una posición de inferioridad en la que está a disposición del disfrute estético del otro (Chew 2019).

3. Antropomorfización: Mitología del progreso e ingeniería

En *Zootropolis*, se plantea una dualidad entre dos realidades: una primitiva, el estado “natural”, previo a la civilización, perteneciente a la prehistoria diegética; la otra, la de la civilización, la organización social y política llevada desde la razón, el control de los impulsos y la convivencia mediada por valores democráticos, la urbanización y la tecnología. Ambas realidades, opuestas, conforman los polos que dan razón de ser a la idea del progreso. Este eje cronológico sustenta la idea

de que la “humanidad” (como sinónimo de *civilización*, término con carga opresiva) se aleja de la violencia primitiva e irracional que caracteriza a las “bestias” y se acerca a la racionalidad y el (auto)control de una sociedad avanzada. Sin embargo, Nibert (2016) argumenta que esta creencia esconde el verdadero desarrollo de la humanidad en términos históricos: precisamente el inicio de los comportamientos violentos y opresivos hacia otros animales por parte de hombres eurasiáticos ha ido configurando las sociedades actuales, estructuradas por relaciones de poder que se fueron engranando por causa-efecto. En *Zootropolis*, se presenta bajo una luz negativa el hecho de que unos animales coman a otros, así como que unos dominen políticamente a otros, pero para ello utilizan referencias culturales que, tal y como aclara Nibert (2016), tienen su origen en la dominación de humanos sobre otros animales, y no al revés. Es decir, aunque en la superficie parezca que *Zootropolis* constituye un discurso activamente en contra de la dominación y a favor de la convivencia, se fundamenta en una narrativa cuyo origen y trasfondo es el opuesto. En resumen, *Zootropolis* critica la dominación entre especies en la superficie, pero la refuerza en el fondo apelando a la mitología del progreso que justifica veladamente las relaciones de poder.

En *Chicken Run*, la situación de las gallinas y sus motivos para tratar de escapar están, de alguna forma, bastante cerca de la realidad, como se ha desarrollado anteriormente. Sin embargo, aunque el planteamiento sea realista, los planes de huída de las protagonistas dejan de serlo. Las ideas de Ginger y sus compañeras están cargadas de ingenio, creatividad y complejidad técnica y estratégica, pero todo ello desde una perspectiva humana, es decir, empleando recursos humanos. Fuera de la ficción, existen casos de animales no humanos que logran escapar del circuito industrial que los explota, y por supuesto lo hacen con recursos, habilidades y estrategias propias (Hribal 2010). Sin embargo, el guion asocia inequívocamente la voluntad de hallar la libertad y la capacidad de hacerlo con virtudes humanas. Prueba de ello es que la película infiere que las gallinas no pueden ni saben volar—lo cual es incorrecto—, pero superan esa limitación gracias a la capacidad de hacer una obra de ingeniería. Es decir: el guion de *Chicken Run* relata que las habilidades naturales de las gallinas no son suficientes para ser libre, como sí lo es la virtud humana —saber construir un avión. Esto refuerza la idea de que, cuando termina la película y volvemos al mundo real, el orden natural de las cosas es que las gallinas permanezcan en sus granjas, porque quienes construyen aviones son los humanos y no las gallinas. La necesidad de cualidades humanas para sobrevivir en la ficción es algo recurrente, tal y como expresan Stewart y Cole (2009, 465): “Los animales se salvan si trascienden su especie, específicamente, si alcanzan cualidades humanas, o una subjetividad casi humana”¹.

¹ Traducción propia. Texto original: “Animals are saved if they transcend their species-being, specifically, if they attain human-like qualities, or quasi-human subjectivity” (Stewart y Cole 2009, 465).

4. Conclusión

En resumen, ambas películas presentan distintos aspectos que por un lado sí rompen activamente con determinadas premisas especistas, pero de forma mitigada, y reforzando otras. *Chicken Run* es explícita en cuanto al deseo de los animales de granja de escapar, tanto por anhelo de la libertad como por miedo a una muerte segura; *Zootropolis* condena de una forma bastante elaborada el discurso relativo a lo “salvaje” y a lo “adorable”. Para ello, ambas películas trazan analogías con distintas formas de opresión que comparten estructuras y mecanismos similares al especismo, como son el racismo, el machismo o, en el caso de *Chicken Run*, la dominación directa por parte de un opresor. Mediante la metáfora con otros lenguajes presentes en la memoria histórica y en la actualidad —tales como la Segunda Guerra Mundial, la segregación racial en Estados Unidos o el racismo y machismo presentes en el debate público— previamente conocidos por la audiencia adulta, ambos filmes consiguen construir significados y narrativas antiespecistas en las que los personajes rechazan las premisas tradicionales y encarnan nuevas retóricas de liberación y convivencia.

Sin embargo, y a pesar de todo esto, ambas obras no dejan de utilizar otras formas de discurso especista. La antropomorfización de los personajes conlleva una asociación del éxito que consiguen con sus cualidades humanas, dejando atrás su “animalidad” en términos hegemónicos y, por ende, colocando una vez más lo humano por encima de lo no humano. Específicamente en el caso de *Zootropolis*, se puede afirmar que la dimensión especista no es central en el mensaje final de la película, sino que es una herramienta alegórica para abordar otras problemáticas de índole humana. Es más difícil decirlo para *Chicken Run*, en donde es plenamente explícita y bastante realista la situación que denuncia la película.

Por tanto, se puede concluir que estas obras ni rompen completamente con las premisas tradicionales, ni se inscriben plenamente en ellas. Se trata de un contenido más ambiguo, y que, en cualquier caso, no deja de visibilizar tibiamente algunas realidades contra las que lucha el activismo animalista desde hace tiempo. ¿Cuál es entonces el impacto real de este tipo de contenidos sobre el aprendizaje del público más joven? Según Stewart y Cole (2009, 464), la ficción infantil tiene la tradición de asociar la pérdida de la simpatía y empatía hacia los animales con la madurez, con lo cual la empatía que se potencia a través de las películas de esta índole puede ser percibida como una “cosa de niños”, es decir carente de seriedad o trascendencia. En cuanto al activismo animalista, esto puede implicar dos cosas. Por un lado, implica que los mensajes emitidos en estas películas no perduren hasta la edad adulta. Por otro, permite que el control social baje la guardia en cuanto al contenido infantil, convirtiendo el formato de ficción infantil en una oportunidad para generar contenido antiespecista con menor riesgo de control o censura.



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Being wild, being delicious, being dangerous



Kai Luo

Department of Communication, Universitat Pompeu Fabra



luokai9703@163.com



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PHOTO: Max van den Oetelaar.

Abstract

There is a long history of Chinese people eating wild animals to keep healthy, and today bushmeat is not only a diet but also a display of personal wealth. Some Chinese tend to order rare animals for important guests to reflect their significance. In these cases, wild animals in China are treated as medicinal resources, as rare goods or as a bargaining chip in business, but not as creatures who share the Earth with human beings. After the outbreak of SARS in 2003, the Chinese started to become aware of the harm of eating bushmeat, and the government banned some bushmeat for a couple of months. However, with the announcement of SARS's ending, the bushmeat business was back on the market in a short time. In 2020, the occurrence of COVID-19 steered China towards controversy, stressing the problem of the bushmeat market in China. The origin of COVID-19 is still currently unclear, so this study does not mean to accuse any country or judge anything; this epidemic is a tragedy for everyone on this planet, no race and no country should be blamed for this. However, bushmeat restaurants are a deeply rooted problem that should be solved. The owner of a Chinese bushmeat restaurant is interviewed for this essay, illustrating the situation of Chinese bushmeat restaurants, discussing the relationship between bushmeat business, orders from the government and the epidemic.



Keywords:

COVID-19, Chinese bushmeat restaurant, animal rights protection, SARS, civet, culling operation.

1. Introduction

"[E]very part of the civet is a treasure, and their meat could be served as food, their fat is a rare and exclusive raw material in cosmetic production..." (Li 2020). This description comes from a Chinese children's book, *The Brief Encyclopedia of Animals*, published in 2011 by Wuhan University Press. As a popular book for 5–7-year-old children, it was also republished many times after 2011, but the content about civets didn't change at all. In 2020, a parent uploaded a picture of this description online. Then, the press took this book off the shelves because of the wide denouncement from the public.

There is an ancient saying in China: "You are what you eat". Ancient Chinese believed uncommon exotic animals are good for their health. Traditional Chinese doctors also agree with the saying to some extent, claiming some animal organs have special functions for certain parts of the human body. For instance, they think eating the liver can be useful for your eyes (Dharmananda 2001). Modern studies claim that this is because the liver contains abundant Vitamin A, which is beneficial to human eyes. However, some

people simplified this idea as that if you want to strengthen any part of your body, just eat the same piece of animals; the rarer the nonhuman animal is, the better.

Why were people angry with the description of civets while there is a long history in China of using wild animals as a valid way to keep healthy? In 2002, the first case of SARS appeared in Guangdong, China, and within nine months SARS killed 919 people worldwide, up to 10.8% of its victims. It was the first Public Health Emergency of International Concern (aka, PHEIC) declared by WHO. As the starting point of SARS, mainland China got 5,327 cases out of 8,422 in total (by August 16th, 2003), which caused severe losses there (Baidu, n.d.b).

In 2004, Chinese research organizations claimed that civets were the origin of SARS, which was supported by the information that the SARS virus in civets is at least 99.8% similar to the SARS virus in humans, and civets could infect humans directly. The Guangdong region, where the first outbreak of SARS occurred, was a significant consumer of civets in China. In January of this year, authorities in Guangdong announced that they were to eradicate civets in their province to cut off the source of infection. They killed more than 10,000 of civets, badgers and raccoon dogs in five days (from January 5 to 10th) (Sina News 2004). However, an epidemiologist from CDC, Ruiheng Xu, declared to reporters of Sohu News: "The expert group advises not to kill [civets], but to take charge of them, and any form of transportation, raising or eating civets should be banned" (Xiao and Xu 2004).

Since then, civets were seen as a taboo ingredient causing the fatal 2002-2004 virus and as the one that was responsible for it all in China for a long time. That changed in 2017, when a group of Chinese scientists found the host of the SARS virus to be a single population of horseshoe bats in Yunnan province, and people realized that civets were just an intermediate host of the SARS virus (Cyranoski 2017). Still, China learned a lot from SARS and, after people started to boycott wild animals in restaurants spontaneously, the Chinese government revised the Chinese Wildlife Protection Act in 2004, in order to protect wild animals by means of legislation. Did wild animals and Chinese live happily ever after? Of course not.

In May 2004, the Chinese government announced SARS had officially ended. In August of the same year, the State Forestry Administration published the list of 54 terrestrial wildlife with sophisticated farming techniques for commercial operation. Civets were still on this list.

In 2004, there were 16 thousand breeding grounds for wild animals in China, generating 20 billion Chinese Yens a year. And those were only the legal ones, the tip of the iceberg. The industry kept growing after SARS, and the voice of strong objection to wildlife restaurants became lower and lower (Nei.st 2020).

2. Bushmeat consumption in China

Seventeen years after SARS, in 2020, the new coronavirus (COVID-19) broke out

in China. At the beginning of this incident, a couple of studies from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention considered that the new coronavirus came from Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market. Even though later other scholars claimed that this market was not the origin of this virus (Yu et al. 2020), actually the earliest track of COVID-19 so far is the sample of wastewater in Spain (Liu 2020), but what is clear is that Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market is the flashpoint of COVID-19.

As the most significant aquatic products wholesale market in Wuhan and Central China, there are many different kinds of products you could purchase in Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market, and sea flesh was just a small part of their business. Like in some other Chinese farmers' markets, people who wanted fresh meat could ask for live animals –and if they didn't want to kill the animal by themselves, they could also ask the owner for help, which was free. Of course, you could also choose packaged goods in some stores there.

But what has made this market the target of public criticism is not that farmed animals are killed cruelly. According to Xinhua News, the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention collected samples from the market twice. By testing those 585 samples, it showed that 33 of the specimens were positive for the new coronavirus, and 93.9% of the positive examples existed in the west part of the market, which is also the district with a vast wildlife trade (Wang 2020).

Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market closed down on January 1, 2020, to avoid severer infections. However, if you searched online, you could still find bushmeat to purchase by January 22. When a reporter from Red Star News asked one of the owners how they could judge if the wild animal contains a virus or not, the assistant answered: "They are not acting crazy, and they don't bite" (Red Star News 2020). If you searched online for bushmeat at the end of 2020, you could not find any; the shops stated they had bushmeat earlier and cleared all products from their online shop.

"It will be a tough year for us... not only us but all restaurant owners", Qian Jiang, the owner of a Chinese restaurant I interviewed for this paper, told me. He also stated: "Our restaurant hasn't opened for about one month, we usually just closed for seven days for Spring Festival's sake". On March 1, 2020, Qian and I had an online interview. I had previously visited his restaurant many times because of family get-togethers, which are always held in nice restaurants in China.

Qian Jiang's restaurant offers customers bushmeat off and on. Sometimes customers even need to reserve during the peak season. He named his restaurant The Farmhouse when it was opened in October 2005. The Farmhouse is not only a restaurant but also Qian Jiang's house. The house stands five stories high. He uses rooms on the first and second floor as dining rooms and lives in the third and fourth floor with his wife. This restaurant also has an underground parking lot in case customers don't have a place to park at peak times. At the back of the building, there is an open-air hall, where the customers can walk or chat and where the kitchen is on the right of the room,

where the customers can go in and check the progress of their dishes or watch when they are killing the animals to make sure they are being served fresh meat.

As a bit of a local celebrity, Qian Jiang is proud of his restaurant: "Our restaurant always offers the freshest dishes, my wife exclusively makes all cuisines, no one else could cook the same flavor". Traditionally, there are eight famous Chinese cuisines—Shandong, Sichuan, Hunan, Guangdong (Cantonese), Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Anhui and Fujian cuisines. What Qian Jiang's restaurant offers is Hunan cuisine, which is renowned for its spicy flavor.

In China, a traditional and standard meal must contain some "hard dishes", which are always meat, the kind of ingredient that was hard to get or expensive to purchase in ancient times. People in Guangdong always use bushmeat as the ingredients for different soups, while people in Hunan always use bushmeat with stew or fry in their way. Every "hard dish" is spicy, "it will make the dish absorb the flavors and taste better", Qian Jiang explains.

With the development of Chinese economy, people now can afford much more expensive food in their daily life. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, per capita meat consumption in China in 2017 rose about 15 times compared with the data in the 1960s (Ritchie and Roser 2017).

"The customers who like to order bushmeat are always rich, or in power, they need to show their good taste and high social status", Qian Jiang said. "Sometimes if someone wants to ask for another's help, he would invite the helper to dinner. In that case, he would need some 'hard dishes,' which is better if it is made of rare animals", he adds.

A day in a Chinese restaurant starts early. Qian Jiang needs to get up when it's still dark outside to get the freshest vegetables and meat in the farmers' market, which is usually around six in the morning. Qian is very confident of his skills for choosing those right ingredients: "I can tell the difference between greenhouse vegetable and vegetable planted naturally". He insists that it is the only way to make the most authentic farm dishes, that is also why he thinks offering wildlife in his restaurant is correct: "Here we are, near the mountains, this wildlife is the most authentic dishes for residents here. That's what The Farmhouse does — offer the most authentic dishes for its customers".

After purchasing the ingredients for the day, Qian goes back to the restaurant and watches the employees prepare for lunch, or takes a nap, waiting for the upcoming customers at lunch.

Lunch and dinner can be hectic for them, since both of them always last 2 to 3 hours and, during this time, Qian needs to guide the customers and serve tables. "We don't put bushmeat on the menu, because it always sells fast, I usually recommend it as today's special if we have any", he says. And he adds: "Sometimes people will reserve bushmeat, but I never let any customer cut in

line no matter how rich or powerful the man or woman is, 'first come, first served'".

Qian always buys bushmeat from local dealers, who have a stable supply of wildlife, but sometimes he also purchases it from the hunters when available, which is cheaper. However, dealers cannot ensure continuous supply of wild animals. Qian explains: "Summer is the best season because you can buy some popular seafood such as local turtles, rock frogs and mandarin fish; some delicious birds like bamboo partridges and turtledoves; and also (terrestrial wild animals) like bamboo rats, snakes, and hares. But during winter, what you can get is only a small group of boar and muntjac".

His words remind me of the first time I went to this restaurant with my parents to have lunch. At that time, I was sitting near the kitchen and I saw a middle-aged man peeling something. I moved closer to see better what he was doing. Then I saw a couple of partridges huddled together. The man picked up one of them and cut her neck. The partridge struggled madly. After dropping her blood into a bowl, the man threw the partridge aside, ignoring that she wasn't completely dead and was suffering from the pain. After the partridge was totally gone, one of the employees put it into hot water to skin her.

However, not all wild animals are killed on the spot, like the partridge. "We need to make a decision", Qian says, "for animals like partridge, which are hard to keep at home, we need to kill them quickly, and what is more important is that this kind of animals can be kept in the fridge, the flavor of their meat will be still nice and fresh". For animals like snake and local turtle, Qian claims that they have to be alive until someone orders them, because "otherwise, their meat will taste bad".

During the peak season of bushmeat, customers can visit the wildlife hold in the restaurant and choose the preferred one for the meal. They also can choose to watch the whole process, the killing and cooking. Children are also allowed to view all. "We allow everyone to go anywhere in the first and second floor", Qian says, "the kitchen is an open area that everyone can go in and check what's going on".

3. "The solution": Fresh bushmeat

When asked about the relationship between the new coronavirus and bushmeat, Qian stated: "I watched TV, and the experts said this virus came from wild animals, I think they should blame these unscrupulous businessmen. They must have sold customers stale animals; those animals have been dead for a long time; that's why the virus comes from wildlife". He believes that if everyone could guarantee they only sell fresh bushmeat, then nothing will go wrong.

"I don't think the license for using wildlife in business works", Qian says, "people like me don't need it to guarantee their bushmeat is fine and nontoxic, people who are unscrupulous will always do the same thing". To get the license, the owners have to meet five conditions: 1) Employing professional staff with

excellent breeding skills; 2) Have a fixed place for the animals; 3) Get animals from legal sources; 4) They must offer enough food to the animals kept in their facilities, and 5) They must be able to provide medical services to the animals, at least to some extent (Baidu, n.d.a).

As for the influence the new disease outbreak brings to bushmeat, Qian states that his restaurant will respond to the call of the government. However, unlike other restaurant owners, Qian sees this new coronavirus as an opportunity: "After that, people will choose the restaurant they trust to have meals, which could be great for us because we always treat customers sincerely. It is a great chance to let the customers know which is the most reliable restaurant". But he doesn't think the government will ban the bushmeat he serves to the customers: "The bushmeat we served was the most regulated ones, we will never do anything illegal. But I don't think it's a big deal to offer bushmeat after that as long as we don't serve the dangerous and toxic ones".

When searching "civet" in Chinese on Google for this paper, the top three results were "images of civet", "civet in Wikipedia", and "how to kill a civet". In the third webpage, the author writes: "You couldn't eat a wild civet, but it's ok if it's farmed, every part of civet is treasure... their meat is edible and also can treat illness", and "if you are killing farmed civets, make sure to skin them immediately after killing them". Then the article lists some advantages the civet has for the human body and shares a recipe about how to make soup with civet meat (Yang 2017).

No matter what kind of wildlife you search online in Chinese, you can always find what they are used for, which usually comes from ancient Chinese books. For some wild animals, you can also find questions asked by people: "How to cook them?" "How to kill them?" "What is the best way to eat them?"

Compared with the public concern about wildlife's nutritive value, people care less about their living conditions. At the moment of closing this paper, the majority of Chinese news media were trying to get people to stop eating bushmeat. If a search for "Chinese bushmeat" in Chinese on Google was conducted, all the news were criticizing people who like to eat bushmeat, warning them how dangerous it is, how bad it could be for the human body and our society. Not until page 7 of the search I could find a article about pangolin, in this case discussing how pangolins are treated in Africa (Lu 2019). Also, no matter what search engine you use, it is pretty easy to see how many people was infected by SARS or how many people died of SARS. However, what about the death toll of civets killed by authorities in Guangdong in five days? There is no official or unofficial record. Some websites in English, like Wikipedia, stated that 10,000 civet cats, badgers and raccoon dogs were killed because of SARS only in this short period.

I will never forget the partridge that died in front of me, how she struggled, how she screamed. I don't believe in god, but that's the moment I felt the original sin inside my body.



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Fur farming. Skin for skin?



Romania Gorbach

Department of Communication, Universitat Pompeu Fabra



romanija.gorbach@gmail.com



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Abstract

Fur production is still not only a huge ethical challenge all over the world, but also an economic and environmental one. Despite the fact that a large number of Western countries have banned fur farming because of its cruelty, irresponsibility and tremendously negative ecological impact, there are a number of countries where regulations are not so strict. For instance, Spain is still the world's fifth largest producer of rabbit's fur and meat, with more than three farms with six million rabbits. Also, there are other regions where fur farming is growing and gaining momentum. One of these so called "friendly" countries is Ukraine, where some international producers are relocating their fur production. With a poorly developed democracy and therefore no proper related regulations, the protection of nonhuman animals rights in this country is under great threat. However, these processes do not exist separately from civil society, which is the driving force behind the quality of the country. More and more civil organizations, government representatives and ordinary Ukrainians understand the global problems of this kind of industry. And not only do they understand, but they are also achieving changes in favor of "fur owners" rights.



Keywords:

Fur farming, nonhuman animals, rights, civil society, global fur industry.

1. Nonhuman animals: Physical and psychological consequences of modern fur farming

"When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves"
— Viktor E. Frankl (Frankl 2006, 184).

During the Second World War, millions of people were murdered in concentration camps in different parts of Europe. They were put in overcrowded small barracks, without any medical care, enough food or water. Kids, women and men spent months or even years in these cruel conditions until they were killed in the most inhumane ways, mostly in gas chambers.

Now we call it a crime against humanity. Because it is a crime, no doubt. We talk about ethics, rights, liberty and solidarity. We call our society more progressive and responsible than ever. But have we really progressed in the understanding of what crime is?

Nowadays millions of living creatures spend 24 hours, day after day, in small wire cages which create long lines. The living space in such modern barracks for each animal is approximately the size of a hand luggage. They are fed poor quality food and given water just to keep them alive. Sometimes they

are killed, sometimes they go crazy or even kill each other. There is almost no hope of being rescued in such places. For most of them, there comes a moment when they are killed by poison, electrocution or gassing.

We are talking about minks, foxes, raccoon dogs or other nonhuman animals who are being farmed for their fur. Some readers may think that they are only animals; who cares for one million nonhuman animals more or less? By contrast, the abuse of humans is a totally different story, a hot topic. Maybe, there will come a time when we, who so proudly call ourselves *homo sapiens*, will eventually realize the truth: that crime is always crime — it does not have logical, historical, economical or species justification.

According to Ripplezoo, every year approximately 75 million nonhuman animals — including minks, foxes and raccoon dogs — are reared and killed all in the name of fashion, with almost 32 million of these animals coming from farms situated in European countries such as Ireland, the United Kingdom, Finland and Poland (Payne 2018). And this does not include the more than one billion rabbits raised on fur farms or trapped in the wild and killed for their pelts every year in the world (Last Chance for Animals 2020).

Experts from the international organization Last Chance for Animals explain that minks, for instance, are naturally wild, very active (instinctively ranging a territory of approximately 741 acres in size) and do not adapt to life in captivity (Last Chance for Animals 2020). In contrast, ranch-raised minks are confined to a 12 by 18 inches cage — a type of confinement resulting in self-mutilation, cannibalism and high-level stress that weakens their immune system and makes animals more susceptible to disease (Last Chance for Animals 2020). According to the data this organization provides, many foxes develop psychotic behavior, literally bouncing off the walls of their cages as they pace furiously back and forth. In the end, they are anally electrocuted in order to preserve the fur — and approximately 10% of animals die every year due to stress and illness (Last Chance for Animals 2020).

Zoologists at Oxford University who studied captive minks found that “despite generations of being bred for fur, minks have not been domesticated and suffer greatly in captivity, especially if they are not given the opportunity to swim” (Mason 2001, 35–36).

2. Banning fur farming: International experiences

The well-known facts and the public opinion's pressure were important reasons for a number of European countries to ban fur farming (Fur Free Alliance 2019). According to Fur Free Alliance (2019), the pioneer in this process was United Kingdom, where fur farming was banned in 2000. The next one was Austria in 2004. In January 2018, Norway, once the world's largest producer of fox pelts, also decided to prohibit fur farming, after a phase-out period until 2025 (Fur Free Alliance 2019). Later, the list of stopping fur countries increased. For instance, in October 2019 Slovakia decided not to permit extreme animal cruelty, by

introducing a legislation that will end fur production by 2025 (Fur Free Alliance 2019).

Legislation to prohibit fur farming was also being considered in Ireland, Montenegro and Bulgaria in 2020. However, not all Western countries stand in solidarity with this trend. A prime example of this is Spain, where new mink farms are not permitted since 2007. However, Spain is still the world's fifth largest producer of rabbit's fur and meat with more than three Southland farms and six million rabbits there. The main producers, according to the Union of Small Farmers (UPA, Unión de Pequeños Agricultores y Ganaderos), are concentrated in Andalusia, Castilla-La Mancha and particularly in Catalonia. Despite the scale of production, local businessmen claim that nowadays fur production is not profitable because of Chinese cheap fur and meat; as a result, UPA commented for newspaper *El Mundo*, the price for Spanish rabbits dramatically dropped (Villaecija 2016).

Not only price is a big problem for fur producers. In 2014 non-profit animal organizations Last Chance for Animals and Animal Equality launched an online campaign based on a two-year investigation of 70 rabbit fur farms in Spain (Animal Equality 2020). According to this campaign, undercover investigators witnessed rabbits confined to tiny cages with unstable flooring for their entire two-year lives and farmworkers callously bashing sick rabbits to death. The investigators also recorded, with the help of hidden cameras, crippled, diseased and severely wounded rabbits that were left to suffer with no medical treatment (Animal Equality 2020). In addition, activists discovered that many world fashion brands were clients of these farms. They therefore requested these brands to abandon the use of natural fur.

3. "Fur friendly" countries or how Ukraine became an alternative market for the Western fur production

Nowadays, doing fur business has become increasingly difficult not only for fashion brands, but also for big fur producers because of current regulation in the sector. This is the reason why some farms from European countries have transferred their production to more "fur-friendly" countries — like, for instance, Ukraine.

According to Pavlo Vyshebaba (2020), head of the Ukrainian organization One Planet, the opening of two Dutch-owned farms in Ukraine has been reported. Another five farms were attempted to be open by Dane owners in the Lviv region (western part of Ukraine) and Zhytomyr region (central Ukraine):

However, after our public campaign "Fur Off" there was lots of noise. We explained in different ways to people what the environmental consequences could be after the opening of fur farms. Thousands of Ukrainians, cultural figures and scientists supported us. As a result, the Danish projects have been frozen. A Dutch businessman lost the court case and now he has to close the farm. Another of his compatriots has

already built a farm in Volyn (western region of Ukraine), but has not yet opened it. (Vyshebaba, 2020)

As explained by Pavlo Vyshebaba (2020), farmers from the Netherlands are moving their production to Ukraine because fur production has been banned in their country. The law will come into force in the Netherlands in 2024. A more complicated situation is found in Denmark. This country is the production leader along with China. However, the cost of production in China is cheaper. So, Denmark is looking for ways to compete. As a result, farms are being opened in countries with cheaper labor and fewer regulation — like Ukraine, Poland, Belarus or Russia.

Experts estimate that if foreign investors are allowed to open production in Ukraine, the volume of fur farms will double at once: from 620,000 killed animals per year to over 1,300,000 animals per year (Vyshebaba 2020). It should be noted that according to the Ukrainian legislation, every project of a fur farm must be approved at local public hearings. As Ukrainian eco activist and journalist Inna Teslenko confirms:

As a rule, peasants think about short-term benefits like some short-term job, and they are not informed at all about the harm of fur production to their health and environment. (Teslenko 2020).

Eco-activists together with Ukrainian politicians drafted a bill that would ban fur production in Ukraine in alignment with European countries. In October 2019, the law was registered in Parliament and the procedure for its consideration was under way when writing this paper.

In total, there are 37 fur farms officially active in Ukraine. According to the State Statistics Committee, minks account for 95% of all fur animals that are slaughtered in the country to produce fur (Ukrstat 2019).

In the eyes of ecologist Maksymovych Maryna (2020) these animals' waste contains high concentrations of nitrogen and phosphorus. Their excess is one of the most common forms of water pollution. In case of improper management of fur farm waste, chemicals contaminate local water systems. As a result, people have a lack of clean water.

4. Ecological crisis. Fur farming as one of the main sources of pollution

It is not only Ukrainian researchers that are concerned about environmental risks. The World Bank also ranks fur farms amongst the top five worst industries on the planet in terms of heavy metal pollution (Wheeler et al. 1999).

Moreover, research from independent Dutch organization Ce Delft concluded that producing one kilogram of fur requires more than 11 animals on average (Bijleveld et al. 2011). During its lifetime, minks eat about 50 kilograms of feed, resulting in 563 kilograms of feed required per kilogram of fur (Bijleveld et al. 2011). Although the feed consists mainly of offal and this is accounted for by a very low allocation of environmental impacts, the 563 kilograms required to

produce one kilogram of fur is a considerable knock on the total environmental footprint of fur and, for 14 of the 18 impact categories studied, feed is the predominant factor (Bijleveld et al. 2011). Compared with textiles, fur has a higher impact per kilogram in 17 of the 18 environmental categories, including climate change, eutrophication and toxic emissions. In many cases, fur has impacts that are a factor 2 to 28 higher than textiles, even when lower-bound values are taken for various links in the production chain (Bijleveld et al. 2011).

Scientists of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (NAAS) also agree with their foreign colleagues. They note that the farmed animals produce a large amount of waste, which pollutes the fertile Ukrainian land (Palapa et al. 2016). When high doses of manure are applied to soil, they are contaminated with heavy metals, as proved by the research conducted on rural settlements of Ukraine (Palapa et al. 2016). NAAS noted that the result of such fertilization of agricultural crops causes a decrease in soil fertility.

As environmental journalist Mariana Verbovska clarifies, the litter of holes in Ukraine is thrown out on the nearest fields. The area of illegal dumps reaches several hectares and is repeatedly recorded by residents. Besides gases emitted from animal droppings, significant air pollution occurs when their corpses are burned — a common method of disposal. The journalist narrates that after slaughtering animals through suffocation in gas chambers, lethal injection, neck breakage or anal electroshock on fur farms, their bodies are skinned — sometimes with the animal still conscious — for tanning and sometimes submitted to further treatment, such as dyeing, bleaching, etc. (Verbovska 2020).

Common substances for tanning skins are formaldehyde and chromium, both of which are on the list of carcinogens and toxins harmful to human health. The European Commission considers air pollution to be one of the main eco-problems of tanning, since toxic and odorous substances are released as part of the standard operations of this process (Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare 2001).

Also, toxic substances have a negative impact on the health of farmworkers. Devices where animals are kept usually have no walls but only a roof, so in winter workers who clean after animals should spend a significant part of their time in the cold, and in summer in the heat. According to the Pavlo Vyshebaba (2020) from One planet, Ukrainian workers from a countryside who already have a fur farm nearby, they can work for more than two months under such working conditions. Stench and toxic substances cause migraines, sleep disturbance, allergic reactions and respiratory diseases.

Due to the rapid deterioration of the environmental situation in Ukraine, the discussion regarding the use of artificial fur as an alternative to natural fur production is becoming increasingly popular. In particular, the environmental impact of artificial and natural fur was compared in another study by CE Delft. The organization developed a life-cycle analysis (LCA) of animal fur using the example of mink, which allowed to determine the environmental impact at

different stages of its production. In the absolute majority of comparable indicators, the environmental advantage was on the side of fake fur: natural fur is inferior to its alternatives on 18 of 19 indicators (Bijleveld 2013).

5. Fur fashion: Why Ukrainians refuse to wear natural fur

After the discussion about fur farming increased, many Ukrainians refused to wear natural fur. For instance, Solomiya (2020), a 28 year-old lawyer from Lviv, said: "For many years I was wearing natural fur, as it was fashionable. I did not accept my coat as a skin of poor animals. First of all, for me it was just nice and expensive thing. And only with time when our media started to talk more about fur industry, I started to realize the real situation. Now I refused to use any natural fur staff. I realized that it is not moral to be a part of killing innocent animals".

Meanwhile, not all Ukrainians are ready to say no to natural fur. Kiril (2020) a 35 year-old photographer from Kyiv, shared: "Personally I do not buy fur, as I simply do not like it and could not accept the cruel way how big producers got the fur. But my mom, for instance, likes it very much. I think it is unfair to stigmatize her because of her taste or position. Maybe it's going to take some time for people to give up their furs, especially in our country, where such stuff is still very prestige".

It is true that you simply cannot dictate your own moral code to someone, also considering the fact that we live in a world with an extremely large roster of challenges. But the most difficult and at the same time the most valuable challenge is still a wish to change yourself. We can provide very complicated data about fur production, reiterate once in a blue moon how it is cruel to kill other animals for their fur. However, these facts do not always have the influence we expect. Why? Maybe they must be a part of our own experience, or it is that our understanding of crime is very metaphorical. There is no one correct answer.

Nonhuman animals do not have a verbal, human voice to speak out against fashion fur, but that does not mean they do not communicate with us and among each other using their own means of expression and language. Eventually if we try to understand them better, they definitely will ask us why we are so obsessed with their skin. Or, even more, they could propose to make an exchange — skin for skin. All in good faith — in a very business human way.



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Vegan environmentalism: Mitigating climate change through diet change



Alexandra Meregildo-Santos

Department of Communication, Universitat Pompeu Fabra



ammsantos92@gmail.com



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Abstract

Is eliminating meat and dairy from your diet the best way to reduce your impact on Earth? Research shows that, without meat and dairy consumption, global farmland use could be reduced by more than 75%, an area equivalent to the size of the United States, China, the European Union, and Australia combined, and *still* feed the world. In 2018, Joseph Poore, an Environmental Researcher at Oxford University, and Thomas Nemecek, the Deputy Leader of Life Cycle Assessment Research Group at AgroScope, conducted a study examining the global impacts of food production. Poore and Nemecek's study also considered how a vegan diet can deliver transformative benefits for the environment. Modeled off a global transition to see the numbers to scale (if 7.7 billion people became vegan), this would require 3.1 billion hectares less land to produce our food. This is the same as the entirety of Africa that we would no longer need to farm. This article discusses these results.



Keywords:

Environmental footprint, veganism, plant-based diet, climate change.

1. Introduction

The global food system is damaging our planet. It is one of the leading causes of climate change, land use, freshwater use and pollution through fertilisers and pesticides, and this is only expected to get worse — unless we take action (BBC Food 2019).

Is eliminating meat and dairy from your diet the best way to reduce your impact on Earth? Research shows that, without meat and dairy consumption, global farmland use could be reduced by more than 75%, an area equivalent to the size of the United States, China, the European Union and Australia combined and *still* feed the world.

In 2018, Joseph Poore, an Environmental Researcher at Oxford University, and Thomas Nemecek, the Deputy Leader of Life Cycle Assessment Research Group at AgroScope, conducted a study examining the global impacts of food production. Using data from nearly 40 thousand farms across the world and in almost every country, the study surveyed the environmental impact of 40 foods that represent about 90% of what we humans eat in terms of protein and calories. Assessing the full food supply chain from the deforestation and clearing of land for agriculture, right through processing, packaging, transport and retail. With a goal of understanding not just the average impacts of different products, but the range (i.e., if you produce a product in a slightly different way, what is the

impact?), Poore and Nemecek's study (2018) examined five environmental implications as part of a value chain:

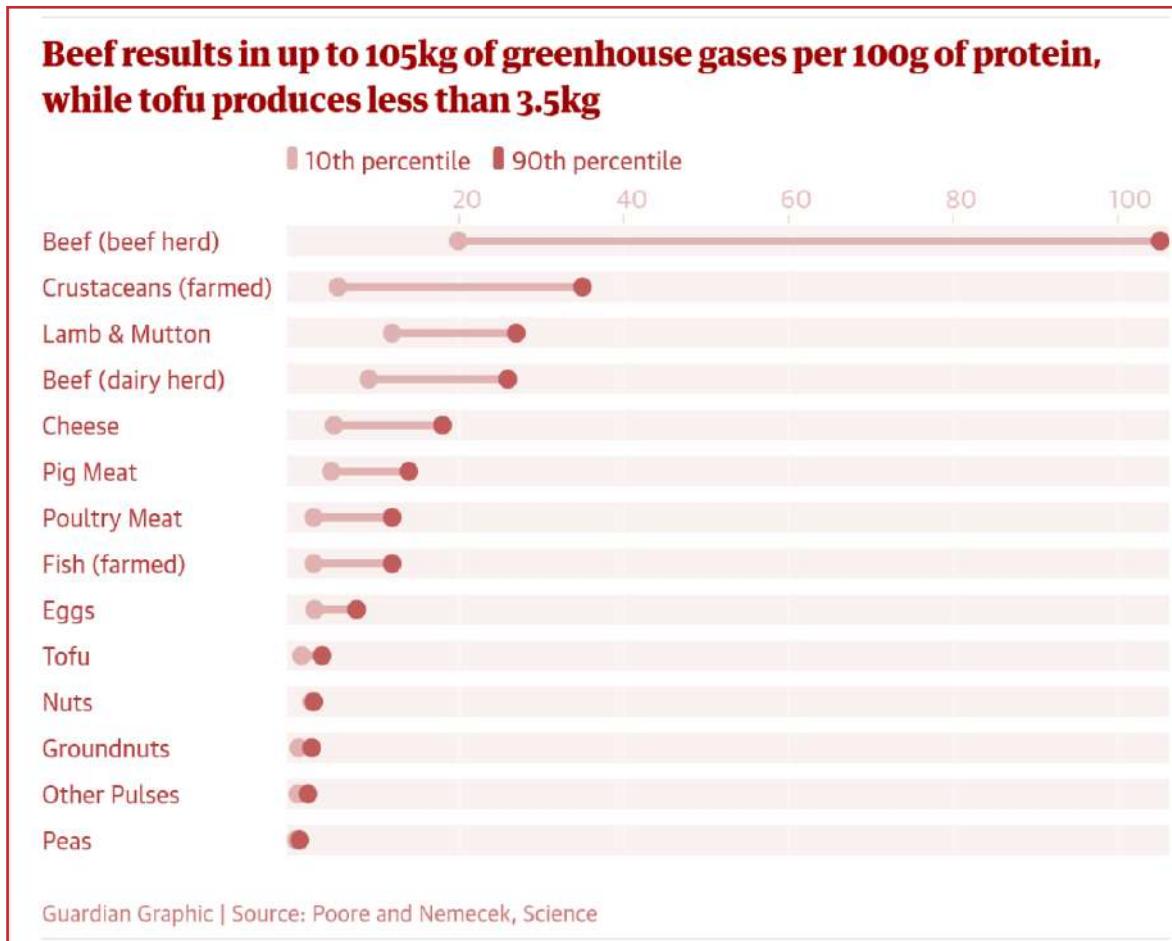
1. How much land is needed to make the food
2. The greenhouse gas emissions that are created
3. The amount of water used
4. The two indicators representing the degradation of terrestrial land and water ecosystems
 - a. Acidification
 - b. Eutrophication

According to the Poore and Nemecek study (2018), the lowest impact beef is using 36 times more land and creating 6 times more greenhouse gas emissions than peas and beans which are some of the lowest impact plant foods (see Figure 1). Even compared to some of the higher greenhouse gas emissions that come from producing plant foods that may have to travel a very long way and have a lot of food miles and packaging associated with them before reaching consumers such as tofu (Poore and Nemecek 2018). This, however, is not new information as a similar study from 2014 at the University of Minnesota examined, "almost 50 years' worth of data from the world's 100 most populous countries... illustrates how current diet trends are contributing to ever-rising agricultural greenhouse gas emissions and habitat degradation" (Smith 2014).

When people are thinking about making changes or modifications to the way they are living in order to have a more positive effect on the environment, they are slow to think about food. Rather they will say: "Oh let's be more conscious about recycling more or invest in an electric car!" But studies (Poore & Nemecek 2018, Smith 2014, Carrington 2018) suggest that changing one's diet is a far better option than cutting down on flights or buying an electric car.

In 2017, sustainability experts Seth Wynes and Kimberly Nicholas from Lund University released a study examining the climate mitigation gap. Their findings suggested that of four high-impact/low emission actions, "with the potential to contribute to systemic change and substantially reduce annual personal emissions: having one fewer child, living car-free, avoiding airplane travel and eating a plant-based diet. These actions have much greater potential to reduce emissions than commonly promoted strategies like comprehensive recycling (four times less effective than a plant-based diet) or changing household light bulbs (eight times less)" (Wynes and Nicholas 2017). As an individual, a change to a vegan diet can cut personal emissions by two to four tons per year of carbon dioxide emissions. That is about the same as 13 return flights from London to Copenhagen.

Figure 1. Greenhouse gases emissions according to different types of food



Source: Carrington 2018

Poore and Nemecek's study (2018) also considered how a vegan diet can deliver transformative benefits for the environment. Modeled off a global transition to see the numbers to scale (if 7.7 billion people became vegan), this would require 3.1 billion hectares less land to produce our food which is the same as the entirety of Africa that we would no longer need to farm (Poore and Nemecek 2018). Meaning that this land could be returned to nature or reforested. So, a vegan diet change would cut land use significantly. It would also cut global water use by about a quarter and cut greenhouse gas emissions globally by nearly 23%, and half of that is just the difference between animal products and vegetable products — the other half is the potential carbon that would be stored when trees have the chance to grow on all this land that has been saved. Additionally, the diet cuts water pollution by about 80% of pollution caused by food (nitrogen phosphorus going into ecosystems) and our acidification which is a measure of pollution of land (Poore and Nemecek 2018). So, this has a big effect, not just on greenhouse gas emissions, but on a wide range of other environmental implications.

2. Are initiatives like “Meatless Mondays” enough?

Sometimes, it feels like we are having the wrong conversations if you want to look after the planet, if you want to save the world, which it appears we have decided collectively that we do. At the moment, the way the media is talking about things and the way conversations are going is that, to save the planet, what we really need to do is point fingers, for example, at restaurants or businesses which continue using plastic straws. In reality, plastic straws are only a fraction of the plastic found in the ocean and in the pacific patch alone 46% of plastic found is strictly from fishing nets (Lebreton et al. 2018). So, would not “if you want to save the fish and the planet, don’t focus on plastic straws, but simply don’t eat the fish” be a better argument?”

When discussing the countless initiatives gaining traction at the moment, such as “Meatless Mondays”, one should ask: Is it enough people not eating meat on Mondays? Or is this something that needs to be a huge, systemic change to actually fix this enormous issue we are facing? Well, here are some numbers for you — according to Poore (2020), by 2050, we are going to be consuming 1.4 trillion liters of milk and 500 billion kilograms of meat a year. That is a 60% increase from today, and with that increasing burdens will occur on not only the environment, but also on all the animals and the industry that is producing them. With all this demand largely coming from intensive animal production, that is a huge challenge for our society. From an animal welfare and animal suffering perspective, it is incredibly important that we do not let this happen. That we stop this dramatic transformation of not just the environment but of our treatment of other species driven by our taste preference largely for animal products.

So, what would be the impact of this? We have already cleared about 40% of the world for farming. According to Poore (2020), since 2000, an area of tropical forest — the most biodiverse forests in the world — the size of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain and Portugal has been cut down or burned largely for grazing and livestock feed. And we have done this largely just because people prefer the taste of animal products to vegetable products. It is hard to see any scenario where we are not going to keep clearing land at this rate.

There are all sorts of things we can do to change and make our lifestyles lower impact. Avoiding things that have been transported a very long way for example, but all of these things avoid the very large elephant in the room and that is meat and animal products. The real environmental problems regarding the over exploitation of fish populations for example — some fish are virtually completely depleted. But they can come back — If we stop. We have to make the decisions now in ourselves, in our communities and with our friends and families that we are going to change our diets.

It is difficult to create policy changes for something that is not visually in front of us. How can we encourage our policy makers to combat this? One of the most powerful options we have is reducing farming impacts by creating and

implementing digital monitoring tools and food labeling to give consumers a more conscious choice. Communicating information to consumers could tip the entire food system towards sustainability and accountability. Discussing this in an interview with *The Independent*, Poore said, “Reminding consumers of the environmental impacts of their purchases by means of labeling could be an extremely powerful tool” (Petter 2018). Additionally, if food products were labeled by carbon footprint, producers around the world would have to monitor their impacts and understand what they are doing to the environment when they produce this food.

In short, consumer change really matters. It has immediate impacts on the environment and it also sets an example and shows what is possible to people. As a collective, knowing our effects is a great start, and that is basically creating information that does not exist. Information that would allow consumers to reduce their impacts. So, if we require producers around the world to measure their effects, that is certainly a smart way of expanding the benefits of our desire to do good for the planet.

3. Alternative options

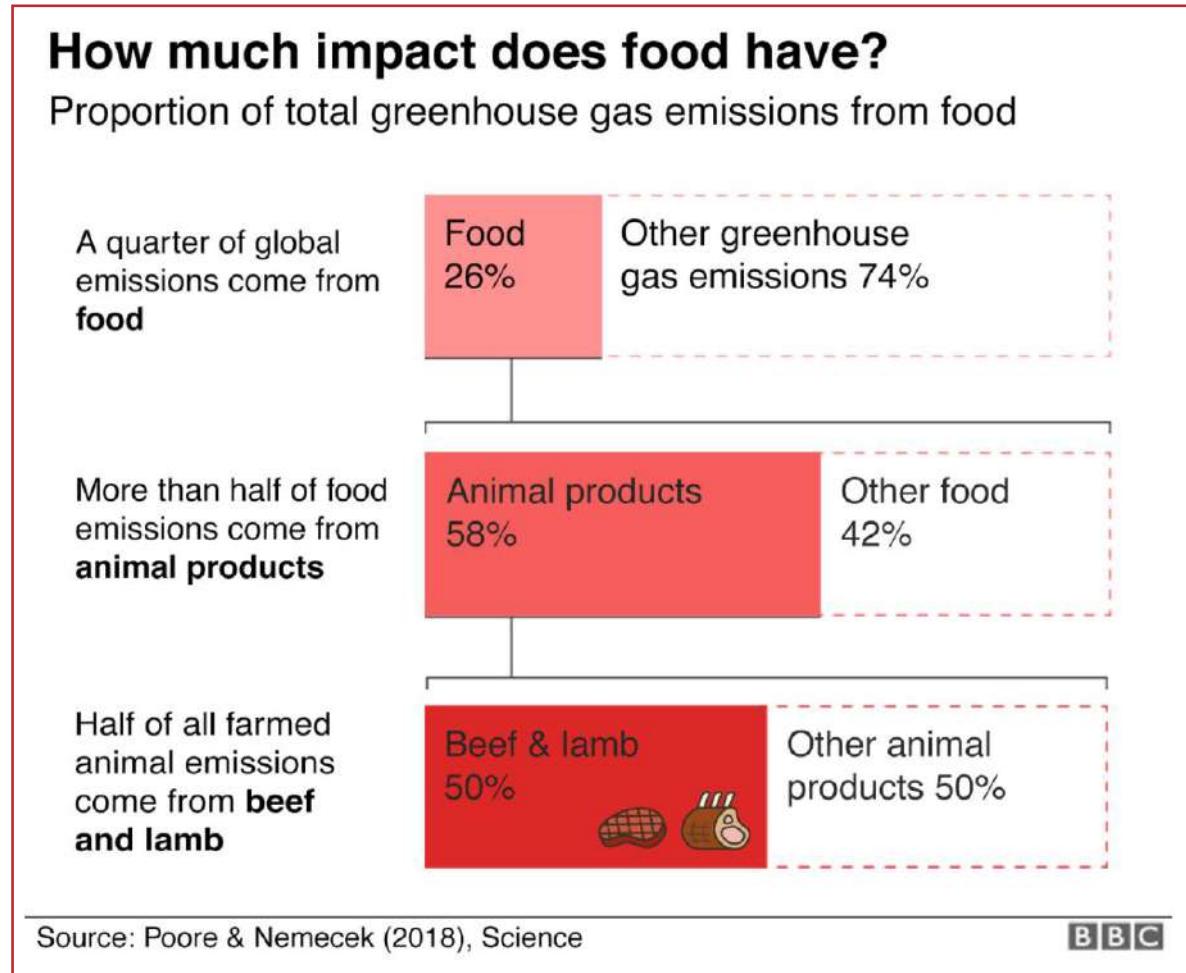
People need to become aware of this. How do we share this? How do we get people talking about these issues in a way that does not terrify them or turn them off from the conversation? The truth is, it *is* terrifying. There is not any way of considering the stark reality of what we are looking at and have it not be frightening, but the way through is by creating positive messages of excitement. So, what are some exciting innovations or new technologies being developed that might allow us to work towards fixing this *ginormous* issue? Or is it something where the only thing that is going to change it, is by human beings changing (for starters) their eating habits?

An interesting option is lab grown meat. Plant-based meats made in a lab that even bleed, allowing the consumer all of the appearances of eating a burger made of cow. However, we do not know enough yet about the consumer demand for lab grown meat, nor do we know enough about its environmental impact. According to Poore (2020), there are studies contradicting the benefits/costs of lab grown meat. We need to know more. They would be great things to have in our bag of ammunition to understand these different approaches. The trick, though, is to change consumers into consuming a more environmentally friendly option.

So, for someone who eats what is considered a “normal” omnivorous diet, what can they do if they cannot go cold turkey vegan overnight, but they want to start making positive changes? What is a practice that people can try and do each week that would really move the needle and improve these issues that we are facing? Firstly, cut out the beef — that in and of itself is going to have a really big impact. Secondly, try different products, there are dozens of different types of plant milk out there (the lowest impact is probably somewhere between soy and oat milk — even the soy milk with the highest impact uses less land and creates fewer emissions than the least impactful cow’s milk), try them. Work on

a gradual transition to develop discipline before noticing that it is a minimal taste difference (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Proportion of total greenhouse gas emissions from food



Source: Harrabin 2019

When discussing veganism and how animal agriculture is impacting the planet, people will often retort that they contribute to the cause by eating only grass-fed beef or free-range eggs/poultry. What then is the difference between that and “regular” meat? Poore says, “You can think of it in terms of a few different ways. Firstly, all land that you convert to farmland with some very few exceptions reduces biodiversity and takes habitats away from other species that could be using that land. Secondly, cows create a lot of methane and feeding them grass is basically equivalent to burning coal to create energy” (2020). No matter how you do it, eating meat is almost always going to have an impact. While it might be grass-fed and maybe that has some benefits in terms of how a product tastes or appears, it is certainly not an environmental solution.

Without a doubt, going vegetarian, or reducing your meat consumption, is a good first step towards helping the planet. But this fails to consider that half of our beef production comes from dairy cows (see Figure 3). And the dairy

industry has really intensified because of high demand and wanting to mass produce at the lowest possible costs. The surplus cows, the male cows, that can not be used to produce milk are sent to slaughter. So we are left with this industry that is trying to produce thousands of liters each year from a single cow to try to get maximum money value and then produce loads of beef for extra revenue. And all of this comes together to tie into this wildly intensified and exploitative industry that is also having really high environmental impacts.

Figure 3. Environmental impact of milks according to types

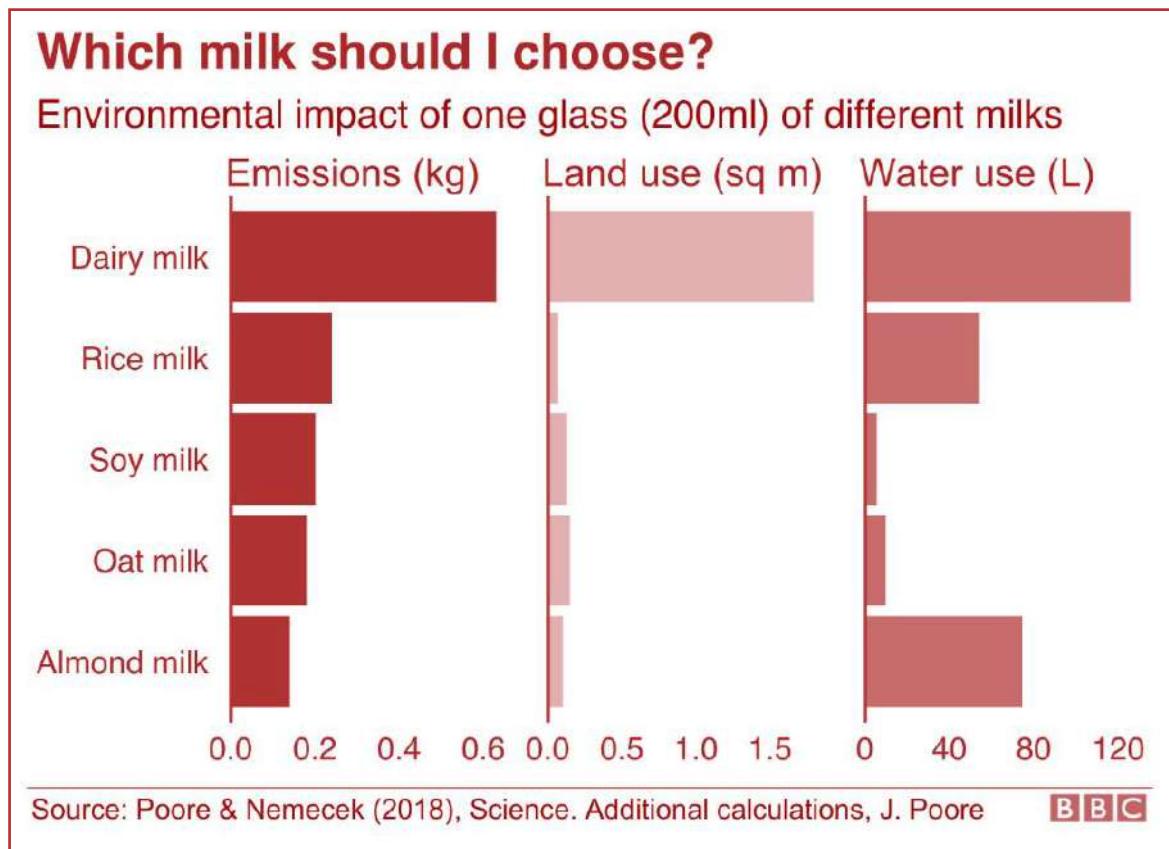


Figure 3. Source: Allen and Grisco 2020

In an interview, Poore (2020) said that during their research they “looked at data from 40 thousand farms and basically every country in the world. What we wanted to understand was, is there such a thing as sustainable meat and dairy? Is it possible to produce animal products with lower impacts than vegetable proteins?” Even the lowest impact animal products are typically creating more emissions and using more land than vegetable proteins. The graph above shows an example with cow's milk vs plant-based milks, and Poore and Nemecek's study (2018) explains that even the least sustainable soy milk is still better for the planet than the most sustainable cow's milk. So that is a really important result that suggests it is always going to be better to make a dietary change.

4. Conclusions

Globally, across all countries, we are seeing a trend towards intensification of the additional food demand that we are going to require by 2050 (Springman et al. 2018). About 80-90% of that will come from highly intensive systems and most pork and poultry around the world is already intensively produced. So here we move back into the grey areas of an environmental issue as well as an ethical issue. What this is becoming is the shortening of farmed animals' life cycle (by two thirds or so) for human consumption. That in itself is quite frightening because, the truth is, people do not want to see what is happening behind closed doors. We do not want to see what is happening, because as individuals, we are blinded by our privilege and do not want to make the necessary changes. But, if we do not change our diets, agriculture is going to become an increasingly large share of our greenhouse gas emissions. So, if we address all these other sectors, without addressing agriculture, it could be by 20, 30 years' time instead of a quarter of our emissions, it could reach as high as 50, or 60% (Poore and Nemecek 2018).

Some already acknowledge that beef production and consumption is especially harmful to the environment. Yet when beginning to move towards more of a pescatarian diet, they are quite surprised to learn that fishing (and specifically fish farming) is in itself harmful to the planet as well. Poore and Nemecek's study considered the emissions of fish farming, which accounts for about 50% of global fish consumption (Poore and Nemecek 2018), in a model that looked at what happened to the excretor of fish, the unconsumed feed, creating this perfect environment for bacteria and microorganisms to convert this carbon into methane (which is also what is involved in cow farming). While the biggest contributor to global temperature rise is carbon dioxide, and the biggest contributor to carbon dioxide has been the fossil fuels industry (which today accounts for about 61% of our emissions) it is very important to not lose focus of these other gases: methane, nitrous oxide (and hydrofluoric carbons). These are the gases that come directly from human agriculture and, with fish farming, methane (which traps heat in the atmosphere and is more potent and powerful at doing so than carbon dioxide) can be produced to a greater extent and even more rapidly than with cow farming.

There are two things we need to do. We need to globally reduce our consumption of animal products (and this is not limited strictly to the food industry but also includes the fashion industry as well). Secondly, we need labels and environmental information on our food products so instead of having wild debates in the media, or people being uncertain — the facts are just there, provided to the consumer. But it can not just be greenhouse gas emissions, it needs to include all five factors of Poore and Nemecek's value chain to avoid getting skewed labeling (2018).

Consumers have to change their demands and expectations before the world can be saved. We are all stakeholders in this, this is not something that can be fixed by one person or one group, it ultimately comes down to the collective humanity. We all eat, and it has a significant contribution globally. We

have to do something about it. It will not be easy, and it will not be popular, but it is difficult to see any scenario where greenhouse gas emissions from the agricultural production stage do not increase, and our other impacts on our really precious planet do not keep increasing. Luckily, Poore and Nemecek's study does highlight that there is this alternative — a vegan diet — and it not only changes the impacts but potentially reverses them: Meaning, we can avert the worst of climate change tomorrow, if we make some drastic changes today.

We cannot beat climate change until there is a big drop on the meat and dairy that is eaten all around the world. It is so important to start including *how* and *what* we eat as part of the conversation on climate change. One of the most powerful things that we can do today is to change our diets. It is no secret that climate change is being caused in large part by human behavior and animal agriculture. Science has shown pretty dramatically how it has both an impact on emissions, greenhouse gasses methane and CO₂, but also polluting the oceans and devastating our natural treasures. It is debatable whether our small planet can provide decent living standards for 7.7 billion humans. But it is indisputable that, as things are currently, our planet cannot provide for billions of humans while enabling other species to flourish.



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Farmed nonhuman animals in newspapers and *Aphro-ism*



Lukas Leitinger

Department of Communication, Universitat Pompeu Fabra



lukas.leitinger@gmail.com



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PHOTO: Cotton. Video and graphics.

Abstract

Critical discourse analysis of farmed nonhuman animals in newspapers has so far relied on a common problem understanding. This understanding is framed as speciesism, as a human-animal issue, "similar" to racism or sexism. Additionally, scientific evidence of sentience or suffering aids to argue against speciesism. In their recent book *Aphro-ism*, Aph and Syl Ko (2017a) describe their framework of black veganism. *Aphro-ism* challenges the conventional definition of speciesism and instead formulates animal oppression as more than a mere human-animal issue. Instead, Ko and Ko identify the common source of oppressions in white, human supremacy which harms all who are considered "not-quite-human". *Aphro-ism* also questions the reliance on scientific evidence as an argument against oppression. As oppression is not based on observable differences, scientific evidence does not get to its ideological roots. Overall, Ko and Ko (2017a) urge for a closer investigation into the ideological and conceptual roots of oppression, and for an exploration of alternative frameworks rooted in anti-racist and decolonial traditions. Thus, the *Aphro-ism* perspective provides an extra layer for analyzing how commodifying or objectifying language and animal oppression are interlinked. This article discusses how Ko and Ko's perspective can enrich the newspaper research on farmed nonhuman animal's representation in both its conceptual approaches and findings.



Keywords:

Aphro-ism, animal oppression, anti-racism, farmed nonhuman animals, newspaper representation, critical discourse analysis, critical animal and media studies.

1. Introduction

Farmed nonhuman animals constitute a massive group of individuals exploited at the hands of humans. Through the way newspapers report the news, they can reflect and reinforce, but also challenge dominant discourses legitimizing exploitation. Thus, newspaper articles provide an interesting medium for critical analysis. With the rising concern for nonhuman animals in the last decades, the scholarly attention to the subject has increased. One of the strands of research concerns itself with nonhuman animals' representation and discourses in the media. The field of critical animal and media studies, with its roots in critical animal studies and critical media studies, has pioneered this research from an intersectional, antispeciesist perspective (Almiron, Cole, and Freeman 2016). Several studies have analyzed the representation of farmed nonhuman animals in newspapers through critical discourse analysis and textual analysis, which are the focus of this paper.

In 2017, Aph and Syl Ko (2017a) released their essays into a crucial book for critical animal and media studies, *Aphro-ism: Essays on Pop Culture, Feminism and Black Veganism*. *Aphro-ism* contains a rich analysis based on the Ko sisters' experiences in both the anti-racist and vegan movements while drawing from different decolonial and anti-racist perspectives. As such, they outline their conceptual framework of black veganism. This paper does not provide a full summary of all their arguments, but rather explores which parts can enrich the analysis on farmed nonhuman animals' representation in newspapers.

As is clear throughout the book, one's position in the social hierarchies and associated personal experiences are crucial in creating theories and frameworks. This is one of the central premises of *Aphro-ism* and black veganism. Therefore, positioning myself as what the dominant view considers a fully human, white, European, able-bodied cis male crucially shapes my experiences. Certainly, this stops me from representing black veganism, and I must take extra care not to misrepresent the perspectives laid out in *Aphro-ism*. However, not engaging with this invaluable literature due to my privileges would do nothing to decolonize my perspectives. After all, being privileged by white, human supremacy does not mean I'm absolved of the urgency to dismantle it.

2. Theoretical frameworks

Analyzing farmed nonhuman animal's representation first requires an analysis of the problem to frame the research. The way the problem is understood significantly influences how the newspapers are analyzed. While not all mentioned studies below deal exactly with farmed nonhuman animals' representation in newspapers, their similar problem definitions are relevant to provide a broader picture. This section will first summarize the most prevalent theories and frameworks in the literature before exploring the ways *Aphro-ism* challenges them.

2.1. Speciesism

Most of the reviewed research for this paper bases its analysis on an understanding of and opposition to speciesism. While the authors describe speciesism in different ways, there are some common themes and definitions. The most common definition comes from Peter Singer's (1975) influential book *Animal Liberation*. Based on Singer's work, Carrie P. Freeman (2009, 82) describes speciesism as the "discrimination of a living being based on his/her species". Natalie Khazaal and Núria Almiron (2016) also cite Singer's influence in spreading the term. The root of the term comes from Richard Ryder, who is also cited in the definitions (Cole and Morgan 2011, Khazaal and Almiron 2016, Freeman and Merskin 2016). Here, speciesism is defined as a "prejudice against nonhuman animals" (Cole and Morgan 2011, 135). Thus, the initial understanding of speciesism amounts to a discrimination, prejudice, or bias of humans towards nonhumans.

A crucial detail in the common definitions of speciesism is the comparison to racism and sexism. These comparisons originate in the Singer's and Ryder's definitions, which "relate speciesism to better-known bias-based ideologies such as racism and sexism" (Khazaal and Almiron 2016, 3). Speciesism, as a form of discrimination, operates "like racism or sexism" (Freeman 2009, 82). Another way to phrase this is to see speciesism as "analogous to sexism and racism" (Cole and Morgan 2011, 135). The most common definitions thus see speciesism as a different, yet similar phenomenon to racism and sexism.

While many studies define speciesism as discrimination or prejudice, similar to racism and sexism, several others expand this view to provide more systemic definitions as well. For example, Matthew Cole and Karen Morgan (2011, 135) draw from David Nibert's sociological perspective to analyze speciesism's "manifestation in social institutions and relationships". Similarly, Khazaal and Almiron (2016) describe the institutionalization of speciesism for human profit. These views provide a more systemic perspective going beyond the narrow definitions of discrimination and prejudice, which are still rather prevalent.

Aphro-ism provokes several challenges to this view of speciesism as the problem. Firstly, they reject universalizing problem definitions and emphasize how our specific experiences shape our problem definitions (Ko and Ko 2017b). A frequent objection here is that speciesism concerns nonhuman animals, not the experiences of humans. However, relating the issue to personal human experiences enriches the understanding of the problem. Only allowing one "right" way to define the problem limits the explanations and ways to fight the problem. An analysis considering this has to pay close attention to the way the problem is framed. Incorporating more diverse voices in the problem definition is a first step, however, *Aphro-ism* emphasizes the importance of using different frameworks and ways of thinking, not merely diverse people following the dominant frameworks.

This relates to a broader theme of *Aphro-ism*, that of using new or alternative frameworks, rather than merely expanding or adapting the dominant ones. This is of course in line with the decolonial argument against universalizing, dominant frameworks. The argument goes beyond pluralism for the sake of diversity, but aims to highlight the problematic roots of many dominant theories. Much of Western philosophy, and by extension also the most dominant animal rights philosophy, comes from Enlightenment thinkers, specifically white, privileged men. In its entanglement with racism and colonialism, Enlightenment thinking has a violent history of exclusion. Instead of trying to extend these views with their obsession with personhood and individuality, Syl Ko (2017a) proposes to use different ideas from anti-racist traditions or create new ones. Uprooting the dominant frameworks of the animal rights literature is a big task for a research analyzing newspaper articles. Nevertheless, focusing on alternative theories from anti-racist and decolonial perspectives can enhance the depth of such analysis.

One of these alternative frameworks is black veganism, as developed by Aph and Syl Ko. While developing their framework based on their experiences in

both vegan and anti-racist circles, they emphasize the need to listen to a range of other experiences as well. Instead of the dominant view of speciesism as different, but similar to racism and sexism, black veganism sees these issues as part of the same problem. Rather than comparing the oppressions and the outcomes, *Aphro-ism* focuses on the common source of these oppressions (Ko 2017d). In all of these oppressions, some are considered “not-quite-human” as they do not match up to the colonial invention of the ideal “human” (being white, male, *Homo sapiens*, straight, able-bodied, etc.). By centering this idea of “humanity” as the basis of white supremacy, sexism and animal oppression, there is no need to “connect” these issues superficially in their outcomes, as they already stem from the same root (Ko 2017d).

Incorporating these perspectives into the analysis requires rethinking at several levels. While the reviewed studies aim to identify and analyze how newspaper articles reinforce or challenge speciesism, the insights of *Aphro-ism* challenge the idea of speciesism as a stand-alone issue. Thus, a more holistic lens would have to identify how the discourses represent not just nonhuman animals, but all “not-quite-humans”, as well as how the discourses reinforce the colonial, “ideal” form of “human”. As the studies aim to reveal the common-sense assumptions in underlying discourses, searching for traces of the colonial invention of the “ideal” human, as described in *Aphro-ism*, would be a good starting point. These traces may be found in whose experiences are reported, and in how they are reported.

2.2. Scientific evidence

One interesting argument for this discussion that often appears in the reviewed research is the use of scientific evidence. By drawing from different natural science disciplines, studies proving animals’ sentience, capacity for suffering and emotional lives, amongst other features, should garner support for their moral consideration. These arguments show the similarity, or at least continuity, between human and nonhuman lives, which in turn should challenge speciesism. The fact that the struggle against speciesism is not as common in academia as other struggles may explain the necessity to justify that focus. Nevertheless, the use of scientific arguments to combat animal oppression opens some fruitful points of analysis. This section will first describe how the reviewed studies have incorporated scientific arguments before discussing the *Aphro-ism* perspective.

The first systematic study on farmed nonhuman animals in newspapers presents several scientific arguments before discussing the different philosophical positions (Freeman 2009). Specifically, it cites the Sentience Report from Farm Sanctuary (which is no longer available) to prove that farmed nonhuman animals “endure both physical and emotional pain during their lives and their slaughter” (Freeman 2009, 80). A more recent report is the Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness, which draws from different branches of neuroscience to prove that all mammals and birds, amongst many other animals, are conscious (Low et al. 2012). For example, a book chapter on the representation of nonhuman animals cites this declaration and thereby follows a

similar pattern of justifying the issue with scientific evidence first (Freeman and Merskin 2016). Again, the scientific evidence for their capacity to feel positive and negative emotions should support the case against speciesism and for respectful representation.

The second main study analyzed here also presents a range of scientific evidence, and directly connects it to speciesism. Citing scientists from Charles Darwin to Mark Bekoff, the article describes the evidence for the intellectual, emotional and moral lives of animals (Khazaal and Almiron 2016). Following from this growing evidence, “the assumptions that hold the symbolic core of speciesism in place are no longer deemed scientific” (Khazaal and Almiron 2016, 3). Thus, while the authors do not consider scientific evidence the main argument against speciesism, they give it significant prominence in the explanation of speciesism.

Syl Ko (2017b) explored the role of scientific evidence and the wider effort to emphasize similarities in anti-racist and anti-speciesist activism. She acknowledges the role of emphasizing the differences along racial lines as part of the racist project. On the flip side, many of the scientists working to prove the similarities want to fight the racist project. Generally speaking, this is a similar phenomenon in the racism and speciesism debate. One side emphasizes the differences, while the other side emphasizes the similarities or continuities between racial and species lines.

However, Ko argues that countering the focus on differences by focusing on similarities does not get to the root of the problems. Despite clear scientific evidence proving the similarities and continuity along racial and species lines, “racism and speciesism remain fully entrenched in our society” (Ko 2017b, loc. 866). This challenges the underlying assumption that actual, measurable differences in capabilities cause or explain racism and speciesism (Ko 2017b). Accordingly, these phenomena have deeper roots than their mere observable differences.

To explain these roots, Syl Ko draws from Cora Diamond's (1978) concept of “the difference”. While the differences, like the ones described above, can be addressed by the sciences, “the difference” cannot be explained by the sciences. We “create the concept of the difference, knowing perfectly well the overwhelmingly obvious similarities” (Diamond 1978, 470). Instead of observable, measurable traits and differences, “the difference” stems from what we mean by the concept of “animal”. As such, for terms like “animal” or “nonhuman”, the justification of violence toward that individual “is in the choice of that term itself [emphasis in original]” (Ko 2017b, loc. 922). Similarly, the racist idea of inferiority is found within the racial label “black”, not in actually observed individuals (Ko 2017b). Thus, the emphasis on the observable similarities and continuities with oppressed groups does not capture the full extent of the problem.

Instead, Syl Ko advocates a different strategy. Firstly, she defends exposing the source of this created, fictional “difference”, namely white

supremacy (Ko 2017b). The second step is to “uproot the source by changing the terms of the conversation”, by “refusing to center whiteness in our lives and work [emphasis in original]” (Ko 2017b, loc. 937).

These points are immediately relevant to the analysis of newspaper articles, as they are essentially discursive features. The emphasis on scientific evidence for sentience and capabilities of pain and emotions could also be identified in discourses attempting to challenge the status quo. Thus, awareness of the underlying assumptions in this strategy can be information for future research. Additionally, “the difference” is another concept that can help understand the meaning packed into terms describing nonhuman animals. As Cora Diamond (1978) argued, the term “animal” already includes that this is something to be eaten, as opposed to a “human” or “person”. This perspective can inform the discursive functions of the terms beyond the externally observable features such as species membership. Further, understanding this “difference” as a creation of white supremacy can enhance a critical perspective.

3. Review of research

Going beyond the theory used in the reviewed studies, this section discusses some of the results to see how the *Aphro-ism* perspective can enrich further research. To do so, two main findings, the objectification/commodification and the suppression of suffering/emotional lives of nonhuman animals, are analyzed.

One of the main features of speciesist discourses identified in the literature is the use of objectifying or commodifying language to describe nonhuman animals. Instead of living, sentient beings, nonhuman animals are described as passive objects or as mere commodities for economic profit through several discursive strategies. Freeman (2009, 89), for example, showed US news using terms like “*livestock, beef cattle, pork, dairy cows, veal calves, poultry, or seafood* [emphasis in original]”. The other main study found a similar use of language in a Spanish newspaper (Khazaal and Almiron 2016). Following Dunayer’s (2001) analysis of speciesist language, other terms such as “nonhuman animals” are promoted as anti-speciesist alternatives.

Indeed, terms like “*livestock*” or “*seafood*” objectify nonhuman animals, yet the *Aphro-ism* perspective can still enrich this analysis. While these are the cruder terms, Syl Ko tracks the roots of our conception of “animal” that underlies them. Instead of the mere phenomena of speciesism, “the notions of ‘human’ and ‘animal’ are racially constituted” (Ko 2017e, loc. 1311). Thus, not only the crude, objectifying terms, but even the categorization as “animal” designates their place in the hierarchy. While the white, male human occupies the top of this hierarchy, the more one deviates from this “ideal”, the less one “matters” (Ko 2017e). Hence, this notion of “animality” not only denigrates nonhumans but also racialized people (Ko 2017e). As a result, Syl Ko (2017e) justifies reclaiming “the animal” to dislodge the hierarchy for the benefit of all victims of “animality”. Understanding how white supremacy underlies the human-animal binary helps

contextualize the objectification and goes beyond describing it as merely a speciesist phenomenon.

Another interesting note is the promotion of “nonhuman animals” as an alternative. Of course, this is technically the more appropriate term, since biologically, humans are animals. However, asserting that humans are animals reveals some underlying assumptions over how to challenge speciesism. Syl Ko (2017c) discusses the slogan “we are all animals” that makes a similar claim of pulling nonhuman and humans into the same space. Again, this runs into the assumption already described above that promoting objective facts (such as humans being biologically animals or emphasizing our similarities) automatically transfers into our moral behavior. This similarity can just as much be used to justify experimentation. Therefore, these facts need “to be filtered through something else, some sort of rule, that instructs us to interpret said similarity as a reason to protect and care” (Ko 2017c, loc. 2013). While this perspective does not disregard the strategy entirely, it reveals some of the underlying assumptions.

Another finding in both of the main studies is the lack or suppression of nonhuman animals’ emotions and suffering in newspaper articles (Freeman 2009, Khazaal and Almiron 2016). On the flip side, examples of such emotions and suffering are discussed as challenges to the speciesist status quo. Here, as before, Cora Diamond’s concept of “the difference” provides valuable insight. Hence, “appealing to anything external, such as their capacity to suffer, misses the force of concepts and *how they function* [emphasis in original]” (Ko 2017b, loc. 915). As described above, the justification for mistreatment is already in the concept of “the animal”. This challenges further research to go beyond the focus on suffering when exploring the discourses surrounding farmed nonhuman animals.

4. Conclusion

These are some of the many ways in which Aph and Syl Ko challenge us to rethink our assumptions when advocating against animal oppression and racism. I argue that these insights can enrich the perspective of research on farmed nonhuman animals’ representation by rethinking the frame of speciesism as an issue that only concerns nonhuman animals. Specifically, they show the shortcomings of focusing only on external, biological aspects such as sentience and suffering. Instead, they center the focus on our dominant concepts and how they function, such as the human-animal binary. Showing and problematizing the entanglements of white supremacy, coloniality and animality can help decolonize and enrich the research on farmed nonhuman animals’ representation and our understanding of animal oppression more generally.



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Los santuarios de animales no humanos en España



Abril Fabà Ubach

Departamento de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales, Universitat Pompeu Fabra



faubaba@gmail.com



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Resumen

Los santuarios de animales no humanos se han constituido en España en los últimos veinte años como espacios cuyo objetivo y acción han sido poder ofrecer un lugar habitable para estos animales, sobre todo a los que se ha considerado tradicionalmente como "animales de granja". Si es verdad que en España han existido antes centros o refugios de animales no humanos, el surgimiento de los santuarios es un fenómeno muy reciente y en las últimas dos décadas el número de santuarios en España ha aumentado de forma considerable.

En este artículo se pretende, por un lado, dar una visión básica del papel, la función y el surgimiento de los santuarios de animales no humanos en el marco del estado español y, más concretamente, entender, a partir de una serie de entrevistas y encuestas, cuál ha sido el impacto que los santuarios de animales no humanos han tenido en una parte de la población española, en concreto aquella que ya estaba familiarizada con las ideas antiespecistas.



Palabras clave:

Veganismo, antiespecismo, santuario de animales no humanos, movimiento de liberación animal.

Hoy he visto un cuerpo muerto
Estaba volviendo del trabajo
Cuando me encontré cara a cara
Con el cadáver de un cerdo adulto
Alguien se lo había colgado del hombro
Y lo estaba llevando a un restaurante
Los ojos del cerdo estaban abiertos de par en par
Como si estuviera impactado ante la muerte
Me quedé parada en seco
Durante lo que parecieron horas en mi mente
Pero fueron unos minutos en realidad
Aquellos ojos...
Aquellos ojos debieron haber mirado a su asesino
Rogando por su vida
Aquellos ojos debieron haberle dicho a alguien
"Tengo derecho a existir"
Entonces, ¿por qué estaba muerto?
Pasé de largo
Mis ojos rozaron los pollos muertos asados
Colgados por el cuello en la ventana.
(...)

Fragmento del poema titulado *Los ojos del muerto*, de Mary Spears (2015).

1. Introducción¹

Los santuarios de animales se conforman como los espacios donde se convive y acoge a animales no humanos, que han estado anteriormente explotados y maltratados, para poder ofrecerles un espacio donde vivir a largo plazo, con unas condiciones dignas y sin ser considerados objetos de consumo destinados a la producción —además de constituirse como espacios donde poder construir un sistema de relaciones entre animales humanos y no humanos no basado en la explotación y mercantilización de los animales no humanos. Un espacio en el que les animales puedan pasar a ser considerados sujetos e individuos que no viven sometidos a los deseos y “necesidades” humanas.

El surgimiento y el papel que juegan los santuarios de animales no humanos en la actualidad no se entiende sin la consideración del contexto social en el que vivimos. Es a causa de la existencia de un sistema de dominación especista (Fernández, 2018, p. 26) que surgen las resistencias antiespecistas que conocemos en la actualidad, y la creación de santuarios de animales no humanos tiene lugar y se desarrolla dentro de estas resistencias.

Pero además de constituirse como espacios donde se puedan ejercer prácticas antiespecistas, también se constituyen como espacios de sensibilización de la sociedad. La mayoría de los santuarios consideran de esencial importancia la concienciación de la población; teniendo en cuenta que, para que se produzca un cambio en el funcionamiento del sistema y en la forma en la que les animales humanos nos relacionamos con los animales no humanos, son necesarias no sólo unas prácticas antiespecistas concretas, sino también un cambio de mentalidad y de valores a nivel social.

Actualmente en España existen unos 24 santuarios aproximadamente (Infoanimal 2021). Cada uno de ellos tiene su forma específica de funcionar, y no existe ninguna organización que los agrupe todos, como sucede en otros países.

La mayoría de los santuarios españoles están poblados por animales no humanos que provienen de la industria de explotación ganadera. Sin embargo, también hay otros especializados en animales pequeños, primates, grandes felinos o aves².

¹ Nota sobre el lenguaje: En este artículo se utiliza el lenguaje inclusivo o género neutro como genérico porque se entiende que enmarcar el lenguaje dentro de un marco binario únicamente, no hace más que excluir a las personas que no se enmarcan en este binarismo. Aun así, en ocasiones se designará a las personas que se sientan cómodas dentro del lenguaje binario como tal, pero cuando las palabras no incluyan sólo a una sola persona, se hará uso del lenguaje inclusivo. Se pretende, así, rechazar el masculino genérico como género neutro, entendiendo que históricamente esta forma de usar el lenguaje no ha hecho más que reforzar un androcentrismo que olvida otras formas de autodesignarse.

² En España existen santuarios como El Ratolí, Rainfer, Primadomus, MONA o Mis Amigas las Palomas, que acogen a animales que no son tradicionalmente considerados como “animales de granja”.

El primer santuario que abrió fue El Hogar, en el año 2004. Con el nombre de El Hogar de Luci, acogía a aquellos perros y gatos más desfavorecidos que esperaban la muerte recluidos en diferentes perreras del Estado (El Hogar 2020). A partir de entonces y hasta la fecha, se han ido abriendo y consolidado más de una veintena de santuarios en todo el territorio español.

2. Análisis

A partir de una encuesta y una serie de entrevistas se ha realizado un estudio cuantitativo y cualitativo para poder analizar cuál ha sido el impacto de los santuarios de animales no humanos en la población española que ya conocía o tenía algún contacto con los santuarios y las ideas antiespecistas.

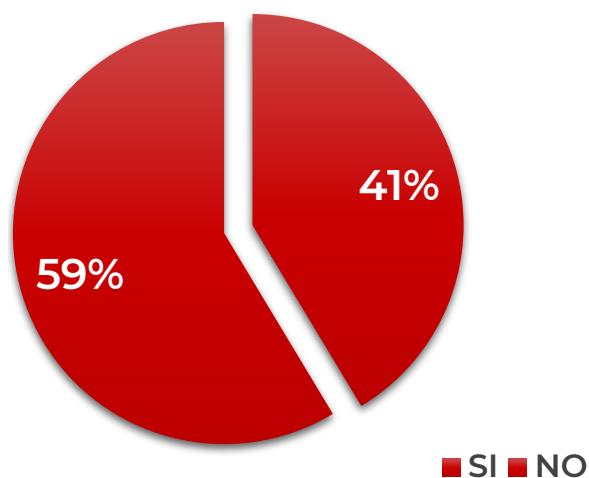
2.1. Encuesta

En primer lugar, la encuesta se ha realizado con una muestra aleatoria de 80 individuos formada por mujeres, personas de género no binario, personas queer y hombres. La muestra ha incluido individuos de entre 19 y 75 años, de varias ciudades del Estado Español y se ha usado la técnica de bola de nieve para construirla.

En esta parte del análisis podemos observar si ha habido un impacto de los santuarios de animales no humanos en el cambio de la percepción que se tiene de los animales no humanos o un cambio en las formas de vida de las personas encuestadas. Los resultados de la encuesta nos muestran varias cosas:

En el Gráfico 1 vemos que en un 41,37% de los casos se han producido cambios en la dieta después de conocer los santuarios, mientras que en un 58,62% de los casos no se han producido dichos cambios.

Gráfico 1. Cambios producidos o cambios no producidos en la dieta después de conocer los santuarios

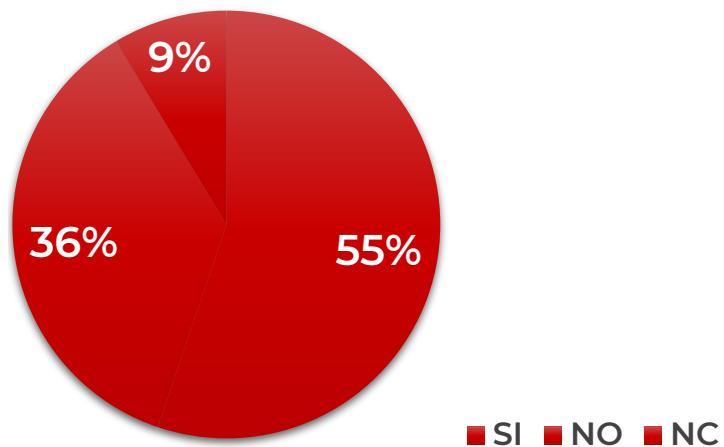


Fuente: Elaboración propia.

El Gráfico 2 nos muestra si ha habido cambios en la concepción que se tenía de los animales no humanos después del contacto con los santuarios. Con respuesta a la pregunta de: “¿Hubo un cambio en la concepción de los animales no humanos después de conocer los santuarios de animales no humanos?”, vemos que en un 55,17 % sí que se han producido cambios y en un 36,21 % no se han producido cambios, mientras que un 8,62 no contestan a la pregunta.

En los casos en los que se produjeron cambios, estos se resumen en un mayor conocimiento de los animales no humanos, mayor grado de empatía hacia ellos, no diferenciación entre los animales no humanos considerados “mascotas” y los considerados “de granja”, pasar a considerarlos seres sintientes, etc.

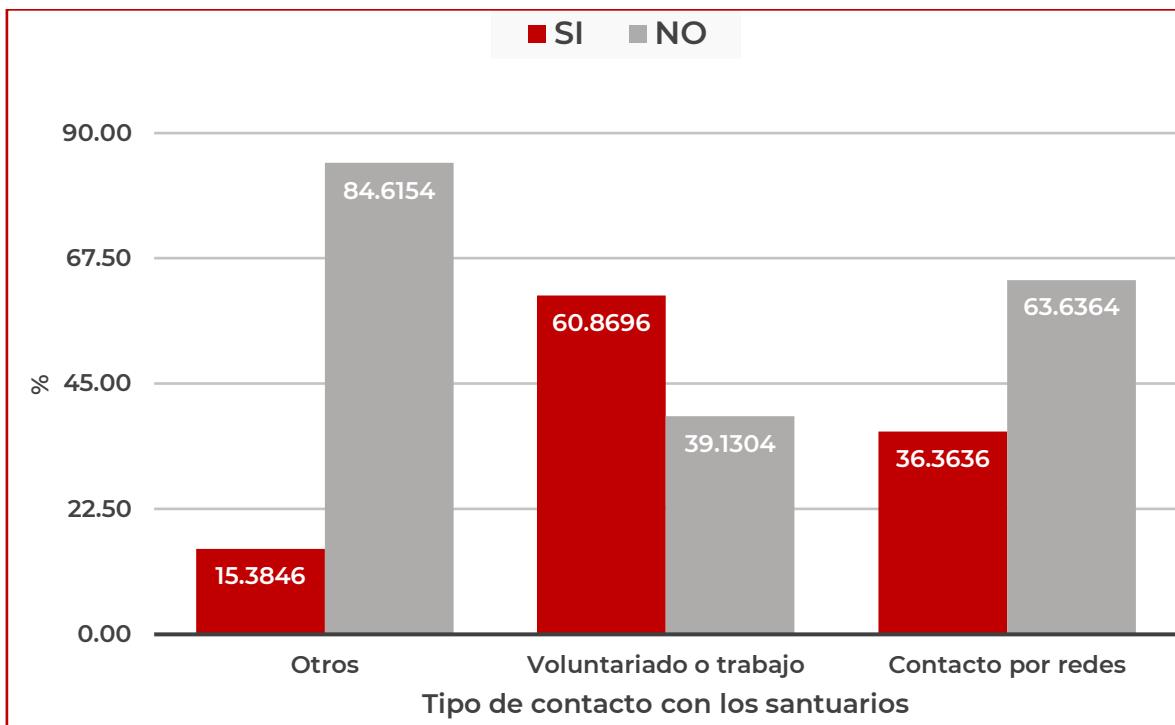
Gráfico 2. Cambios producidos en la concepción de los animales no humanos



Fuente: Elaboración propia.

En el Gráfico 3 vemos si se han producido cambios en la dieta a raíz de conocer o tener contacto con los santuarios de animales no humanos según el tipo de contacto. En los casos de personas que conocieron los santuarios por voluntariado o trabajo, en un 60,87% hubo un cambio en la dieta, mientras que en un 39,13% no hubo cambios en la dieta. En el caso de la gente que conoció los santuarios por las redes sociales, vemos que en un 36,36% de los casos se produjo un cambio en la dieta, mientras que en un 63,64% no se produjo dicho cambio. Finalmente, de la gente que conoció los santuarios por otros medios un 15,38% realizó cambios en su dieta, mientras que un 84,62% no.

Gráfico 3. Cambios en la dieta según el tipo de contacto con los santuarios (en %)



Fuente: Elaboración propia.

Finalmente, el Gráfico 4 nos muestra los diferentes tipos de cambios en la dieta. Vemos que en las personas que conocieron el santuario vía voluntariado/trabajo, se ha producido un paso al veganismo en un 39,13% de los casos, una reducción del consumo de carne en un 8,70%, se ha dejado de consumir carne en un 8,70%, se ha hecho el paso a la dieta ovolactovegetariana en un 4,35% y no se ha producido ningún cambio en un 39,13% de los casos. Dentro del bloque donde no se produce ningún cambio, también entran los casos de personas que ya eran veganas u ovolactovegetarianas con anterioridad.

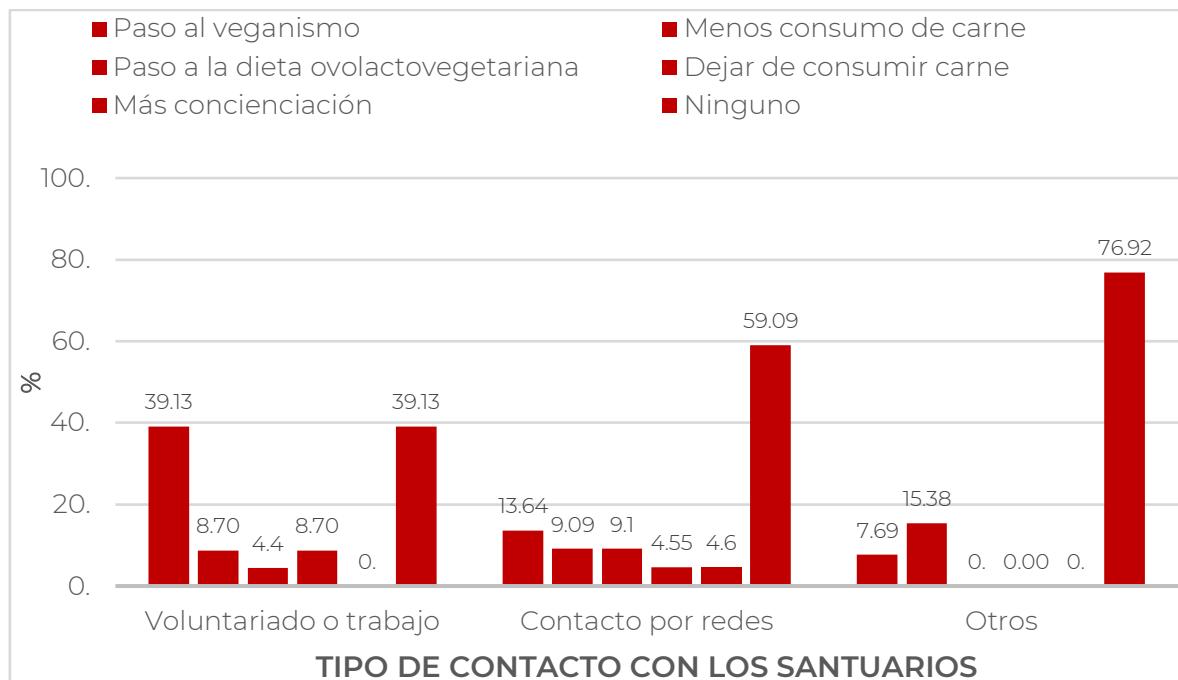
En aquellas personas que los conocieron vía redes sociales vemos que un 9,09% redujeron su consumo de carne, un 4,55% dejó de consumir carne, un 9,09% dio el paso a la dieta ovolactovegetariana, un 13,64% dio el paso al veganismo, un 4,55% cambió a un mayor grado de concienciación y un 59,09% no realizó ningún cambio en su dieta.

Para finalizar, de aquellas personas que los conocieron por otras vías, un 15,38% redujo su nivel de consumo de carne y un 7,69% se pasó al ovolactovegetarianismo.

Observamos, entonces, que en el sector donde ha habido un mayor porcentaje de cambio de modelo de dieta a una alimentación vegana y ha

aumentado el nivel de concienciación ha sido en los casos en los que se ha realizado un voluntariado o se ha trabajado en los santuarios.

Gráfico 4. Tipo de cambios en la dieta (en %).



Fuente: Elaboración propia.

2.2. Entrevistas

En la segunda parte del análisis se han realizado cuatro entrevistas a personas que han tenido contacto con los santuarios en España, ya sea porque han conocido su existencia o porque han participado de ellos como voluntarias.

El objetivo de las entrevistas era poder analizar con mayor profundidad qué tipo de prácticas o cambios en la mentalidad y la concepción que se tiene de los animales no humanos se han producido como consecuencia del contacto y la influencia de los santuarios de animales no humanos.

Las entrevistas se estructuran en torno a siete preguntas. Las dos primeras preguntas nos informan sobre la relación de la persona entrevistada con los santuarios. En el resto de las preguntas podemos observar si ha habido (o no) cambios en el modelo de vida de la persona entrevistada, y cómo han sido estos cambios. Finalmente, observamos también cómo era la concepción que la persona entrevistada tenía sobre los animales no humanos y si ésta ha cambiado después de su contacto con el santuario. El resultado de las entrevistas arroja los siguientes datos:

Para empezar, todes les entrevistades han tenido conocimiento de los santuarios a través de las páginas web de estos. Y, además, vemos que tres de les entrevistades hicieron un voluntariado en el santuario.

En segundo lugar, en tres de los casos el modelo de dieta no ha cambiado radicalmente, o bien porque no se ha dado el paso al veganismo o bien porqué ya se era vegane antes de tener contacto con el santuario. Por el contrario, en un caso sí que se pasó (a raíz de tener contacto con el santuario) de una dieta ovolactovegetariana a una dieta vegana.

Si observamos la concepción de los animales no humanos, en tres de los casos se señala que sí que ha habido un cambio considerable en esta concepción.

Estos cambios se resumen en que después de su contacto con el santuario se ve a los animales no humanos de forma distinta, su concienciación ha aumentado, y la concepción que se tenía de los animales no humanos ha cambiado totalmente. En concreto, el contacto con los santuarios ha sido uno de los factores que ha generado un giro antiespecista o no antropocéntrico en la forma de pensar sobre les animales no humanes, teniendo así, les entrevistades, un mayor conocimiento y una mayor empatía hacia las formas de existir y de organizar la vida que tienen les animales no humanos, además de tenerles más presentes en su día a día.

En uno de los casos, su contacto con los santuarios no ha tenido un impacto muy grande en la concepción que tenía de los animales no humanos, ya que antes de saber de la existencia de los santuarios ya entendía el antiespecismo como una forma de vida. Aún así, en este caso, el hecho de tener contacto con los santuarios ha hecho que se reafirmase en su decisión de ser antiespecista.

Por otro lado, con las entrevistas obtenemos más datos de cuál era la concepción de los animales no humanos antes y después de tener contacto o conocer los santuarios. Solo en tres de los casos se ha producido un cambio significativo. Antes de conocer los santuarios, en un caso, vemos que no se tenía tan presentes a les animales no humanes en su vida. En otro caso, su concepción era la de que no interactuaban tal como lo hacen les animales considerades “doméstiques” y creía que había diferencias entre elles —si bien les respetaba y consideraba que tenían idénticos derechos, desconocía que podían tener personalidad, carácter, diferencias, gustos, aficiones e intereses. Además, no sabía que podían tener formada una personalidad tal como la tienen les animales humanes. En un último caso, vemos que inconscientemente se clasificaba las especies en diferentes peldaños jerarquizados.

Después de conocer dichos santuarios, los testimonios de les entrevistades apuntan a que la concepción que se tiene de les animales no humanos es distinta. En el primer caso, se tiene presente a les animales en casi todo su día a día, aunque aún le queda mucho para conseguir vivir sin contribuir al sufrimiento animal. En el segundo caso, su concepción actual es que lo único

que les diferencia es la especie. Y en el tercer caso, vemos que el hecho de convivir con los animales no humanos ha hecho que les coloque a todos en la misma posición, y que les trate a absolutamente todos por igual, y que además su grado de concienciación sobre el maltrato que reciben en las diferentes explotaciones haya aumentado.

Finalmente, observamos cuál es la concepción sobre el impacto de dichos santuarios. Todos consideran que en efecto dichos santuarios han generado un impacto, aunque no pueda llegar siempre a todas las personas, y este se resume en que:

1. Contribuyen cada día a la divulgación de un cambio urgente y necesario sobre el trato de los animales por parte de los humanos.
2. Que gracias a toda la información y la lucha actuales las mentalidades están cambiando y seguirán cambiando inevitablemente.
3. Que la historia de vida de algunos de los habitantes de los santuarios ha impactado directamente en las personas, que después de conocer la lucha de esos animales para sobrevivir —que responde directamente a su deseo de vivir— ha cambiado la concepción antropocéntrica acerca de los mal considerados “animales de granja”.
4. Que desafían a las personas a cuestionarse sus creencias, cultura, y costumbres.

3. Conclusiones

Los resultados de esta investigación claramente sugieren que, si bien no se puede establecer una relación causal directa entre el conocimiento de los santuarios de animales no humanos y el cambio en la mentalidad o en los hábitos de la población que tiene conocimiento o conoce los santuarios, es posible afirmar que dichos santuarios han tenido influencia en los cambios de hábitos o de mentalidad con relación a los animales no humanos de las personas entrevistadas.

Vemos que, aquellas personas que conocieron o tuvieron contacto con los santuarios, ya sea por las redes sociales o por colaboraciones o voluntariados en dichos santuarios: o bien han generado un cambio en su modelo de alimentación; o bien han generado un cambio de mentalidad en referencia a la concepción que tenían de los animales no humanos y de su situación; o bien han contribuido en reafirmar su posición y mentalidad antiespecista.

Uno de los cambios principales que se ha producido por la influencia del contacto con los santuarios ha sido el cambio en el modelo de dieta. Vemos que de las personas que conocieron los santuarios vía voluntariado o trabajo, un 60,87% sí que ha producido cambios en su modelo de dieta, mientras que un

39,13% no. Por otro lado, les que los conocieron por las redes sociales, un 36,36% han cambiado su modelo de dieta y un 63,64% no.

Dichos cambios han sido influenciados por el contacto con los santuarios, pero hay otros factores que también pueden haber influido, pero que quedan fuera de este estudio —como podrían ser la influencia del movimiento y las ideas antiespecistas que se han extendido y proliferado en las últimas décadas.



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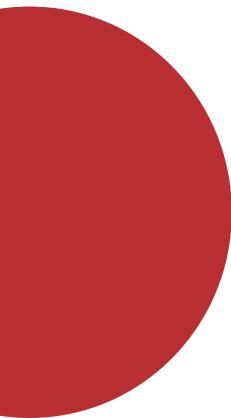
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COMMENTARIES



Nuestro tratamiento cruel hacia los animales condujo al coronavirus¹

	David Benatar Director del Centro de bioética de la Universidad de Ciudad del Cabo, Sudáfrica
	Traducido por: S. Juliana Granados M Filósofa de la Universidad Santo Tomás, Colombia
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Las condiciones que llevan al surgimiento de nuevas enfermedades infecciosas son las mismas que causan daños horrendos a los animales.

Existe lo obvio y luego lo que debería ser obvio. Lo obvio es que la pandemia del coronavirus ha paralizado a gran parte del mundo. Muchos países están viviendo un encierro de emergencia. Hasta ahora, más de 1.7 millones² de personas se han infectado, otras 100.000 han muerto y millones viven con miedo de que estos dos números se incrementen exponencialmente. Las economías están en recesión, con todas las privaciones y dificultades que implican en el bienestar humano.

Lo que debería ser obvio, y puede que no lo sea para muchos, es que nada de esto llegó por sorpresa. Que habría otra pandemia era algo completamente previsible, a pesar de que el tiempo preciso de su surgimiento y su trayectoria no lo eran. Existe una noción importante de que la pandemia es creación nuestra en tanto humanos. Con todo y que

¹ Esta es una traducción del artículo "Our cruel treatment to animals led to Coronavirus", publicado originalmente en The New York Times, el 13 de abril de 2020 (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/13/opinion/animal-cruelty-coronavirus.html>). Su publicación aquí no tiene fines lucrativos y cuenta con el permiso explícito del profesor David Benatar.

² A 2021, estas cifras han aumentado a 111 millones de contagiados. (N. de la T.).

una pandemia pueda llegar a percibirse como un desastre enteramente natural, en ocasiones no lo es, de hecho, usualmente no lo es.

El coronavirus comenzó en animales y saltó rápidamente la barrera de especies hasta propagarse entre los mismos humanos, un fenómeno conocido y común. Casi todas —algunos creen que todas— las enfermedades infecciosas son de tipo zoonótico, es decir, que se transmiten entre animales y humanos. Dichas enfermedades no son en sí mismas responsabilidad de los seres humanos. Sin embargo, muchas enfermedades de tipo zoonótico surgen como consecuencia de las maneras en que los humanos tratan a los animales. Los “mercados húmedos” en China son el primer ejemplo, pues son frecuentemente fuentes no solo de COVID-19, sino también de SARS y de algunos brotes de influenza aviar (otra posible fuente que devino en COVID-19 pudo ser una de las tantas granjas chinas en las que conviven ganado y fauna silvestre, y de esto los humanos también somos responsables).

Los “mercados húmedos”, que no se encuentran únicamente en China sino también en otros países del oriente asiático, tienen una serie de características que los hace especialmente propicios para alojar enfermedades zoonóticas infecciosas. Animales vivos son tenidos allí en espacios pequeños hasta que son cruelmente asesinados en ese mismo lugar. Una vez son sacrificados, sus compradores se los llevan. Bajo estas condiciones, las infecciones son fácilmente transmitidas de un animal a otro. Dado que nuevos animales son regularmente llevados al mercado, una enfermedad puede propagarse a través de una cadena infecciosa de un animal a otro que llega incluso mucho tiempo después. La cercanía con los seres humanos, sumada a la abundancia de sangre, el excremento y otros fluidos corporales y sus partes, facilitan la infección a humanos. Inmediatamente después de la transmisión entre humanos lo que se espera es una epidemia, a menos que el problema sea rápidamente contenido. El tránsito aéreo puede convertir la epidemia en pandemia en el curso de semanas o meses, exactamente como pasó con el coronavirus.

Es bajo estas condiciones que se facilita la aparición de nuevas enfermedades infecciosas, y es también bajo estas condiciones que se infligen daños terribles a los animales, pues son mantenidos en extremo confinamiento para luego ser masacrados. Puesto de manera simple, la pandemia del coronavirus es resultado de nuestro brutal maltrato hacia los animales.

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Aquellos que piensan que este es un “problema chino” en lugar de pensar que es un problema humano deberían pensarlo de nuevo. No son pocas las zoonosis que han surgido del maltrato hacia los animales. El origen más probable del V.I.H. (virus de inmunodeficiencia humana), por ejemplo, es el V.I.S. (virus de inmuno deficiencia en simio), y la forma más probable en la que se pudo traspasar la barrera de especies fue por la sangre del primate sacrificado para el consumo humano. De manera similar, la variante de la enfermedad Creutzfeldt-Jakob tuvo su origen en la versión bovina análoga (Encefalopatía espongiforme bovina o “síndrome de las vacas locas”). El mecanismo de transmisión más factible es el consumo de ganado infectado.

En los tiempos venideros cabe esperar que el maltrato que le damos a los animales siga causando estragos en nuestra propia especie. Además de las futuras pandemias que vendrán, nos enfrentamos a un riesgo real de generar resistencia a los antibióticos. El mayor contribuyente a este riesgo es el uso de antibióticos en la industria de la agricultura animal como promotor de crecimiento (para llevar a los animales al peso ideal de sacrificio tan pronto como sea posible) y para frenar la propagación de infecciones entre animales mantenidos en condiciones extremadamente crueles con fines de cría industrial.

Es enteramente posible que el futuro humano implique el regreso a una era pre-antibióticos, en la que la gente muera en masa por infecciones que han sido efectivamente tratadas desde el descubrimiento de la penicilina y otros agentes antibacterianos tempranos. De ser así, puede resultar que la era de los antibióticos sea un breve interludio entre dos períodos mucho más largos en la historia de la humanidad, en la cual podríamos sucumbir a un gran número de infecciones bacterianas. Esta perspectiva, mucho más terrible que la crisis actual, no es menos real. Nosotros, como especie, conocemos este problema, pero no hemos hecho lo que se requiere para evitarlo (o al menos para minimizar el margen de que esto suceda).

Lo que este y otros ejemplos muestran es que herir cruelmente a los animales puede llevar al daño de los humanos. Esto proporciona una razón, aunque interesada en nosotros mismos como especie y dejando de lado consideraciones morales aún mucho más fuertes, para tratar mejor a los animales. El problema es que incluso esta razón egoísta, que

nos interesa en tanto seres humanos, es un motivo insuficiente. En contraste con la alabanza que hacemos al llamarnos a nosotros mismos *Homo sapiens*, el “humano sabio”, mostramos en realidad poca sabiduría.

No se trata de negar los muchos logros intelectuales de la humanidad. Sin embargo, estos logros vienen combinados con muchas deficiencias cognitivas y morales, incluyendo una confianza indebida en nuestra habilidad de resolver problemas. En general, los humanos respondemos en consecuencia ante las pandemias, en lugar de actuar para prevenirlas; intentamos prevenir su propagación después de que estas emergen para luego desarrollar un tratamiento. La crisis actual demuestra el sinsentido de esta forma de ver las cosas. Lo más cerca que llegamos a una idea de prevención es el esfuerzo por desarrollar vacunas. Pero incluso esta clase de prevención es un tipo de reacción. Las vacunas son desarrolladas como respuesta a virus que ya existen. Tal y como la experiencia con el coronavirus lo muestra, puede existir un retraso significativo entre la aparición del virus y el desarrollo de una vacuna segura y efectiva, tiempo durante el cual se genera un gran daño.

Una prevención real requiere de, primero que todo, tomar medidas para minimizar las posibilidades de que los virus y los agentes infecciosos emerjan. Una de muchas medidas más inteligentes, y mucho más compasivas, podría ser la evaluación de nuestro tratamiento hacia los animales no humanos, y consecuentemente, una acción en conjunto.

Algunos podrán decir que es insensible señalar al ser humano como el responsable de la actual pandemia, cuando es él mismo quien está siendo afectado por esta. Se preguntarán también: ¿acaso no es un poco inapropiado, justo ahora, que nos restreguemos en la cara este desastre que hemos causado? ¡Pero estas preocupaciones están absolutamente fuera de lugar! Algunas advertencias tempranas acerca de los peligros derivados de nuestro comportamiento no fueron escuchadas en momentos de menor pánico. Ahora, por supuesto, es incluso posible que estemos momentáneamente conscientes de la situación, pero pronto olvidaremos la lección, ya existen varios precedentes de ello. No obstante, dada la importancia de lo que está hoy sobre la mesa, es mejor arriesgar un poco y abrirnos a la idea de que nos llamen insensibles antes que dejar pasar la oportunidad de alentar un cambio significativo. Millones de vidas y la abolición de mucho sufrimiento están en juego.



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