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Human-Animal Relations in the Twenty-First Century

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Abstract

The overall picture of human-animal relations as they stand in the second decade of the twenty-first century is an appalling one. The suffering of animals, both those designated as consumption goods and those perishing due to the disappearance of habitats, is increasing as the human species continues to wield power through myriad forms of animal extraction, exploitation, production, and consumption. The notion of "human-animal relations," however, is a misleading one, as it lumps all humans into one classification and obscures the profoundly diverged roles that different groups of people play in shaping society's collective attitude towards animals. In this article, drawing on Theodor Adorno's and Carolyn Merchant's approaches to the tripartite structure of the most widespread forms of human-nature relations, I discuss human-animal relations in the twenty-first century, an era when public policies in a significant part of the world follow neoliberal models. Following the work of Charles Prusik, who considers Theodor Adorno's idea of natural history instrumental to understanding neoliberalism, I critically dissect the bases of contemporary human-animal relations.

Keywords: Adorno, Merchant, Prusik, capitalism, industrial meat production, narrative, neoliberalism, science

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Introduction

The overall picture of human-animal relations as they stand in the second decade of the twenty-first century is an appalling one. The suffering of animals, both those designated as consumables and those perishing due to the disappearance of habitats, is increasing as the human species continues to wield power through myriad forms of animal extraction, exploitation, production, and consumption. The notion of "human-animal relations," however, is a misleading one, as in effect it lumps all humans into one classification and obscures the profoundly diverse roles that different groups of people play in shaping society's collective attitude towards animals. In this article, I draw on the work of Theodor Adorno and Carolyn Merchant to critically unpack human-animal relations in the twenty-first century. Both Adorno and Merchant identify the most common forms of human-nature relations according to a tripartite structure. In Adorno's work, this tripartite division is largely along the lines of social class. Merchant, in contrast, places more emphasis on the tripartite structure as it plays out along gender lines. Both thinkers, in critiquing these human-nature relations, also emphasize the importance of the construction of narratives (both verbal and visual) by powerful groups of humans, the hiding of power from public view by these same groups, and these groups' justifications of oppression and exploitation. For Adorno, it is the narrative of the capitalist economy depicted as the natural order of things that legitimizes the exploitation of nature by humans and the oppression of a so-called second class of humans (for their labor) by humans. For Merchant, it is in the name of science that a dominant human group normalizes the exploitation of two other groups, nature (nonhuman beings inclusive of animals) and minority human groups inclusive of women. The autonomy of those who subscribe to and are condemned under the narratives is lost, and many people erroneously believe that the behavior that the narratives represent is normal and natural.

Adorno's and Merchant's approaches to and emphases on the power of narratives in their critique of human-nature relations provide important insights for understanding human-animal relations in the twenty-first century, an era when public policies in a significant part of the world can be characterized as neoliberal. Following the work of Charles Prusik, who considers Adorno's idea of natural history instrumental for understanding neoliberalism, I critically dissect the most nefarious forms of human-animal relations. These betray hierarchy and exploitation. Highlighting the increasingly concentrated distribution of wealth and power as a result of neoliberalism and its narratives, which are intentionally designed and betray profoundly unequal human-animal relations, I argue that the

neoliberal system has grown increasingly capable not only of hiding animal cruelty from view but also of desensitizing humans towards such cruelty where and when it is exposed. As a consequence, many people have less power or ability to restore and support more fair relations with animals. This diminution reinforces the power of neoliberal institutions, creating further inequalities in human-animal relations.

Adorno's and Merchant's Critique of Human-Nature Relations

Adorno sees modern human-nature relations as tripartite structures, or human-human-nature structures, under which a privileged human group exploits two other groups, nature and other humans, who also participate with the dominant human group in exploiting nature. Adorno traces this particular relation to the Enlightenment. It is not "the advance of thought . . . aimed at liberating human beings from fear"; rather, it represents a totalitarian idea that has "always sympathized with social coercion" and left the earth "radiant with triumphant calamity" (Horkheimer and Adorno 1, 9). The Enlightenment reduces nature to something akin to mere logic or abstract math, which then is relied upon to wield absolute authority: "an infinite world . . . is conceived as one in which objects are not accessible individually to our cognition in an imperfect and accidental way but are attained by a rational, systematically unified method which finally apprehends each object" (18-19). Enlightenment ideals also suggest that humans must choose between subjugating to nature and forcing nature to subjugate to them and the second choice is unavoidable. Under this apparently limited either/or choice, a dominant controlling minority, the bourgeoisie, subordinates life "in its entirety" to the "requirements of its preservation" and so "the power of the system over human beings increases with every step [humans] take away from the power of nature" (24, 30-31).

Language plays a central role in consolidating the tripartite hierarchical structure of the entrenched human-nature relations in the period of modernity. As Adorno characterizes it, "Language itself endowed what it expressed, the conditions of domination" (Horkheimer and Adorno 16). With its impartiality, scientific language in particular is enlisted to deprive the powerless of whatever strength it has "to make itself heard" and to provide "the existing order with a neutral sign for itself" (17). Scientific language justifies injustice "in the guise of brutal facts," characterizes injustice as being something that is "eternally immune to intervention," and gives injustice the status of the "sacrosanct" (21). Through such language, power is kept on one side and profanity or obedience

is cast on the other side (15). Scientific language is used by dominant human groups to serve an order founded on unfair divisions of labor and to serve "the self-preservation" of those groups (16). This "necessarily turns the whole into a means of enforcing the particular interest" of the dominant minority (16).

In the same vein, Carolyn Merchant understands the widespread and prevalent human-nature relations and the narratives and concepts associated with them according to the tripartite hierarchical (human-human-nature) structure of these relations.[1] In *The Death of Nature*, Merchant argues that as Western culture became increasingly mechanized in the 1600s, the concept of nature as a living organism and a nurturing mother was replaced by that of a wild and uncontrollable female necessitating domination and mastery. Such a reconceptualization was necessary because of commercialism and industrialization, "which depended on activities directly altering the earth—mining, drainage, deforestation, and assarting" (2). These are incompatible with older cultural narratives. Many of those had functioned as constraints on uses of the natural world. Under them, "One [could] not readily slay a mother, dig into her entrails for gold or mutilate her body" (3).

The new images and narratives served as cultural sanctions for the denudation of nature, and technological development was used in support of that denigration. During the course of the Scientific Revolution, rational control over nature and society was achieved through the machine metaphor, and it redefined reality. As "the unifying model for science and society," the machine all but completely "permeated and reconstructed human consciousness" (Merchant, *The Death of Nature* 193). Merchant sums up this most far-reaching effect of the Scientific Revolution in four words: the death of nature (193). "Because nature was now viewed as a system of dead, inert particles moved by external, rather than inherent forces, the mechanical framework itself could legitimate the manipulation of nature" (193).[2]

Moreover, as Merchant also emphasizes, just as nature was projected after 1600 as being something that needed to be controlled, so, too, women were projected as being wild, disorderly, chaotic, and unruly. Nature and women were lumped together, positioned on the same side of the natural order of things and positioned opposite to the scientific order of things. In addition, women

[1] Carol J. Adams also offers a similar perspective on the tripartite structure of human-animal relations (*Sexual* and *Pornography*).

[2] Donna Haraway makes a similar point in *Modest Witness*. The titular figure, as Cynthia Huff notes, refers to the "Enlightenment man of knowledge with superior cognition" (378). He is "allegedly objective in his witnessing, and his narrative about the workings of the world explains its mysteries to his students, who are everyone and everything other than his Enlightenment equals" (378).

were blamed for causing illness, destroying crops, obstructing generation, and killing infants, and so they were demonized as "witches" (Merchant, *The Death of Nature* 127). The issue of control and the maintenance of the new order, and of women and nature within this new order, critically ties to the witch trials in these times (138). The scientific language (of Francis Bacon and others) that also was part of this new order reinforced that positioning; in effect this language states that nature, like witches, can be mutilated, incarcerated, interrogated, and "tortured through mechanical inventions" (168).

Neoliberalism

For both Adorno and Merchant, narratives play a critical role in shaping human-nature relations and the tripartite structures that betray the most prevalent forms of these relations. Sugarcoated by narratives of science in particular, oppression of a second class of humans and oppression of nature by a dominant class of humans parades not as such but as reason. As Adorno argues, narratives, and particular those of science, when constructed and used cleverly by the dominant human group, help create "a social context which induces blindness" (Horkheimer and Adorno 33). Under the dominant human group's support of the "scientific temper," "any deviation of thought from the business of manipulating the actual, any stepping outside the jurisdiction of existence," is condemned for being senseless or baseless (Horkheimer and Adorno 19). Merchant similarly argues that common understandings of nature reflect constructed scientific narratives, which mirror narratives about women. Nature is like the unruly female and invites dissection and control. Moreover, such narratives function as a tool to hide the power of the dominant minority from view and deprive the dominated majority of their autonomy and so of their ability to question or resist power. Such narratives further widen power gaps between the dominant minority and dominated majority.

In keeping with the foregoing account of the transformation of human society in the modern period is the question of the various models of social control that help to maintain the deeply inequitable human-nature relations. These models are constantly being renewed, repackaged, and renovated. One of the latest of these is neoliberalism. As Chien-Yi Lu characterizes neoliberalism, it is "the art" (as in the art of the "con artist") "of exclusion through inclusion, with the upward redistribution of power and wealth as its goal" (xxi). Neoliberalism is the direct descendant of and bears all the marks of the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment. As Charles Prusik points out in "Economics as Natural-

History: Adorno and the Critique of Neoliberalism," despite Adorno's distance from the contemporary world of neoliberalism, his work is instrumental for scholars today who critique neoliberal efforts to naturalize the free market. This is true of Merchant's work as well, for Merchant persuasively argues that modern science is largely unquestioned as being a form of "objective, value-free, and context-free knowledge of the external world" (*The Death of Nature* 290). Citing Adorno's "The Idea of Natural History," Prusik points out that instead of comprehending socio-historical processes in terms of their naturalness, Adorno shows "how specifically social, political and historical forms have been forgotten by subjects throughout the course of their naturalization" ("Economics" 167). Here, nature is akin to the concept of "myth" and refers to "what has always been, what as fatefully arranged predetermined being underlies history and appears in history; it is substance in history" (166).

Prusik also tells us that Adorno's insights invite us to reject "the scientific designation of the economy as nature" and so to reflect on "the historical content that disappears in the naturalization of economy" ("Economics" 166). Through the naturalization of the free market, individuals "come to live within an economic 'second nature,' where the ideals of competition, individualism and privatization appear normal and, therefore, unchangeable" (166). Neoliberalism is the latest form of the naturalization of the free market and should be understood not only in terms of an economic system but also in terms of "a political project that constructs the social blindness in which the economy can appear as fate" (Prusik, *Adorno* ix). Such reading is consistent with Adorno's observation that "Reason itself has become merely an aid to the all-encompassing *economic* apparatus [serving] as a universal tool for the fabrication of all other tools, rigidly purpose-directed" (Horkheimer and Adorno 23).

Similar to Prusik, Ciprian Bogdan considers Adorno's concept of naturalization of economic and political systems as one that is particularly useful for understanding neoliberalism. Referring to Adorno's *The Jargon of Authenticity*, Bogdan highlights the ways in which individual autonomy disappears as the "jargon of authenticity bombastically hails individual choices only to *mask* the powerlessness of the individual" (225). Lu's definition of neoliberalism also critically ties to these understandings of the neoliberal revolution. In the views of Lu, and Prusik and Bogdan (who both are informed by Adorno), most thinkers fail to recognize or fail to capture the true nature of neoliberalism. Indeed, neoliberalism is notoriously difficult to define because its actual objective (i.e., ever more concentration of wealth, power, and control) cannot also be the stated goal—the goal of those who promote free markets and naturalize pro-business

economic theories. Neoliberals' wiggling, disguising, adjusting, and updating of neoliberalism's key features to fit new realities keeps neoliberalism in a constant state of metamorphosis. Sometimes, for instance, neoliberal elites are champions for rolling back the government. At other times, when they stand to benefit from extravagant government aid, these elites nimbly shift their neoliberal narratives to the opposite pole. Lu's characterization of neoliberalism as the art of the con artist emphasizes the duplicitous nature of neoliberalism. Similar to the language that a dominant group of humans enlisted in the period of the Enlightenment to rationalize the exploitation of nature, the language that neoliberal economists use today rationalizes oppression of nature inclusive of animals. Such economists depict market mechanisms as affording humans the most liberty, and as being something akin to gravity; they shrewdly downplay the fact that such mechanisms are engineered by humans, enslave some and free others, and are not inescapable forces of nature.

Not everyone who supports neoliberalism is (by default, so to speak) a neoliberal. Many people would not support neoliberal agendas if they were aware of what propels those agendas. Neoliberalism also is "a complex nexus of ideas, tactics, institutions, and individuals" and so people "are implicated in at least some of the activities" of neoliberalism regardless of whether or not they want to be or know that they are so involved (Lu xxviii). Adorno critiques the dominant and oppressive institutionalized thinking of his own time as follows:

> Yet even the threatening collective is merely a part of the deceptive surface, beneath which are concealed the powers which manipulate the collective as an agent of violence. Its brutality, which keeps the individual up to the mark, no more represents the true quality of people than value represents that of commodities. The demonically distorted form which things and human beings have taken on in the clear light of unprejudiced knowledge points back to domination. (Horkheimer and Adorno 22)

Just as the tangled relationship between this "collective" and those who manipulate it cannot be reduced to a binary construct but can be recognized for what it is—namely, a relationship based on "demonically distorted" forms of knowledge—so, too, the neoliberal ties today between a dominant minority and an oppressed majority cannot be easily unraveled.

Human-Human Relations and Human-Animal Relations under Neoliberalism

Under neoliberalism, the most sanctified forms of human-human relations

and human-animal relations are those between a small number of transnational economic and political elites and a larger number of humans and animals.[3] The real picture must be more nuanced than that which is captured by the "We are the 99 percenters" slogan of the Occupy movement. Nonetheless, the "1% vs. 99%" rhetoric helps to encapsulate the most important aspect of human-human relations in the twenty-first century. Wealth and power, being inherently mutually enhancing, have become so concentrated that the "1%," or minority of individuals, now have great control over the "99%," or the majority. That same minority thus has the ability to determine, and does determine, common understandings of the world, perceptions of what is socially desirable, decisions about what kinds of behavior are normal and what sort of socio-economic reforms are feasible, and misconceptions about how much autonomy one actually has.

The extreme power- and wealth-asymmetry is precisely the intended consequences of those who spearheaded the neoliberal stealth revolution, which began in the 1950s.[4] The public does not knowledgeably endorse a socio-economic model that allows—and increasingly mandates—the enclosure and privatization of the commons (land, rivers, oceans, forests, air, and animals as well as such areas as public health care and education) by a tiny fraction of society. Large corporations and their academic and media allies undertake and resort to massive propaganda to deceive the public into accepting this neoliberal socio-economic model.[5] "We are in this together" represents the standard rhetoric used by neoliberal corporations. They claim that if "we" can stay competitive—which typically is achieved through tax cuts and tax loopholes, government subsidies to the corporations, deregulation of labor, and downgrading of environmental and animal welfare laws—then "we" can achieve higher economic growth and enjoy better lives.[6] Such rhetoric appears, for example, in a recent statement in a video recording of Ken Sullivan, the CEO of Smithfield Meat Company, delivered to workers at the Company's Sioux Falls factory in South Dakota during the COVID-19 pandemic. After emphasizing that "there's

[3] Twenty-six individuals own as much as the poorer 50% of the world population (Elliott).

[4] "Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution" is the subtitle of Wendy Brown's book, *Undoing the Demos*.

[5] As U.S. Supreme Court Judge Louis Brandeis said, "we must make our choice. We may have democracy, or we may have wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both" (Dillard 45).

[6] In the U.S., the highest tax percentage decreased from 94% in 1945 to 87-70% between the 1950s and 1970s, to 50% under Reagan, and to 28% under President George H. W. Bush (Miyoshi 738). So-called economic growth, or growth in terms of GDP has long been kept from ordinary people. A recent study by Brookings Institute shows that 65% of growth earnings in the past decade went to the very rich in the U.S. Cyprus, Germany, and Austria do better, with the very rich taking "only" 59%, 51%, and 40% of the growth respectively (Kharas).

no evidence that COVID-19 can be transmitted by food," Sullivan says:

> *We* feed millions of people every day, every single day. It's a business with no shortcuts and no days off. Most of our team members work side-by-side on production lines in our facilities. *We* can't stay home. *We* can't telecommute. Food, after all, does not get made on the internet. *We*'re here. *We*'re always here. *We*'re a food company. And despite Covid-19, indeed, because of it, *we*'re working around the clock to do what *we* do best. And that's deliver good food responsibly. ("One Meat Plant"; emphasis added)

Three weeks after the statement was issued, the Sioux Falls factory became the largest COVID-19 hotbed in the United States. More than 850 workers tested positive and two died from the virus. According to the Food and Environment Reporting Network, as of May 22, 2020 at least 220 meatpacking and food processing plants had confirmed cases of COVID-19, at least 17,360 meatpacking workers tested positive for the virus, and the number of deaths had peaked at 66.[7]

Over a hundred years ago, Upton Sinclair's novel, *The Jungle*, depicted the appalling conditions of workers in the stockyards of Chicago, Illinois, where immigrant workers were relentlessly exploited by the meat packing industry. It might seem that things are entirely different today: human rights, working conditions, equality, freedom, democracy, and prosperity seem all to have made huge forward strides in the twentieth century. Yet, today the meat industry sees an average of two amputations per week and there is a 50-50 chance of sustaining a workplace injury for anyone who stays in the industry for five years (Wasley et al.) This is due in no small part to the increase in automation in the meat industry and the decrease in the number of different kinds of tasks any one worker performs. The repetitive tasks and speed involved mean that there is greater risk of an accident for the workers. Today, up to 5,000 cows or 22,000 hogs can be processed in a single day because of this so-called efficiency, or reduction in the value of both human and nonhuman animals.[8]

During the COVID-19 pandemic, industrial meat workers were simultaneously declared as being essential and treated as being dispensable. JBS, the largest meat company in the U.S., was reluctant to share information about COVID-19 with workers or provide them with protective gear and basic hygiene items such as soap and hand sanitizer (Genoways). Even after federal authorities interfered, the company resisted testing its workers for Covid-19.

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[7] https://thefern.org/2020/04/mapping-covid-19-in-meat-and-food-processing-plants/

[8] As Adorno notes, "The countless agencies of mass production and its culture impress standardized behavior on the individual as the only natural, decent, and rational one" (Horkheimer and Adorno 21).

It did begin testing on managers but then abruptly stopped, and it never carried out full testing on front-line workers. Apparently, rates of positive cases on those who were tested were so high that the company desisted from further testing out of concerns that the findings would deter workers from coming to work (Genoways).

How to explain the unspeakable exploitation of meatpacking workers in the twenty-first century when the "backward, far off days" (Genoways) are supposedly long gone? Two World Wars and one Cold War later—wars that supposedly offered precious lessons about inequity—one cannot blame people for assuming that working conditions in advanced democratic countries have improved significantly since Sinclair's time. The truth, however, is that during this period, a minority of humans honed the skills necessary to expand and exploit power differences between themselves and others. These skills included implementing neoliberal economic policies and practices to ensure that workers were vulnerable and held a weak economic and social position. Shrinking unionization increased their vulnerability and weak position in society. Today, even where labor is unionized, workers are reluctant to "interfere in the market" (Teachout 159). They have so deeply internalized neoliberal narratives, which include the narrative that the market "is a fact of nature, not policy," that they treat the market "like weather, for good or ill" (159).

At the same time that neoliberal elites downplay the role of collective action by workers, they drum up the notion of consumer sovereignty. Ken Sullivan's pep talk, apparently designed to instigate a sense of pride in the Smithfield meat company employees, also implies that the consumer wields power. Yet, how much power, or autonomy, do consumers really have in today's neoliberal markets? To any extraterrestrial visitors, the fact that scientists on earth, when comparing different dietary habits, group diets in line with government dietary guidelines under one category and diets reflecting evidence of healthy eating—namely, consuming lower amounts of red and other meats and greater amounts of fruits, vegetables, nuts and legumes—under another category, must be perplexing (Lu 146-47; Springmann et al., 3). In the U.S., food industries treat federal dietary guidelines as extraneous information more than as critical information. It is hardly surprising, then, that since federal guidelines first began to appear (in 1980), the number of Americans who have type-2 diabetes and obesity has more than doubled and two-thirds of Americans are overweight (Kearns et al.) And, in spite of the World Health Organization's classification of beef, lamb, and pork as "carcinogenic" when this meat is eaten in processed form and "probably carcinogenic" when eaten unprocessed (Bouvard et al.), the latest U.S. Guidelines reflect pressure on the federal government by the meat

industry to strike down the Advisory Committee's recommendation—reached after reviewing thousands of studies—to cut down on the consumption of red meat. One such powerful meat industry group, the North American Meat Institute, which represents Smithfield and JBS, instead celebrates the "commonsense policy document that all Americans can use to help them to make healthy food choices" (Evich).[9]

In September 2019, the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health magazine, *The Nutrition Source*, published an article revealing and criticizing the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, a prestigious and influential academic journal, for publishing dietary guidelines that were "tantamount to promoting meat consumption." The authors of *The Nutrition Source* article found not only that the guidelines were developed by a self-appointed panel but also that the panel of fourteen members was made up of just two "nutritional scientists." The remaining panelists were listed as "methodologists." Moreover, the recommendations of the panelists contradicted the large body of evidence indicating the high health risks associated with red meat consumption. Most importantly, the *Annals of Internal Medicine* circulated a press release with a sensational title: "New guidelines: No need to reduce red or processed meat consumption for good health." Of the consumers exposed to mainstream media that ran the sensational headline, a minority would have read or otherwise accessed contrary evidence such as that published in *The Nutrition Source*. The marketing strategies that appear in *Annals of Internal Medicine* exemplify successful marketing strategies in the present century.

In both pairs of human-human relations examined here—large corporations vs. workers and large corporations vs. consumers—large corporations are by far the clear winner. They are the ones who tutor consumers about what to demand and workers about what to be proud of. This asymmetry of power in human-human relations and the deprivation of meaningful autonomy for those in the weaker positions are intended results of the neoliberal socio-economic order.

Perhaps not by accident, a farmer made his fortune in the 1950s by industrializing chicken slaughter, a type of animal slaughter that is particularly inhumane. He was more interested in increasing profits than in decreasing cruelty and played a critical role in the neoliberal stealth revolution and so in the deteriorating

[9] Meanwhile, in the first three quarters of 2015, the National Pork Producers Council spent $780,000 on lobbying; the National Cattlemen's Beef Association spent more than $112,000, and one of its main targets was the Dietary Guidelines; and the North American Meat Institute spent more than $220,000 on lobbying (Evich 2016).

conditions of workers, consumers, animals, and nature. The farmer, Antony Fisher, Eton-educated, imported battery chicken farming techniques to England after a visit to the Agriculture Department of Cornell University. Using the profits accrued by treating animals cruelly on a massive scale, Fisher went on to found the influential Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA). The IEA would be the first of more than a hundred neoliberal think-tanks of its kind across the globe. Without the massive propaganda by entities such as IEA, it is doubtful that most people would endorse a socio-economic system that concentrates power and wealth in the hands of a very few and, at the same time, increases acts of cruelty. Acting in effect as mediator between business funders and neoliberal academics (who include F. A. Hayek), think-tanks such as the IEA—which Hayek characterized as "second-hand dealers in ideas"—have succeeded in luring the public into accepting an exceedingly unjust socio-economic model (qtd. in Cockett). Former British MP Oliver Letwin once commented, "Without Fisher, no IEA; without the IEA and its clones, no Thatcher and quite possibly no Reagan . . . Quite a chain of consequences for a chicken farmer" (Atlasnetwork). [10]

Using free-market rhetoric, neoliberal scholars and their fellow "second-hand dealers in ideas" (Hayek qtd. in Cockett) mesmerize the public with dazzling so-called free choices: McDonald or KFC? Minivans or SUVs? Fur coats or leather jackets? The most crucial piece of information, i.e., the cost of these apparently free choices, involves handing over what once belonged to the commons, or what once was public, into the hands of the very few.[11] This is nowhere to be seen in neoliberal propaganda disguised under economic theories. So herding the public, from social spheres to market arenas that inherently

[10] In the early 1960s, Rachel Carson noticed the problem of corporate manipulation of academic research. Most of those who were best fitted to develop natural pest controls were busy "laboring in the more exciting vineyards of chemical control" (228). Only 2% of the economic entomologists in the United States were working in the field of biological controls in 1960. A substantial number of the other 98% were busy with research on chemical insecticides. The entire research program of the most outstanding entomologists was supported by the chemical industry. "Their professional prestige, sometimes their very jobs depend[ed] on the perpetuation of chemical methods" (Carson 228-29). The neoliberal tactic of enlisting intellectuals harkens back to a key feature of the Scientific Revolution. Merchant highlights that in these words: "The submergence of the organism by the machine engaged the best minds of the times during a period fraught with anxiety, confusion, and instability in both the intellectual and social spheres" (*The Death of Nature* 193).

[11] I use the term "the commons" in the sense that Ugo Mattei employs. The commons refers to "resources which belong to the people as a matter of necessity," and access to them is "claim-free" (8). As Mattei argues, often in the struggle "between 'the public' (the domain of the State) and 'the private' (the domain of the market and of private property)," the commons is hidden from the public, for, "as an institutional framework," it "presents an alternative . . . providing for more equitable distribution of resources and as a direct consequence, social justice" (8).

privilege those endowed with capital, the neoliberal stealth revolution has succeeded in widening the power gap between top elites and the rest of the human population. This power gap guarantees that meatpacking workers are stuck in low-paid and high risk jobs and consumers in situations where there seems to be unlimited choice but where in fact the choices are few. At the very bottom of the lowest stratum of the neoliberal socio-economic order, unsurprisingly, are sentient nonhuman beings who have absolutely zero capacity to organize, protest, and otherwise be heard. As Carl Boggs asks, "[i]f those who run the meat empires have nothing but reckless contempt for their own workers and only slightly better regard for consumers, what can be expected of their treatment of those millions of hapless creatures processed through the extermination chambers" (37)?

The practice of large-scale animal exploitation by no means began with neoliberalism. When a food surplus started to appear in many human societies resulting from the emergence of horticulture roughly ten thousand years ago, human-animal relations took a route that associated increasingly with unequal and exploitative relations between humans and other beings. The domestication of cows, pigs, goats, sheep, horses, and so forth, was part of that turn. Living animals were "integrated as objects into the socio-economic organization of the human group" (Nibert, *Oppression* 11). In other words," while living, those animals [already] are [being reduced to] objects for ownership, inheritance, exchange, trade, etc." (11). Eventually, horticultural societies in Eurasia morphed into "true agrarian" societies, or societies where the labor of cows and horses was exploited for agricultural production (12). This exploitation aided in human migration to the Eurasian steppes and gave rise to nomadic pastoralism roughly eight thousand years ago. In using horses as instruments of war, pastoralists also began brutal incursions into other parts of Europe. This first occurred approximately six thousand years ago. Waves of pastoralist invasions were crucial factors in the molding of the later "violent and expansion-prone cultures of the West" (13). A stratified patrilinear social structure was "superimposed over the egalitarian substrate of Old European agriculturalists" and the exploitation of animals became more deeply engrained in societies (13-14, 16).

By the time colonialism swept through the New World, the exploitation of humans was already profoundly entangled with the exploitation of animals. As Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel points out, "the colonial project—encompassing diverse rationalities of elimination, exploitation, and assimilation—cannot be easily disentangled from . . . prevailing relationships with animals" (xvii). Colonialism is a "radical remaking of non-human animals and 'nature'" as well as of humans (xvii). Speciesism, then, must be understood

within the context of "the historic and ongoing elimination of indigenous peoples and the theft of indigenous lands for settler-colonial expansion, including animal agriculture" (Belcourt 21). Short of such understanding, any discussions of human-animal relations will be incomplete, or will be anthropocentric discussions of epistemic violence and colonial erasure (Kim 83).

Wadiwell's arguments resonate with David Nibert's research on the deep connections between colonialism and "domesecration," which refers to the combination of "domestication" and "desecration" and so to "the systemic practice of violence in which social animals are enslaved and biologically manipulated," a practice that results in "their objectification, subordination, and oppression" (*Oppression* 12). "Through domesecration, many species of animals that lived on the earth for millions of years, including several species of large, sociable Eurasian mammals, came to be regarded as mere objects, their very existence recognized only in relation to their exploitation as 'food animals' or similar socially constructed positions reflecting various forms of exploitation" (12). The historic trajectory of domesecration largely follows the expansion of colonialism. The conquering of the Americas by Europeans was made possible by the oppression of horses, cows, and pigs. The enslavement of indigenous people further helped settlers expand their domesecration enterprise. This racheting—namely, the facilitation of human oppression by animal oppression that leads in turn to more human oppression—is a key causal factor of triumphant colonial expansion.

Being a continuation of colonialism, neoliberalism keeps the extractive and exploitative essence of colonialism intact. It also refines colonialism and its narratives, and modernizes colonialist practices to fit decolonizing contexts.[12] As the kinds of power upon which colonialist regimes rely on become unacceptable and so outdated—kinds of power that include military might—new forms of power emerge. These include the forms that transnational corporations wield. Transnational corporations, the new emperors, emerged in the 1960s, and they

[12] In many important aspects, colonial laws are strikingly similar to contemporary laws under the neoliberal order. Colonial governments, for instance, were ordered to "assist private enterprise by opening new avenues of trade and maintaining law and order; 'their job was to hold the ring for private enterprise . . . but on no account . . . to enter the arena'" (Stammer 194). In the 1930s, the governor of an African colony answered demands for additional public works by saying, "it is the duty of every African government, not to provide work for the workless, but so to govern that private enterprise is encouraged to do so: that trade is allowed to grow without hindrance; that business houses are given every facility and encouraged to start new productive works" (qtd. in Stammer 194). Neoliberalism today reflects many of the weaknesses of colonialism in the past: "Of course there were 'regrettable necessities' such as health and education, which involved additional expenditure from time to time" (Stammer 194).

gave colonialism a new impetus, and a friendly image as well as a deceivingly innocuous name, i.e., globalization. In 1969, in an article titled "The Giants' Causeway," published in *The Economist*, the author(s) state that "More and more economic power [is falling into] the hands of a relatively small number of giant and truly international business corporations." The output of overseas subsidiaries of American corporations was estimated at around $120 billion a year in 1966 and $140 billion a year in 1969. These numbers were "bigger than the gross national product of any [other] free world country" and so big that "the third largest producing unit in the world, after the US and USSR" consisted of "American subsidiaries abroad" ("The Giants' Causeway").[13] Two decades later, Masao Miyoshi observed that colonialism was even more active now in the form of transnational corporatism.

In the time of colonial expansion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, bourgeois leaders hid their class interests and constructed the myth of the nation-state in order to persuade their foot soldiers about the profitability as well as the nobility of their mission. When corporations became transnational and so no longer were tied to their nations of origin but rather were "adrift and mobile, ready to settle anywhere and exploit any state including [their] own," they could more easily evade accountability and responsibility while also misrepresenting to the public that their activities were for the common good. Representing "neither their home countries nor their host nations but simply their own corporate selves," transnational companies continued colonialism in new guises. The old colonialists "enriched the rich and powerful of the home country and the compradors at the expense of the populace at large." The new colonialists mostly enrich themselves. In addition, they flaunted the "trickle-down theory." This enjoyed great popularity in particular in the 1980s. In fact, it hid "an unadulterated con game" (Miyoshi 728; 732-33; 736; 739; 749). Rather than a rupture of colonialism, and still less a reversal of it, neoliberalism doubles down on what it is good at, and outperforms colonialism. If neoliberalism is not the initial cause of many injustices, then it accelerates and reinforces them. These injustices include "the relentless assault on nonhuman nature" (Boggs 34). "[E]cological crisis, militarism, resource wars, global poverty, and political repression" are deeply tied to neoliberalism and to what Boggs calls the "corporate-imperial order" (34). The damage it has caused is on track for being called the worst crime the world has ever known in human history (Chomsky).

[13] In 2020, two companies alone (Tesla and Amazon) saw their net worth increase by $200 billion—a sum greater than the GDP of 139 countries combined ("While a Majority").

Meatification

"Meatification," a term Tony Weis coined to denote "the shift of meat from the periphery to the center of human food consumption patterns" and so to signal the importance of meat consumption "in relation to global inequity," is a classic example of neoliberalism's astounding maneuverings ("Meatification"). In 1961, "just over three billion people ate an average of 23 kg of meat and 5 kg of eggs a year" (Weis, *Ecological* 1). By 2011, "7 billion people ate 43 kg of meat and 10 kg of eggs a year . . . In a mere half-century, from 1961 to 2010, the global population of slaughtered animals leapt from roughly 8 to 64 billion, which will double again to 120 billion by 2050 if current rates of growth continue" (1-2). As the system increasingly rewards giant companies rich in capital, small producers who have little alternative but to supply the monopolies become hostages to those monopolies and the system that serves them. Meat cartels render lives of small family farmers hellish.[14] The relationship between so-called Big Meat entities and small farmers is summarized by a member of Farm Aid, an organization representing small family farms: "We can't overstate the level of fear and intimidation felt by poultry growers who contact us . . . . If they choose to speak up, they risk everything—their contract, their land, their homes" (Shanker). Few animals that humans eat today have lived decent lives and died relatively painless natural deaths. Most of the workers who are directly involved in the killing of these animals also are sacrificed in the Big Meat order of things.

Neoliberal elites tout the so-called free market and freedom to choose, consumer sovereignty, and so-called fair competition. In reality, the concentration of wealth and power reflects that they manipulate and control markets, competition, choice, and consumer sovereignty. These elites also downplay the costs of what they champion. Paul McCartney famously said, "if slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be a vegetarian" (qtd. in PETA). The exploitation of animals is rife in the meat industry. It uses its abundant power and money to make every effort to ensure that the public knows little about its practices. With a lobbying power that consumer groups and animal activists have zero chance of rivalling, the meat industry is doing its utmost to make sure its slaughterhouses will never have glass walls. Moreover, recent gag laws, so-called Ag-gag laws, are designed to criminalize activists who photograph or film animal cruelty in factory farms. The laws make it extremely difficult to report

[14] Today, four companies—JBS, Tyson, Cargill, and National Beef—process 85% of cattle in the US (Shaxson 295).

on these farms. In May 2018, animal rights activists were charged with felonies by a Utah prosecutor and faced up to ten years in prison. During an undercover investigation, the animal activists found tens of thousands of turkeys "crammed inside filthy industrial barns, virtually on top of one another" (Greenwald, "Six Animal Rights"). The birds were suffering from "diseases, infections, open wounds, and injuries sustained by pecking and trampling one another" ("Six Animal Rights"). They were "barely able to stand, or were lying in their own waste, close to death" ("Six Animal Rights"). Many "looked dead but were still breathing" ("Six Animal Rights"). The turkey farm under the undercover investigation is a supplier to a company that advertises that it sells mountain-grown turkeys treated humanely ("Six Animal Rights").

Meat industry lobbyists have long tried to mislead the public about animal rights undercover videos. Even when those videos show shocking cruelty, the lobbyists defend the cruelty by saying that it "may seem troubling to someone unfamiliar with farming" (Oppel). One such lobbyist compared the animal slaughter to "seeing open-heart surgery [on a human being] for the first time" (qtd. in Oppel). He argued that no-one viewing such surgeries would consider them to be "abhorrent" (qtd. in Oppel). This is a false analogy. Open-heart surgery on a human being is undertaken to preserve and enhance not shorten or impoverish the life of this being.

During the COVID-19 lockdown

One might have thought it was "a perfect procedure" (Oppel) under the neoliberal order to "depopulate" thousands of pigs in a pork facility in the state of Iowa in the U.S. during the COVID-19 crisis (Greenwald, "Hidden Video"). Using the cruel and excruciating method of "ventilation shutdown," or VSD, pork facility workers exterminated the pigs by "sealing off all airways to their barns and inserting steam into [the barns], intensifying the heat and humidity inside and leaving [the animals] to die overnight" (Greenwald, "Hidden Video"). Most pigs died "after hours of suffering from a combination of being suffocated and roasted to death" (Greenwald, "Hidden Video"). Those who showed any lingering signs of life in the morning were killed with bolt guns (Greenwald, "Hidden Video"). As industrialized factory farming spreads to other regions of the world, human-animal relations further deteriorate.[15] The ever lengthening

[15] For a detailed documentation of industrial animal agriculture in Brazil, China, Ethiopia, India, and Southeast Asia, see this website: https://brightergreen.org/globalization/.

supply chains and routine outsourcing of meat production are part of that, and they reflect that it is easier than ever for the people at the top of the meat industry, the key drivers of it, to avoid accountability.[16] Industrial animal farmers also engage in rampant logging to make way for grazing land for livestock or and for land for growing the crops used in livestock feed (FAO, *Livestock*).

As Boggs points out, "[s]o long as living creatures with physiological makeup very close to our own are reduced to resource-objects for human appropriation, virtually anything is possible" (34). Cary Wolfe makes the same point:

> as long as it is institutionally taken for granted that it is all right to systematically exploit and kill nonhuman animals simply because of their species, then the humanist discourse of species will always be available for use by some humans against other humans as well, to countenance violence against the social other of *whatever* species—or gender, or race, or class, or sexual difference. (8)

These arguments are backed by research by scientists. For example, psychologists have found a strong correlation between individuals who believe in a clear division between humans and other animals and individuals who are prejudiced against other humans.[17] Such findings echo Adorno's comment that "Auschwitz begins whenever someone looks at a slaughterhouse and thinks: they're only animals" (qtd. in Hodson and Costello 34).[18] How we treat animals not only says a lot about us as a species, it also "directly affects how we treat each other" (Hodson and Costello 35).

In colonial discourse, "[t]he representation of a resemblance between native and animal was a common trope . . . forcefully asserting the supposed gulf between colonizer and colonized and opening a range of violent and repressive possibilities for colonial rulers as racial others are emptied of their human status" (Miller 2). Neoliberal discourse actively endorses a great divide between human animals and other animals. In the neoliberal world, upper class human populations are the most privileged humans, the middle classes follow in this pecking

[16] The classic neoliberal tactic of trapping poor countries in crippling debt is in part to blame for the millions of children who have died of malnutrition. The land that could have been used to grow food for humans is owned by large companies based in the West investing in cash crops such as animal feed (FAO, *2020 Global Report*).

[17] Research also reflects that white children who believe most strongly in the superiority of humans over animals engage more than do other white children in the dehumanization of black children (Hodson and Costello 35).

[18] A more accurate translation might be: "The constantly encountered assertion that savages, blacks, Japanese are like animals, monkeys for example, is the key to the pogrom. The possibility of the pogroms is decided in the moment when the gaze of a fatally-wounded animal falls on a human being. The defiance with which he repels this gaze—'after all, it's only an animal'—reappears irresistibly in cruelties done to human beings, the perpetrators having again and again to reassure themselves that it is 'only an animal'" (Miller 13-14).

order, and the working classes follow. Most nonhuman animal populations don't count for much at all.[19] As Miyoshi notes in his description of colonialism, "the myth of mission civilisatrice (that is, the voyagers' racial superiority over the heathen barbarians) seems complementary [to the myth of the nation-state] and indispensable" (732). Neoliberalism is analogous in the sense that it enables and fuels concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few human beings by overlooking, downplaying, or insufficiently engaging in, in particular, the moral vacuums associated with the appropriation and subjugation of nonhuman beings.

Generally speaking, neoliberal institutions in effect both nurture and take for granted the prejudice of speciesism, which is analogous in many ways to racism. In the instance of racism, spokespersons for a dominant racial or ethnic group foster through the mass media "feelings of racial superiority, racial distance, and a claim to certain rights and privileges," and the other members of the dominant group, although they may have "different views," fall into line fearing ingroup ostracism" (Zanden 81). As James W. Vander Zanden hypothesizes, the dominant racial or ethnic group has "a vested interest in another group's subordination" and the prejudices that it supports and generates against the other group are "an instrument for defending" its great privileges and advantages (81). W. E. B. DuBois, who saw racism and colonialism as the twin pillars of capitalist society, argued that one cannot "effectively challenge racism while remaining a supporter of capitalism" (qtd. in Nibert, *Rights* 16).[20] Analogously, one cannot challenge speciesism and continue to support capitalism, or at least the most dominant forms of capitalism, which are forms of unchecked and unregulated profiteering. Susan Finsen makes this point when she rhetorically asks, "Is corporate capitalism compatible with animal rights" (ii)? In the same way that planting and nourishing racial prejudice serves dominant ethnic classes, sowing and cultivating speciesism—namely, prejudice towards nonhuman animals—and treating it as being something that is normal and natural, serves dominant, neoliberal, classes.

[19] As Nibert puts it, "[o]ppression has to be rationalized and justified. It relies heavily on hierarchical views in which certain groups are believed to be undeserving of consideration and fair treatment, promoting a ranking based on purported virtue or worth" (*Rights* 5). Similarly, Anna Grear concludes that "any ethically responsible future engagement with 'anthropocentrism' and/or with the 'Anthropocene' must explicitly engage with the oppressive hierarchical structure of the *anthropos* itself" (225).

[20] Nibert cites W. E. B. DuBois (230; 234) and Manning Marable (11-18).

Autonomy

Under neoliberalism, most of us are less capable than we think we are of making autonomous decisions. Neoliberal elites venally use academics, think tanks, and mainstream as well as social media to strip many of us of the ability to choose, and particularly so when it comes to making decisions about the environment and climate change.[21] Climate change denialism is jeopardizing entire planetary ecosystems. Supported by neoliberal mechanisms, climate change deniers make false and disingenuous claims about the environment. For example, in 2008, in a speech titled "Endangering the Polar Bear: How Environmentalists Kill," contrarian scientist Wei-Hock (Willie) Soon stated that "too much ice" was "really bad for polar bears" (qtd. in Shankman). He later admitted that the talk was a "deliverable" in return for a research grant from a large coal company (Gillis and Schwarz). In a recent article, "Why is YouTube Broadcasting Climate Disinformation to Millions?," AVAAZ reported on a monetarized algorithm that climate change deniers also use meretriciously. Monetarized algorithms are algorithms that companies use to help increase their visibility and popularity and to market their products. Climate change deniers use them to draw people to their (internet) sites. These sites undermine the scientific evidence for climate change. They carry such claims as "There is no evidence that CO2 emissions are the dominant factor [in climate change]" (qtd. in AVAAZ). [22] As Naomi Oreskes writes about in a now famous article published in *Science*, "Beyond the Ivory Tower: The Scientific Consensus on Climate Change," it took the decadence of only a handful of academics to secure the public impression, one aided by the powerful fossil fuel industry, that climate change was a hoax perpetrated by radical leftists.

As record-breaking rainfalls, once-in-a-lifetime storms, droughts, devastating bush fires, and viral pandemics are becoming more intense and more frequent, more people are recognizing that the key figures behind climate change denial are wealth- and power-driven propagandists (Orjollet). Many of these figures, who have a lot of sway and are used to getting what they want, support or are key stakeholders in the meat industry. As they exploit cows and other animals, rivers and lakes are shrinking and disappearing (Corkery; Farah). Others key figures are major banks (for example, the World Bank, the European Bank for

[21] On how the mass media operates and affects consumers, see Herman and Chomsky; on climate change denialism, see Oreskes and Conway.

[22] To date, the climate change denial video, "Richard Lindzen in Climate Change: What Do Scientists Say?," has received 1.9 million views.

Reconstruction and Development, and the UK's Development Finance Institution). They spend billions of taxpayer money in subsidizing big agribusinesses, such as Smithfield, even as the devastating environmental consequences of these businesses are becoming increasingly apparent (Wasley and Heal). Despite growing public awareness of the links between climate change and agribusiness, agribusiness is barely slowing. It spends millions of dollars on disseminating dubious information about the benefits that agribusiness brings to the public. Alternative information is less visible, not as prolific, and requires more time to read and digest, and it is far more accurate. Just a minute fraction of this dissenting voice include such publications as *Good Natured: The Origins of Right and Wrong in Humans and Other Animals* (de Waal); *Pleasurable Kingdom: Animals and the Nature of Feeling Good* (Balcombe); *The Emotional Lives of Animals: A Leading Scientist Explores Animal Joy, Sorrow, and Empathy* (Bekoff); *Second Nature: The Inner Lives of Animals* (Balcombe); *Beyond Words: What Animals Think and Feel* (Safina); *The Soul of an Octopus: A Surprising Exploration into the Wonder of Consciousness* (Montgomery); *What A Fish Knows* (Balcombe); *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?* (de Waal); and *Mama's Last Hug: Animal Emotions and What They Tell Us About Ourselves* (de Waal). Unlike Willie Soon and other handsomely paid individuals who trade in spurious facts, the authors of these truth-seeking and truth-revealing books have no big corporate backers, or megaphones that bombard the public with misleading information. Their voices often are drowned out by corporate-sponsored information, which makes the exploitation of animals and the environment appear to be moral and natural instead of what it is, shockingly inhumane behavior and a key cause of climate change.

Oppression of both human and nonhuman animals will continue without the questioning of neoliberalism. Similar to older, related or analogous forms of power, those that Adorno and Merchant critique in their arguments about the tripartite structure of the most common forms of human-nature relations in the period of modernity, neoliberalism in the present century concentrates power and wealth in the hands of a few humans and manipulates and controls many humans and most of nature. Adorno argued that "nature [is] misunderstood by masterful science" and that the "bourgeois economy," by "multiplying violence through the mediation of the market," intensifies and accelerates "its things and its forces to the point where not merely kings or even the bourgeoisie are sufficient to administrate them: all human beings are needed" (Horkheimer and Adorno 33). It is critical for us to create alternative, more sustainable ways of living with the world. In the twentieth century, Merchant characterized these as a "lesson" to be learned "in the twenty-first century." They support

environmental autonomy as well as human autonomy and thus are about "how humanity can live within an autonomous earthly nature" (*The Death of Nature* 165).

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21世紀“人”與動物的關係

摘要

以2020年的現況來看，地球上人與動物的關係僅能以「駭人」來形容。無論是直接淪爲人類的消費品，或是間接因人類行爲而失去棲地，動物所遭受的來自人類的磨難有增無減。儘管如此，人類依舊透過各式各樣的攫取、剝削、掠奪、生產、消費，以高高在上萬物之靈之姿，揮鞭宰制著地球萬物。然而「人與動物的關係」這樣的框架方式將所有人類歸於同一類別，忽略了社會對動物共同態度的形塑並非不受不同群體等量的影響，而是只有部份群體角色重大，需爲殘破的地球生態負絕大多數責任。本文參考阿多諾（Theodor Adorno）以及麥茜特（Carolyn Merchant）在分析人與自然之關係時所採用的人-不同階級人-自然三元觀點來理解21世紀的“人”與動物關係。21世紀全球多數國家公共政策的共同特徵可謂是「新自由主義」(neoliberalism)。本文參照普魯斯克（Prusik）借用阿多諾（Adorno）之自然史觀點來理解新自由主義之途徑，拆解新自由主義下不同人類群體彼此之間及其與動物間的關係，勾勒出現今世界階級性、剝削性的“人”與動物關係。

關鍵字： 阿多諾、麥茜特、普魯斯克、資本主義、工業肉類生產、敘述、新自由主義、科學