

**AN ECOFEMINIST CRITIQUE OF IN/HUMANE BIOPOWER: BAD FAITH,
SPECIESISM AND CARNISM IN “HAPPY MEAT” MARKETING**

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AN ECOFEMINIST CRITIQUE OF IN/HUMANE BIOPOWER: BAD FAITH, SPECIESISM AND CARNISM IN “HAPPY MEAT” MARKETING

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Abstract

This thesis uses an interdisciplinary Critical Animal Studies and Foucauldian Studies framework to argue that “humane” animal agribusiness is firmly implicated in the animal-industrial complex and thus poses major ethical, ecological and social justice issues. I use the term in/humane biopower to refer to the discursive power mechanisms used by the meat and dairy industries to control and manipulate public opinion surrounding the “question of the animal” (Derrida 12) as well as questions of ecological sustainability. An intersectional ecofeminist framework, which posits that nonhuman animals have subjectivity and therefore should be given moral and ethical consideration, is used to critique advertisements of “happy meat” as that which reify what Carol J. Adams has called the *absent referent*, which replaces the animal subject with the object of “meat”. The function of the absent referent is to allow for the moral abandonment of a being while also emptying violence from the language (Adams 41-42). I argue that the ubiquitous symbol of “happy meat” in carnist advertising and marketing is problematic in that it normalizes meat consumption by interpellating the individual as a consumer, not of violence or suffering, but of compassionate products. As my research shows, welfare discourses and regulations that aim to “improve” the lives of farmed animals justify new forms of violence against animals and do not signal the end of animal suffering. Furthermore, I observe that in/humane biopower reflects neoliberal forms of governance and citizenship where individual consumerism is seen as the answer to animal rights and ecological sustainability, rather than the radical political action I argue is necessary to rethink the centeredness of the human in the Anthropocene. I therefore conclude that ecofeminism and Critical Animal Studies alongside a Foucauldian critique of modern power provides fundamentally important lines of moral reasoning and questioning that can lead to truly sustainable and ethical outcomes for ourselves and for those beings with whom we share this planet.

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1 Introduction

Enlightenment philosopher René Descartes notoriously maintained that nonhuman animals were mere automata and that they could not feel pain, pleasure, or suffering in the way that humans could. According to Descartes, if you struck an animal, it would cry out only in the same manner as a clock would chime, as a result of the workings of similar internal mechanisms (Spiegel 24). Animals were therefore excluded from Descartes's philosophical proposition *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am), where subjectivity and being are granted only to humans on the basis that they can "think." Enlightenment knowledges therefore perpetuated fundamental divides between what is known as the "human" and the "animal," wherein violence against animals was justified. Indeed, Claire Jean Kim points out that race, species, gender and other forms of difference are constructed through the articulation of a core set of dualisms—master/slave, male/female, human/animal, white/black, reason/nature, culture/nature, civilized/savage, mind/body, subject/object, and so forth—which undergrid Western thought and culture (Jean Kim 312-313). Power works through these dualisms to create numerous, interrelated hierarchies of worth (313). The Cartesian perspective of animality as beneath the human has contributed historically towards the reification of mechanisms of power, and has justified the oppression of certain "animalized" minority human groups. For instance, African people were constituted as savage, irrational and less-than-human "chattel" (property) during the transatlantic slave trade, while Jewish people were constituted as "pests" and "vermin" during the Holocaust. However, as Marjorie Spiegel's text *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery* indicates, this comparison does not aim to conflate human and nonhuman experiences, nor racism and speciesism, but rather underlines the idea that power constructs one group of beings, whether they are human or nonhuman, as objects and the other as "superior"

subjects (Spiegel 1996). Indeed, the justification of violence against animals because they are “lesser” has led to the normalization of cruel institutions such as animal experimentation, animal agribusiness, leather/fur clothing industries, animal entertainment industries (zoos and aquariums), among others.

This thesis focuses on contemporary food movements, regulations, certification programs and marketing campaigns that are all unified around the pretense that so-called “happy meat” and “humane” animal farms are the answers to the issues of ecological devastation, animal suffering, and human health that have been engendered by industrial factory farming. To the contrary, I argue that the term “humane” has become a marketing symbol that is a function of what I call “in/humane biopower,” which is the power to control and manipulate public discourse surrounding the “question of the animal” (Derrida 12) as well as questions of ecological sustainability. In/humane biopower furthers the interests of speciesist (discrimination based on species membership) meat and dairy industries that, now given a new face, may continue to seamlessly profit from the objectification of animal subjects. Fig. 1.1, for instance, shows an advertisement at Whole Foods, an industry leader in so-called “alterative” and “humane” animal products.



Fig. 1.1 A Hearty Helping of Animal Compassion With Every Order; “Why Target Whole Foods”; *Direct Action Everywhere*; [directactioneverywhere.com](http://www.directactioneverywhere.com), <http://www.directactioneverywhere.com/theliberationist/2014/12/2/why-whole-foods>

In this store display, the messages “a hearty helping of animal compassion with every order” and “natural and organic poultry” function to assuage the consumer’s guilt so that they can retain their privilege as an Enlightenment *human* subject without feeling as if they’re exploiting animals. Indeed, as Critical Animal Studies scholar John Sanbonmatsu states, “just as Fordism interpellated a new form of mass consuming subjects, post-Fordism is “hailing” a new, post-animal rights consumer to preserve the overall regime of animal capital” (Sanbonmatsu 23). The individual, assuaged of guilt, acts in *bad faith*—they see themselves as not what they are, a consumer of exploited, vulnerable and slaughtered animals for pleasure, but for what they are not, a *compassionate*, empathetic and sustainable individual. In/humane biopower thus works within neoliberal forms of governance, where real political issues such as animal rights/liberation and climate change are easily bypassed by acts of consumption. This by-passing, in turn, secures the animal capital status quo.

Rather than providing a wider mapping of the “humane” market and its history, I focus on a few specific examples of how “humane” regulations and marketing function ideologically to commodify living beings in the name of ethical concern. Moreover, I examine how “compassionate” regulations and advertising interpellate individuals into consumer subjects in order to secure the ideology of carnism. While I do not directly engage with Marxist theory, Louis Althusser’s concept of interpellation is highly relevant to my analysis. Althusser suggests that ideology “acts” in such a way that it “recruits” subjects among the individuals, or “transforms” the individuals into subjects by that very precise operation which he has called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: “Hey, you there” (Althusser 456). This thesis uses Whole

Foods and its relationship to niche market demographics as a key example of interpellation through “humane” regulation and marketing.

Through interpellation, Whole Foods produces and reproduces what they have called their four customer groups: *conscionables*, *organics*, *foodies* and *experientials*. In an annual report, Whole Foods states that “unlike shoppers at conventional grocery stores, we believe many of our customers connect with us on a deeper level because of our shared values and, for this reason, continue to shop with us even in uncertain economic times” (Whole Foods Market 4). Based Whole Foods’s research, they believe their customers can be segmented into four broad categories:

Conscionables embody the Core Values of Whole Foods Market; they support social and environmental initiatives and are frequent shoppers who spend the largest proportion of their monthly grocery bill with us. *Organics* buy organically grown food as a way to maintain their personal health and for food safety reasons. *Foodies* equate food with love and are frequent shoppers who shop our stores for selection, value and convenience, and *Experientials* are driven to Whole Foods Market for unique products and special occasion items. (4)

When I speak of the interpellated consumer in this thesis, then, I reference these four broad categories. While I concentrate on animal welfare, it must be noted that ecological sustainability and human health are two additional key areas of “concern” for these consumers. This niche market views “humane” animal products as superior or unique and purchases products based on the following market claims or categories: organic production; grass-fed; pasture-raised; raised without antibiotics or added hormones; cage-free; free-range; heritage breed; and humane husbandry practices (Curtis et al. 3). Niche meats, as discussed in this context, also include the

increasingly popular claim, “local” (3). In the United States, meat labelled and sold as “humane” is regulated by independent third party certification programs. These programs have the power to produce their own standards and regulations and, as such, animal “welfare” varies significantly between each program. Examples of these certification programs include American Humane Certified, Certified Humane, Animal Welfare Approved, American Grassfed Association, and Global Animal Partnership (GAP). In the second chapter, I analyze GAP and argue that their “welfare” standards are not in place to protect animals because these standards actually contribute significantly to animal suffering. Rather, GAP uses in/humane biopower as a tool to legitimize animal husbandry and to allow for the violent exploitation of animals to continue without public backlash.

To understand how in/humane biopower functions as a means of control, it is important to note that it depends upon, firstly, essentialist and anthropocentric cultural logics that define animals as “dumb” and merely “instinctual.”¹ This logic has been sustained over centuries especially in science and philosophy, where philosophers of mind, for instance, have developed their theories anthropocentrically and have applied those theories only secondarily to questions about animal interiority (Bekoff x). Cognitive ethologist Marc Bekoff argues that the belief of humans and animals as inherently separate has led to a limited understanding of the nature and the evolution of mind (x). Indeed, as Dawne McCance points out, modern Western philosophy since the seventeenth century has turned animals into “stone,” that is, into inert objects, useful and disposable things (McCance 2). The essentialist notion of the animal as a “dumb” and

¹ I want to make it clear at the outset that this thesis challenges the ways in which *Western* culture has constructed, exploited and consumed animals. As such, I do not universalize Western philosophical ideas or capitalist industrial practices. I acknowledge that Western knowledges of the animal and non-dominant traditional/Indigenous knowledges significantly differ, and must not be conflated.

“useful” object poses myriad moral, ethical and intellectual issues and thus must be deconstructed if one is to further the project of social justice for *all* sentient beings.

A critique of anthropocentrism is key to questioning the centrality of in/humane biopower in meat marketing and its power to interpellate individuals as consumers of compassion. Jacques Derrida states that “*Animal* is a word that men have given themselves the right to give. . . . [humans] have given themselves the word in order to corral a large number of living beings within a single concept: ‘The Animal’” (Derrida 32). In opposition to the reductionist concept of “The Animal” as that which is unfeeling and “dumb,” exhaustive scientific research supports the claim that animals are conscious in the ways that matter ethically (Bekoff and Allen 300), that they are emotionally complex, intelligent, and aware of what is being done to them.² Indeed, in the 2012 Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness, a prominent group of neuroscientists declare that “nonhuman animals, including all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses, possess the neuroanatomical, neurochemical and neurophysiological substrates of conscious states along with the capacity to exhibit intentional behaviors” (The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness 2). The purpose of this thesis is primarily to take ethical responsibility for the scientific evidence that shows animals are sentient, conscious and emotionally dynamic beings—by dismantling anthropocentrism, we can begin to view animals as beings that are subject to domination, exploitation and objectification in profoundly violent ways that call for philosophical, ethical and political intervention. While “humane” rhetoric claims to take animal emotion and interiority into account when producing “welfare” standards, I argue

² The field of cognitive ethology is one example of scientific research that challenges traditional Western notions of the animal. For a comprehensive introduction to this field, see Colin Allen and Mark Bekoff’s essay “Animal Minds, Cognitive Ethology, and Ethics.” For research on the complexity of animal emotions, see Marc Bekoff’s essay “Animal Emotions: Exploring Passionate Natures.”

that this claim serves merely an ideological purpose and that, in practice, “humane” animal agribusiness violently disavows animal sentience, emotion and complexity and perpetuates the anthropocentric idea that animals do not matter ethically.

In “Animals, Immigrants and Profits: Slaughterhouses and the Political Economy of Oppression,” David Nibert states unequivocally that industrial slaughterhouses are “the most nightmarish manifestation of the capitalist system” where one commodity—the labour of devalued immigrants, minorities and women—is used to “kill and convert other animals into other commodities that are foisted on the public as food” (Nibert 14). Indeed, the slaughterhouse is one part of what Barbara Noske has termed the *animal-industrial complex*, which is an interlinked structure comprised of government, scientific institutions, and various corporate interests in the fields of agriculture, biotechnology, entertainment, medicine, pet industries pharmaceuticals, retail food industries, vivisection, the wildlife trade, and other businesses based on the exploitation of animals (qtd. in Sorenson xiii). Within the animal-industrial complex, both human and animal bodies find themselves enmeshed in exploitative capitalist systems of power where the minority individual’s “devalued labour” is commodified, while the animal subject is absolutely objectivized, dominated and commodified.

Nibert observes that the emergence of industrial animal agribusiness in the Americas was linked to the project of colonialism and, thus, capital accumulation in Europe: “the wealth accumulated through this entangled oppression” of “farmed” animals, Indigenous peoples and their land “played a pivotal role in the emergence of capitalism in Europe” (Nibert 4). Furthermore, in its ties to colonialism, animal agriculture and, thus, animal oppression, can be seen to be tethered to the erasure and genocide of Indigenous peoples including the theft of their lands for the purposes of capital accumulation. Indigenous scholar, Billy-Ray Belcourt has

argued that we “cannot address animal oppression or talk about animal liberation without naming and subsequently dismantling settler colonialism and white supremacy as political machinations that require the simultaneous exploitation and/or erasure of animal and Indigenous bodies” (2). While the scope of this thesis is not an analysis of the links between animal and Indigenous oppression, I certainly agree with Belcourt’s stipulation that animal activists have a responsibility for decolonization.³

Continuing with his argument that capitalism has profoundly worsened the linked oppression of devalued humans and other animals, Nibert offers evidence that plans to increase meat consumption in the United States were pursued during the Great Depression (8). During this time, reducing costs and increasing productivity meant that pigs, chickens, turkeys, “dairy cows” and other farmed animals were increasingly confined in highly intensive, artificial and sterile enclosures called confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) (9). In today’s global meat industry alone, agribusiness has sped up considerably and resulted in 56 billion land-based animals being killed each year, along with uncounted numbers of water-dwelling animals (Sorenson xi). Adding to the increasing numbers of animals raised for slaughter, is the rise not only in animal suffering but also in ecological devastation.⁴ The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations identified livestock production as “one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems at every scale,

³ For writings on the links between human and animal oppression, see Billy-Ray Belcourt’s essay “Animal Bodies, Colonial Subjects: (Re)Locating Animality in Decolonial Thought,” Claire Jean Kim’s essay “Moral Extensionism or Racist Exploitation? The Use of Holocaust and Slavery Analogies in the Animal Liberation Movement” and Marjorie Spiegel’s *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery*.

⁴ See Kip Andersen and Keegan Kuhn’s documentary film “Cowspiracy” and the United Nations report released by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) *Livestock’s Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options*.

from local to global” (FAO xxvi). As John Sanbonmatsu remarks, “animal agriculture destroys local habitats, pollutes water supplies, degrades the soil, leads to the razing of whole rainforests, and introduces virulent pathogens to the human population (Sanbonmatsu 29). Furthermore, as the second biggest source of global greenhouse gas emissions, animal agriculture is one of the chief factors in the destabilization of our planet’s atmosphere (29). Considering these far-reaching consequences of the animal-industrial complex on animal suffering, exploitation of human minority groups and climate change, it is important to ask why animal agribusiness remains a non-issue to the majority of human beings.

Responding to this question requires that we consider two variables: *carnism* and its relation to *speciesism*. Psychologist Melanie Joy defines *carnism* as the belief system in which eating certain animals is considered ethical and appropriate (Joy 30). Joy contends that in industrialized countries, carnism is an ideology seen as “normal, natural and necessary.” Joy aptly remarks that the “three Ns of justification” have been invoked to justify all exploitative systems, from African slavery to the Nazi Holocaust; indeed, when an ideology is in its prime, these myths rarely come under scrutiny” (96). Thus, part of the answer as to why more social justice movements aren’t geared towards animal liberation and the dismantlement of oppressive animal industries has to do with the invisible ideology of *carnism*, which renders all the evils of animal agribusiness somehow justified.

The other part of the ideological equation is in *speciesism*, a term coined by Richard Ryder that is defined as discrimination based on species membership. In his essay “The Animal of Bad Faith: Speciesism as an Existential Project,” John Sanbonmatsu argues that speciesism is not merely a reflection of our own intraspecies social conflicts and hierarchies, but an expression of an extraspecies *animus* and will to power in its own right (Sanbonmatsu 30). Sanbonmatsu

argues that speciesism is exemplary of Jean-Paul Sartre's notion of bad faith; to Sartre, bad faith is a "peculiar kind of lie, because it is a lie told to oneself; we engage in bad faith when we either hide some 'displeasing truth' from ourselves, or, alternately, embrace some 'pleasing untruth' because we prefer it to a truth we fear" (32-33). Thus, when confronted with the *displeasing* facts of animal agribusiness, the speciesist may act in bad faith and hide the truth from him or herself by disavowing his or her participation in a system of violence and brutality (33), which is carnism. Given the power that carnism and speciesism hold in Western societies, I argue that an interdisciplinary framework of Foucauldian Studies and Critical Animal Studies is highly germane to deconstructing the newest and most pervasive iteration of both carnism and speciesism: that of "humane" animal agribusiness.

Today, "humane" animal agribusiness, or "happy meat," is marketed as a new sustainable economy that ostensibly goes beyond mechanistic conceptions of nature and is promoted as the ethical and "cruelty-free" alternative to industrial animal agribusiness. Indeed, even the World Society for the Protection of Animals has made the unsubstantiated claim that for livestock production to be sustainable, it must be "biologically based, socially just and *humane*. . . . Animal welfare must be included in all future discussions on agriculture and climate change" (Appleby 4-5). Welfare discourse thus claims the "humane" economy to be "animal-centered," "biological," and "natural." For instance, the guidelines in *Improving Farm Animal Welfare: Science and Society Working Together: The Welfare Quality Approach* states that "it is generally accepted that animal welfare is about the animal itself, and the increasing integration of fundamental biological sciences is contributing towards a greater understanding of the link between the animal's biology and its welfare state" (Blokhuys et al. 22). Through this ostensibly "animal-centered" discourse, the meat and dairy industries strategically market false, or "bad

faith,” images of compassion and ethical behavior which misleads the public into thinking that, by purchasing pieces of dead animals from these “humane” businesses, they are helping animals (Sorenson xiii). This thesis presents a critical inquiry into the various myths of “humane” animal agribusiness and argues that the “humane” economy is implicated in the animal-industrial complex in strikingly similar ways as factory farming or concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs). I contend that the idea of “happy meat” does not further the project of “animal rights” or provide an “ethical” alternative to industrial agribusiness. Rather, the “humane” economy normalizes inherently exploitative food industry practices, carnism and speciesism and is thus a pressing philosophical, ethical and social justice concern.

Matthew Cole points out that the belief in the possibility of ‘happy meat’ has its academic counterpart in ‘animal-centered’ welfare discourses (Cole 84). However, as will be argued throughout this thesis, welfare discourses reproduce speciesist and carnist values while actively promoting the exploitation of other animals. As Kris Forkasiewicz argues, “many reformers generally fail to see animal husbandry itself—behavioral and genetic manipulation, captivity, killing—as a form of oppression” (Forkasiewicz 47). Indeed, welfare reformers argue that “bigger cages, some pasture, less antibiotics, more daylight, and so on, make for a happy horse, pig or hen”; such conditions, Forkasiewicz continues, “amount to a mere shadow of a fulfilled life” (47). Furthermore, Richard Twine points out that understandings of “humane” are “inescapably accompanied by spatial sequestration whereby the geographies of violent human-animal relations are effectively hidden away from the public gaze and critical scrutiny” (24). I contend that the “humane” economy is merely one way the meat and dairy industries have attempted to “greenwash” the inherent violence in the animal-industrial complex and to ease the conscience of the consumer of animal products. In other words, “humaneness” is a marketing

tactic that allows consumers to participate in exploitative practices without the guilt that is increasingly becoming associated with consumption of animal products.

In an expose concerning the “happy” meat industry, Hope Bohanec points out that the word *humane* is used in reference to “tenderness, compassion, and sympathy for people and animals, especially for the suffering or distressed” (Bohanec 6). Yet this definition, she argues, is “completely antithetical to the act of treating animals as commodities instead of as sensitive and emotionally complex individuals” (6). Indeed, if those participating in the “humane” economy were really concerned for animal well-being, they would not purchase industrial breeds of animals, confine them, transport them, and kill them in slaughterhouses. Moreover, following Melanie Joy’s lead, one can understand how the promotion of “humane” discourse results in *ecocarnism*, which maintains that eating animals is natural and thus the problem is not in animal agriculture, but industrial agriculture (Castricano and Simosen xi). However, as my thesis will show, the “humane” economy directly participates in industrial practices and, contrary to popular belief, is not sustainable.

Ironically, as Nancy Williams points out, the majority of “humanely” farmed animals end up on the same transport trucks and are killed in the same slaughterhouses as factory farmed animals (Williams 267). In the United States, for instance, federal guidelines require that all meat intended for sale must be from animals slaughtered in a USDA-approved facility (Gillespie 106). As chapter one shows, the transportation of animals and their deaths at slaughterhouses cannot be considered “humane” or ethical by any stretch of the imagination. Furthermore, I argue that humane animal agribusiness is unsustainable in that it cannot come even close to matching current demands for meat, much less future demands. Mark Bittman observes, for instance, that available pasture on the earth could not sustain the 1.3 billion cattle now raised and slaughtered

for food in CAFOs (qtd. in Pluhar 462). Indeed, the United Nations Population Division estimates there will be 9 billion humans on the planet by 2050; according to the FAO, meat production will double worldwide by that same year unless demand falters (456). Bittman thus concludes that even at current levels, the only way to sustain meat consumption is to *further industrialize its production* (456). Furthermore, Vasile Stanescu cites the United Nations' report *Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options*, which suggests that in terms of biodiversity, pasture-raising animals, because of factors such as deforestation and habitat destruction, actually causes more biodiversity loss than factory farms (Stanescu 222). Rather than being a sustainable alternative to factory farming, I conclude that the "humane" economy is a marketing 'divide and conquer' strategy that attempts to isolate the "radical" animal abolitionists and then inculcate "green" consumers who unquestionably follow humane dogma. It follows that welfare science and the humane economy are *not* animal centered, but rather, are centered upon new avenues of profitability that "green capitalism"—which can be defined as the "tethering of environmentalism to a political economy whose mantra is growth for growth's sake" (Prudham 1594)—provides them.

Arguing that the "humane" economy is a biopolitical enterprise centered upon the exploitation of nonhuman animals, this thesis uses an interdisciplinary critique of the myth of "humane" animal agribusiness from two areas of research in critical theory: Critical Animal Studies (hereafter CAS) and Foucauldian Studies. Both CAS and Human/Animal Studies share a common origin in the following two fields: (1) utilitarian thought as it is developed by Peter Singer who takes a utilitarian perspective regarding the sentience of nonhuman animals and (2) moral rationalist thought as it is developed by Tom Regan who argues that animals are subjects of a life and therefore ought to be given rights. In *Critical Animal Studies: Thinking the*

Unthinkable John Sorenson points out that “many ideas that are now seen as fundamental to the concept of social justice were once considered absolutely unthinkable” (Sorenson xv). At one point, he notes, it was unthinkable that women might hold the same jobs as men, or that same-sex couples might have the right to access the same social and legal rights and benefits as heterosexual couples (xv). Still considered unthinkable, Sorenson continues, is the idea that equity and social justice should be extended to beings other than human, which stems from “both a deep conviction of human exceptionalism and a lack of understanding of how oppression of other animals and of human groups is entangled” (xv). CAS, then, sees no inconsistency between the rights of humans and other animals and advocates on behalf of both:

Rather than accepting the false binary that suggests that one must be concerned either about humans *or* about animals, critical animal studies sees the intersectionality of oppression and suggests that speciesism—the oppression of animals—constitutes a basic form of oppression that provides a structure for the oppression of other humans. (xv)

Ecofeminism is a major component of CAS and similarly emphasizes the entanglement of oppression. To ecofeminist Greta Gaard, no attempt to liberate women (or any other oppressed group) will be successful without an equal attempt to liberate nature (Gaard 1). In this thesis, I use the ecofeminist ethic of care dialogic, which entails humans listening to animals, paying emotional attention, taking seriously—*caring about*—what they are telling us (Donovan 305-306), to argue that the “humane” economy’s treatment of animals as commodities violates the basic premises of care and is thus unethical.

Alongside the historical rise of Poststructuralism, CAS has now become the more radical agent in the field of animal studies in that it problematizes anthropocentric conceptions of rights and subject-hood using ecofeminism, deconstruction, post-humanism and critical theory. CAS

distances itself from traditional animal studies by giving more attention to political economy, and more specifically a critique of capitalism as inseparable from a critique of both animal commodification and environmental destruction (Twine 8-9). CAS's emphasis on deconstruction and a critique of political economy informs my thesis in two main ways: (1) through deconstructing "humane" discourse, I show that reductionist and essentialist notions of the animals are reproduced, which in turn continues to define animals as one-dimensional objects rather than complex, sentient beings; (2) through a critique of political economy, I show how the "humane" economy is part-and-parcel of the animal-industrial complex which is centered on exploiting animal subjects and minority workers for profit.

The second part of my interdisciplinary critique uses Foucault's theory of biopower to question the promises humane animal agribusiness makes about animal ethics, human health, and sustainability. Although Michel Foucault provided forceful critiques of institutions of human confinement, he never addressed the confinement or treatment of nonhuman animals nor considered relations of power between humans and nonhumans (Taylor 539). In response to this gap in Foucauldian thought, a significant number of CAS theorists, such as Matthew Cole, Stephen Thierman, Nicole Shukin, Jonathan Clark, Richard Twine and Cary Wolfe, have placed Foucault's theories of biopower in conversation with what has been called "the question of the animal" (Derrida 12). Whereas Foucault sees biopower operative at two levels: (1) the level of the body, where disciplinary power creates norms of corporeality, such as "docile" and self-mortifying (or, self-submitting) bodies and (2) the level of the population, where regulatory power creates norms of "healthy" and "productive" populations—Critical Animal Studies sees the question of biopower as highly germane to a critique of the factory farm asserting,

[t]he practices of maximizing life, of “making live,” in Foucault’s words, through eugenics, artificial insemination and selective breeding, pharmaceutical enhancement inoculation and the like – all for the purposes of maximizing the efficient production of flesh – are on display in the modern factory farm as perhaps nowhere else in biopolitical history. (Wolfe 23)

This thesis builds from existing CAS critiques that place animality in conversation with Foucault by applying this work towards a critique of the “humane myth” as it serves the animal industrial complex. I argue that when animal agribusiness and green consumerism are studied from a Foucauldian approach, the notion of “humane” raising and slaughter of animals can be seen firmly implicated in industrial practices. That is to say both modalities rely on Cartesian denials of animal sentience and an avowal of the idea that farmed animals are objects that exist for one inherent purpose: gustatory human pleasure.⁵

To examine the parallels between the factory farm and humane agribusiness, I use Foucault’s two-tiered structure of biopower to first approach animal life from the level of the *body*—i.e. how the animal subject is reduced to his or her body. Genetic and animal welfare sciences, nutrient management, desired reproductive rates and husbandry procedures (such as supernumerary teat removal, disbudding/dehorning, castration, and other surgeries) all constitute methods of manipulating the animal body to become self-mortifying and docile in the humane farm. For instance, Matthew Cole notes that scientists working in the field of ‘animal welfare’ manipulate even the *personality* of ‘farmed’ animals so as to render them more docile (Cole 87). Indeed, molecular and genomic breeding techniques aim to create certain kinds of animal bodies, such that they meet the goals of productivity, profitability and efficiency. Moreover, regulatory

⁵ See Foer, Jonathan Safran. *Eating Animals*. Little, Brown and Company, 2009.

power in the humane farm directed towards animal *populations* include confinement technologies, feed operations, health inspections, disease management, humane slaughter regulations, transportation, bio-security, and the handling of sick or injured animals.

One of my primary aims with this CAS/Foucauldian critique is to re-constitute animals as *subjects*—i.e. that they have interiority, personality, wants, needs and interests unto themselves—that are exploited within the biopolitical animal-industrial complex. Stephen Thierman’s essay “Apparatuses of Animality: Foucault Goes to a Slaughterhouse” presents the slaughterhouse as a technology of power that is complicit in the domination and objectification of both human and nonhuman animals (Thierman 89). Thierman states that Foucault sees power as a force that actually shapes and constitutes individuals in their subjectivity. He quotes Foucault:

[We should] discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thought, etc. We should try to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects. (qtd. in Thierman 97)

It can thus be argued that nonhuman animals can also be seen as “subjects” in this sense, that is, as “beings whose very existence is shaped and constituted by power in some significant way” (97). If we are to truly accept that animals are subjects that are objectivized and dominated (i.e. shaped by power in some way) then we must act accordingly and *treat* them as living beings worthy of moral consideration. Treating animals as subjects would mean that we *care* about animals in the same ways that we care about humans, that is, by including them in social justice discourse and philosophical/social science critiques of power.

2 The “Said” and the “Unsaid” Discourses of In/Humane Biopower:

The Erasure of the Slaughterhouse

2.1 Overview

“The ear was assailed by a most terrifying shriek ... the shriek was followed by another, louder and yet more agonizing — for once started on that journey, the hog never came back. ... And meantime another was swung up, and then another, and another, until there was a double line of them, each dangling by a foot and kicking in a frenzy — and squealing.... Meantime heedless of all these things, the men upon the floor were going about their work. Neither squeals of hogs nor tears of visitors made any difference to them; one by one they hooked up the hogs and one by one with a swift stroke they slit their throats. There was a long line of hogs, with squeals and lifeblood ebbing away together until at last each started again, and vanished with a splash into a huge vat of boiling water.” (Sinclair 44)

This account of a slaughterhouse is from Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle*, a novel that graphically illustrates the extent to which those working in abattoirs become inured to the horror that surrounds them (Smith 51). Sinclair’s novel is also remembered as a “stomach-turning revelation” of unsanitary and unsafe practices in the meat industry (Sayer 22). Depicting the unsanitary conditions of the slaughterhouse, Sinclair writes, “the men who worked on the killing beds would come to reek with foulness, so that you could smell one of them fifty feet away; there was simply no such thing as keeping decent, the most careful man gave it up in the end, and wallowed in uncleanness” (Sinclair 32). Published in 1906, Sinclair’s novel sparked such public outrage that Theodore Roosevelt ordered a federal investigation into the so-called “meatpacking” industry. This investigation led to the confirmation of the novel’s accuracy that resulted in the Meat Inspection Act of 1906 (Smith 51). Although the public was outraged regarding sanitation, this sentiment had less to do with the suffering of animals, which is an issue I take up in addition to sanitation and working conditions. Indeed, this passage from Sinclair’s novel describes the unfathomable suffering that nonhuman animals experience in the

slaughterhouse, which can arguably be deemed one of the most violent institutions that exist today.

The violence against human and nonhuman animals in the meat industry that Sinclair depicts must not be seen as a deplorable event that occurred in the past and was subsequently remedied by governmental regulations. The animal suffering that occurs in the meat industry cannot either, as contemporary food movements like to believe, be remedied by “humane” welfare advancements. Countless undercover investigations of farms and slaughterhouses by animal rights group Mercy for Animals show that animal suffering is not an anomaly, as it is often portrayed. However, the truth of animal suffering is systematically kept hidden from public view by meat and dairy industries. For instance, AG-GAG laws in the United States make it a “felony to obtain a job at a factory farm with the intent of exposing inhumane practices, such as banning the taking of photos or videos of a factory farm without permission” (Wrock 272). Furthermore, these laws, most often put forth in states where the meat industry is a considerable section of the economy, effectively make it impossible for an undercover investigator to document a repeated pattern of behavior which is crucial to building a case against the perpetrators of inhumane acts (272-273).

The slaughterhouse is one such site where both human rights abuses as well as the torture and killing of sentient beings persist, to this day, in *all* forms of animal agribusiness. Nancy Williams remarks, for instance, that the majority of “humanely” farmed animals end up on the same transport trucks and are killed in the same slaughterhouses as factory farmed animals (Williams 267). In other words, the slaughterhouse is at the center of the animal-industrial complex and is integral to the meat industry’s relentless commodification of animals even when it comes to the production of “humane” or “happy” meat. What is therefore extremely

problematic is the fact that food industry marketing, certification systems and regulations that cater to a niche market of “conscientious” consumers *disingenuously* conceal the central role of the slaughterhouse in meat production. The purpose of this chapter is twofold: (1) to provide theoretical frameworks for CAS, Foucauldian Studies and Ecofeminism that I will use in the coming chapters when I analyze certification systems and contemporary food movements in detail and (2) to show how in/humane biopower is the power to authorize certain public discourses surrounding animality, such as that of “compassionate” meat, and to “unauthorized” other discourses, such as the ecofeminist position that animals ought to be seen as subjects, and not on mass terms.

Bad faith, speciesism and carnism are central to the production of in/humane discourse. These three elements work as biopower to dominate nonhuman animals by violently transforming their status as living beings into marketable “happy” objects. I use the example of the slaughterhouse to elucidate how “humane” animal agribusiness is inextricable from factory farming or CAFOs, and is implicated in what Stephen Thierman, following Foucault, has called the “*apparatuses of animality*” (Thierman 90, emphasis mine). The apparatuses of animality are the political, cultural and economic spaces where human and nonhuman subjects are “always inscribed in a play of power” (91). Through an interdisciplinary CAS/Foucauldian approach, I argue that the “humane” myth is one center of power among many interconnected institutions, economies and discourses that work together to exploit human labour and dominate animal subjects.

Ecofeminism is central to my critique and approach because it problematizes the way in which animals are seen on false *mass terms* in Western culture. Ecofeminist Carol J. Adams states that “the most efficient way to ensure that humans do not care about the lives of animals is

to transform nonhuman subjects into nonhuman objects. This is what [she] has called the structure of the *absent referent* . . . behind every meal of meat there is an absence: the death of the nonhuman animal whose place the meat takes” (Adams 5-6). When animals are defined on mass terms, they not seen as having “individuality, uniqueness, specificity, or particularity”—“*they are not like us, our compassion does not need to go there*” (6). The ecofeminist *ethic of care*, developed by ecofeminist Josephine Donovan, is a response to the systematic erasure of human compassion for other animals. It compels humans to care for animals by viewing them for who they are, sentient, emotionally complex individuals who deserve to live on their own terms, and not the terms of animal agribusiness. Our compassion *does* need to go there not only as a response to the vast amount of nonhuman pain and suffering in the animal-industrial complex, but as a response to ecological devastation—as the second biggest source of global greenhouse gas emissions, animal agribusiness is one of the chief factors in the destabilization of our planet’s atmosphere (Sanbonmatsu 29). raccoon

An ecofeminist critique of the biopolitical domination of animals within capitalist economics is indeed imperative at a time when “compassion is joining the movement of commodities and is becoming one of them” (Forkasiewicz 51). As described in the introduction, Whole Foods Market is an industry leader in the “compassionate” food movement, which capitalizes from a niche market of consumers who are interested in nutrition/human health, where their food comes from, how it is produced, what its environmental impacts are, and how “happy” the animal on their plates was. Fig. 2.1 shows an advertisement that is part of Whole Food’s first national campaign in 2014 called “Virtues Matter.”



Fig. 2.1 Whole Foods’s Virtues Matter Campaign Poster; “Whole Foods Market Posters/Misc. Printed Pieces”; *Coroflot*; coroflot.com, <http://www.coroflot.com/bmerkel/Whole-Foods-Market-PostersMisc-Printed-Pieces>.

In this advertisement, Whole Foods claims to have an “animal compassion rating system” but what they are referencing is the “5-Step Animal Welfare Rating Program” by the nonprofit alliance of producers, retailers, “animal advocates” and scientists called Global Animal Partnership (GAP), which certifies all Whole Foods’s meat products. Chapter two analyzes what GAP is in detail and problematizes the biopolitical violence involved in each of the “5 steps.” I want to point out here, however, that Whole Foods’s disingenuous marketing campaign “Virtues Matter” is not about compassion or care towards animals but is rather about reaching and interpellating a niche market of consumers, and then profiting from their participation in the “compassionate” commodity movement. The advertisement in Fig. 2.1 disingenuously attaches

subjectivity, or “happiness,” to the absent referent “gumbo” (a food dish with animal flesh) to prevent niche market consumers from feeling guilty for eating animals for gustatory pleasure.

In/humane biopower is therefore a falsely compassionate discourse that relies upon the symbolic value of niche market categories that continue to define animals in mass terms, such as “free-range” *beef* and “pasture-raised” *pork*. While the *vast* majority of animals that come from GAP-certified farms are legally raised in crowded indoor facilities and are transported for up to *sixteen hours* to, and killed at, slaughterhouses (GAP 36), these facts are “unauthorized” because they are in direct contradiction to symbolic “humane” categories. Furthermore, in/humane biopower relies upon the delegitimation of animal rights/liberation discourses such as ecofeminism, since these counter-discourses take the position that care and compassion towards animals entails protecting them from harm, treating them as ends in and of themselves, and *not* treating them as commodities in emerging “green” markets.

2.2 The Apparatuses of Animality and Carnism

To begin my critique of “humane” animal agribusiness and its participation in various forms of biopolitical exploitation, I turn to Stephen Thierman’s essay “Apparatuses of Animality: Foucault Goes to a Slaughterhouse,” which presents the slaughterhouse as a technology of power complicit in the domination and objectification of both human and nonhuman animals (Thierman 89). Thierman’s term, *apparatuses of animality*, is derived from Foucault’s concept of the *apparatus*, which Foucault defines in the following way:

a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions – in short, *the said as much as the unsaid*. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of

relations that can be established between these elements. (qtd. in Thierman 90 emphasis mine)

Thierman applies the notion of the apparatus to the system of relations where humans and animals find themselves enmeshed, such as animal husbandry (e.g. “humane” farms, factory farms, slaughterhouses), animals used in scientific/university research, animal entertainment industries (e.g. zoos, aquariums, circuses), and so on. In this quotation, I have emphasized that the apparatus is the “said as much as the unsaid,” which is a line of Foucauldian inquiry that is central to dismantling the hold “humane” rhetoric has taken over meat industry marketing. In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault states that there is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say, and that we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case (Foucault 27). We must thus ask which discourses are authorized in in/humane biopower, how these discourses reproduce carnism and speciesism, and what the ethical, economic and political consequences of these deeply problematic discourses are. Moreover, if we problematize the rate at which “unsaid” and “unauthorized” discourses that run contrary to carnism, such as animal ethics/liberation as well as the reality of animal suffering, we recognize that challenging the unsaid constitutes a threat to the profitability, credibility and outright *existence* of the meat and dairy industries.

To engage with the “said” and “unsaid” elements regarding animal oppression, it is imperative to situate the *authorized* discourses of the apparatus in the context of Foucault’s notion of *biopower*. David Sowell states that “biopower engendered concepts of normalcy— oftentimes expressed in terms of the body or gender conduct that structures social behavior . . . biopower causes the internalization of knowledge, and alters behavior into what might be

understood to be normal (Sowell xiii). Thus, if biopower grants the power to constitute normalcy and to cause internalization of knowledge, then carnism is a means of biopolitical rule in the animal-industrial complex. Recall that carnism is the *violent* Western ideology that justifies meat-eating practices on the grounds that it is “natural, normal and necessary.” Important to the discussion here are the following three conditions that make carnism a biopolitical and yet *culturally specific* phenomenon: (1) carnism constitutes which everyday Western eating practices are normal and which deviate from the norm; this discourse, in turn, gives exploitative meat and dairy industries tremendous economic and political power, (2) carnism constitutes which beings are subjects and which are edible objects that solely exist to fulfill the (constructed) desires of the subject; in so doing, carnism grants political representation to only human beings; (3) carnism regulates which discourses surrounding animal agribusiness are authorized,⁶ such as “humane,” “happy” and “compassionate” rhetoric, and delegitimizes the “unauthorized” discourses that expose the unethical practices of confining and killing *billions* of animals for human pleasure, not for sustenance, necessity or health, but *pleasure*. Indeed, I argue that the notion of “humane” meat is absolutely vital to the reproduction of carnism because its logic renders meat-eating ethical and compassionate, normalizing the violence inherent in a system that commodifies living beings.

⁶ An example of carnist institutions regulating discourse is the partnership between the National Dairy Council and the American Dietetic Association (ADA). According to the ADA, as a sponsor, the National Dairy Council can “leverage benefits to achieve marketing objectives . . . and build brand relevance with [the ADA’s] highly-desirable target audience” (Joy 99). In fact, animal agribusiness interests regulate the “unsaid” discourses to the extent that activists can be (and readily are) imprisoned and labelled terrorists under the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act of 2006, which makes it *illegal to engage in behavior that results in the economic disruption of an animal enterprise* (Joy 41).

“Humane” animal agribusiness is a carnist enterprise that biopolitically regulates what is “said” (i.e. how meat is marketed, what kinds of philosophical statements are made by “welfare” scientists, how they treat animals) and erases the troublesome counter-discourses that infringe on its profitability. For instance, Catherine Friend, a “humane” farmer and author of *The Compassionate Omnivore*, chronicles in an earlier book called *Hit by a Farm* that she not only cuts off her sheep’s tails but also castrates her male lambs without the use of anesthesia (Stanescu 225-226). As Vasile Stanescu states, if the majority of the scientific community conclude that tail docking inflicts significant levels of pain, there is a complete consensus that castration causes intense pain and results in long-term chronic pain (226). Mutilating sentient beings is exemplary of the disciplinary dimension of biopower, where the subject is reduced to his or her body; through this process, the subject becomes a useful object or machine, disciplined to meet the ends of production and profit. Moreover, Friend claims to *care* for the very animals she mutilates without anesthesia and, at the end of their short life, sends to the slaughterhouse. In a telling example, as her partner takes lambs to the slaughterhouse, Friend disingenuously writes, addressing the lambs, “I wish you a safe journey, and I honour your role in my life” (218). The language Friend uses idealizes the lives and deaths of the lambs for her own purposes; in an act of bad faith, she rationalizes her acts of violence in the guise of honour and respect.

What is thus “unsaid” about “happy meat” is that the practices of disciplinary power that occur on factory farms and CAFO’s are replicated on “humane” farms. Violence against animals on “humane” farms is possible because what the meat and dairy industries refer to as “reasonable care standard,” means certain practices are deemed “necessary” and “commonplace” and thus not considered cruel (Bohanec 33). Castration and tail docking along with other “reasonable care standards” such as branding, ear tagging, ear notching, debeaking, all without anesthetic, are

considered necessary aspects of “humane” farming (33-34). Furthermore, the following practices are legally permitted in *every* form of animal agribusiness: “grinding up male chickens at birth; using animals who have been selectively bred into shapes that cause disease, suffering, and early death; forced and repeated pregnancies; separating family members for profit; and killing animals in the same slaughterhouses and identically “inhumane” conditions (Stanescu 226). These standard practices, all for the purposes of capital accumulation in the “green capitalist” marketplace, are part of what is the “unsaid” about the “humane” meat industry. It then follows that the concept of “humane” animal husbandry plays a central role in the animal-industrial complex because it is no different than the “normal, natural and necessary” treatment of animals in in the factory farm.

Although the authorized discourse of “happy meat” is that it is a humane, sustainable and “ethical” alternative to factory farming, its complicity in animal oppression paints a vastly different picture of biopolitical violence that reobjectifies animals and does not challenge the Western tradition of viewing animals on *mass terms*. I thus argue that the social justice critique of animal agribusiness must incorporate liberationist, abolitionist and ecofeminist frameworks because they do the necessary radical work of not only problematizing *all* forms of animal objectification in the animal-industrial complex but also of the plight of workers in the industry. In “Fragments of an Animalist Politic: Veganism and Liberation,” Kris Forkasiewicz states that reformists (or, welfarists) have the conviction that “the evils of animal oppression ought not to be exaggerated”; according to Forkasiewicz, reformists “fail to see animal husbandry itself—behavioral and genetic manipulation, captivity, killing—as a form of oppression” (Forkasiewicz 47). One of the claims that “humane” animal agribusiness makes is the idea that animal oppression is exaggerated by the abolitionist “radicals” and that “humane” fixes and regulations

can solve the problem. In response to the ethical issues inherent in reformist ideologies, Forkasiewicz argues that

disidentification from the reformists may be an important political and strategic step for liberationists, who, by definition, strive for paradigm-shifting emancipation. By doing so, they may be able to pressure the reformists into explaining why they equivocate on matters of oppression and persuade them to take a stronger stance. (47)

Following Forkasiewicz's lead, the last section of this chapter posits that *ecofeminism* is an integral part of animal liberation's project of shifting the paradigm of the "lesser evil" (welfare discourse) to that of abolitionism, where animals are re-constituted as subjects who are deserving of care. Indeed, the main goal of this thesis is to apply pressure to the claims by reformists and advocates of "happy meat" by showing how welfare discourse is deeply entrenched in carnism, speciesism and bad faith. The point is that welfare politics reflect the political strategy of the "lesser evil," of which Hannah Arendt, in another context, aptly remarks:

Politically, the weakness of the argument has always been that those who choose the lesser evil forget very quickly that they choose evil . . . Acceptance of lesser evils is consciously used in conditioning the government officials and the population at large to the acceptance of evil as such. (Arendt 36)

Similarly, the public has accepted the meat-industry's representation of "happy" meat at a time when animal liberation paradigms have entered the mainstream, and many consumers have begun to think about the source of their food. The "lesser evil," constructed as necessary, becomes much easier to accept in the face of the "bigger" evils, in this case, the factory farm and slaughterhouse.

2.3 The Interconnected Oppression of Humans and Nonhumans in the Slaughterhouse

In this section, I use the institution of slaughterhouse as a core example of how “humane” animal agribusiness objectifies human workers and nonhuman animals and, as Thiermann argues, is constitutive of Foucault’s notion of biopower. Biopower, centering on the body as a “machine,” animalizes the human subject while it de-animalizes the animal subject, transforming her life into a commodity. I argue that through a Foucauldian/CAS critique, the animal can be seen as a subject under biopower, a force that actually shapes and constitutes individuals—humans and other animals—in their subjectivity. Through its complicity in the slaughterhouse, “humane” economy must be seen as part-and-parcel of what Giorgio Agamben has called the *anthropological machine*, where humans and animals are divided yet bound in the urgent repetition of that division; as a consequence, animals and animalized humans are exposed to violence (Chrulew 55). In the last section, I argue that ecofeminism can help break the anthropological machine by its inclusion of *all* oppressed beings in the ethic of care dialogic.

The inclusion of the “question of the animal” (Derrida 12) in Foucauldian thought is significant because, within this framework, animals are re-constituted as subjects that are disciplined and materially *shaped* into objects by power, rather than the commonly held view that animals are always already objects. Stephen Thierman quotes Foucault,

[We should] discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thought, etc. We should try to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects. (qtd. in Thierman 97)

Foucault is not talking about animals in this passage but Thierman uses Foucault to make this point about animals, whom he considers always already living beings. Indeed, it can be argued

that nonhuman animals can be seen as “subjects” in this sense, that is, as “beings whose very existence is shaped and constituted by power in some significant way” (97). This logic has the potential to have a profound impact on existing social justice paradigms that already problematize the “animalization” of humans, but leave the “question of the animal” out of the picture. Indeed, if we are to take seriously the notion that animals are dominated and objectified by power, then we would have to revalue animals, and become political actors that advocate on behalf of them. Moreover, by disallowing the “question of the animal” the anthropological machine will remain intact, allowing those in power to continue to dominate and objectify humans and animals for their own ends.

Giorgio Agamben’s notion of the anthropological machine is central to understanding how the biopolitical oppression of humans is intimately connected to the oppression of animals; this entanglement of domination and objectification signals that we should include *all* beings in political and ethical discourse, and strive to dismantle the apparatuses of animality. The question for Agamben is not one of human rights, but rather how the category of the “human” is produced and maintained against the category of the animal, which functions as both constitutive outside and inside such that some people are rendered non- or sub-human (Oliver 2). Although Agamben is not primarily concerned with the ramifications of nonhuman life in the anthropological machine, Kelly Oliver argues that liberating animals from this biopolitical machine is key to dismantling it altogether. I quote her argument in full:

The machine must be stopped not only for the sake of man but also for the sake of animals. A possible wrench in the works could be to revalue animals and animality rather than accept and thereby perpetuate their status as denigrated. Justifying abusing or killing some ‘people’ by arguing that they are animals or like animals, is compelling only if we

assume that animals deserve or even require abuse and killing. Using the argument that people are animals or like animals in order to treat them as inferiors likewise assumes that animals are inferior. (11)

Animals should be included in our circle of compassion and ethics not only to mark the end of animal oppression and suffering, but also to remove the baseline of oppression that will no doubt further the project of human flourishing. Indeed, to leave animals as “rightfully” oppressed in biopolitical institutions is an act of violence and a form of discrimination—speciesism—that ironically reproduces the very machine that so many individuals condemn. I now turn to my biopolitical analysis of slaughterhouse as exemplary of one cog in the anthropological machine that is only kept in place through consumer purchases of “happy” meat.

Stephen Thierman identifies the slaughterhouse as a site of disciplinary power and domination where a multitude of human and nonhuman animals are rendered docile (Thierman 103). Foucault defines disciplinary power as a pole of biopower that is “centered on the body as a *machine*: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls” (Foucault 139). Thierman draws attention to the human/animal hierarchical divide in his analysis of Charlie LeDuff’s compelling account of his visit to the Smithfield Packing Co. pork processing plant (in North Carolina), which was published by LeDuff, as “At a Slaughterhouse, Some Things Never Die” (2000). Thierman’s analysis engages in two levels of disciplinary power found in the slaughterhouse pertaining to workers: (1) the distribution of individuals in a space by means of *enclosure* and a *partitioning* into functional sites” (141); (2) hierarchical observation, which includes gender and racial hierarchies as well as the role of surveillance by (white) management.

Firstly, the partitioning of bodies is evident in the slaughterhouse as workers and jobs are divided on the basis of gender, ethnicity and race. LeDuff states that “everything about the factory cuts people off from one another,” as workers on the kill floor are separated from those on the cut line; these two groups are both, in turn, separated from the warehouse workers and from the managers whose offices are positioned above the factory floor (103). Secondly, in terms of hierarchical observation, Thierman states that the division of labour reinforces hierarchies of a racial nature. Blacks and Mexicans get the “dirty” jobs, such as killing and cutting, American Indians tend to get the “clean menial jobs,” involving warehouse work, while the few whites on the payroll tend to be mechanics or supervisors (104). Using the oppressive strategy of “divide and conquer,” the meat industry systematically creates hierarchical inequities between worker groups in order to control not only labour productivity and efficiency, but also the individual subjects themselves, who are objectified as “docile” bodies.

The creation of controlled subjects alongside the brutal and violent nature of slaughterhouse work—killing terrified animals, dismembering their bodies, and cleaning the foul by-products of this process—violates the most basic workers’ (and human) rights, and has disastrous ramifications for worker’s mental and physical health. About 25% of slaughterhouse workers become ill or injured from the work conditions and require serious medical attention, while the psychological consequences of the repetitive act of killing include drug and alcohol abuse, anxiety, panic, depression increased paranoia and disassociation or amnesia (Dillard 393). Moreover, a 2004 report by Human Rights Watch has concluded that meat and poultry industry employers take advantage of immigrant workers fears—many of the workers are undocumented or have family members who are undocumented—to keep them in abusive conditions that violate basic human rights and labor rights (HRW 4). “Happy” meat’s complicity in the slaughterhouse

is therefore a gear in the anthropological machine that contributes greatly to human working-class oppression under capitalism in addition to the suffering endured by the animals destined for the kill-floor. The purchase of “happy” products provides financial support to an oppressive institution, and serves to normalize racism, human rights abuses, deplorable working conditions, and so on. Thus, the issue of animal rights in the slaughterhouse is also an issue of *human* rights.

In “Speciesist Veganism: An Anthropocentric Argument,” A. Holdier argues that vegans should consider shifting their immediate attention away from philosophical disagreements with carnists to find a common cause that can more directly benefit the well-being of all conscious creatures (Holdier 42). This common cause, for Holdier, is centered upon the ethical position that *human flourishing should generally be promoted*. Rather than proposing “speciesist veganism” as the end-point of animal activism, Holdier presents “speciesist veganism” as one activist tactic that may be a more effective starting-point than an animal-centered critique. The slaughterhouse undermines human flourishing in several ways; one of the examples he gives is profound psychological damage as a result of violence against animals in the workplace (43-45). He cites the testimony of one poultry factory worker:

You are murdering helpless birds by the thousands (75,000 to 90,000 a night). You are a killer . . . Out of desperation you send your mind elsewhere so that you don’t end up like those guys that lose it. Like that guy that fell on his knees praying to God for forgiveness. Or the guy they hauled off to the mental hospital that kept having nightmares that chickens were after him. I’ve had those, too. (46)

This testimony, which reflects an all too common experience in the slaughterhouse, is an example of how carnist institutions biopolitically constitute humans, transforming their subjectivity into “killing machines” that must meet production demands regardless of the

physical or mental health ramifications. If carnist or speciesist individuals do not advocate on behalf of animals, then, they might be moved to concern for the human lives that are at risk in the slaughterhouse. While this argument remains anthropocentric, it can perhaps be one strategic step towards animal liberation; although it is not enough. A single-issue approach to the industrial-animal complex does not get at the root of oppression, but addresses just one strand in the entanglement of human and animal oppression. What also needs to be addressed is how animals are affected by the anthropocentric machine in similar ways, and thus ought to be included in our circle of compassion along with human animals.

The transportation of animals to slaughterhouses as well as their deaths at the hands of the “knockers” on the kill-floor are two violent events in an animal’s life that in/humane biopower conceals. In a telling example of this concealment, Fig. 2.2 shows an image of Whole Foods’s “butcher paper” that depicts an idyllic pastoral scene at the “family farm.”



Fig. 2.2. Butcher paper used to wrap cuts of meat at a Whole Foods Berkeley store; “There’s Nothing Humane About Whole Foods Turkey”; *The Daily Pitchfork*; [dailypitchfork.org](http://dailypitchfork.org/?p=992), 24 Nov. 2015, <http://dailypitchfork.org/?p=992>.

The “happy” messages in this image include: “committed to transparent farming and ranching practices,” “know where your meat comes from” and “the more you know the better.” The “family farm” imaginary does not include the slaughterhouse or massive trucks that are used to transport animals. These forms of violence are replaced by absent referents such as a farm bearing the message “improving standards for meat since 1981.” In direct contrast to the crowded and disease-ridden realities of meat production (humane or not), the chickens and cows in this image are depicted as freely-roaming outdoors; they are seen as being cared for by benevolent farmers whom Whole Foods supports. So-called “transparency” campaigns by Whole Foods, however, exist merely as a kind of security blanket for niche meat market consumers who want to block out the idea of animal suffering from their minds.

For meat to be sold legally in the U.S., the animal must be slaughtered in a USDA-approved facility; it is cost prohibitive to have a USDA-approved slaughterhouse on most small-scale farms, so even animals from alternative and small-scale farms are shipped, sometimes hundreds of miles, without food or water, to the same slaughter facilities as animals from industrial-scale and factory farms (Bohanec 48). Transportation of living animals is for them a stressful and terrifying process that is central to *all* forms of meat production. Michael Appleby notes that 80% of meat in the USA is processed by 49 plants, mostly in the Midwest, despite the fact that there are 918 federally-inspected plants across the country (Appleby 300). The number of abattoirs in most developed countries has declined considerably over recent years; this means that animals are “often driven very long distances to slaughterhouses” (300). The anthropocentric machine, including the “humane” workings of it, transports animals en masse as if they were cargo, not as if they were living and emotionally complex animals who are utterly terrified. Fig. 2.3 references a report by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism of animal welfare breaches

discovered between 2014 and 2016 in Britain. The report concludes that almost 90 per cent of the most serious category 4 infractions—meaning that animals were subjected to “avoidable” pain, distress or suffering—related to the *transport* of livestock from farms (Wasley and Robbins n.p.).

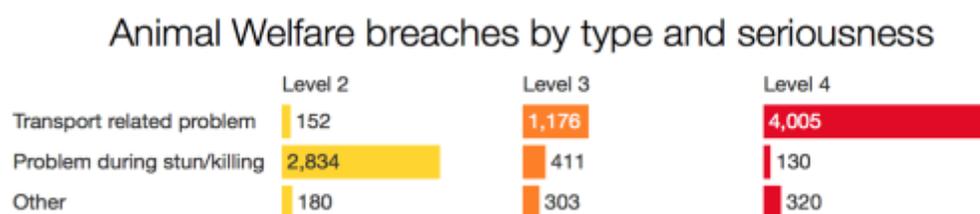


Fig 2.3. Animal Welfare breaches by type and seriousness. “Severe Welfare Breaches Recorded Six Times a Day in British Slaughterhouses”; *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*; [thebureauinvestigates.com](https://v1.thebureauinvestigates.com), 28 Aug 2016, <https://v1.thebureauinvestigates.com/2016/08/28/severe-welfare-breaches-recorded-six-times-day-british-slaughterhouses/>

The records showed that “many animals are presented for slaughter in appalling condition”; animals often arrive hypothermic, bleeding, or injured in some way (n.p.). In one consignment of 220 pigs, 33 were dead on arrival at the slaughterhouse with suffocation concluded as possible cause of death (n.p.). The egregious treatment includes that experienced by “humanely” raised animals and forms yet another constitutive part of the “unsaid”: advertisements for “free-range beef” do not show what happens when it is time for that animal, just beginning its life, to be killed and commodified.

Ironically, the animals who arrive alive at the slaughterhouse are perhaps the most unfortunate ones as the violence, pain and suffering inflicted on animals at the end of the journey is deplorable. As Stephen Thierman states,

From [the pig’s] perspective, the slaughterhouse can be thought of as the point where a docile body—a docility inculcated thanks to confinement and rearing in other agricultural

contexts (i.e. a hog lot, free-range farm, etc.)—is transformed into a dead body.

(Thierman 103)

The slaughterhouse reduces an individual pig to his or her body to the point of “disintegration” by the means of the abstractly appointed “disassembly line” (106), where the “dead body” is now dismembered, packaged, and rendered into a product. In the biopolitical hierarchy of the slaughterhouse the “absolutely commoditized bodies” of pigs form the base that keeps the slaughterhouse’s pyramid standing (104). Indeed, the hierarchical pyramid that “animalizes” humans into productive less-than-human machines is the very same pyramid that allows animal life to be devalued to the point that the rapid and mechanized killing of intelligent and aware beings is justified. The vast majority of “humanely raised” meat sold at Whole Foods comes from animals that were transported for up to *16 hours* on trucks and were killed at the same slaughterhouses as industrially farmed animals (Global Animal Partnership 16). When recalling the previous image of Whole Foods butcher paper, one can see bad faith as instrumental to the reproduction of animal capital. The unpleasant truth of animal suffering on transport trucks and in slaughterhouses is disavowed and replaced by the pleasant untruth of the sunny family farm where, ironically, “transparency” is marketed as a defining feature of Whole Foods meat production.

In terms of the laws and regulations surrounding the slaughter of animals, carnist institutions operate biopolitically as the “said” and, thus, authorized discourse—that slaughter is performed “humanely,” federally inspected by the USDA and guaranteed by the law—masks the “unsaid” nightmare of animal and human suffering. The Humane Slaughter Act (HSA) in the U.S. states that an animal must be rendered unconscious before slaughter with just one application of a captive bolt device but the speed of the assembly line does not guarantee this to

be the case and many animals, raised “humanely” or not, are conscious while being hauled up by one leg on a pulley while bleeding profusely from a cut to the throat. The slaughter of chickens is exempt from the HSA, which means that even chickens raised in “humane” farms are legally allowed to be carelessly thrown about by the workers and hung upside down, alive, with their ankles hooked in a moving conveyer belt, frequently causing bruising, hemorrhaging and broken bones (Bohanec 49). For all other animals, the reality is no more “humane” as there is pervasive under enforcement of the HSA; since 2001, there have been a series of undercover investigations into USDA-inspected slaughterhouses, and *all* have been damning of agency oversight (Friedrich 205).⁷

Timothy Walker, a USDA employee who collected bovine blood samples at Florida’s largest beef supplier slaughterhouse called Kaplan, witnessed cows being skinned alive by the hundreds, one after the other. In this situation, both the cows on the kill-floor and the workers employed there endure horrific conditions. Regarding the workers, Walker wrote to multiple supervisors: “I can safely say someone is going to be killed if conditions at Kaplan’s are not changed”; to others, he wrote, “you cannot begin to know what the conditions are at this plant unless you have worked on the kill floor and seen them for yourself. I have almost [been killed] a number of times by live cows kicking wildly as they were being skinned while still conscious” (Eisnitz 25). The USDA, which is a division of the *federal government*, did not respond to Walker’s pressing concerns. There are no adjectives to describe the suffering that these innocent animals experience being skinned alive, and the fact that the USDA does nothing to prevent it is speaks volumes to the connections and agreements they have with the meat-industry.⁸

⁷ For a comprehensive review of USDA under enforcement, see Bruce Friedrich’s essay “When Regulators Refuse to Regulate: Pervasive USDA Underenforcement of the Humane Slaughter Act.”

⁸ The USDA, closely allied to the meat industry and opposed to the HSA, was nonetheless made responsible for its enforcement (Eisnitz 24). While the intentional violation of the Federal Meat Inspection Act carries stiff fines and

Moreover, it should be noted that the HSA is also under-enforced in the few “humane” slaughterhouses that exist, where a minority of “humanely” raised animals are slaughtered. In her exposé of “happy meat,” Bohanec cites a 2009 undercover investigation by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) at a small-scale, certified organic veal calf slaughterhouse in Vermont, called Bushway Packing Inc:

The investigator documented newborn calves from dairy cow mothers being kicked, beaten, and struck repeatedly with electric prods. Workers threw water on their heads and bodies so the electric shock would be more painful. The video showed calves fully conscious and kicking when they were hanging upside down by one leg, their throats slit open. At one point in the video, in front of a USDA inspector, a calf is skinned alive without his throat being slit. (51)

These instances of animal cruelty in slaughterhouses are ubiquitous yet disingenuously deemed “anomalies” in the world of “humane” meat. This is to say in the animal-industrial complex, profit, productivity and efficiency override any semblance of care or compassion to animals. The reason that Catherine Friend, the “humane” farmer, gives as to why she castrates her sheep and cuts off their tails without anesthesia is because of the *cost*; it is cheaper and easier to dock tails without paying for anesthesia (Stanescu 227). The idea that one can treat an already objectified and dominated sentient being “humanely” is logically and ethically untenable. Rather, what we see is that “happy meat” is a version of carnism grounded in bad faith and speciesism. According to Jean Paul Sartre, we engage in bad faith when we either hide some “displeasing truth” from ourselves, or, alternatively, embrace some “pleasing untruth” because we prefer it to a truth we

imprisonment, violations of the HSA carry no penalties at all; however, if violations are observed, they are required to stop the process of slaughter until the violations are corrected (24).

fear (qtd. in Sanbonmatsu 33). The truth that many carnists fear, especially “compassionate” carnists who purchase “humane” products, is that the system of animal agribusiness is *inherently* violent and exploitative, which is to say it cannot be remedied by any technological or welfare “fix.” Moreover, and perhaps this is the salient point, no matter how “humanely” one can claim to treat animals, not one of them is going to go willingly to the kill-floor. Instead of acknowledging this fact, one cleaves to the “pleasing untruth” presented by the meat-industry. As to why carnists ought to care for animals beyond companion pets, and take seriously the notion of animal subjectivity, I now turn to ecofeminism.

2.4 Ecofeminism and the Ethic of Care

In this section, I propose that ecofeminist ethics are key to jamming the anthropocentric machine that, as I have shown, oppresses human and nonhuman animals in biopolitical ways that render humans as labour machines and animals as objects and commodities. Ecofeminism is an intersectional social justice perspective that is both anti-speciesist and anti-anthropocentric. Where traditionally feminism sees patriarchy as oppressing individuals based on race, class, sexuality and gender, ecofeminism’s intersectionality goes a step further to argue that not only does patriarchy oppress certain groups of humans, but also has dominated nature and nonhuman animals. Greta Gaard, an ecofeminist theorist, states ecofeminism’s basic premise in “Living Interconnections with Animals and Nature,”

The ideology which authorizes oppressions such as those based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities, and species is the same ideology which sanctions the oppression of nature. Ecofeminism calls for an end to all oppressions, arguing that no attempt to liberate women (or any other oppressed group) will be successful without an equal attempt to liberate nature. (Gaard 1)

Ecofeminism connects the plight of women to the environment as well as to non-human animals, to argue that oppression does not have a single center, but rather many centers that intersect and are interconnected. Gaard cites Karen Warren's "Toward an Ecofeminist Ethic," which argues that feminism must be understood as striving to end all systems of oppression; it must have a *pluralistic* structure, and an inclusive and contextual framework that values and emphasizes humans in relationships, denies abstract individualism, and provides a guide to action (2). Ecofeminism therefore tackles oppression at its root, and, since the anthropocentric machine creates hierarchies within the category of the human and between humans and animals, such a critique would destabilize each of these hierarchies.

As I have shown, a Foucauldian critique of carnist institutions such as the slaughterhouse re-constitutes the animal as a subject who is molded into a docile object and reduced to a symbol of profitability. The animal is thus shaped by power by his or her endpoint, the objectified form; if we are to take seriously this idea, then we must act politically and *treat* animals as subjects. Ecofeminism proposes an "*ethic of care*" dialogic as an answer to why we ought to care about animals in the first place. Josephine Donovan proposes a dialogical mode of ethical reasoning wherein humans listen to animals, paying emotional attention, taking seriously—caring about—what they are telling us (Donovan 305-306). An ethic of care dialogic would "put front and center the feelings of the animals in question and not dismiss those desires as irrelevant to the argument" (311), in other words, we *treat them as subjects* who have been shown to have their own desires, needs and interests beyond that of human exceptionalism.

Therefore, with the ethic of care, the human/animal binary is destabilized and we enter a new paradigm where humans and animals are not seen in hierarchical terms, but in terms of what philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty has called "strange kinship" (qtd. in Oliver 17). Merleau-

Ponty theorized that the “relation of the human and animality is not a hierarchical relation, but a lateral, a surpassing (*dépassement*) that does not abolish kinship” (qtd. in Oliver 18). This kinship, according to Kelly Oliver, neither erases all differences between animals and humans, rendering them identical, nor erases any similarities between them, rendering them radically separate (18). Thus, an ecofeminist ethic of care alongside the notion of “strange kinship” settles oppression as not a matter of “either/or” (that we extend moral consideration to either humans or animals) but as a matter of “both/and” (Donovan 311). With this “both/and” kinship with animals, we can begin to destabilize the anthropocentric machine that necessitates human and animal oppression, and the “humane” economy’s role in it. I thus argue that because “humane” animal agribusiness does not listen to animals in any meaningful way and because it leaves oppressive hierarchies in place, it is not, by any stretch of the imagination, ethical.

Ecofeminist philosopher and CAS scholar Lori Gruen argues that “the categories ‘women’ and ‘animal’ serve the same symbolic function in patriarchal society. Their construction as dominated, submissive ‘other’ in theoretical discourse (whether explicitly so stated or implied) has sustained human male dominance” (Gruen 61). To advocate only for the liberation of women and not animals therefore keeps the very same “human male dominance” in place, and once a group of people have positions of power, they are justified in doing what they want to the Other, which in the case of “humane” carnism, means confinement, mutilation, transportation and slaughter of living and vulnerable beings. As an ecofeminist, I argue that by viewing oppression as multifarious and interconnected, where humans and animals have “strange kinship,” hierarchical models of human society can finally begin to dismantle in their entirety.

3 Whole Foods, Global Animal Partnership and Welfare Quality®: How Welfare Standards Obfuscate Animal Suffering

3.1 Overview

Considering the proven capacity for animals to feel pain and experience emotional complexity, we may expect that when we become caretakers of domesticated animals, whether they are dogs, goats or chickens we are leading these animals to believe that they can trust us. As with any relationship involving trust, there is an unspoken promise. These animals, as highly emotional beings, come to expect us to care for them, to make them as comfortable as we can, and to nurture them throughout their life stages. . . . But when the human guardian has an ulterior motive of self-interest and is all the while plotting to ultimately kill the animal companion for her flesh, this sacred bond of trust is completely violated by the human's treacherous motive. (Bohanec 5)

In *The Ultimate Betrayal: Is There Happy Meat?* Hope Bohanec argues that “humane” meat is untenable and immoral because it involves the betrayal of the animal subject by the human captor. Bohanec explains that the word *humane* is commonly defined as “tenderness, compassion, and sympathy for people and animals, especially for the suffering or distressed” (6). As Bohanec argues, meaning is at odds with actual practice and completely antithetical given that animals are treated as commodities instead of as sensitive and emotionally complex individuals (6). In other words, there is nothing “humane” about the raising and slaughtering of an animal. Moreover, profiting from a niche market of consumers who are “concerned” for animal well-being is particularly disingenuous. As I argued in Chapter one, so-called humane animal agribusiness is no different than factory farming when it comes to captivity, breeding, transportation to slaughterhouses, and the rendering of death in the slaughterhouse itself. Only the rhetoric promoting “humane” meat is different and to critique humane animal agribusiness as a biopolitical institution, we must demonstrate how Foucault's notion of biopower provides insight into the workings of the humane farm itself—what kinds of regulations, certifications, confinement technologies, control mechanisms and laws come together to form the “humane”

apparatus? What are the real and material effects regarding human workers and animals in agribusiness? Therefore, we must look at how biopower operates within humane *discourse* and *practice*, which can include welfare philosophy, humane certification programs, advertisements and marketing, media, and so on.

This chapter begins with a critique of anthropocentrism in relation to capitalism and its role in constructing fixed notions of what it means to be “animal” and “human.” I primarily engage with the work of scholars Matthew Calarco, Jacques Derrida, Nicole Shukin and Richard Twine to argue that Western understanding of the “animal,” including the notion of the “happy” farmed animal, is not only specious because it is fraught with ethical issues but also unsustainable and therefore philosophically and politically untenable. I argue that the move towards abolitionism and away from welfarism⁹ must occur for a new political category that incorporates animal subjectivity to emerge in public discourse. Although purported as the answer to all the problems associated with animal agribusiness, welfarism does not give political or ethical representation to animals and therefore does not change anthropocentric philosophy and the biopolitical valuation of animals as commodities.

Moreover, I engage with and problematize primary pro-humane and pro-sustainable sources that further the ideology of “humane” animal agribusiness. These sources, such as Michael Ableby’s essay “Sustainable Agriculture is Humane, Humane Agriculture is Sustainable” and the collection of essays *Improving Farm Animal Welfare*, claim the “humane” economy to be “animal-centered” all the while invested in a bioeconomic emphasis on “productivity, product quality and profitability,” (Blokhuys et al. 23) where the animal subject is

⁹ Abolitionism gives moral standing to nonhuman animals and seeks to prohibit the instrumental use of animals. Welfarism may extend limited moral standing to nonhumans but it allows for their instrumental use as long as they are “humanely” treated.

yet again seen as a site of biocapital and potential for new markets. I thus pose the question of whether “humane” animal agribusiness is truly ecologically sustainable, as these sources maintain. I argue that, on the contrary, it is *not* sustainable because it is economically impossible for grass-fed or pasture-raised animal products to even closely match current demand for meat, poultry and dairy (Bohanec 28), not to mention future demands for meat which are projected to rise as more countries become industrialized. Furthermore, the UN report *Livestock’s Long Shadow* suggests that “in terms of biodiversity, pasture-raising animals, because of factors such as deforestation and habitat destruction, actually causes more biodiversity loss than factory farms” (Stanescu 222). The danger of welfare discourse is that it seriously misleads the public into believing that “humane” animal agribusiness is sustainable, when, in fact, it is complicit in the very same ecologically devastating processes as factory farming.

The fact that carnism and speciesism are founded on ecologically unsustainable food practices, essentialist notions of “animal” and “human,” as well as outright *oppression* thus begs the question: what does “humane” even mean in the context of animal welfare? How are suffering, pain, discomfort, aggression and fear biopolitically measured and regulated in the “humane” farm? To answer these questions, I examine Whole Foods’s participation in Global Animal Partnership’s “5-Step Animal Welfare Rating Program” and argue that this program reproduces in/humane biopower, which justifies violence against animals in the name of so-called “welfare standards” and “sustainability.” The 5-Step Animal Welfare Rating Program is a key example of the power “humane” certification programs have in constituting what levels of violence against animals are sanctioned, which regulations are unprofitable and therefore not part of their program and which regulations are considered “humane” in the first place. I therefore conclude that so-called welfare regulations are not in place to protect animals but instead exist

for the purposes of profitability, efficiency and productivity in niche markets that are ever-expanding as consumers become more concerned with the so-called transparency of their food.

3.2 The Problems with Western Understandings of the “Animal”

In the first chapter, I argued that a critique of animal oppression is necessary to fully dismantle what Giorgio Agamben has called the *anthropocentric machine*, where human and animal exploitation are mutually dependent. Indeed, the unfounded idea that “humane” animal agribusiness will solve the issues of climate change and animal suffering is merely an extension of the power the anthropocentric machine has over animal subjects and only normalizes the oppression of innocent sentient beings. I continue this critique by arguing that “humane” and “welfare” discourses perpetuate highly problematic Western understandings of animality that can no longer be deemed philosophically tenable. Matthew Calarco raises the issue of how Western philosophy has traditionally posited that there is a shared essence or set of characteristics that bind all animals (Calarco 8). He points out that “much like the critique of essentialism in feminism, queer theory, and race studies, theorists in animal studies seek to track the ways in which the concept of “animality” functions to demarcate humans clearly from animals and establish homogeneities amount what appear to be radically different forms of animal life” (8). Biopolitical violence against animals thus depends on an essentialist set of “knowledges” about humans and animals, such that the “animal” is constructed as purely impulsive, unthinking, emotionally “dumb,” lacking language, and so on. Recall, however, that exhaustive scientific research supports the claim that animals are conscious in the ways that matter ethically (Bekoff and Allen 300), that they are emotionally complex, intelligent, and aware of what is being done to them. As is evidenced by the 2012 Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness, all mammals and birds, including other creatures such as octopuses, possess the neuroanatomical,

neurochemical and neurophysiological substrates of conscious states along with the capacity to exhibit intentional behaviors (The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness 2). Anti-essentialism regarding animals must therefore be brought to the forefront of discourse alongside that of anti-essentialist race and feminist studies in order for the anthropocentric machine to be dismantled.

Like Critical Animal Studies, ecofeminism advocates for the abolition of animal exploitation and is one avenue that is highly germane to rethinking ethics, philosophy and social activism because ecofeminism links the oppression of women to the oppression of nature and thus animals. Ecofeminist scholar Catriona Sandilands's project is to bring the radical, anti-essentialist and public ecofeminist framework to the forefront of democratic discourse regarding patriarchy and ecology. She writes,

It is this implicitly political element that strikes me as ecofeminism's greatest promise; the democratic politicization of gender and nature suggests a process of challenging hegemonic identifications, of opening up new spaces of social and political (and ecological) life to scrutiny and debate, and of tackling the discursive relations in which problematic gendered and ecological relations are embedded. (Sandilands XVIII)

The opening up of new spaces of political life to scrutiny and debate would necessarily include the "question of the animal" and would reconsider what our (human) ethical duties towards complex, sentient beings would be. The ethics of care dialogic makes it necessary for us to listen to animals and to care about what they are telling us—that they do not want to be confined, they do not want to suffer and that they do not want to be slaughtered. The fact that "welfare regulations" and "humane discourse" ironically use the same ecofeminist language, such that we ought to treat animals well and be concerned for their livelihoods, and yet continue to breed,

confine and kill animals, is highly disingenuous. This chapter therefore focuses on how “welfare regulations” are actually antithetical to ecofeminist discourse in that they justify violence against animals under the guise of “care” only because this language is *profitable* and proliferates carnism.

Indeed, “humane” and “welfare” discourses do not challenge Western anthropocentrism, as ecofeminism does, nor do they come close to deconstructing the privileged position of the human over the animal. Rather, they reify this position in neoliberal terms. Take, for instance, a statement issued by Vincent Breton:

At duBreton, we believe that hog farms can be efficient and profitable while using sustainable farming practices and raising animals in ways that reduce stress by providing spacious shelter, comfortable resting areas, proper facilities, and the freedom to express normal behavior. (Certified Humane n.p.)

Vincent Breton is the President of duBreton farms in Quebec, North America’s largest producer of “natural” pork. In this quotation, he uses the neoliberal language of “profitability” and “efficiency” as intimately connected to “compassion” towards animals and ecological sustainability. This rhetoric aimed at garnering the trust of the public is particularly disingenuous not just for the project of animal liberation, but for anti-capitalist struggles in general, because it presents oppressive food industry practices as “anti-ideology.” Slavoj Žižek points out the irony of liberal humanist political figures and refers to them as “liberal communists”; they can “have the global capitalist cake, i.e. thrive as profitable entrepreneurs, and eat it too, i.e. endorse the anti-capitalist cause of social responsibility and ecological concern” (Žižek 16). In the context of “pro-animal” political figures such as Breton, the neoliberal logic of “happy meat” is ironic

because it means that one can indulge in the pleasure of eating animals while disingenuously endorsing their well-being.

This form of ideology masquerading as “anti-ideology” is therefore part of larger capitalist movements that attempt to recast social and ethical concerns into avenues of capital accumulation. A CAS/Foucauldian critique of “humane” animal agribusiness, however, destabilizes capitalist appropriation and continues the work of “new social movements” in animal studies that seek to develop a “postliberal, posthumanist approach to politics” (Calarco 11). I contend that the most effective postliberal, posthuman approach is an ecofeminist critique. As Sandilands remarks, the critical focus of founding ecofeminist texts remains the “historical polarization of humanity from nature, men from women, mind from body, and reason from emotion in the philosophical and religious development of ideals of transcendent humanity” (Sandilands 15). As an ecofeminist, I view the oppression of animals under “humane” biopower as merely an extension of the anthropocentric machine that is no less concerned with the profitability, efficiency and marketability of the objectified animal than factory farming. In moving towards a postliberal and posthuman politics, however, we must first explore how the sign of the “happy” animal functions in capitalist marketing.

The ubiquitous symbol of “happy meat” in carnist advertising and marketing is problematic in that it normalizes meat consumption by interpellating the individual as a consumer, not of violence or suffering, but of harmless products. CAS scholar Nicole Shukin argues that discourse and technologies of biopower hinge on the species divide, where animals become key symbolic resources of capital’s reproduction (Shukin 11-12). Shukin demonstrates that animals are simultaneously sign and substance of market life, as the animal sign functions as semiotic currency of market culture while animals themselves are reproductively managed as

protein and gene breeders under chilling conditions of control (12). “Humane” animal agribusiness is one function of the apparatus in which the animal is both sign and substance of market life. The animal, reduced to her body, is biopolitically controlled and manipulated in a farm and slaughterhouse, while her sign, recalling Carol J. Adams’s “absent referent,” becomes a “happy” self-submitting image.

The carnist symbol of the “happy” animal is thus another form of biopolitical knowledge that is disingenuously presented to the public in order to normalize meat consumption and to continue capital accumulation. Meat and dairy product advertisements do not display *real* images of animals in small crates or cages, distressed and suffering animals, images of dairy cows calling after their taken-away calves, or animals mid-slaughter. Instead, the sign of the animal is always fabricated in that the referent for meat is the image of living, happy animals on a pasture—fig. 3.1, for instance, shows a frame from a 2017 McDonald’s commercial.



Fig. 3.1. McDonald’s Happy Meal Commercial; “McDonald’s Happy Meal Commercial 2017 Starting at only \$3.99”; *McDonald’s*, youtube.com, 23 Jan. 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGgnvAerefM>

In this commercial, the Claymation cartoon “animals,” depicted leisurely standing in a green and sunny pasture, function as signifiers of freedom, a happy life, and well-being. The animal sign of

market life thus produces a certain way of knowing and understanding “animality” that allows the consumer to purchase animal products guilt-free and for carnism to thrive; the living and suffering cow in a factory farm is replaced by the *absent referent* of the freely-roaming cartoon animal. Bad faith is therefore structural to the reproduction of humane biopower. The meat industry produces citizens who embrace some “pleasing untruth” because they prefer it to a truth they fear (Sanbonmatsu 33), thereby authorizing a discourse of “welfare” and “happy meat” while erasing the reality of animal suffering in factory farms, “humane” farms, and slaughterhouses.

3.3 Welfare Sciences, Abolitionism and Restoring the Absent Referent

Highly germane to the discussion of in/humane biopower is the relationship between biological forms of knowledge and the emergence of capitalism. I contend that the “humane” economy hinges on scientific “knowledges,” where the public is assured that welfare assessments and regulations are backed by animal sciences. Richard Twine ties together the strands of bioethics, Foucauldian thought and CAS through his exploration of the role of animal biotechnology in producing sustainable, yet profitable, animal bodies in the bioeconomy (the rendering of biological life in economic terms). He argues that the move of science in locating sustainability in the animal genome is intrinsically linked to capitalist growth and entails certain promises about the future of livestock production (Twine 114-118). To build from Twine’s critique, I argue that “welfare sciences” are also linked to capitalist growth and thus create self-serving “knowledges” of what animal well-being means, how it could be regulated, what the most profitable avenues of “welfare” are, and so on.

A major example of “welfare science” is Welfare Quality® (WQ), a research project funded by the European Commission during the years of 2004-2009. WQ claims to have “aimed

to deliver reliable, science-based, on-farm welfare assessment systems that address stakeholder concerns for poultry, pigs and cattle as well as a standardized system to convey welfare measures into clear and understandable product information” (Blokhuis et al. 75). One example of WQ’s “science-based welfare assessment” research is that of lameness resulting from leg disorders in broiler chickens, which cause chickens to suffer chronic pain, have poor balance and render them unable to even walk. WQ researchers claim that they have developed an “innovative feeding strategy” where lameness in broilers can be alleviated by slowing down their early growth rate and speeding it up again once their bones have developed (182). However, I argue that this conclusion is quite unfounded as the chicken gait score (GS) was found to be not much better in birds on the “innovative” diet regime (mean GS of 2.41) than in the “traditional” diet control group (mean GS of 2.61) (182). Fig. 3.2 shows a gait scoring table to provide context for these numbers.

Gait Score	Indicative Signs
0	His/Her gait is smooth. The foot curls when lifted, and the bird appears well-balanced.
1	His/Her gait is uneven. The foot may or may not curl when lifted. It is difficult to tell which side has the injured leg or foot.
2	His/Her gait is uneven. The foot remains flat when lifted. The bird’s stride is shortened. The bird may have poor balance and use his/her wings for support.
3	Similar to gait score of 2 but remains lying down unless gently nudged to move, more likely to use wings for balance and support. He/She cannot stand for more than 15 seconds (undisturbed), and typically lies down after a series of steps.
4	He/She is reluctant to move (~ 5sec before the bird stands on both feet) and uses wings like crutches to walk. The bird can only take a few steps before lying back down.
5	He/She is not able to take one step, and will shuffle if nudged to move

Fig. 3.2. Gait Scoring Table; “Lameness in Poultry: Evaluating Gait Scores”; *Poultry Welfare Center*; poultrywelfarecentre.files.wordpress.com, <https://poultrywelfarecentre.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/lameness-in-poultry-evaluating-gait-scores.pdf>

The fact that a “welfare standard” allows for a gait score to hover between 2 and 3—where leg deformities cause chickens to experience stress, pain, and discomfort—while touting a small incremental change to be “innovative” is highly problematic because it is disingenuous and *self-serving*, to say nothing of the fact it delegitimizes suffering for the chickens.¹⁰ It serves the interests of animal agribusiness because farmers can continue the same unethical process of fattening up a sentient being so it can be slaughtered as quickly as possible with the added social and political clout of having “welfare” standards. This political clout, where farmers and scientists are not seen as *harming* animals but helping animals, allows in/humane biopower to actually build on and sustain animal capital by tapping into a niche market of consumers who are interested in animal “welfare.”

The dismal reality of animal suffering, human labour exploitation and unequal concentration of wealth inherent in animal agribusiness, however, directly contradicts the positive images the “humane” industry puts forth. For instance, fig. 3.3. shows an advertisement from Whole Foods’s “Values Matter” campaign.

¹⁰ Furthermore, Welfare Quality® researchers did not consider that these chickens are a result of selective breeding for greater profitability and faster growth rates which will *always already* cause lameness in chickens.



Fig. 3.3. Whole Foods’s “Know What Kind of Life Your Dinner Lived” Advertisement; “David Milosevich Casting”; *David Milosevich*, <http://davidmilosevichcasting.com/the-work/>.

This advertisement depicting a rural pastoral scene with the message “know what kind of life your dinner lived” is a paradigm example of Adams’s *absent referent*. Adams states, “people want to believe they are good people. The structure of the absent referent, in which the animal disappears both literally and conceptually, allows them to believe that they are good people” (Adams 55). This advertisement, geared towards the niche market of “conscientious” consumers, ironically refers to the living chicken the woman is holding as an always already absent referent, as “dinner” and dead flesh. Whole Foods marketing therefore invites the “ethical” consumer to act in bad faith: rather than recognizing they are exploiting or killing an animal needlessly, they are encouraged to believe they are a good person who is consuming a “healthy” and “happy” product, which in turn is seen as healthy for the consumer as well. Ecofeminist animal activists, however, “restore the absent referent by talking about what animals experience. We are saying you are either harming animals or not. There is no neutral position here” (55). What is key to

restoring the “absent referent,” that is, giving animals subjectivity, is an abolitionist perspective as opposed to a welfare perspective.

I now turn to the animal rights debate between abolitionism and welfarism to explain why abolitionism is the only ethical solution to the “question of the animal.” CAS scholar and legal expert Gary Francione advocates an animal rights approach, and maintains that we have “no moral justification for using nonhumans at all, irrespective of the purpose and however “humanely” we treat them, and that we ought to abolish our use of nonhumans (Francione and Garner 8). Robert Garner, on the other hand, argues in favour of the protectionist (or, welfare) approach which maintains that animals are different from humans, and other things being equal, the moral value of an animal life is less than the moral value of human life; some uses of animals may be justifiable, this approach maintains, but we should *better regulate our treatment of animals* (9). However, I ask what “better regulations” mean in the first place, who has the power to decide what they are, and what forms of discretion are involved in their creation.

I contend that since market goals of profitability, efficiency and productivity often constitute what these “better regulations” are, animal welfare becomes a slippery slope. Take, for example, Joel Salatin and his Polyface Farm, which participates in Humane Farm Animal Care's Certified Humane Raised and Handled program. When asked the question of why he doesn't use “heritage” birds and instead uses birds that were bred to live in industrialized settings and, consequently, live short, unnatural and painful lives, Salatin responds by saying (Stanescu 228),

I'm not opposed to heritage breeds. We have some heritage breeds. Here's the problem though: Marketability. . . . We tried heritage chickens for three years and we couldn't sell 'em. I mean, we could sell a couple. But at the end of the day, altruism doesn't pay our

taxes. And I'm willing to say: "You know what? I don't have all the answers and I pick my battles and compromises." (228)

While Salatin *could* use "heritage" breeds, which would result in less suffering for chickens, he chooses not to because it is not profitable. Salatin's facile mention that "altruism doesn't pay our taxes" signifies that profit interests override that of animal well-being, which is completely antithetical to what ecofeminists would consider "humane" or "compassionate." Indeed, as James McWilliams points out, Salatin's birds—mostly Cornish X's—suffer a long list of health problems (namely bone fractures) because they aren't "designed" to move about as their wild ancestors once did (McWilliams n.p.). It does not truly matter, then, if chickens are "pasture-raised" if they have been selectively genetically modified to have weak bones. This begs the question as to why genetically modified industrial breeds are not banned from "humane" certification programs. Welfarism is therefore a slippery slope because it is inextricable from the markets of animal capital.

Abolitionism, which restores the absent referent because it talks about what animals actually experience both in industrial and "humane farming," is therefore the only genuine and ethical solution to the animal rights debate. Francione has critiqued welfare ethics on the grounds that they do not fundamentally challenge practices of the human that continually (re-)embody anthropocentric values (qtd. in Twine 24). In this sense, a welfare approach is, for all intents and purposes, speciesist. Garner's claim that humans and other animals are different and, because of this difference, animals have lower moral standing must be questioned. What accounts for lower moral status? The difference is clearly significant in that it constitutes who gets to live or die, who is free and who is confined. Mick Smith states that the "ethical exclusion of animals depends upon a cultural logic that, recalling the Cartesian model of animals lacking reason,

defines them as “dumb,” as lacking the ability to express themselves, or indeed lacking any self to express” (Smith 49). The cultural logic that sees animals as “dumb” and, therefore, less-than-human is neither new nor has it applied only to animals. Eugenics in the 20th century, for instance, justified forced sterilization of human individuals because they were seen as “dumb”—the mentally or physically “handicapped,” racial/ethnic minorities and criminals were all deemed “unfit” to reproduce by those in power and were, to a certain extent, animalized, as Marjorie Spiegel and others have observed. Whether applied to human populations or to other animals, biopower produces certain biological, genetic and cultural knowledges that in turn render those subject to it morally insignificant instruments. In the case of animals, welfare ethics does little to challenge this paradigm. Rather than challenging the roots of animal exploitation, which are human/animal dualisms, a welfarist approach alongside the “humane” economy masks and justifies the inherent violence of partitioning the human against the animal. Moreover, welfare discourses disingenuously attempt to restore the absent referent, that is, give the animal subjectivity through its “animal-centered” discourse. However, to the contrary, the animal is not made into a subject but instead enters the movement of commodities as a market symbol of care and compassion. Abolitionism, however, takes into consideration an animal’s *life* and experience without distorting that experience for self-interest and rather aims to treat the animal as a living being sufficient unto itself.

3.4 Pro-Humane Discourse and the Question of Sustainability

The links between capitalism and in/humane biopower must be made explicit in order for animal politics to move beyond welfare discourse and towards abolitionism. In this section, I develop my argument that the “humane” economy is not animal-centered but rather centered upon neoliberal goals of profitability, efficiency and productivity. I also take up the myth of

“sustainability” as it relates to in/humane biopower. In “Sustainable Agriculture is Humane, Humane Agriculture is Sustainable” Michael Appleby claims that a collaborative approach to humane sustainable agriculture will benefit animals, people and the environment (Appleby 293). Like many apologists for “animal welfarism” in agribusiness, Appleby posits “humane” meat as the solution to problems always already *caused* by industrial animal agribusiness including animal suffering, environmental degradation, human health conditions, and so on. Appleby argues,

The fact that humaneness and sustainability overlap is not coincidental. Both approaches place a much greater emphasis on the animals themselves than do conventional methods. These alternative methods can be said to be animal centered, to recall that animal production is first and foremost a *biological process* rather than the *technological approach* that has become conventional. (300)

Appleby’s claims that “animal production is first and foremost a *biological process*” and that alternative methods are “animal-centered” are erroneous on many grounds. Firstly, animal *production* cannot be “natural” as it depends on genomic science, breeding techniques, artificial insemination, confinement technology, transportation and finally slaughter, all of which are part of the violent and unethical animal-*industrial* complex. Secondly, the fact that the “humane” economy transforms living beings into commodities means that it cannot be said to be “animal centered” in the way ecofeminists or abolitionists see it. If certain animal welfare standards mean less profitability and marketability of the farm—as was shown in the example of Joel Salatin’s refusal to use “heritage” breeds and Catherine Friend’s refusal to use anesthesia for castration and tail docking because these decisions were *too expensive*—then even the scant animal welfare standards currently in place will inevitably diminish.

So-called humane and sustainable discourses surrounding animality mislead consumers by using the language of progress, science and innovation in order to restore a sense of “rightful, but ‘benevolent,’ domination of nonhuman animals” (Cole 84). As with Appleby’s essay, chapters in *Improving Farm Animal Welfare: Science and Society Working Together: The Welfare Quality Approach* rely on the myth that the “humane” economy is animal-centered, biological and natural: “it is generally accepted that animal welfare is about the animal itself, and the increasing integration of fundamental biological sciences is contributing towards a greater understanding of the link between the animal’s biology and its welfare state” (Blokhuys et al. 22). Neoliberal knowledge production is at play here, as the “biological sciences” are said to have profound knowledge of an animal’s “welfare state.” I would argue, however, that the true “welfare state” of a nonhuman animal is the same as that of a human animal: to be free from oppression, suffering and objectification. However, since the public trusts scientific and biological “knowledges,” the meat-industry strategically uses this language to interpellate consumers.

Thus, a pervasive issue I find with these texts is how the animal’s “welfare” is discursively constructed as an avenue for capital accumulation, where the animal becomes an even more profitable commodity if she is treated with “care.” *Improving Farm Animal Welfare* states that “the way the [animal] responds to stressful stimulation is a key area, with clear and important consequences for *productivity, product quality and profitability* (Blokhuys et al. 23). To use the example of lameness in broiler chickens, the Welfare Quality® project claims that “lameness can have *significant economic costs*, some birds may have to be culled and the surviving lame birds may lose weight and are more likely to be downgraded at slaughter” (180). Indeed, referring to broiler chicken gait scores in fig. 3.2, “birds with a gait score of 4 to 5 are

considered severely lame and should be humanely culled without delay” (Roulston 1). It is not profitable to have birds with gait scores of 4 to 5 because those birds cannot be converted into commodities and are thus viewed as capital losses or “failed” commodities. A mean gait score of 2.41, which can cause chronic pain, debilitation and stress, is ironically seen as “humane” *only because* these birds can still be slaughtered without loss of profit. Welfare regulations are thus not truly “animal-centered” but are centered around the commodity value of the objectified animal body.

This disturbing trend of profit-centered “humane” regulations then begs the questions: what happens when certain types of animal welfare are *not* profitable? Can one care for an animal while aiming to profit from her body at the same time? Following Donovan’s lead, I would argue *no*: the violent and brute commodification of complex emotional beings with interests, desires, needs and individual personalities is inherently uncompassionate and unethical. As an ecofeminist, I contend that welfare discourse and in/humane biopower continue to view animals on mass terms, which means these paradigms cannot enter an actual relationship of care with animals. In response to Robert Garner’s question if animals raised humanely (with care) and slaughtered humanely would be acceptable under care theory, Donovan states,

Garner’s question points to a misapprehension of care theory that I believe a dialogical theory will help to correct. From the point of view of a dialogical ethic of care, the answer to Garner’s question would clearly be no, for if we care to take seriously in our ethical decision making the communicated desires of the animal, it is apparent that no animal would opt for the slaughterhouse. . . . Caring must therefore be extended to mean not just “caring about their welfare” but “caring about what they are telling us.”

(Donovan 310)

Indeed, when we truly care about what animals are telling us, and they communicate their desires for freedom and well-being quite clearly, raising them under brutal systems of control that transform them into commodities would not be an option. Even though the neoliberal language of “welfare” appropriates care theory and ecofeminism, it cannot be seen as an ethic of care, but rather as a pattern of broader capitalist movements that appropriate social criticism and use it for the goals of profitability. The “humane” economy, however, does not stop at appropriating animal ethics discourse, but goes on to appropriate the language of sustainability and concern for ecology.

The oft-cited claim that “humane” animal agribusiness is a sustainable and economically viable option to factory farming misleads the public into thinking that meat and dairy production *at any level* could be sustainable. Indeed, dairy and meat production, regardless of whether it is “humane” or industrial, is inherently unsustainable. There is simply not enough land or water on earth to “humanely” raise animals on a large scale; pasture-raised animals, in fact, actually cause more biodiversity loss than factory farms (Stanescu 222). Recalling Michael Appleby’s essay “Sustainable Agriculture is Humane, Humane Agriculture is Sustainable,” about the topic of sustainability and animal agribusiness, he ironically has little to say. Nowhere does he explain *how* “humane” methods could reduce, air, water, or land pollution, greenhouse gases, deforestation and so on. Currently livestock raised for meat use 30% of global ice-free terrestrial land and 8% of global freshwater, while producing 18% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, which is more than the global transportation sector (Tuomisto and Mattos 6117). Livestock production is also one of the main drivers of deforestation and degradation of wildlife habitats, and it contributes to the eutrophication of waterways (6117). These deep-seated problems that have arisen from increases in rates of world meat consumption, Western

overconsumption patterns and rapid population growth simply cannot be fixed by technology or “humanely” raising animals. As Hope Bohanec concludes, raising animals for food “sustainably” is an economic impossibility (Bohanec 59).

Advocating for “humane” meat as a sustainable alternative to factory farming is especially disingenuous when it is impossible to sustain current levels of demand for animal products, much less *future* levels of demand. Mark Bittman observes, for instance, that available pasture on the earth could not sustain the 1.3 billion cattle now raised for food in CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) (qtd. in Pluhar 462). Indeed, the United Nations Population Division estimates there will be 9 billion humans on the planet by 2050; according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, meat production will double worldwide by that same year unless demand falters (456). In his response to the problems of population growth and meat consumption growth, Vasile Stanescu agrees that the issues of the carrying capacity of the earth cannot be addressed by switching to “humanely” raised meat. He writes,

The question of how to sustainably and ethically raise and kill 55 billion (much less 110 billion) animals per year is simply a question without an answer. *No* strategy—not intensification and not free-range, pasture-fed animals—overcomes the basic limits of our planet’s carrying capacity. (222)

Furthermore, in 2012, leading water scientists issued one of the sternest warnings about global food supplies, saying that the world’s population may have to switch almost completely to a vegetarian diet over the next 40 years to avoid catastrophic shortages (Shurtleff and Aoyagi 493). Thus, “humane” animal agribusiness is neither an economically viable alternative to factory farms, nor can it produce enough products to sustainably supply current or future levels of demand. Not only for the sake of animal well-being, but of ecological and therefore *human* well-

being, we must begin to look beyond capitalist “quick fixes” to the problems engendered by capitalism.

Arguably, the only sustainable alternative to carnism, industrialized or “humane,” would be the adoption of a plant-based food politic which involves abstention from animal products and a boycott of the inherently unsustainable and exploitative animal-industrial complex. As Lee Hall argues,

Designing campaigns around more space for animals destined to wind up on plates at trendy restaurants and pricey grocery stores is *environmental malpractice* . . . We cannot afford to waste any more time attempting to reform animal farms . . . Joining energies, animal advocates and environmentalists could replace the fantasy of sustainable and humane animal farming with a plain-speaking movement that gets to the point: We just don’t need to buy what animal agribusiness is selling. (qtd. in Stanescu 223)

The idea that sustainable meat production is possible, given the current consumption rates and population growth levels, is highly misleading and an indication of the hold carnism and speciesism have over climate change discourse. A plant-based food politic informed by abolitionism and ecofeminism, I argue, would be a truly sustainable and ethical alternative to carnism.

3.5 Case Study of Global Animal Partnership and Whole Foods’s Marketing of “Happy Meat”

In this section, I argue that although Whole Foods’s 5-Step Animal Welfare Rating System is marketed as “humane” and “animal-centered,” it is complicit in the same forms of biopolitical violence against animals as the factory farm. I examine “humane” regulatory power as that which entails the violent management of animal populations, while “humane” disciplinary

power, which entails violence directed towards the animals' bodies. Under these forms of biopower, the animal subject is yet again reduced to a manipulated and docile body. I conclude that the "humane" industry ought not be viewed even as a "lesser evil" to that of factory farming but rather as an equally oppressive form of animal agribusiness that normalizes inherently unsustainable and unethical food industries.

Whole Foods insists that all their meat products are supplied by farms that are audited by the Global Animal Partnership (GAP), which has a 5-Step Animal Welfare Rating Program. GAP was founded in 2008 with assistance from Whole Foods. GAP's website states that Whole Foods had piloted its own animal welfare rating program, but Whole Foods CEO John Mackey felt that an independent organization would be more effective. GAP provides farm standards for broiler chickens, pigs, beef cattle, and turkey, all of which follow the "5-Step" program guidelines. Fig. 3.4 shows a very basic outline of this program displayed on Whole Foods's and GAP's websites.

STEP 5+	ANIMAL CENTERED; ENTIRE LIFE ON SAME FARM
STEP 5	ANIMAL CENTERED; NO PHYSICAL ALTERATIONS
STEP 4	PASTURE CENTERED
STEP 3	ENHANCED OUTDOOR ACCESS
STEP 2	ENRICHED ENVIRONMENT
STEP 1	NO CAGES, NO CRATES, NO CROWDING

Fig. 3.4. The 5-Step Animal Welfare Rating Program; "Improving the Lives of Animals Step by Step"; *Global Animal Partnership*, www.globalanimalpartnership.org.

On their website, GAP claims this program provides transparency for consumers on animal farming, encourages and supports farmers and ranchers to move up the animal welfare ladder

and recognizes farmers and ranchers for their commitment to animal welfare practices (GAP n.p.). However, the marketing of this program which includes promises such as “no crowding,” “enriched environments,” “enhanced outdoor access” and “animal-centered” farms is a far cry from the actual practice of these welfare standards to say nothing of the fact it all ends on the kill-floor regardless. I therefore argue that “welfare regulations” are in place not to protect the animals—the vast majority of animals certified under GAP come from *indoor* facilities that either do not exceed industry norms or minimally exceed them (Greener Choices Consumer Report n.p.)—but are rather in place to secure the continuation of meat-industry profits and carnism. This case study provides further evidence for my claim that welfare regulations are biopolitical in that they objectify animals for the neoliberal goals of productivity, profitability and efficiency. The complicity of mainstream retailers such as Whole Foods in animal oppression thus signals the pressing need for an ecofeminist/abolitionist framework that goes beyond anthropocentric philosophy, emphasizes the need for meat and dairy industry boycotts and constitutes the animal as a *subject* that matters morally and ethically.

To begin with, it must be made clear that the number of farms that have “5” and “5+” star ratings are extremely few, and yet these “animal-centered” farms are the very ones that appear in Whole Foods’s and GAP’s marketing campaigns. A “5” rating ostensibly guarantees that pigs, for instance, will have “no physical alterations” and continuous access to pasture, while a “5+” rating claims that the animal will not be transported to a slaughterhouse but rather slaughtered on an on-site or mobile slaughter facility. Fig. 3.5 shows the number of Whole Foods 5-Step Program farms and ranches by species.

	1	2	3	4	5	5+	Total
Beef	473	57	0	499	5	0	1034
Pork	324	108	50	26	1	1	510
Chicken	4	320	98	53	4	0	479
Turkey	102	14	11	3	1	2	133
Total	903	499	159	581	11	3	2156

*As of March 1, 2013.

Fig. 3.5. Whole Foods meat suppliers as rated by Global Animal Partnership; “A Deadly Feast”; *Direct Action Everywhere*; directactioneverywhere.com, 2015, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/515cca87e4b0bca14d767b61/t/5656a274e4b01a74ead529aa/1448518260139/A+Deadly+Feast.pdf>

To put fig. 3.5 in perspective, as of March 1, 2013, only 15% of all pigs were raised in farms that had even remote access to outdoor facilities (which includes Steps 3, 4, 5 and 5+). For Step 3, however, “enhanced outdoor access” is defined as an “outdoor area such as a dry lot, concrete pad, or pasture, but does not have to be pasture” (GAP 2). A “concrete pad” with “no access to vegetation” (31) marketed as “enhanced outdoor access” is profoundly disingenuous and misleading; the minimum space allowance for this outdoor area is 1.7ft² per pig (26), hardly anything, and yet it is falsely advertised as “enhanced.” Even more troubling is the fact that a striking 85% of pigs did not even have access to a “concrete pad” and spent their entire lives confined in a crowded indoor facility, while all pigs except those from *one* farm were transported on the same trucks¹¹ and killed at the same slaughterhouses as factory farmed animals. Through the use of pasture imagery, Whole Foods can erase the violent reality of where their meat comes from. For instance, fig. 3.6 shows a still of two piglets from a Whole Foods video advertisement for one of their meat suppliers, Thompson Farms.

¹¹ One GAP’s “welfare” standard is that transport of animals to slaughterhouses should not exceed a striking *16 hours* (GAP 16).



Fig. 3.6. Whole Foods Piglet Advertisement; “Thompson Farms | Stories from the Field | Whole Foods Market”; *Whole Foods*; youtube.com, 5 Jul. 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Izu3_ts8WIE.

The choice to market a 5 or 5+ pig farm, which accounts for the vast minority of pork farms certified by GAP, is a highly misleading marketing tactic on the part of Whole Foods.

Consumers are falsely informed that pork production at Whole Foods occurs on a “free-range” farm. Even so, this picture says nothing about the lives, or deaths, of these piglets; they are potential absent referents who are valuable only insofar as they are “happy” market symbols in animal capital.

Disciplinary power is one significant way in which humane biopower exercises brutal forms of control of animal subjects in the 5-Step Animal Welfare Rating Program. Recall that Foucault’s notion of disciplinary power entails a form of biopower that is enacted at the *level of the body* which produces “docile” bodies as well as norms of corporeality. The subject, whether human or other animal, is reduced his or her body in the form of a profitable machine. One example of how GAP produces *violent* norms of corporeality in pigs is the “lesion scoring” section of their certification program. Fig. 3.7 shows how this program refers to painful

lacerations, gashes and wounds as “body marks” or “lesions,” which misdirects the underlying suffering the pigs routinely experience.

Scoring Body Marks			
0	MINIMAL	No lesions or less than mild lesions as described below	
1	MILD	A linear lesion longer than 4 inches (10cm); OR 3 or more 1 inch (3cm) lesions; OR a circular area larger than 0.4 inches (1cm) diameter but less than 2 inches (5cm) diameter. Definition of lesion includes grazed/broken skin, fresh (i.e.: bleeding) wounds and healing lesions (scabs). Scar tissue is not included.	
2	SEVERE	Circular Lesion or area of lesions \geq 2 inches (5cm) diameter; OR lesion extends into deeper layers of skin; OR the lesions cover a large percentage (>25%) of the skin.	

Fig. 3.7. Scoring Body Marks; “Appendix III—Lesion Scoring”; *Global Animal Partnership*; globalanimalpartnership.org, 3 Oct. 2016, <http://gapstaging.blob.core.windows.net/standards/5-Step%20Animal%20Welfare%20Rating%20Standards%20for%20Pigs%20v2.2.pdf>.

GAP’s document instructs certifiers to “randomly select 4-5 pens of breeding animals and market animals to conduct the assessment. If [they] observe >25% with marks in any of the following areas on any animal(s), record as observed in each affected body region (GAP 45). This means that it would be considered “humane,” at any step level, for 25% of pigs to have *severe* wounds on their bodies. Scoring Body Mark regulations also apply to shoulder, vulva and tail wounds (such as bitten off tails), all of which are a result of stressful crowded environments where pigs have no other choice but to harm each other. Furthermore, the appearance of these painful wounds is considered a “minor” non-conformance (19) and must be documented on three consecutive audits (over nearly 4 years) for a farm to lose its animal welfare certification¹² (Direct Action Everywhere 8). These “welfare regulations” that constitute norms of pig

¹² GAP farms are audited just once every 15 months and visits are announced ahead of time to the farm.

corporeality—such that it is “normal” and an industry “standard” for *at least* 25% of pigs to be in constant pain—cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be deemed “humane.” Rather, this is an indication of how Whole Foods and GAP are, as James McWilliams puts it, “in bed” with industry (McWilliams n.p.). Humane biopower is thus firmly implicated in the animal-industrial complex and is not a sustainable or “compassionate” alternative to factory farming.

Regulatory power is the next way in which animal exploiters use “animal welfare” standards to justify the same violence against animals that is found on uncertified “humane” farms. Foucault’s notion of regulatory power is a form of biopower that is directed at the *level of the population*, where groups of humans and other animals are created into “healthy” and “productive” populations. One example of humane regulatory biopower is GAP’s claim of how “environmental enrichments” are supposed to “add complexity to pig environments, encourage the expression of natural behaviours and decrease the expression of abnormal behavior such as tail biting” (GAP 30). Environmental enrichment is a high selling-point of Step 2 and yet the reality of these enrichments is quite dismal, as they may include “long straw, hay, silage, wood chips (provided as a deep bed), branches, whole crop peas or barley, compost, peat, sisal ropes, or other natural materials” (30). The fact that cheap materials such as *branches* and *wood chips* are touted as the answers to abnormal pig behavior and not, for instance, *space to move*, is clearly a profit-centered regulation. Indeed, pigs farmed under Step 2 regulations are not given enough space to move around freely, are not given natural lighting and have no access to outdoors (Greener Choices Consumer Report n.p.).¹³ Giving animals enough room to roam

¹³ Step 1 is so lax that its packing density requirement for cattle (250 sq/ft per cow) is less than that of the cattle industry itself (350 sq/ft) (McWilliams n.p.).

would infringe on profits, as either less pigs or bigger facilities would be required, both of which mean less productivity, efficiency and profitability.

At the end of the day, Whole Foods and other “natural food” retailers are primarily concerned with accumulating capital from niche markets that are requesting “transparency” in the meat and dairy industries. A profoundly unethical aspect of the 5-Step Animal Welfare Rating System is that it justifies all kinds of levels of exploitation, where lower-ranked steps either do not exceed industry norms or minimally exceed them (Greener Choices n.p.). One of the highest-ranked 5+ Step turkey farms, however, has come under scrutiny as a nine-month investigation by Direct Action Everywhere (DXE). The report showed that turkeys were raised in “filthy, noxious and crowded barns,” some birds were “trapped in feces which covered much of the floor” and that many birds had “swollen shut eyes, swollen nostrils and open wounds and bruises” (DXE 2). People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) also issued a lawsuit against Whole Foods in 2015. In a Step 2 farm, a PETA investigator discovered intense crowding (as Fig. 3.8 shows), found sick and severely injured pigs that were left for weeks without medical intervention, and witnessed seven pigs with grotesque rectal prolapses (PETA n.p.).



Fig. 3.8. Overcrowding in Certified Step 2 Farm. “Whole Foods ‘Happy Meat’ Supplier Exposed”; *PETA*; investigations.peta.org, 2015, <https://investigations.peta.org/whole-foods-humane-meat-exposed/>.

Whole Foods, a so-called retail leader in “animal welfare” and “compassionate consumerism,” ironically does not provide transparency to their consumers but rather hides the reality of animal agribusiness under the guise of “welfare regulations.” Brian Burns mentions that, with its recently announced \$20 million PR campaign “Values Matter,” Whole Foods explicitly stated that its profits depend on deceiving consumers, particularly the “Conscionables,” or “customers [who] connect with us on a deeper level because of our shared values,” with a false image of a progressive company that cares for animals, despite all evidence to the contrary (Burns n.p.). The symbol of the “happy animal” is therefore nothing more than a reflection of the power carnist corporations have in generating consumer desire and interpellating individuals as “conscionables” all while exploiting nonhuman animals to meet these ends.

4 The Locavore Movement and Pastoral Biopower: An Ecofeminist Critique of the “Politic of Pleasure”

4.1 Overview

But sticking it to the Man (whoever he is) may not be the most inspired principle around which to organize one's life... We hoped a year away from industrial foods would taste so good, we might actually enjoy it. The positives, rather than the negatives, ultimately nudged us to step away from the agribusiness supply line and explore the local landscape. Doing the right thing, in this case, is not about abstinence-only, throwing out bread, tightening your belt, wearing a fake leather belt, or dragging around feeling righteous and gloomy. Food is the rare moral arena in which the ethical choice is generally the one more likely to make you groan with pleasure. Why resist that? (Kingsolver 22)

The above passage comes from *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* by Barbara Kingsolver. Kingsolver's text, along with Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* and Alisa Smith and J.B. MacKinnon's *The 100-Mile Diet: A Year of Local Eating*, mark the beginnings of the “locavore movement.” The argument of locavorism is that because it is harmful to the environment to transport food over long distances (referred to as “food miles”), people should instead, for primarily environmental reasons, choose to consume only food that is grown or slaughtered “locally” (Stanescu 1). After the publication of these texts, locavorism emerged as a highly popular trend and it became commonplace for individuals in the West to think about the “farm to fork” process, that is, how the food they are eating got to their plate, what the environmental ramifications of that process is, and so on. In telling examples of locavorism's popularity, The Oxford University Press declared *locavore* to be the Word of the Year for 2007 and in the same year *Time* magazine ran a cover proclaiming “Forget Organic. Eat Local.”

The purpose of this chapter is to challenge what I find to be three fundamental problems in locavore ideology as it relates to in/humane biopower: (1) its emphasis on *individual*

consumer choices reproduces neoliberal forms of governance whereby what I believe to be *necessary* radical political action viz-à-viz climate change and animal rights is easily bypassed and commodified; (2) locavorism's romanticization of the "local family farm" and its "return to nature" rhetoric re-objectivizes animal subjects and renders them "ethical biocapital," that is, guilt-free and "sustainable" objects of human pleasure and (3) by misdirection, locavorism presents the effects of animal agribusiness on climate change as easily mitigated by local consumerism and in doing so obfuscates the inherently unsustainable nature of *global* meat production. I argue that locavorism, as an extension of the "humane" economy that is the object of my critique, normalizes meat consumption and therefore perpetuates ecologically devastating food practices and the biopolitical domination of animal subjects.

Kingsolver's quotation, then, reflects many of these issues that permeate locavorism. Her assertion that "sticking it to the man," by which she presumably means a radical, anti-institutional and anti-capitalist position, is not the "most inspired principle around which to organize one's life" is a reflection of the neoliberal utopian myth that assumes we can live as faithful capitalist citizens while, ironically, challenging capitalist corporations (in this case, agribusiness). What this does is depoliticize meat consumption and the animal liberation movement; in turn, anti-oppression movements are inverted as unnecessarily "radical" and "idealist" while market forces and capitalist consumerism are promoted. Indeed, Julie Guthman has argued that the increased salience of food politics in contemporary life, such as locavorism, may itself reflect the neoliberal turn and "intersect with neoliberal rationalities: consumer choice, localism, entrepreneurialism, and self-improvement" (Guthman 1171). One goal of this chapter is therefore to emphasize the importance of a radical ecofeminist anti-oppression *ethic of care*

model that restores the absent referent, questions patriarchal and anthropocentric privileges and ultimately decenters the Enlightenment human subject.

Furthermore, in her passage, Kingsolver emphasizes how eating local food is pleasurable, and argues that we ought to organize so-called ethical resistance against agribusiness around the *pleasure* of local consumption (including “local” animals). However, what Kingsolver and other locavore advocates fail to realize, and in turn reproduce by this omission, is the problematic relationship between pleasure and privilege. An ecofeminist critique politicizes privilege and pleasure as they relate to the ownership of other animals and is therefore crucial to destabilizing in/humane biopower, where the human privilege to breed, confine and slaughter animals is sustained. In *The Pornography of Meat*, ecofeminist Carol J. Adams argues that political privilege creates pleasure and then the privilege disappears and that all people experience is the pleasure (Adams 380). She writes,

People never question, “Where did my privilege come from?” “Why do I assume I have emerged as an autonomous subject with this privilege?” “Where did my privilege to be eating dead animals come from?” Because the privilege hides behind the pleasure, and the “pleasure” is depoliticized, experienced as apolitical—having no relevance to politics, when we come along and critique the situation we are seen to be challenging someone’s *pleasure* rather than someone’s *privilege*. (381)

Questioning the root of the “pleasure of privilege” in the Western world is therefore key to meaningful political action that is to be taken against carnism in hopes of not only eradicating the suffering that “farmed” animals experience because they are constructed as objects of pleasure, but also in hopes of securing equitable access to food and water for the *global* human population.

As it stands, “alternative” meat products that are labelled as “free range,” “grass-fed,” “organic,” “natural,” or “cage-free” represent the minority (1%) of meat production (Gillespie 101) and are significantly more expensive than industrially farmed meat. Building from Adams’s critique I ask who has the class privilege to enjoy the “ethical experience” of local or “humane” meat, that represents such a small number of all meat produced? Through my critique of locavorism, I do not wish to argue that it is, on the whole, a neoliberal project that has no merits or ecological benefits. As Stanescu points out, urban community gardening, farmers markets, Community Support Agriculture (CSAs), and organic farms which eschew the use of monoculture crops, pesticides, and treat their workers well are all important goals which locavorism helps to forward (Stanescu 28). Rather, I am critical of how the locavore attitude towards meat designates a post-animal rights and post-climate change arena where the solution seems to be more about individual pleasure and purchasing power than political action.

4.2 Green Capitalism, Locavorism and the Privilege of Buying “Happy Meat”

In this section, I argue that locavorism reproduces the very same logic that permeates “humane” rhetoric, that is, that the capitalist market and individual *consumption* are the only solutions to the issues of animal rights and climate change. In the case of “local” animal agribusiness, the market rests on animal capital where yet again the autonomous Enlightenment human subject has the power to decide which beings have livability, and which do not. Referencing locavorism, CAS scholar John Sanbonmatsu states, “just as Fordism interpellated a new form of mass consuming subjects, post-Fordism is “hailing” a new, post-animal rights consumer to preserve the overall regime of animal capital” (Sanbonmatsu 23). Locavorism is therefore implicated in “green” capitalism and must *not* be seen as an anti-corporate movement because, as Sanbonmatsu points out, it seeks to preserve the overall regime of animal capital.

Complex and systemic issues such as animal rights and climate change cannot be solved through a movement that begins and ends with consumerism. Locavorism's focus on the purchasing power of the individual citizen reinforces unequal neoliberal power relationships and does not dismantle the base of oppressive food systems. Before I begin with my critique of locavorism's complicity in "green" capitalism, I want to make it clear that not all local farms, especially plant-based farms, fail to exhibit radical political resistance against food industries.¹⁴ I aim to question, rather, the ideology of consumerism and speciesism that is often found in locavore rhetoric and that involves the raising, confinement, transport and slaughter of animals. Scott Prudham defines green capitalism as a "tightly woven mix of faith in nominally free markets and market-based instruments, enclosure of various kinds, and capital investment and entrepreneurial innovation, all aimed at redressing environmental problems (however defined and measure) (Prudham 1596). Green capitalism is thus the "tethering of environmentalism to a political economy the mantra of which is growth for growth's sake" (1594).

At first glance, locavores appear to be in opposition to the stark "evils" of industrial and corporate farming—in *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, Michael Pollan rightfully opposes the corporatization and commercialization of "Big Organic," an industry that is now worth \$15 billion. However, locavore farmers and advocates nonetheless ironically reproduce the market logic of green capitalism, and aim to develop "sustainable" farming practices *within* capitalism rather than in opposition to it. In *The 100-Mile Diet: A Year of Local Eating*, MacKinnon and Smith state, "our inability to feed the world is not an agricultural failure, it is a failure of both imagination and of kindness. . . . Our farmlands are not only our security against hunger, they are

¹⁴ For example, *Out Here*, a documentary film created by the Queer Farmer Film Project, hopes to inspire a national discussion about gender and sexuality as they are related to food systems. A link to the trailer can be found here: <http://outheremovie.com/>.

also the last redoubt of a *gentler capitalism*” (Mackinnon and Smith 162-163). In another telling example, recall “humane” farmer Joel Salatin of Polyface Farms (who happens to be a libertarian) who states,

We don’t have to beat [the industrial food economy]. I’m not even sure we should try. We don’t need a law against McDonald’s or a law against slaughterhouse abuse—we ask for too much salvation by legislation. All we need to do is empower individuals with the right philosophy and the right information to opt out en masse. . . . It’s a little like Luther nailing his ninety-nine theses up at Wittenberg. (Pollan 260)

Michael Pollan replies: “Of course! Joel saw himself as more of a Luther than a Lenin; the goal wasn’t to blow up the Church, but simply to step around it” (260). Locavorism in these two examples is shown to be a non-revolutionary “side-stepping” neoliberal politic that emphasizes the role of the *individual* in making the right consumption choices. This problematic resurgence of a liberal social “movement” leads me to conclude that a “local” food movement headed by neoliberal or libertarian rhetoric fails to tackle the wide-ranging systemic issues of animal rights, climate change, global food inequality or even wage labour.¹⁵

An ecofeminist politic is especially pressing, then, at a time when food movements such as locavorism refuse to incorporate radical anti-speciesism and anti-capitalism in their ideas about how to change the food industry. As Carol J. Adams states, “the ecofeminist articulation of “care” becomes both a radical critique of patriarchal privilege as it has been depoliticized and becomes a remedy for responding to the crisis [of the Anthropocene]” (Adams 383). In Salatan’s

¹⁵ In terms of wage labour, Chad Lavin argues that locavore literature is curiously silent on this issue, and therefore seems less anarchist than neoliberal (Lavin 107). Julie Guthman’s systematic study of California’s organic farms turns up “no evidence to suggest that working conditions and remuneration on small ‘family’ farms are better than on large ‘corporate’ ones” (qtd. in Lavin 108).

words “blowing up the church,” or in the case of ecofeminism and animal rights, blowing up the *patriarchy* is indeed the only way of liberating nature and animals because it tackles the root of oppression. The crises brought about by the Anthropocene cannot be mitigated by a depoliticized neoliberalism that “steps around” issues. Rather, what is necessary is a radical discussion on the origins of human privilege, the social, political and ethical consequences of this privilege as well as an emphasis on compassion, empathy and *care* in political discourse. We must ask ourselves, how would I feel if I were born a pig on a factory farm or on a “humane” farm and were then murdered after a mere three years of life, to feed a human who consumed my flesh for mere pleasure? What if this happened to a dog or cat that I love? Locavorism, however, runs in opposition to ecofeminism because the human privilege that allow us to breed and slaughter animals as if they did not have emotions, interests or personalities remains intact.

Animals under “green” capitalist market logic, brutally transformed into “designer” symbols, are *not* being cared for in any meaningful way because they are not seen as individuals. As Adams points out, “these ‘nouveau flesh eaters’ are still eating meat from a dead body whose life had been emptied of meaning by the freedom to kill that being” (277). Locavore consumers of animal flesh are therefore doubly privileged: (1) firstly, they retain unquestioned freedom to breed an animal, imprison it—I use this term because animals raised for food are fundamentally *unfree*—and kill it at a young age for *pleasure* and (2) secondly, they have the class status to purchase expensive “designer” animal products whereby their guilt may be assuaged and they may have the “moral upper hand” in the animal capital market. As an ecofeminist, I find this double privilege to be highly problematic because it not only normalizes animal exploitation, but also because it constructs individuals who may not have the resources to participate in the “local” movement as uninterested in promoting animal well-being, the *real* exploiters of animals,

and so on. As Guthman points out, locavorism is becoming a *cause célèbre* on the Californian central coast, notable for being one of the wealthiest regions in the wealthiest state in the wealthiest country in the world (Guthman 1180). The question must therefore be asked: *who has the privilege of eating local?*

While local vegetables and fruit tend to be less than 50% or even 25% more expensive than non-local counter parts, local meat, poultry and eggs are dramatically more expensive than industrial, often two, three or even more times so (Comis n.p.). Indeed, the reason as to why industrially farmed animal products are so inexpensive is because of heavy government subsidies. As the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) observes, “Canada’s hog production sector would not even be viable were it not for multi-million-dollar taxpayer-funded subsidies. . . . since 1996, taxpayers have given more than \$4 billion to hog producers, with nearly three-quarters going to the largest corporations” (WSPA 19). The average meat consumer in the U.S. and Canada eats animal products quite frequently and thus, if one were to *only* consume local animal products, one would need to pay much more to eat “humanely.” This is simply not an economic possibility for many U.S. families. The fact that only mid-upper class individuals can afford to act “ethically” is, to reference sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, a form of social capital. Elitism and classism are therefore central to in/humane biopower; “happy meat” becomes a designer item that only certain demographics can afford to indulge in.

Moreover, not only do in/humane biopower and the locavore movement privilege certain niche consumers and grant them the moral upper hand, they can also draw gendered lines. Vasile Stanescu points out that women are often negatively portrayed in the locavore movement, particularly feminists, who are frequently faulted for having collectively abandoned the kitchen, i.e. cooking meaningful and nutritious meals for the family (Stanescu 20). Barbara Kingsolver,

for instance, describes feminism as “the great hookwink of my generation” because it wrongly removed the woman from hearth and home (qtd. in Stanescu 21). Moreover, Jennifer Jeffery writes that

one day during the *Pennywise Eat Local Challenge*, as I was dashing between meetings and wondering how on earth I was going to create an evening meal composed of local ingredients within budget with almost no time to shop, this thought flashed through my head: this whole eat local concept is *so not friendly* for women who work. . . . can we call ourselves feminists and still suggest that an ideal dinner consists of handmade ravioli and slow-simmered marinara from vine-ripened, hand-picked tomatoes and a salad composed of vegetables that are Not Available at Safeway? (qtd. in Stanescu 21)

This also begs the questions; can we call ourselves feminists and still purchase an overpriced piece of “local” steak, where the animal was bred and killed so we can have our luxurious “feel good” sentiment? “Can one be a feminist and still eat meat or dairy?” is the more radical question of ecofeminism. In response to both questions, I argue no. As an ecofeminist, I recognize that not only does meat-eating in the Western world entail an “always already” human privilege over the animal, but I recognize that the purchase of “happy meat” also adds the dimension of elitism, where the mid-upper class niche market can afford for their guilt to be assuaged, while other classes are seen to be “blindly” purchasing factory-farmed meat. In/humane biopower’s consumerist “quick-fix” to issues of animal suffering and climate change therefore obfuscates the pressing need for *not* a commodity movement, but a grass-roots movement, such as ecofeminism, that tackles the roots of the animal-industrial complex.

4.3 Locavorism's By-Passing of Animal Ethics and Climate Change Politics

The fundamental issue of locavorism is that the individual neoliberal “ethical” consumer, interpellated by “green” capitalism, believes that political action is *not required* because the commodity they have purchased is thought to have this resistance built-in. Indeed, locavore rhetoric has been centered around the idea of *pleasure* as being the central motivator for a so-called anti-corporate movement. In her quotation at the beginning of this chapter, Barbara Kingsolver argues that “doing the right thing” is not about “abstinence-only” or “wearing a fake leather belt”—an obvious jab at the abolitionist’s refusal to participate in the animal-industrial complex—but is about deriving *pleasure* from local food, and from the flesh of animals (Kingsolver 22). Michael Pollan expresses the same sentiment in *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, where he states that

Even connoisseurship can have a politics, Slow Food wagers, since an eater in closer touch with his senses will find less pleasure in a box of Chicken McNuggets than in a pastured chicken or a rare breed of pig. It’s all very Italian (and decidedly un-American): to insist that doing the right thing is the most pleasurable thing . . . (Pollan 259-260)

Locavorism’s “politic” of pleasure and “connoisseurship” is not only classist and elitist, as argued in the previous section, but also an expression of what Jacques Derrida has called *carnophallogocentrism*.¹⁶ The so-called pleasure one derives from eating a “pastured chicken or rare breed of pig” is *not* by any stretch of the imagination political. In fact, pleasure is only constructed as political in order to firstly secure the *privilege* of the Enlightenment animal-flesh-

¹⁶ In “Eating Well,” Derrida suggests that *carno* should be added to *phallogocentrism* in order to emphasize that the notion of the subject that is being critiqued in post-humanist thought should be understood not simply as a fully self-present, speaking, masculine subject but also as a quintessentially *human, animal-flesh-eating* subject (Adams 158).

eating subject and secondly to do so in a way that bypasses the inherently political nature of abolitionism and ecofeminism.

The bypassing of animal ethics in locavorism is done through the denial of animal individuality by means of conflating animal sentience with that of plant *insentience*. This is yet another way in which carnism delegitimizes and obfuscates animal suffering; in a supreme act of bad faith, locavore rhetoric omits any reference to animals as living beings in their own right. Furthermore, using the symbol of a plant draws a parallel between plant and meat-eating and both become “normal natural and necessary”. For instance, in *The Vegetarian Myth: food, justice, and sustainability*, Lierre Keith argues that vegetarianism is a myth because it is ignorant of the “fact” that

plants are sentient and that they defend themselves, protect each other, communicate, call out to other plant species, asking them to join in forming a resilient community. They sometimes sacrifice themselves for the good of all. They respond. They talk. They have meaning and they make meaning. They are capable of agency and courage and self-awareness. (Keith 14)

Moreover, she justifies meat-eating on the grounds that “apples eat, and what they eat is animals, including us. They need our excrement—the nitrogen, the minerals, the microbes—and our flesh and bones” (24-25). The faulty logic here is that if apples eat humans, and if humans eat “self-aware” plants, then surely it is no less problematic for humans to drink milk, for instance, which comes from artificially inseminating (or, as some ecofeminists call it, raping) a cow multiple times in her life, taking her offspring away each time, and shooting her when she becomes too weak to walk. This carnist reasoning is in direct contradiction to an overwhelming amount of scientific and philosophical evidence that proves that the animal’s capacity for pain, pleasure and

emotion is on par with that of the human's. Moreover, it is never the human subject that is being sacrificed in this so-called reciprocal relationship between humans and animals. The conflation of animals and plants, however, is used to interpellate the subject under carnism where the animal has *no place* as a highly complex individual, but only as a body.

Locavorism and its rhetoric of “nature” and the “cycle of life” therefore depoliticizes the “question of the animal” by displacing and assuaging the consumer’s guilt of exploiting another animal. The guilt or discomfort that humans may feel participating in carnism is no doubt a result of empathy, but empathy itself has been depoliticized because it has been associated with the *feminine* and with *emotion*—to feel a “feminine emotion” towards a nonhuman animal *directly* opposes our patriarchal anthropocentric world. Bad faith, which can be seen as the displacement of empathy, is thus necessary to the reproduction of speciesism and carnism. In another telling example, in “The Animal of Bad Faith: Speciesism as an Existential Project,” John Sanbonmatsu references Kingsolver’s argument that “slitting the throats of chickens and cutting off their heads with a hatchet isn’t killing them—it’s ‘harvesting’ them” (Sanbonmatsu 34). Kingsolver describes animals as “crops that blink their eyes” and is unmoved by the “similar” act of “cutting the heads off lettuce (34-36). In response, Sanbonmatsu argues that in an act of speciesist bad faith, Kingsolver “apprehends herself as ‘that which she is not’—a farmer non-violently harvesting insentient crops—in order to avoid responsibility for what in fact she *is*—a person who has chosen to kill other conscious, sentient beings with merciless brutality, purely for aesthetic reasons” (34). An ecofeminist politic is thus extremely important at a time when bad faith and speciesism permeate contemporary “humane” food movements that conflate animal sentience with plant insentience. By acknowledging the individuality of animals, ecofeminism is ethically responsible for animal subjects by including them in its intersectional and radical social

justice framework. Adams states, “animals are killed because they are false mass terms, but they die as individuals. They die as a cow, not beef, as a pig, not pork. Each suffers his or her own death, and this death matters a great deal to the one who is dying” (Adams 277-278). Seeing animals as individuals therefore calls into question the right and *privilege* of the carnophallogocentric subject to mercilessly slaughter other animals for his pleasure.

Just as locavorism’s absent referent masks and therefore depoliticizes the animal subject, I argue that the severity of animal agribusiness’s role in climate change has also fallen prey to the neoliberalization of activist work. The locavore’s insistence on “food miles,” or how far food travels from “farm” to “fork” not only obfuscates the reality of the inherently unsustainable nature of meat production, but also bypasses the dire need of political environmentalism by advocating for individual consumption. Locavorism lacks any meaningful political discussion of whether *global* meat production at any level can be sustainable when considering rising income levels and population rates, both of which will dramatically increase demand for meat to such a level that Earth’s resources will not be able to sustain it. In *Just Food: Where Locavores Get it Wrong and How We Can Truly Eat Responsibly*, James McWilliams argues that “buying local has evolved into a ‘lite green’ act of conspicuous consumption that offers environmentalists otherwise deeply involved in a commercialized life an easy way to register their discontent with the excesses of modernity” (McWilliams 30). McWilliams remarks that study after study has shown that local is not necessarily greener—winter tomatoes that originate in Spain and travel to England, for instance, are more energy-efficient in the aggregate than hothouse-grown British tomatoes (which can take up to ten times more energy) (McWilliams 26). In the case of meat production, McWilliams argues that “monocropping, excessive applications of nitrogen fertilizer, addiction to insecticides, rainforest depletion, land degradation, topsoil runoff, declining water

supplies, and even global warming” would *all* be considerably less severe if global consumers “treated meat like they treat caviar, that is, as something to be eaten rarely, if ever” (118).¹⁷ Indeed, as Chapter two shows, it is economically and physically impossible to produce meat “humanely” to match current, much less future, global demands for meat. There simply isn’t enough land, water, or resources. The focus of sustainability discourse regarding animal agribusiness therefore *must* shift towards an ecofeminist politic that challenges the roots of our anthropocentric culture and away from a local “politic of pleasure” to meaningfully address the pressing issues of global food security, ecological sustainability and the place of the animal sentience in social justice.

4.4 Pastoral Biopower on Chipotle and A&W’s Corporate “Family Farm”

In this section, I argue that the locavore food movement, adhering to in/humane biopower, justifies violence against animals under what Foucault has called pastoral power. Under pastoral power, “humane” discourse uses the politics of nostalgia, the imagery of the “family” farm as well as spirituality to romanticize animal agribusiness. Furthermore, I use the examples of A&W and Chipotle to show how the corporate cooption of the locavore movement as well as the “humane” economy signals the neoliberalization of in/humane biopower. Matthew Cole identifies four characteristics of Foucault’s notion of pastoral power: (1) responsibility, referring

¹⁷ Furthermore, the “only study to date to focus on whether a local or vegetarian diet is more helpful in reducing greenhouse gases, conducted by Christopher L. Weber and H. Scott Matthews at Carnegie-Mellon” concluded that “shifting from beef to vegetables for even a single day a week would in fact be more helpful in reducing greenhouse gases than shifting the entirety of one’s diet to exclusively locally produced sources” (qtd. in Stanescu 13). Stanescu also cites data from a study conducted by Adrian Williams of Cranfield University in England which found that “organic, free-range chickens have a 20 percent greater impact on global warming than conventionally raised broiler birds. That’s because “sustainable” chickens take longer to raise, and eat more feed. Worse, organic eggs have a 14 percent higher impact on the climate than eggs from caged chickens” (qtd. in Stanescu 13).

to the duty the shepherd has for ‘his’ flock as a whole, and for each individual sheep; (2) submission, where the “sheep must permanently submit to their pastors,” and this submission should have the character of a self-willed obedience; (3) individualized knowledge, which refers to the connection between total obedience, knowledge of oneself, and confession to someone else on the part of each member of the flock and (4) self-mortification, which is a self-willed death that is supposed to provide life in another world (Cole 90). Therefore, pastoral power is a function of *biopower* as it constructs “self-mortifying” and blindly submitting animals, while placing the shepherd in a position of power where he has the responsibility to “know” (and therefore dominate) his flock.

“Humane” farmer Joel Salatin, made famous by Pollan’s *The Omnivore Dilemma*, is a paradigm example of pastoral power. Salatin has stated that he sees farming as his “*responsibility* to honor the animals as creatures that reflect God’s creative and abiding love, and believes his method is to honour that of God” (Wirzba n.p.). Moreover, when asked how he can bring himself to kill a chicken, he states, “that’s an easy one. People have a soul, animals don’t. It’s a bedrock belief of mine. Animals are not created in God’s image, so when they die, they just die” (Pollan 331). Salatin’s Christian references cast him in the role of pastor or shepherd to self-submitting soulless flock, an image which appeals to a demographic of consumers who are nostalgic for the non-existent idealized past of the “family farm,” of “good Christian values” and of a time when life was “simpler” and less “industrialized.”

Equally problematic is the fact that pastoral biopower, along with the branding of “eat local,” is used by corporate marketing campaigns. As James McWilliams notes, in 2008 the Chipotle Mexican Grill, a Denver-based fast-food chain, vowed to purchase 25 percent of one item at each store from local farmers as part of its “Food with Integrity” initiative (McWilliams 39). This

decision also included buying local pork in Virginia from Salatin’s PolyFace Farms; along with Chipotle, Wal-Mart promised to spend \$400 million a year on local produce as part of its “Commitment to You” program (39). In 2013, Chipotle released an advertisement called “The Scarecrow” along with a new app-based game which prompts consumers to “join the quest for wholesome sustainable food” (Chipotle n.p.). “The Scarecrow” is a 3:22 minute story of a protagonist scarecrow who finds out that Crow Foods, a corporation that advertises itself as “idyllic” and “humane,” is actually an exploitative industrial corporation. After peeking into a Crow Foods milk industry, the scarecrow sees cows inside metallic cages being pumped for milk. The scarecrow, finally, decides to take matters into his own hands and starts a local farm at his own home in the countryside to protest the industrial “evils” of Crow Foods. Fig. 4.1 shows the scarecrow, after having harvested his vegetables, drive (in his nostalgically-appropriate truck) to the cosmopolitan city to set up a “farmer’s market” with the flag “Cultivate a Better World” above it.



Fig. 4.1. Juxtaposition of Rural Farmer’s Market and Industrial Cosmopolitan Center; “The Scarecrow”; *Chipotle Mexican Grill*; youtube.com, 11 Sept. 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUtnas5ScSE>

This image shows the pastoral biopower binary of nostalgic “nature”—the scarecrow’s vintage truck, recalling rural life, and his local vegetables headed for the farmer’s market—and brute “industrialization,” the cosmopolitan center. In “Veganism and the Politics of Nostalgia,” Jessica Carey argues that the

co-articulation of nostalgia, people and food in contemporary meat advertising enables major food industries and corporations to overwrite the common narrative that they have ruined traditional foodways through intense industrialization, and instead positioning themselves as the trusted guardians of those foodways.” (Carey 248)

The marketing of nostalgia and goodness in the “The Scarecrow” thus allows Chipotle to act in bad faith by positioning itself as that which it is not—a “humane” and non-industrial restaurant that sources all its food locally, while erasing that which it is—a major fast-food chain that purchases “millions of pounds of animal flesh” from factory farms each year (McWilliams 39).

A&W similarly markets their meat as “natural” which prompts consumers to think that their meat comes from animals that were “humanely” raised. “Natural,” however, is defined by the USDA as a product containing no artificial ingredient or added color and is only minimally processed; “natural” requires no standards for how the animals were raised, what they ate, or how they were slaughtered (Gillespie 111). A picture on A&W Canada’s Instagram page (see fig. 4.2) shows a green idyllic pasture where cows are seen to be free-roaming with the caption “warmer weather means new grass, and cattle love to graze in fresh fields” (A&W Instagram n.p.) While they may “love to graze in fresh fields,” there is no guarantee that any cows raised for A&W has actual access to said “fresh fields.”

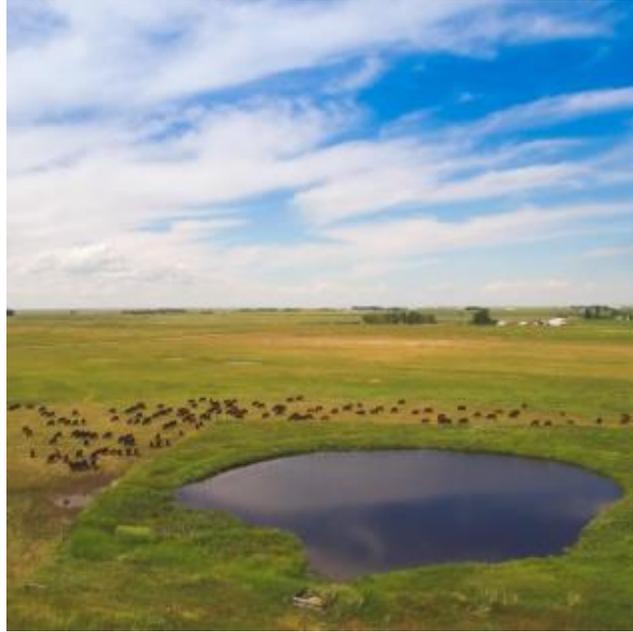


Fig. 4.2. A&W Cattle Advertisement; “Warmer weather means new grass, and cattle love to graze in fresh fields”; A&W; Instagram.com, 3 May 2017, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BTov0HYFSLr/?taken-by=awcanada>

Indeed, A&W Canada’s Instagram account is strategically filled with aesthetically pleasing pictures of fresh vegetables, family farms, vast fields, idyllic barns and nature. A&W’s website states that they “audit all facilities that handle [their] beef and they are also audited by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency or equivalent regulatory agencies as well as third-party auditors to ensure ethical and *humane treatment of the animals*” (A&W n.p. emphasis mine). Nowhere on their website does A&W state they have any form of humane certification, nor do they describe how cows are treated, what kind of environments they are raised in, and so on. Along with Chipotle, which uses factory farmed animals and yet markets itself as “natural,” A&W is a corporation that uses “humane” and “local” rhetoric to interpellate “post-animal rights” consumers where sustainability, human health and animal rights are always already pre-packaged in the form of, ironically, a fast-food burger.

In the case of A&W, however, marketing is not focused on animal welfare but gravitates towards human health and “natural meat.” Its television advertisements and campaigns are no

doubt centered upon the claim that they produce meat without antibiotics, hormones, or steroids; implicit in this campaign is A&W's so-called concern for human well-being. The focus on human health, in this sense, reflects in/humane biopower as A&W has the power to construct themselves as a compassionate entity—they ostensibly care for both human health and animal health by not giving animals hormones. Given a new innocent face, A&W nullifies its complicity in any form of suffering it may inflict on animals or humans. It is therefore important to view animal welfare, ecological sustainability and human health not as separate marketing phenomenon but rather as part-and-parcel of in/humane biopower, whose function is to perpetuate the ideology of carnism as normal, natural and necessary.

The corporate cooption of the signifiers “humane” and “local” demonstrates the dangers associated with apolitical consumer movements that claim to have simple fixes to issues of climate change and animal suffering. If Wal-Mart can become a participator in the “local” because it is profitable to do so, and if A&W can claim to treat its animals “humanely” without hormones, then we must radically rethink the ethics involved in “compassionate” commodity movements that demand *consumption* rather than *political action*. Indeed, the neoliberalization of social justice movements such as ecological sustainability and animal rights by locavorism reflects the Anthropocene's market-driven political climate.

5 Conclusion

Their favorite method is a 'divide and conquer' strategy heavily dependent on co-optation: First identify the 'radicals' who are unwilling to compromise and who are demanding fundamental changes to redress the problem at hand. Then, identify the 'realists' -- typically, organizations with significant budgets and staffs working in the same relative area of public concern as the radicals. Then, approach these realists, often through a friendly third party, start a dialogue and eventually cut a deal, a 'win-win' solution that marginalizes and excludes the radicals and their demands. Next, go with the realists to the 'idealists' who have learned about the problem through the work of the radicals. Convince the idealists that a 'win-win' solution endorsed by the realists is best for the community. Once this has been accomplished, the 'radicals' can be shut out as extremists, the PR fix is in, and the deal can be touted in the media to make the corporation and its 'moderate' nonprofit partners look heroic for solving the problem. (LaVeck n.p.)

The above passage comes from animal rights activist and documentary filmmaker James LaVeck's essay "Invasion of the Movement Snatchers: A Social Justice Cause Falls Prey to the Doctrine of 'Necessary Evil.'" In his remarks LaVeck references John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton's article that described a presentation given in a Cattleman's Association conference. Ronald Duchin, the presenter, was referring to PR's most effective strategy for "dealing with the meat industry's biggest irritants: us (meaning, "radical" animal rights activists)" (n.p). LaVeck therefore argues that the "humane" economy is a marketing 'divide and conquer' strategy that attempts to isolate the "radicals" and then inculcate the "idealist" consumers who follow humane dogma. In my concluding remarks, I want to emphasize the importance of viewing in/humane biopower not just as a profit-driven industry, an effective marketing campaign, or a problematic politic of the "lesser evil" but also as a *divide and conquer strategy*. In/humane biopower derives its control over niche markets interested in "compassion," "sustainability" and human nutrition/health from the strategic delegitimation of social justice groups such as animal rights activists and ecofeminists. In constructing the radicals as "extremists" and the abolitionists as "unrealistic," in/humane biopower, backed by corporations and contemporary food movements

alike, retains power over public discourse and therefore the freedom to continue exploiting animals under the false pretense that they are helping animals.

In “humane” knowledge production, the animal subject remains masked under the dominant absent referent and therefore unprotected from violence or exploitation. As I have shown, the absent referent can be a welfare regulation such as a chicken’s gait score for lameness, an image of a “happy” piglet on one of Global Animal Partnership’s farms or, as the locavore movement shows, the absent referent can be a plant that is claimed to be as just as sentient as an animal. In/humane biopower secures the reproduction of animal capital by constructing animal liberation as something it has innovatively bypassed—there is no need to liberate animals when they are constituted as always already free on the “*free-range*” farm. Public discourse is therefore efficiently managed by what is “said” by inhumane biopower, such that “happy meat” is an ethical possibility, as much as by the erasure of the “unsaid,” such as the fact that the majority of animals raised on “humane” farms end up in the same trucks and in the same slaughterhouses as factory farmed animals, that GAP’s “5-Step” Rating System keeps the majority of their animals indoor, crowded environments, and so on. As James LaVeck states, it is an “invasion” of the “movement snatchers” (LaVeck n.p.)

Locavorism, as developed by public figures such as Barbara Kingsolver and Michael Pollan, for whom the “political” is the “pleasurable,” manages public discourse in a similar way. Its neoliberal language of a “gentler capitalism” that does not “stick it to the man” but steps around him in turn delegitimizes radical counter-discourses such as ecofeminism and animal liberation. What one is left with, then, is a celebrated “local” commodity movement without a real political edge around which to rally. Common to both the locavore movement and in/humane marketing campaigns by Whole Foods, is the ontological construction of the animal

as *happy*, *self-mortifying* and *free*. Fig. 5.1. shows a 19th century French postcard of pork production.

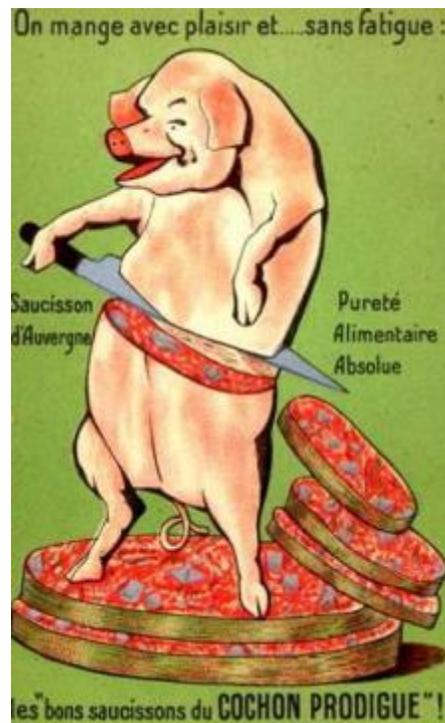


Fig. 5.1. The Self-Mortifying Pig; “Visions of Pork Production, Past and Future, on French Belle Époque Pig Postcards”; *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*; 19thc-artworldwide.org, 2015, <http://19thc-artworldwide.org/spring15/garval-on-visions-of-pork-production-past-and-future-french-belle-epoque-postcards>.

The translation on the top of this image is “one eats with pleasure and...without fatigue.” The self-mortifying pig, depicted happily slicing his body into absent referents is a reflection not just of public discourse viz-à-viz the animal in the 19th century, but also of today’s time of “humane” pastoral biopower. In the same way, the “happy” pig from one of GAP’s or Salatin’s farms is constituted as a self-submitting, soulless creature that gives their life away for human pleasure. Restoring the absent referent and giving individuality back to animals is therefore imperative for the politicization of not just animality, but of the effects of animal agribusiness on climate change and the plight of workers in slaughterhouses.

How do we restore the reality of the life of an animal in the time of the Anthropocene? What would this project look like? Ecofeminism, as Adams states, does not try to offer a solution, but a remedy to the culture that has created the ecological crisis—for Adams, one of the ways this crisis originates is through the postulation of the “autonomous” subject, the enlightenment, ontological rights-bearing subject, who comes to believe that what they’ve achieved has been achieved on their own” (Adams 380). Questioning the “traditional” human privilege over certain groups of humans, all other animals and over nature is therefore a necessary step to figuring out how animals would be granted their individualities through a restoration of the absent referent. Indeed, intersectional ecofeminism shows us that oppression is interconnected between humans, animals and nature which means that we must develop a “both/and” ethic of care, rather than an “either/or” scenario. A Foucauldian perspective alongside ecofeminism, furthermore, elucidates how the creation of the absent referent entails the violent biopolitical transformation of the animal subject into a docile *body* and *machine* that serve the needs of animal capital. The ethic of care, then, is what ties this all together. To restate Adams’s argument: “I urge resistance to the ideological construction of living objects through adopting a feminist ethics of care. The feminist ethics of care is a political ethic: it understands that ideology influences how we choose whom to care about” (Adams 72). Seeing animals as “happy” reifies them as absent referent as does refusing to see animals beyond false mass terms (as “beef” or “pork”). Both forms of “seeing” draw attention to themselves as forms of conditioned ethical blindness; that is, ideological perspectives that prevent true compassion and empathy towards animals.

The prevalence of in/humane biopower in public discourse and contemporary food movements is particularly dangerous at a time when environmental justice and animal liberation

must be seen as *twin* projects. One cannot occur without the other. As I have shown, animal agribusiness is posing a catastrophic threat to the ecosystem while contributing to the suffering of billions of animals, each year, worldwide. We have come to a point where the exploitation of resources to satisfy the West's over-consumption of meat brought about by carnism cannot continue if we want to even attempt to liberate animals or prevent catastrophic food and water shortages for future generations. In/humane biopower merely bolsters the carnist, speciesist and anthropocentric underpinnings of Western culture that have engendered the crises of the Anthropocene. While it is marketed as a sustainable and political movement, "humane" meat is a myth, or better yet, a lie that relies upon the profitability of animal capital. Ecofeminism and Critical Animal Studies works alongside a Foucauldian critique of modern power to provide fundamentally important lines of moral reasoning and questioning that can lead to truly sustainable and ethical outcomes for ourselves and for those beings with whom we share this planet.

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